

SMOKE & MIRRORS



THE LOVE OF GOD | 1 JOHN 4:7-21

MAIN SCRIPTURE:

1 John 4:7-21 (NLT): ⁷ Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. ⁸ But anyone who does not love does not know God, for **God is love.**

⁹ 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. ¹⁰ **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.**

¹¹ Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. ¹² No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.

¹³ And **God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us.** ¹⁴ Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ All who declare that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. ¹⁶ We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love.

God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. ¹⁷ And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.

¹⁸ Such love has no fear, because **perfect love expels all fear.** If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love. ¹⁹ **We love each other because he loved us first.**

²⁰ If someone says, “I love God,” but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don’t love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? ²¹ And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their fellow believers.

MAIN CONCEPTS:



TRUE LOVE IS FROM GOD [v. 7-12]



TRUE LOVE LIVES IN BELIEVERS [v. 13-18]



THE CALL TO LOVE [v. 19-21]

CONCEPT | 1 TRUE LOVE IS FROM GOD [v. 7-12]

1 John 4:7-8 (NLT): ⁷Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. ⁸But anyone who does not love does not know God, for **God is love**.

WHAT IS TRUE LOVE?

1 Corinthians 13:1-8 (ESV): If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ²And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, **but have not love, I am nothing**. ³If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, **I gain nothing**.

⁴Love is **patient** and **kind**; love **does not envy** or **boast**; it is not **arrogant** ⁵or **rude**. It **does not insist on its own way**; it is not **irritable** or **resentful**; ⁶it **does not rejoice at wrongdoing**, but **rejoices with the truth**. ⁷Love **bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things**. ⁸**LOVE NEVER ENDS**.

LET'S BE HONEST.....

↳ MANY OF US DON'T KNOW WHAT TRUE LOVE IS.

↳ WHY?

↳ WE'VE FALLEN FOR THE WRONG VERSION OF IT.

WORLDY FAKE LOVE vs. BIBLICAL TRUE LOVE

1 John 4:7-8 (NLT): ⁷Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. ⁸But anyone who does not love does not know God, for **[LOVE IS GOD]** God is love.



WORLDLY FAKE LOVE

Rewrite of 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 [Worldly Love]: Worldly love is impatient and rude; worldly love is subject to jealousy and seeks comparison to others for validation; worldly love is arrogant and selfish, always putting the desires of itself first; worldly love is quick to anger, resentment, and bitterness when another person fails you; worldly love rejoices when others fail; worldly love rejects the truth; worldly love doesn't give grace, worldly love doesn't have trust and security, worldly love has no hope, worldly love gives up when things get hard; worldly love ends.

DIVE DEEPER

- The world may think they are experiencing true love, but in reality, the world's love is based upon feelings and emotions which are ever-changing.
- It's not unbiblical to have feelings and emotions, but we can't let our emotions and desires become our God and rule our body.

WE HAVE TO STOP SEEING LOVE AS JUST FEELINGS AND START SEEING IT AS A LIFESTYLE.



A LIFESTYLE THAT JESUS DISPLAYED FOR US.

BIBLICAL TRUE LOVE

1 John 4:9-10 (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. 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.

- **John 3:16 (ESV):** ¹⁶“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

v.10 – WORLDLY LOVE IS FULL OF ITSELF WHILE BIBLICAL LOVE IS EMPTY OF ITSELF.



REAL LOVE STARTS WHEN WE DIE TO OUR SELF AND REALIZE THAT THE ONLY GOOD IN US IS CHRIST.



UNLESS AND UNTIL WE TRULY UNDERSTAND THIS VERSE, WE WILL NEVER UNDERSTAND THE TRUE WEIGHT OF JESUS' SACRIFICE.

SO WHAT?

1 John 4:11-12 (NLT): Dear friends, since God loved us that much, **we surely ought to love each other.** 12 No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.

AGAIN, LOVE IS MORE THAN A FEELING, IT'S A LIFESTYLE.

- A lifestyle that Jesus not only displayed for us [without sin], but also calls us into.
- When we understand the full weight of Jesus' sacrifice, deny ourself, take up our cross, put on the ways of Christ – our lives begin to reflect Christ, and as a result, the love of Christ pours out of us and unto those around us.

CONCEPT | 2 TRUE LOVE LIVES IN BELIEVERS [v. 13-18]

1 John 4:13-18 (NLT): And God has given us his Spirit as **proof** that we live in him and he in us. 14 Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. 15 **All who declare that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them,** and they live in God. 16 We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love.

God is love, and all who live in love, live in God, and God lives in them. 17 And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.

18 Such love has no fear, because **perfect love expels all fear.** If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that **we have not fully experienced his perfect love.**

v. 13 – “Spirit as **proof** that we live in him and he in us.”

