

Chardon Christian Fellowship

Wednesday Night Bible Study

1 John

Lesson 4: Love

Love is supposed to be an “identifying mark” for Christians (**John 13:34-35**). Evidently a lack-of-love was an issue in the church of the First Epistle of John. There was a schism (*schisma*) in the church (**1 John 2:19**) as a result of heresies. Although a schism is implied in **1 John**, *schisma* appears 8 times in the New Testament (e.g. **Matthew 9:16, John 7:43, 1 Corinthians 1:10, 11:18, 12:25**) and means: *cleft, split, division with damage, discord*.

Since this study is about love, before we proceed, let us make sure we are all “on the same page” regarding love which is another key focus of **1 John**.

I. What is Love?

A. Love

There are 6 Greek words for love; however, we only find three Greek words for love in the New Testament (*agapaō, phileō, storgē*) and only one in **1 John** (*agapaō*).

Agapaō

Agapaō is a verb “to love” or “loving” while *agapē* is the noun “love”. A very good definition of *agapaō* is offered by W.E. Vine: “... *agapaō* .. expresses the deep and constant love and interest of a perfect Being towards entirely unworthy objects, producing and fostering a reverential love in them towards the Giver, and a practical love towards those who are partakers of the same, and a desire to help others to seek the Giver” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, p. 703).

This definition by W.E. Vine has a key element to it (the source) and incites the following question “*What is the source of our agapē?*”

1 John 4:7 *for agapē is from God; and everyone who agapaō is born of God and knows God; this creates little doubt about origin of agapaō*

Agapaō is also defined for us in:

1 John 4:9 *what did the agapaō of God result in? it is defined in The Cross*

1 John 3:16 *how far should agapaō go? laying down your life is agapaō*

B. Contrasts

The Epistle of John uses a writing style of “contrasting absolutes”, such as ‘light and darkness,’ ‘life and death’, and ‘truth and falsehood.’ We also see the contrast of ‘love and hate’ in this Epistle. The Greek word in **1 John 2:9** that we translate as hate is *miseō*. It means: *to hate, to regards with ill will, to detest, to abhor*. It truly is the opposite of love, thus, another Johnanine contrast: love and hate.

Hate (*miseō*) is a telltale sign of someone not filled with the Spirit of God:

1 John 2:9 *he who hates is: in the Light, in the darkness
by inference, he who is in the Light: loves, hates*

II. First Epistle of John and Love

A. Love defined

How does one define 'love' and which 'love' is used in **1 John**? We have 'love' defined in several verses in **1 John**.

1 John 3:16 *God showed His love for us by sending Messiah*

1 John 4:8-10 *agapao is summed up in the character and actions of God, including propitiation in it's fullness*

1 John 4:16 *true or false: anyone expressing love is from God (_____)*

B. Source of Love Identified

We have all heard someone say "I just can't love that person" or "I have a hard time loving that person". What does **1 John** say regarding the sources of 'love'?

1 John 2:4-6 *what was the manner in which Jesus walked?*

1 John 2:10 *so our source of agapao is what?*

1 John 2:15-16 **** a serious statement is laid out for agapao of the world. What is 'world' in this case?*

C. Impact on Us

The Word of God should have an impact on us. Paul wrote Timothy that the Word is "... profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness ..." (**2 Timothy 3:16**). Therefore, with God's love poured through us, there should be an impact on us. **1 John** describes some of this impact:

1. No Fear

1 John 4:17-18 *what should be our attitude toward Judgement?*

2. Love for brothers

There is an obvious outcome when a person is filled with *agapaō*.

In **1 John 2:9**, we see a command regarding "brothers". The word translated as 'brethren' or 'brothers' is *adelphos* (*adelphō, adelphōn, adelphous, adelphoi*). It means: *brother(s), near kinsman or relative(s); member(s) of the Christian community; one of the same nation or nature; one of equal rank and dignity*. In **1 John**, *adelphos* or derivatives (**1 John 2:9-11, 3:10, 12-17, 4:20-21, 5:18**) are exclusively used in reference to 'members of the Christian community' (people of the Word).

