

1st John Lesson 13 – God Is Love

1Jn 4:7-8 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. (8) He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

John is an excellent teacher. Everything he teaches is sequential and each thought is built on the previous truth in the letter. He is now going to teach on love, but why does he teach about it at this point in the letter? Because in the same way you can only understand the LIFE of God by seeing that LIFE manifested in Jesus Christ who came in the flesh, you can only understand the LOVE of God as it was manifested in Jesus Christ who came in the flesh. Do you want to see LIFE? Look at Jesus. Do you want to see LOVE? Look at Jesus.

The love of God is vastly different than the love of fallen man. Right here in Oklahoma, on the first day of school this year, there was the news report of a young male student who "loved" a fourteen year old girl student. When he told her how much he "loved" her and wanted a romantic relationship with her, she told him she did not feel the same way about him ... and he demonstrated his fallen human love for her by taking out a knife and stabbing her eleven times. Amazingly, she has survived so far and the whole state is praying for her full recovery.

Men "love" all kinds of things **with natural human love**. Men love their wives, their children, their horses, their dogs, their cats, their cars, their guns, their friends, their country, their business, their farms ... but all of that is human love. That kind of love does not make a person a child of God. Jesus said,

Luk 6:32 For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.

I will never forget the time during one of my studies years ago when I found out the word Jesus used for the love sinners have for each other in that verse is G25 agapao – the verb form of the noun G26 AGAPE which is the word John uses when he says, "God is love." Agape means – love, affection, benevolence. AGAPE is the word translated "Charity" all through first Corinthians chapter 13 describing the very love of God. But the AGAPE sinners have for each other is vastly different than the love of God as seen manifested in Jesus Christ.

In the Old Covenant, the covenant God made with the unregenerate, natural man, the nearest he could come to the love of God was to command them to,

Lev 19:18 ... thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I *am* the LORD.

Said another way, "Love your neighbor with the same "self-love" you have in you." That is the highest level of love there is for the natural man. But the true love of God is first seen in Jesus Christ who came as a man to show us what true love is like. It is not a selfish love like ... "I love you as long as you love me." **It is a "self-less" love that says, "I love you because I love you."** That is why Jesus gave us a NEW commandment,

Joh 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

The world has a saying currently that is being used to justify alternative lifestyles that God calls an abomination. The saying is, "*Love is love.*" They are trying to justify abominable lifestyles by making all love equal. John is teaching precisely the opposite. **God's definition of love is the love seen in Jesus Christ who came in the flesh. Nothing else is the love of God!** The natural human normally has human love for his family. but notice what Jesus says,

Mat 10:37-39 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. (38) And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. (39) He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

Jesus Christ tells us we are to love Him more than,

1. Our mother and father.
2. Our children.
3. Our own flesh.
4. Our own natural life.

Does that sound like natural, normal, human love to you? It does not. But Jesus is not asking us to do anything He Himself did not do.

Mat 12:46-50 While he yet talked to the people, behold, *his* mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. (47) Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. (48) But he answered and said unto him that told him, **Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? (49) And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, **Behold my mother and my brethren!** (50) **For whosoever shall do the will of my****

Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

It is subtle, but Jesus is revealing a MAJOR revelation in this passage. He is preaching the kingdom of God that is soon coming to them when they will be born again. He is preaching like they already are born again. You have to read the gospels in the light of the revelation that Jesus was teaching as if they were already in the kingdom of God.

Luk 16:16 The law and the prophets *were* until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

The major revelation is: YOU BELONG TO A DIFFERENT FAMILY NOW. YOUR NATURAL FAMILY IS NO LONGER YOUR FAMILY. YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD NOW. YOU ARE IN THE FAMILY OF GOD. THE WORLD IS NO LONGER YOUR HOME. YOU ARE A CITIZEN OF HEAVEN SIMPLY ON TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENT HERE IN THIS WORLD.

Col 3:1-3 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. (2) Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. (3) For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

DON'T SET YOUR AFFECTION ON THINGS BELOW. YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD AND YOUR LIFE NOW IS ABOUT BRINGING THE WILL OF GOD TO THIS FALLEN WORLD TO SAVE, HEAL, AND BLESS AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE.

Loving God does not relieve you of your obligations to honor your mother and your father, and to provide for your wife and children. Remember even on the cross, Jesus, as the first born son of the family, made sure His mother Mary would be provided for in her old age,

Joh 19:26-27 (26) When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! (27) Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own *home*.

