

# God is Love | 1 John 4:7-12 | 10/20/19

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- Introduction
  - As we continue to talk about the character of God, we will today focus on God's love.
  - Last week we looked at the holiness of God and that God is set apart from everything else that there is no one else like God.
  - We will look at not only that God is love and that he has a holy kind of love, but we will also look at the love that we are commanded to show.
  - Just as God is holy and called us to be holy, he has also called us to love.
- God is love and displays a holy love.
  - As we look at the character of God we see that he is several things. One of which is that God is love.
  - What kind of love is God?
    - We know that we have seen that God is holy, and holy meaning to be set apart and that he is pure and righteous.
    - We know that with whatever God is or does that he is Holy and set apart from anything else.
    - **So if God is love then he has a holy love, a love that is we cannot fully comprehend.**
    - **His love is so great and above any love that we can experience or show to others.**
    - In fact even in his judgment and wrath he is love.
    - His love is there in everything thing that he does.
- God's love was shown to us through Jesus | 1 John 4:9-10
  - **Read 1 John 4:9-10**
  - **The best example from the Bible of God's love is without a doubt the showing of his love for us by sending Jesus to the cross to die for our sins.**
  - This verse says that God sent Jesus so that we might then live through him.
  - That is powerful because God certainly didn't have to send Jesus to the cross, he could have left us be and he would have been just to do so.
    - It's possible that we take this act of love from God for granted, that we almost see it has something that God had to do for us.
    - **When in fact this was an act of holy sacrificial love that God showed for us and it certainly wasn't done because he had to or because we deserved it.**
  - But as we can see from John 3:16 that God loves the world to such a degree that he would show us His love sacrificially with Jesus.
    - John 3:16-17
      - "For **God so loved the world** that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."
      - **God loved the world, not just certain people because of their heritage or their goodness; no God loved the whole world.**
      - God could have condemned the world if wanted to, he could have sent Jesus to give us the punishment that we all rightly deserved, but that is not what he did.
      - **Do you think that there is anyone that is not included in "the world"?**  
**Are there people that God does not love?**

- God so loved us that he sacrificed his Son Jesus, to suffer a horrible death with unbearable pain and misery for us.
- **This sacrifice is the ultimate form of love.**
  - John 15:13
    - “No one has greater love than this, that someone would lay down his life for his friends.”
- God knew that there was no way on our own for us to have forgiveness for our sins.
- That on our own we would be eternally separated from God.
- But God in his loving nature and his love for us he has made it possible, by showing us sacrificial love.
- **What does God's sacrificial love tell us about what He thinks about us?**
- God showed sacrificial love even to the disobedient and to his enemies.
  - **So whom did he show this sacrificial love too?**
  - **If we try to understand this love that God has for us with what he did for us because of Jesus, it is very hard to even think of us doing the same thing.**
  - If we think of sacrificing ourselves for someone we might think that we could do it for our children, wife or family.
    - That we could lay down our lives for them.
  - But we see that for Jesus he laid down his life, and God gave him up for the world, disobedient and the enemies of God.
  - **This is why he has a holy love.**
  - He sent Jesus for the sinners, those that disobeyed God.
    - Romans 5:8
      - “But God proves His own love for us in that **while we were still sinners**, Christ died for us!”
    - Even though we were still sinning and disobeying God he sent Jesus.
    - He sent him not just for those that returned the love to God and obeyed him, but instead to those who are being disobedient and sinning against God.
    - We naturally have a hard time showing love to those that do us wrong.
      - **We see though that God didn't show his love by waiting for the sinners to quit sinning and to be obedient.**
      - No he showed them his love while they were still sinners.
  - He sent Jesus for the enemies of God.
    - In fact the Bible even says that we were enemies of God and yet he sent his only son.
      - Romans 5:10
        - “For if, **while we were enemies**, we were reconciled to God **through the death of His Son**, then how much more, having been reconciled will we be saved by His life!”
      - So while we were enemies of God, he still sent Jesus to his death for us.
      - We could never lay down our life or our children's life for that of someone else or someone whom was our enemy.
        - **Would you send your child to death for one of your enemies?**
        - **Would you give up your child to change places with a murderer sitting on death row?**
        - **Why couldn't you?**
  - God's love is a holy love that goes beyond our understanding, but it is a love that we cannot live without.

