

Experiencing and Expressing God's Love I John 4:7 - 5:3

In I John 4:7-21, John uses the word love twenty-eight times! He speaks of its origins, its demonstration, its liberating and perfecting power. A number of points are made, three of which are clearly unmistakable.

Number one, GOD IS LOVE. He says it in such a way so that the words are not interchangeable. Yes, God is love. But no, love is not God. He, Himself is the Source, the origin of love. Trace love as far back as possible and you find... "in the beginning, God..." - God the Lover, the Life that goes out to others. His love is innate to His character. His love is without any "because". Since love originates in God it needs no deserving objects. Because love is out of God ("from God" - 4:7), its source is in nothing created or natural. It is "alien" (I Jo 3:1) - not from around here. He and His Love are prior to all creation. Every idea of genuine love must be revealed and received from God to man. The ultimate demonstration of God's love is in the gracious giving of His Son to be the provision for all we need to believe and come to know that we are loved by Him. (4:9-10)

Number two, GOD IS PERFECTING OUR CAPACITY TO KNOW AND EXPRESS HIS LOVE. Four times John uses the word perfected, completed, fulfilled... brought to a perfect finish. (4:12,17,18) The fullness of His perfect love abides within us from the moment we trust in Christ. Now, we have to learn to be at home in it - experiencing it for ourselves, expressing it to others. In fact, the only way to grow up is to be loved into being and to be loving others into being. We must stay immersed in His unchanging love for us so all fear may be put out of us - the fear of rejection, the fear of inadequacy, the fear of failure, even the fear of the cost of loving others. Then we must dare to love whomever God sends to us (not just the ones we choose!). We will discover His Love in us for others is always adequate for the moment. How do we know we are growing up, being perfected by love? There will be a growing confidence that stabilizes us (4:17-18), an increasing genuineness that compels us (4:20), and a maturing obedience that energizes us (5:2-3).

Number three, GOD WILL MAKE VISIBLE HIS INVISIBLE LOVE THROUGH US. We love because we are being loved (4:19) - His love leaves us no other choice. (II Cor 5:14) We say with our lives, "Here's what the love of God looks like." (This is invaluable to those who do not yet have eyes to see God and His Love.) In the Body of Christ, we call that edification. If the love of God has built up and strengthened us, His love in and through us can do the same for others. Out in the world we might call that evangelism. Taking provisions from the Storehouse of Love to a hungry and thirsty world in need of the Bread and Water of Life. We need make no real distinction between the two because this is simply Love running its course as God intends... from a Person... through a person... to other persons.

John has no problem proclaiming, "If we say we love God, we should back it up with love for others." (4:21) We might respond, "But John, that is such a burden!" And I can hear John reply, "It is no burden to the Lover in you!" (I Jo 4:17; 5:3)

✂

- **Tax-deductible contributions** -

may be made to *One In Christ, Inc.*

13820 NW 172nd Ave, Alachua, FL 32615

- **Messages and sermons by Steve** -

www.stevepettitmessages.com

- **Conferences and events led by Steve** -

can be arranged by calling Steve at 352-672-1275

- **To receive this newsletter electronically** -

email your request to OICnewsletter@gmail.com

Praise Reports & Prayer Requests



Please inform us of any changes to your address



Greetings

In a fallen world, "bad" seems to be stronger than "good". Bad news gets more attention than good news. A bad first impression makes more impact than a good first impression. A bad reputation is harder to lose than a good one. One bad loss can wipe out many good gains. One bad encounter can make an enemy for life, yet many good encounters are required to make a lifelong friend.

You and I may not be able to stop the "bad" from happening, but neither do we need to succumb to its apparent power. Jesus didn't. In fact, He came to overcome the bad with good - with His good life. He spoke truth to the lie. He met fear with love. He applied forgiveness to wrongness. He chased away darkness with light. He faced sin with grace and mercy. And on every count... He won! His resurrection is proof, proof that truth, love, forgiveness, light, grace, mercy always get the final word.

Now, do you see why we are told things like, "Fear not... rejoice always... give thanks... take courage?" Or, "speak the truth... love always... forgive your enemy... shine your light... show mercy?" And even, "Do not be overcome by 'bad', but overcome 'bad' with good." (Ro 12:21) For there is nothing out there - as "bad" as it may seem - that the Good One in you does not overcome! (See Jo 16:33; I Jo 4:4; 4,5)



CALENDAR



JUNE

6,13,20,27
8

Parkview Baptist Church, Gainesville, FL
Alachua Bible Study

JUNE/JULY

29-July 1

Sebring, FL (863-382-1085)

JULY

9-11

Waymart, PA (607-239-5006)

SEPTEMBER

13-15

Sebring, FL (863-385-6058)



Praise & Prayer



The Perfecting Love of God



The Liberating Love of God



Love to run its course through us



The courage to overcome "bad" with "good"

PERMIT NO.11

ALACHUA, FL

US POSTAGE PAID

NONPROFIT

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Alachua, FL 32615

13820 NW 172nd Avenue

One In Christ, Inc.