

1 John 4:7-12 | Why We Love Each Other

Intro:

- You are loved
- Made for love (image)
- Need love (orphans)
- Do anything for love
- Misdirected love
- Lesser loves

Love = Agape = **Verb**, Present (Tense), Active (Voice), Subjunctive (Mood)

- **Action** (Ongoing, continuous action on our part)
- Wished for; possible

One another = speaking to the church (we also love outsiders)

- Defining mark
 - John 13:35 (NASB)
By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.
- A certain kind of love
 - A love that is meant to be part of the Christian experience (Christian love)
 - As opposed to natural love (supernatural)
 - Everyone who loves is born of God

Agape love explored:

1. Agape is from God (v. 7)

- Not a human sort of love
- Not of human origin or essence or quality (there are **glimpses** of it—meant to be **images**)
- God is the source
- Verse 7
Beloved, let us love one another, **for love is from God**; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

2. God Himself is agape love (v. 8^b)

- The creator and essence and example of true love
- Verse 8
The one who does not love does not know God, **for God is love**.

What do we mean when we say that God is love—what does that entail?

- God is not only the source of all true love—He **is** love in his inmost being
- 3 other statements in the NT concerning what God is in substance and nature
 - God is spirit (John 4:24)
 - God is light (1 John 1:5)
 - God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29 from Deuteronomy 4:24)
 - The Gnostics believed that God is immaterial spirit and that He is light
 - But they never taught that He is **love** (John is showing them something they missed)
 - It is the most comprehensive explanation of God's being
- We must **hold** these assertions about God's essence **together**
 - "**God is love**" means that loving is not merely one of God's many activities but rather that **all His activity is loving activity!**
 - Therefore if He judges, He judges in love
 - If He judges in love, His loving is also in justice (to not judge would be unloving)
 - He who is **love** is **light** and **fire** as well
 - Far from condoning sin, His love has found a way to expose it (because He is **light**) and to consume it (because He is **fire**) without destroying the sinner, but rather saving him (He is **love**)
 - All that He does in our lives are His loving actions (even hard things)

3. Agape has been demonstrated by God (v. 9)

- A love marked by sacrificial giving not self oriented getting
- Verse 9 (NLT)

God showed how much he loved us **by sending his one and only Son into the world** so that we might have eternal life through him.

4. Agape is the way God loves us (v. 10)

- The standard and model of real love
- Verse 10 (NLT)

This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

- **Not that we loved God** = Because God is loveable and for us
- **But that He loved us** = Unlovable rebels
- The sending of Jesus was both the **revelation** of God's love (**This is how God showed His love...** v. 9) and the very **essence** of love itself (This is love... v. 10)¹
- John 15:12-13 (NASB)
 - 12 This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.**
 - 13 Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.**
- Selfless, other oriented love (God shaped in Christ)
 - The seeking of another's positive good at one's own cost²
- Controlled not by what we can get, but what we can give
- A love based on truth and righteousness and sacrifice
 - There are glimpses of this
 - Parents
 - Marriage (Unconditional)
- Not based on feeling or attraction but rather a choice of the will
 - The new will (rebirth)
 - In this case of **divine directive** and **divine origin** and **divine supply**

We love each other because God Himself is love and God has loved us in and through Jesus

1 John 4:11

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. (NASB)

Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. (NLT)

- Our love toward one another is meant to be a **response** to and **reflection** of God's love toward us
 - This is the **why**
 - **1. We love because God is love** (image bearers)
 - **2. We love because we are so loved by God** (beloved of God)
 - A right response to God's love = an act of obedience and worship
 - Impetus is in God's love—not one another (for and unto)
 - Goes beyond the object—not about lovability

¹ John Stott, *The Letters of John* (TNTC) (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1964, 1988), 162.

² Stott, 162.

Challenges to us in the church loving each other

- Family = natural connection
- Friends = you get to choose them
- Opposite sex = other reasons
- The loveable = just happens

- **Church** = collection of broken people who may be very different and in all sorts of different places and spaces in life
 - No natural connection
 - Let's not pretend like we are not hard to love
 - Supernatural, otherworldly, of a different kingdom, different values
 - **Gospel oriented** = not loving in order to be loved but loving because we are loved

The call to **agape** each other (particular love) in some way makes it **harder** and in some ways **easier**

- **Harder** = not based on feelings
 - Other oriented, sacrificial, action (not for self-gain)
 - We cannot wait for our self-oriented feelings to drive us
 - We have to actually work against or self oriented feelings
- **Easier** = not based on feelings
 - Actually a **truer sort of love**
 - Not about
 - “Do I feel loved?”
 - “Am I pleased?”
 - “Are my needs being met?”
 - “Do I like you?”
 - “Am I attracted and/or attractive?”
 - “What do I get out of it?”

There has to be **something beyond ourselves** that makes this a possibility

- 1 John 4:7
Beloved, let us love one another, for love is (1) **from** God; and everyone who loves is (2) **born of** God and (3) **knows** God.
- **Agape** in the church is:

1. Resourced and supplied by God	(ask for it)
2. The result of a change in us	(live into it—image)
3. The fruit of experience	(formed in us by time spent with God—intimacy—vertical)

An exhortation to read the Scriptures

- One of the biggest schemes of the enemy is to get us to feel that God does not in fact love us
- This is easily believed if we are not **filling our hearts and minds with truth** (the Word)
- READ YOUR FLIPPIN' BIBLES PEOPLE!!!!!!

Why do we **agape** one another?

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. God Himself is love | (we are made in His image) |
| 2. We ourselves are the objects of God's love | (we are the beloved of God) |
| 3. God continues to love in and through us | (we are His body and witness) |

1 John 4:12

No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. (brought to full expression)

▪ John 1:18 (NASB)

No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, **He has explained Him.**

- God (invisible) revealed Himself and His love in Christ—now does so through His people when and if we love
- God continues to love in and through us (His love is seen in and through our love)
- **Abides** = evidence not result +
- God's love which originates in Himself (vv. 7-8) and was manifested in His Son (vv. 9-10) is made complete in His people (vv. 11-12)
- God's love for us is complete (**perfected**) only when it is reproduced in us (and among us)

= This is always going to be challenged by the enemy (Satan)

8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

- The argument is clear
 - A person who claims to be a Christian (to **know God**) and yet is loveless toward his or her Christian brothers and sisters (the unlovable ones) is like claiming to be a native resident of France and yet you do not speak French or like claiming to be black but you are white, or like claiming to be a surfer but you do not surf
 - It is a failure to manifest the nature of Him Whom we claim to have as our Father (**born of God**)
 - Love is as much a sign of Christian authenticity as righteousness (Cf. 2:29)—**both** are hallmarks of the regenerate

★★★Evidences not merit ★★★

- If that evidence is not evident in you then there are 2 possibilities:
 1. You are walking in disobedience to the command to agape others
 - a. Is there other evidence of regeneration in your life?
 - b. Then this may just be an area where you need to repent and seek God's help to agape
 - c. Remember: We are not talking about how you feel—but rather an act of the will
 - i. Well, the text is not asking you to feel a certain way, it is asking you to do a certain thing (Commandments = enablements)
 - d. May be an issue of growing in sanctification (not whole package—we grow like babies)
 2. You do not **know God**
 - a. Is there no other evidence in your life that you are born again?
 - b. Then this may be your chance your trust in Christ for salvation
 - c. Experience true love!!!

Jesus is true love!