[Tradition says that John took care of Mary in Judea until the time of her death, which occurred about fifteen years after the death of Christ. – Albert Barnes]

Getting back to loving those who don't love you back. You don't love people, so they will love you. **You love people because Christ in you loves them.** You love them with the

love of God, even if doing so means they hate you so much they will want to kill you the way they killed Him. Think for a moment about these false prophets with the antichrist spirit, who had broken off fellowship with John because they were no longer willing to abide in the teachings of Jesus Christ. They followed with John for a time, but John says, "they went out from us, but they were not of us." How do you think those men reacted when news of this letter got to them? Do you think they thought like this? *"Oh, that sweet John, he loves us so much. We just love him too even though he is telling everybody we are false prophets and teachers."*

NO! They were not appreciative of John at all ... even though ... John is demonstrating the LOVE of God for them ... and for the sheep ... by declaring the truth in love. It is safety for the sheep, and it is a lifeline of salvation for these false prophets if they will hear the truth and repent. It is a dangerous thing to love anything more than Christ ... even your own family ... even your own skin ... even your own natural life. You do NOT want to end up being the enemy of Christ by going in that antichrist direction too far:

Php 3:17-20 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (18) (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: (19) Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) (20) For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

1Jn 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

Man thinks he recognizes love when he sees it. Yet Jesus is the express image of God, meaning, if you want to know what the Father is like, you look at Jesus. God is love. Jesus is the express image of the love of God. I like to say it this way, "**Jesus is the love of God with legs.**" Jesus is the express image of the Love of God in human form that we can see and comprehend. Jesus did NOTHING that was outside of the LOVE OF GOD. Again I say ... man thinks he recognizes love when he sees it ... but the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the other religious leaders ... they did not recognize the LOVE OF GOD when it walked up on two legs right in front of them. They HATED the LOVE OF GOD to the point they eventually crucified it ... meaning Christ ... in the effort to rid the world of the love of God. We are commanded to love the way Jesus loved us. We are to love our brethren and our enemies with true AGAPE, self-less love.

Luk 6:46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

Pastor Dave would say, *"Hmm, If Jesus is our Lord, we are supposed to do those things*

that He says. Maybe we don't have to back up in this chapter very far to find some of His sayings." And then Pastor Dave would take us to:

Luk 6:27-36 But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, (28) Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. (29) And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not *to take thy coat* also. (30) Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask *them* not again. (31) And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. (32) For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. (33) And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. (34) And if ye lend *to them* of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. (35) But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. (36) Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

"Hoping for nothing again." **This is a self-less love.** Jesus demonstrated this love more than any person in history. He came to save the very people who will eventually crucify Him. He died for His murderers and even prayed for them while suffering the agony of the cross,

Luk 23:34a Then said Jesus, **Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.**

Rom 5:5b-8 ... the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. (6) For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. (7) For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. (8) But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

John and the apostle Paul are both saying what Jesus said,

Joh 3:16-17 **For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.** (17) **For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.**

1Jn 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

John is an excellent teacher. Every sentence is based on truth he has already established earlier in this letter. Here he says, **he that loveth not knoweth not God.** Let's keep it in context of the entire letter: *"Brother Gary, one thing is for sure ... I know God."* I respond, Really? That's good. Let me ask you a question. How do you know that you know God? *"Well that's easy, brother Gary. I know God because I have these strong feelings of 'love' toward Him."* So, you know God by your emotions, your feelings for Him? *"That's right. I know I know Him because I have these strong FEELINGS of LOVE toward Him."* The apostle John gave a different definition of how to know that you know God. He gave that definition earlier in the epistle when he wrote,

1Jn 2:3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

John is faithfully telling what he "saw and heard" Jesus say all those years ago,

Joh 14:21-24 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. (22) Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? (23) Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. (24) He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

There is no such thing as knowing God or loving God if you do not keep the commandments of Jesus. "FEELINGS" are a bonus, not a proof that you love Him ... or that you know Him. I know many people who will tell you they have deep emotional feelings of love toward the Savior, yet they live in habitual rebellion by abusing drugs and alcohol, habitually living in fornication, adultery, and so forth. John keeps repeating this same theme throughout this epistle ... YOU KNOW YOU KNOW HIM IF YOU KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS ... YOU KNOW YOU LOVE HIM IF YOU KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS. To "say" you know Him and love Him without being a "doer" of His sayings simply makes you out to be a liar. A deceived liar no doubt, but a liar all the same.