- And we are thankful that he pours His love upon us.
- We love our family, and our family returns that love. We could sacrifice ourselves for that.
- **But God sent Jesus and Jesus died sacrificially for those that didn't show any love for him.**
  - **Could you do it for the "world" as God did?**
    - *"For God so loved the world..."*
  - This is why we are unable to fully comprehend the holy love of God because we could never show this same love.
- The Love that God has for us
  - Romans 8:37-39
    - "No, in all these things we are more than victorious through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that not even death or life, angels or rulers, things present or things to come, hostile powers, height or depth, or any others created thing will have the power to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord!
- **What does this say about His love for us when we sin or disobey Him?**
- **Do we only love those that love us back? Do we only show love to our "friends" and not our enemies? Why?**
- We must love one another, because God loves us. | 1 John 4:11 & 7-8
  - **Read 1 John 4:11 & 7**
  - We are called to love others as God has loved us.
  - **So now that we have seen the holy love that God has for us, what now do we think when we see that we are to love one another?**
    - **Should this love to one another be as God has loved the world?**
      - John 3:16
        - *"For God so loved the world..."*
      - So just as God loved the disobedient sinners and his enemies we are to do likewise, we must love the world as he did.
  - We are commanded to love God and our neighbor
    - **Jesus speaks to this importance of this love by his command to us.**
      - Matthew 22:36-40
        - "Teacher, which command in the law is the greatest? He said to him, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important command. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands."
      - **What do we learn from these verses?**
        - **The importance of the love that we have to God.**
        - **The equal importance of the love for our neighbor as ourselves.**
          - **How much do you love yourself?**
  - **But how can we do this? How can we show this type of holy love that God is capable of showing to others?**
  - Because we know that people by themselves certainly do not have this same ability of holy love that God has.
  - **God gives us the ability to love the world because of the Holy Spirit.**
    - 1 John 4:7
      - "Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been **born of God** and knows God."

- If we are born again we know God, and God shows us this love that can only come from him.
- **Those that are “born of God” are Christians whom have received the Holy Spirit.**
- He shows us this love by the Holy Spirit that we given upon receiving our salvation.
  - Ephesians 1:13
    - “When you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation and when you believed in Him, you were also sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.”
- **And with that Holy Spirit we know love.**
  - 1 John 4:15-16
    - “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God—God remains in him and he in God. And we have **come to know and to believe the love** that God has for us. **God is love**, and the one who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him.”
- With God’s Holy Spirit we share in his divine nature and there is traits of God that we receive.
  - 2 Peter 1:4
    - “By these He has given us a very great and precious promises, so that through them **you may share in the divine nature**, escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desires.”
  - Because of the Holy Spirit we can share in the nature of God, this is of course not from us but from God.
  - The Holy Spirit is what causes the changed life in a person so they will want to escape the evil desires of our flesh and to show this holy love of God.
- **Is it possible to love the world as God does without the Holy Spirit?**
- **Have you personally felt what it was like to show love to others only because of the Holy Spirit? What was that like?**
- There is no way that we by ourselves with our sinful nature and self-centeredness can possible do this.
- We being selfish naturally will only show love to those that love us back or love us first.
- **The love that the Holy Spirit gives us is the ability to love those that DO NOT and WILL NOT love us back.**
- **That is why a Christian is so different from the lost whom live for the world.**
  - Ephesians 5:1
    - “Therefore, be imitators of God, as dearly loved children. And **walk in love, as the Messiah also loved us** and gave Himself for us, a sacrificial and fragrant offering to God.”
  - We are to imitate the love that God has for us into the world as he has done for us because we were also from the world.
- We are called to love our enemies and those that disobey God (without condoning their actions)
  - **When God calls us to love others, does that mean we are to love people that are evil and do things that are in direct disobedience to God?**
    - Yes it does, because God loved us even though we sin against him, we likewise are to do the same.
  - **If you think of everyone who has ever wronged you, if you think of the people in life that have hurt you in some way physically or emotionally. Does God call us to love them?**

