

The Life of Fellowship

Studies on 1 John

4. Love (1)



Introduction

How do we know if someone truly is a child of God? We have discovered that there are three things that the Apostle John says in his letter.

- i. We will obey God's commands
- ii. We will love our brothers and sisters
- iii. We will have faith in Jesus Christ

These three themes are interwoven throughout 1 John. In this study we will look at the second theme, which is love. Love is the center of our relationship and fellowship with God, and if we love God then we will love one another. Let's see what John, 'the disciple whom Jesus loved', has to teach us about real love.

1. COMMAND TO LOVE **1 John 4:7-12**

There is a story of how John, as an old man, was carried into church every Sunday, and when asked to speak, he always repeated the same words, "Little children love one another". God never gives us a command without telling us why.

- * So why are we told to love one another? There are six reasons. See 1 John 4:7, 8, 11, 12, 19.
- * If we love one another what does it prove? See v7 and 12.
- * On the other hand if we do not love one another what does it show? Also see 1 John 2:9, 11, 4:20

2. CONTRAST OF LOVE AND HATE **1 John 3:11-18**

An example of love and hate is seen in these verses in the life of Cain and Abel.

- * Why did Cain murder his brother Abel? V12



Cain is an illustration of what the world is like. Why do people in the world hate us? Have you experienced this? Share a situation you have faced like this. See v12 and John 15:19, 17:14.

- * Hate is of this world and comes from the evil one, resulting in death. What does John say hatred is? See v12, 14-15
- * Compare the difference between love and hate in verses 15 and 16.



What does this love that John speaks about really mean? 1 John 3:16-18, 4:9-10. Why do we find it so difficult to love like this? How is it possible?



Some Christians think that it is dishonest to 'show' love when they don't feel it. What do you think about that?

Conclusion

The word love is used freely today. However God's love is very different, and it is only as we look at what Jesus has done for us on the cross that we begin to understand what John meant by love in his letter. Love is not simply a feeling, but it is something we demonstrate in our lives.

Some people say, "Well I love everyone!" It is not possible for us to do that. As CS Lewis once said, "Loving everybody in general may be an excuse for not loving anybody in particular!" Is there someone who has hurt you? Start loving that person by forgiving them. Love is a choice, so choose love.