1 John 2:9-11 what does 1 John say about someone who does not love the brethren? What does verse-11 say about discernment?

1 John 3:10 1 John contrasts children of God and children of Devil. What does 1 John say about one children of the Devil?

1 John 3:11-12 what 'beginning' do you think John was referring?

1 John 3:14-15 'life and death' are contrasted, implying 'of God' and 'not of God'. What does this verse say about love of the brethren?

1 John 3:16-18 how far does the 'love of brethren' go?

1 John 4:11 why should we love? because He loved us !!!

1 John 4:12 don't get the cart before the horse - Gods love abides, then it is perfected in us.

1 John 4:19-21 these verses summarize the Gospel - God first loved us (propitiation) forgiving us of all sin; therefore we love; the position of loving God and hating a brother is a lie; if God's love (agape) is in you, you cannot hate (miseō) brothers (adelphos) - this struck at the heart of the antichrists who were proclaiming a false gospel and evidently not loving the brethren (adelphos).

3. Desire to Do God's Will

There are several things that God 'commands' us to do. These commandments are not written as "by doing this you will learn to love me", rather, they are written as "because I love you, and put my love in you, you will want to do this." Obeying commandments should flow out of our agapaō as be as natural as a baby reaching for her mother.

1 John 5:3 why do we wish to follow God's commandments?

1 John 3:23 we are commanded by Jesus to do what?

1 John 4:21 who are we to agapaō?

1 John 2:3-9 John restated a commandment, that is, that we love our brethren.

V. Heresy at time of John

We know that heresies were springing up in the church. We have briefly studied in previous lessons the heresies of Docetism (heresy that Jesus was apparition, did not die), Gnosticism (heresy that we 'evolve' from body through knowledge), Cerinthianism (heretic who taught Jesus did not die on cross), and antinomianism (anti-Law; heresy that we are free to sin because they have all been paid).

Evidently the church to which John writes had factions, some following Apostle John and some following these heresies and being opposition to the teaching of the Apostle John. This created a church with disagreement, factions, schism and most likely 'lack of love' between factions.

This unloving spirit can permeate churches today, so the First Epistle of John is very relevant to today.

V. Application

The application from this study of **1 John** and love is quite obvious ... and quite challenging:

- (1) Have you been in a church or church meeting where you felt there was tension and an ‘unloving spirit’ in the meeting? A schism? Opposing factions?
- (2) How are we to respond to believers, that is, those “of the Word”?
- (3) Is there anyone who is a brother (*adelphos*), who if they walked into this room, you would find yourself in bitterness, hatred (*miseō*) and not love (*agapaō*)?
- (4) What message do we send to our ‘biological children’ and ‘spiritual children’ if we are in hate (*miseō*) toward other believers? Consider **Matthew 8:21-35** and **1 John 2:11-12**, wherein, how much have you been forgiven and how much should you forgive? What about **Matthew 5:43-46** where Jesus instructed us to “... *agapaō your enemies* ...” since even the tax collectors love (*agapaō*) those who love (*agapaō*) them.
- (5) What is the purpose of the Word? Read **2 Timothy 3:16** and ask yourself the question “*How is the Word to affect me?*” Failure to allow the Word to change us (i) denies its power and purpose, and (ii) is putting us in **Proverbs 12:1** condition.
- (6) Read **1 John 4:7-11**. Pray that God through the power of the Holy Spirit will enable us to fulfill and exemplify **1 John 4:7-11**.

Resources:

New American Standard New Testament, The Lockman Foundation

The Letters of John, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, Volume 19. John Stott, InterVarsity Press

Bible Knowledge Commentary, An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Theological Seminary Faculty, John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, Victor Books, 1983

Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, MacDonald Books

The Mounce Reverse-Interlinear™ New Testament, Robert H. Mounce and William D. Mounce, 2011

https://studylight.org	https://www.openbible.com	https://www.biblereasons.com
https://jewishvirtuallibrary.org	https://www.challies.com	http://qbible.com
https://www.biblestudytools.com	http://www.gotquestions.com	http://allaboutgod.com
https://www.biblehub.com	