- Yes God calls us to love even the unlovable.
    - **To show love to world does not mean we agree with what they are doing.**
      - As we are called to show love to the world, even those that live their lives in direct disobedience to God, this does not mean that we agree or condone their actions.
        - We are to show love and compassion to the person on death row, but we do not agree with their actions there is a difference.
        - We are to love our enemies those that have wronged us, but we do not agree with what they did to us.
        - Even if the world does not see the love that we show.
      - This can be the hardest thing for us to do. We know that it is easy to love someone who loves us back, but to love our enemies or someone who lives their life in direct disobedience to God is entirely different.
      - **Do you find it difficult to show love to those that don't love you back?**
      - **Do you find it difficult to show love to those that have hurt you?**
    - While it is difficult to love these people, it is not impossible because of Christ
    - He has given us an example and he has given us the ability to show love even to these people.
      - **What can we do to help us love the unlovable?**
- **Jesus commanded us to love one another so that we would be a witness for Christ and so that the world would know that we are his disciples.**
  - If we had any doubt on the love that we are to show to others, they can all be removed when we see the command that Jesus gave us.
    - John 13:34
      - **"I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."**
  - **Jesus gave the Christian a very direct command that we are to love one another just as Christ has loved us.**
  - This command to love others wasn't new as we have previously seen, but this was a special command in the love that we are supposed to show to other Christians.
    - Not that Christians are better than others but God wanted there to be unity.
    - If Christians are seen bickering and hating each other why would the world want any part in that?
    - The world should see that not only does a Christian love others differently, but that among themselves they show this same Christ like love.
  - **This is an important command that we MUST obey, Jesus didn't say we should, or we might, or if we feel like it, but instead he said that WE MUST love one another.**
  - Commands of Jesus are given for a purpose and they are significant. We must obey his commands and show this love that he has commanded us to give.
  - **Jesus also says that by obeying this command that the all people (the world) will know that we are a disciple of Jesus.**
    - So not only is this command issued so that we will show the love of Jesus to our fellow Christians, but it is proof that we are his disciples.
    - If we are his disciples then there is something different about us than the world.
    - The world does not know this kind of holy love that God does.
    - If the Christian shows this love then we will be a witness for Christ that the world cannot disregard.
      - The world will wonder,
        - What is this love that is shown by the Christian?

- How is it possible that someone could love their enemy?
  - How could someone show love to someone who has wronged them?
  - Surely there is something different about them!
- We can see how by obeying this command that we can be a witness for Christ in our daily walk.
- That others may even come to know Christ because of our obedience.
- We should all want to show this love to others.
- **Knowing that loving others will show our love for God, does this put a different perspective on how you treat others?**
- **What are some examples that you have seen by others who have obeyed this command to love others as Jesus loves us?**
- Our love for God is shown by obeying his commands
  - 1 John 5:3a
    - “For this is what love for god is: to keep His commands...”
  - We show our love to God by showing love to others.
  - To love the unlovable as Christ has loved us.
  - We cannot love God if we hate the world or if we hate others.
    - 1 John 4:8
      - “The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love.”
    - 1 John 4:20-21
      - “If anyone says, “I love God,” yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For the person who does not love his brother he has seen cannot love the god he has not seen. And we have this command from Him: The one who loves God must also love his brother.”
  - The Bible puts significant importance on our love for others as we are commanded to do it so that by our obedience we show our love for God.
- If we love one another his love is perfected in us | 1 John 4:12
  - *Read 1 John 4:12*
  - To obey God’s commands and to love others we will see his love being perfected in us.
  - God uses us to show his love to others.
    - We know that God is love and was the sole originator of love.
    - Love was manifested in his Son
    - The love of God is demonstrated in his people.
  - We the people, the Christians must follow the will of God so that his love can be perfected.
  - Let us be obedient Christians who strive to be in his will and love others.