WE ARE NOT TALKING ABOUT LEGALISM. WE ARE TALKING ABOUT OBEDIENCE TO THE RISEN LORD. HE IS ONLY YOUR LORD IF YOU DO WHAT HE SAYS. THE LOVE OF GOD TRULY HAS BEEN SHED ABROAD IN YOUR HEART BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. THE VERY FIRST FRUIT OF THE NEW NATURE ... WHICH IS "CHRIST IN YOU" ... IS LOVE!

Gal 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (23) Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Love flows from within your new nature. It is the very FIRST fruit of the Spirit. Why? Because GOD IS LOVE! It is the nature of Christ and it is the nature of Christ in you. What restrains that love from flowing freely from within you to reach others? LACK OF MORTIFICATION OF THE FLESH. There is still too much fleshly, natural, human, "selfish" love dominating your soul, which is the seat of the emotions. Thank God for Pastor Dave teaching us about mortification and edification all of these years.

I hear someone saying, *"How can you tell me God IS love with a straight face when you look at all the evil in the world. Why is there so much suffering, sickness, crime, pain and tragedy in the world? If God is love, surely He would not have created a world like this."*

I could not agree with you more. Have you ever read Genesis chapter one? Have you ever read about the world that LOVE created? In every aspect, when God had finished creating everything, He said it was VERY GOOD! There was no death. There was no pain. There was no crime. There were no murders. There wasn't even thorns or thistles. There were no blood sucking insects like mosquitos. The world that LOVE created for man was VERY GOOD!

In the beginning, all God wanted was for His son Adam **to be who He had made him to be**. God wanted to fellowship with Adam and walk with him in the cool of the day. All Adam needed to do was simply demonstrate his love for God by keeping the commandment. For Adam, there was only one commandment. The commandment was not grievous. How hard is it to obey one commandment? How hard is it to not eat the fruit of just one tree? God (LOVE) gave Adam a perfect world and unlimited access to every tree in the garden. God (LOVE) gave Adam a beautiful wife. If Adam would have loved and trusted God enough to keep that one commandment, we would still be in the world that LOVE created, and it would be VERY GOOD!

Don't ever blame God for this world being like it is. God did not create it this way. LOVE did not create it this way. Disobedience to the commandment of God is what brought about this fallen world. Through disobedience, Adam delivered this world into the hands of the wicked one. John verifies that truth later in this epistle:

1Jn 5:19 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

1Jn 5:19 We know [positively] that we are of God, and the whole world [around us] is under the power of the evil one. AMPLIFIED BIBLE

Back to chapter four:

1Jn 4:9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

John has written earlier in the epistle we are not to love in word only, but in deed and in truth. Notice God did not just love us in "word" but in "deed." God so loved ... He "sent" His only begotten Son into the world. That we might "live" through Him.

Joh 14:19b ... because I live, ye shall live also.

Joh 15:5 I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Rom 5:10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Rom 5:10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, it is much more [certain], now that we are reconciled, that we shall be saved (daily delivered from sin's dominion) through His [resurrection] life.
AMPLIFIED

1Jn 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

The love of God does not wait until you love Him first! No, He loved you first! He made provision for your salvation by sending His Son to die an agonizing death to save you from sin ... without any guarantee at all that you would respond to His amazing love for you. Christ died for you while you were yet a sinner. GOD IS LOVE! His love has provided forgiveness for all of your sin ... and freedom from committing sin ... if you will choose Christ instead of sin. God is love. God loves you. Now the question is ... do you love God? Or do you love sin? He has provided forgiveness and made a way of escape for you out of sin and into life if you choose Christ instead of sin.

1Jn 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

God loved us first. We are to always love first ... in deed, not just in words. We don't wait for people to love us first. We love first. We give, help, bless ... first! That's how we love one another the way God first loved us.

1Jn 4:12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

No man has seen God, **but we have seen Jesus!** Remember how John started off this letter;

1Jn 1:1-3 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (2) (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) (3) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the love of God with legs! He showed us what the love of God is. **He commanded us to love each other the way He loved us ... because ... that is how the Father loves us! That is how the Father loves through us!** When we love each other the way Jesus loves us ... that is HOW GOD DWELLS IN US. That is how HIS LOVE IS PERFECTED IN US. Again, it is "Christ in us" ... His nature ... the very nature of the Father in us ... God is love ... love itself [Himself] ... loves through us!

