

Eternity Daily Bible Study

The Importance Of Love

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Number: 04

Verses: 1 John 4:9-12

Topic: If We Love One Another God Dwells In Us And Perfects Us

Date: 21st July 2011

1 John 4:9-12 *In this the love of God was revealed in us, because God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. (10) In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation concerning our sins. (11) Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. (12) No one has seen God at any time. **If we love one another, God dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us.***

Do you desire to be a God-indwelt, Spirit-filled glorious Christian in whom God's love is made perfect? Then simply "love one another"!

Love is the only true spiritual pathway to perfection. There is no alternative. There is no "selfish" way to get spiritual. You can study the Bible and theology for 100 years and have all knowledge but without love you are nothing. You can have faith until you move mountains, but without love you are nothing. You can speak with the tongues of men and angels and be edified in prophecy and know all about heavenly things, yet without love you are nothing! (1 Corinthians 13:1-4).

God will come and dwell in you with love and power once you start loving your friends, family and brothers and sisters in Christ with practical agape love and lay yourself down for them just as Christ became a propitiation for us on the Cross.

Once you make the tough decision to break out of your isolation, unforgiveness, little resentments, busy-ness, and self-protection, and genuinely take time out to love people, it is then you will be blessed! It is then you will grow and it is then you will be transformed because God is love and when you love God dwells in you and is with you!

Bible college is good if it helps you love people better. It is not much good if it does not have that effect. God dwells with those who love, not with those who just have ideas and philosophies! (see 1 Corinthians chapters 1-4 for Paul's explanation of this..)

There is a seemingly odd "insert" in the middle of today's verses: *(11) Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. (12) No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us.*

This "insert" is explained a little later on in the same chapter: **1 John 4:19-21** *We love Him because He first loved us. (20) If anyone says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar. For if he does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? (21) And we have this commandment from Him, that he who loves God should love his brother also.*

So then, in order to love God (whom we have not seen) we first have to love our very visible brother. You cannot hate your brother and love God – in fact the apostle John calls that a flat-out lie, a contradiction of reality! Once you get over your hatred of actual real people, then and only then, can you truly love God.

Indeed, since God loves us, and loved us first by giving His life for us, then we ought to love one another. That is our proper response to God's love.

One of the Bible's rules is that we should treat others as God treats us. For instance if Christ has accepted us then we should accept others (Romans 14:7), and if God has been merciful and forgiving to us then we should be merciful and forgiving to others (Matthew 18). Since God has loved us with a very great and sacrificial love, then we should love one another also in the same way.

In fact, it is as we love (in strong and truthful ways) that we grow up spiritually:

Ephesians 4:15-16 *But that you, speaking the truth in love, may in all things grow up to Him who is the Head, even Christ; (16) from whom the whole body, fitted together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of each part, producing the growth of the body to the edifying of itself in love.*

And as the early Church loved one another, it also grew:

Acts 4:32-35 *And the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul. And not one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own. But they had all things common. (33) And the apostles gave witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power. And great grace was on them all. (34) For neither was anyone needy among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold, (35) and they laid them down at the apostles' feet. And distribution was made to every man according as he had need.*

God dwelt among them and perfected them in love because they chose to love one another with practical agape love. Once they got rid of selfishness and possessiveness and materialism then God turned up and great grace was upon them all!

People are matured in loving communities where they are regarded as true persons and not as mere owners of possessions. When the needs of the poor are being met then God is present. Let's go back to today's key verse and notice that the first word is "IF", it is a conditional promise, it depends on our willing choice to love: **If we love one another, God dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us.**

Memorize this verse above! It is an amazing promise! The family that chooses to truly and deeply and unselfishly love one another will be a family where God dwells and a family where God's love is perfected! Many families of mature Christians include a disabled child. The disabled child is a gift of God who forces the family to exercise agape love, in total unselfishness and this process matures that family in love. The disabled child slows the family down from being too busy in ministry and turns them into disciples instead of religious robots! (It is the neediest among us who teach us to become saints)

On the other hand, no one is matured in a theatre. People go to a performance, are moved and touched, and then go out without relating to anyone else. They see, hear and feel and may even cry. Often they believe they have been changed but they are still much the same afterward. People can watch hundreds of edifying movies and still be unchanged in how they really live. And people can go and hear sermons for twenty or thirty years and meet no one, love no one and be totally unchanged in how they live.

Change and maturity only happen in loving relationships. And it doesn't take much real love to change someone. An encounter of a few minutes may turn a whole life around.

So we see that information alone, without love, does not lead to change. We have to speak the truth in love if the truth is to have any deep impact into human lives at all. Which is why we are called to make disciples, and not just distribute literature. By all means pass out the tract – but put your name on it, and be open to relationship as well!

If you want God to dwell in your life then exercise practical agape love towards a very needy person who cannot ever repay you. Stretch your love to the limit and you will be perfected in God (Matthew 5:44-48).

Luke 14:12-14 *And He also said to him who invited Him, When you make a dinner or a supper, do not call your friends or your brothers, or your kinsmen, or your rich neighbors; lest they also invite you again, and a recompense be made to you. (13) But when you make a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, (14) and you shall be blessed, for they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.*

Matthew 10:38-40 *And he who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. (39) He who finds his life shall lose it. And he who loses his life for My sake shall find it. (40) He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.*

Luke 6:35 *But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return. And your reward shall be great, and you shall be the sons of the Highest. For He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil.*

Love is the narrow, hard and difficult road to spiritual growth and to the fulness of eternal life (Ephesians 3:19). Our flesh wants almost any other pathway to Christ-likeness. We will invest thousands of dollars in books and seminars as long as we can stay in our own little zone, largely undisturbed by difficult and needy people.

Look at all the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11. Nothing ever went right while they “stayed in their zone” and pursued their own comfort. It is only when they “went out” and suffered, and journeyed, and fought battles and suffered affliction with Christ and with the people of God, that the big glorious and wonderful things happened. Saints are made in messy places filled with love and sacrifice.

If we love one another, God dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us.

Blessings,

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