1Jn 4:13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

GOD IS LOVE! HIS SPIRIT IN US IS LOVE! You know you dwell in Him when His love is flowing through you. Some might say, *"I don't seem to let His love flow through me very much. Maybe I don't have that love. Maybe I am not saved."* That is a possibility, but because that kind of thinking is even in you to begin with, it is more likely that the "fruit" of love is not very developed on your limbs through lack of mortification and edification. Love is described in scripture as a FRUIT. Fruit develops slowly. Have you ever bitten into a baby peach that is about the size of nickel? It takes time for peaches to lose that bitterness and become those sweet delights that when you bite into them, the juice just runs down both sides of your mouth. Many Christians have tiny, bitter, sour "peaches" of love on their limbs. They are genuine peaches, but they are bitter and undeveloped. It is not accident that the "fruit of the Spirit" is contrasted with the "lusts of the flesh" in Galatians chapter five. The more you mortify the flesh, the easier it is for the fruit to ripen on your limbs.

I say again, if you are at all concerned that you are not walking in enough love ... that very thought demonstrates pretty conclusively that you genuinely ARE a Christian. You

have some fruit. Your limbs need pruning, so you can bring forth more fruit.

Joh 15:1-2 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. (2) Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit [good ground ... some thirty fold, some sixty fold], he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

This is where I give so much honor and respect to our pastor, Dave Roberson, who taught us faithfully for decades how to mortify the flesh [purge dead limbs] and how to edify the spirit [mature the fruit]. Thank God for Pastor Dave blazing the trail for those of us who would follow after. Some accuse me of not teaching enough on praying in tongues. We all teach on it occasionally, but the major teaching on it has already been done by Pastor Dave Roberson. The teachings are available for free at his website, www.daveroberson.org. The foundation on that subject has been laid. Pastor Dave taught it to us all. At the Lord's instruction, we are now building on that foundation, using what pastor Dave taught us to mortify our flesh, to edify our spirit, **and to press on into revival ... which was the whole point from the beginning!**

1Jn 4:14-15 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world. (15) Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

In this epistle John is still **telling what He has seen and heard** more than fifty years earlier. He is being a **faithful eyewitness** that the Father has sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world. That's what John is confessing and God dwells in every person who confesses the same thing. There is no salvation except through the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Hold fast to your confession of faith! Don't ever break fellowship with the teachings of Jesus Christ like those antichrist men who have "gone out from" John and the disciples. **JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD. JESUS IS THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD. THERE IS NO OTHER NAME UNDER HEAVEN BY WHICH MEN CAN BE SAVED!**

1Jn 4:16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

I will never forget the day, many years ago, when the Holy Spirit interrupted my reading of this verse by saying to me personally, "*You know about God's love to you, but when are you going to believe the love that God has to you?*" It is one thing to hear preachers say God loves you. That is knowledge about the love of God. But it is another thing entirely for you to finally BELIEVE the love God has ... to YOU! He loves YOU! I like

how Dave always says it, *"God can't help Himself. He loves you."* GOD IS LOVE and the more you BELIEVE that He who IS love ... loves YOU ... the more that same LOVE will flow **through you to others**. We need to not just "visit" the love of God in times of "worship," but rather we are to "dwell" in ... "abide" in ... constantly "live" in the love of God so His love will constantly flow through us like sap through from the vine flowing all the way through the branches where the fruit becomes available on the limbs for others to eat. Not bitter, shriveled "peaches" of love. Big, fat, juicy, delicious peaches straight from the Vine of the Love of God!

1Jn 4:17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

"Herein" ... as we know **and believe** the love God has **to us** ... our love is made "perfect" [Greek = "made complete"]. Remember, love is a "fruit" of the spirit. It grows, it matures, it becomes complete. It may be a bitter little peach about the size of a marble in the beginning, but it is a peach ... and it is genuine ... it just needs to become complete ... it just needs to mature on the branch. How? As we "know and believe."

Maybe it would be good for all of us to begin saying about ourselves what John always said about himself, *"I am the disciple whom Jesus loves."* Don't just "know" about the love of God. BELIEVE the love that God has toward YOU! "Herein" ... to know and **"believe"** ... that is HOW the fruit of love is perfected, matured, made complete in you.