- **The Trinity:** God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit – the perfect embodiment of love; the very standard of love; unconditional, limitless, and eternal.
- When we accept Jesus into our heart, part of the Trinity – the Holy Spirit – then lives inside us; meaning it takes control. Our bodies are no longer under the rule of sin but the rule of Christ.

Galatians 5:22-24 (ESV): But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

WHAT DOES THE SPIRIT DO?

- Not only does the Spirit convict us, but it's through the power of the Spirit that we become more like Christ [v. 17 "our love grows more perfect."].
- It's through the power of the Spirit that we are able to experience true love.
- It's through the power of the Spirit that we can overcome temptation.
- It's through the power of the Spirit that we can have confidence in Christ.

HERE'S THE DEAL:

A LOT OF US **STRUGGLE** WITH OUR FAITH BECAUSE WE DON'T HAVE **CONFIDENCE** IN OUR FAITH. AND WE DON'T HAVE CONFIDENCE IN OUR FAITH BECAUSE WE **FAIL** TO MAKE LIVING LIKE JESUS A **PRIORITY** IN OUR LIFE. AND WHEN WE FAIL TO MAKE LIVING LIKE JESUS A PRIORITY, WE **NEGLECT** THE LIFE CHANGING **POWER** THE SPIRIT **PROVIDES**.

- Often times this problem stems from having the wrong view of God. A view that relies on the continual works of yourself, and not the finished work of the Cross.

CONCEPT | 3 THE CALL TO LOVE [v. 19-21]

1 John 4:19-21 (NLT): 19 **We love each other because he loved us first.**

20 If someone says, "I love God," but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? 21 And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their fellow believers.

v. 19 – We love as a **Response** to what God has done for us.

Romans 5:8 (ESV): but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Hebrews 12:2 (ESV): looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross.

- Despite all of our failures [past, present, and future] Jesus still considered it a joy to endure the cross that we may be saved. Despite all the people who would turn away and curse his name, Jesus still endured the cross that we may be free and find new life in him.

WE DON'T LOVE BECAUSE WE HAVE TO, WE LOVE BECAUSE WE GET TO.



IT'S AN OVERFLOW OF THE LOVE WE HAVE FOR CHRIST AND THE LOVE HE HAS FOR US.

1 John 4:20-21 (NLT): If someone says, "I love God," but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? 21 And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their fellow believers.



THE LOVE WE HAVE FOR THOSE AROUND US REFLECTS THE LOVE WE HAVE FOR CHRIST.



HATING PEOPLE AND LOVING GOD ARE LIKE OIL AND WATER – THEY DON'T MIX.

MAIN POINT:

BIBLICAL, TRUE LOVE IS THE MAIN WAY IN WHICH GOD IS SEEN HERE ON EARTH.

- Why is love so important? Christ's love is so important because it is the glue that binds all things together. It's Christ's love that gives us power, purpose, and a peace that surpasses all understanding. It's through the love of Christ that our eyes are opened to the true meaning of life, and we are then able to operate our lives from a state of blessedness.
- Everyone longs for a sense of love, belonging, and purpose, and in a world full of lies, people often find their gratification in the things of the world. Why? Because it FEELS good.
- Christ calls us to deny our flesh, pick up our cross, and follow him. WHY? It's through these things that we are able to experience true, Biblical love. In return, we live our lives in a way that loves God and loves people – the two commands in which all things depend on.

CHALLENGE:

DOES YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU REFLECT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST?

Discussion Q's

1 John 4:7-21

Leader Tips:

- Keep it conversational—ask follow-ups: “Why do you say that?” or “How could you apply that in your life?”
- Encourage story-sharing: real examples from school, home, social media

Icebreaker: What is the first thing you think of when you hear the word “love.”

Concept 1 | True Love Comes From God [v. 7-12]

Q1 | John says love comes from God. How does this challenge the world's view of love?

Q2 | Why is loving others evidence that we know God?

Q3 | What are some ways you've fallen for a wrong version of love?

Q4 | How do we break the habit of seeing love as purely feelings instead of a lifestyle Jesus has called us to live?

Q5 | (v.10) What does John mean when he says, “this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us...?”

Concept 2 | True Love Lives In Believers [v.13-18]

Q6 | What role does the Spirit play in helping us experience and express God's love?

Q7 | What is the significance of confessing that Jesus is the Christ? How is one saved? [See Romans 10:9]

Q8 | What does it mean to “abide in Christ” on a practical level?

Q9 | Have you ever struggled with confidence in your faith?

Q10 | How can having the wrong view of God lead to fear and anxiety within your faith?

Q11 | What’s the difference between a fear-based religion and a love-based relationship with Christ?

Concept 3 | The Call To Love [v. 19-21]

Q12 | How does remembering that God loved us “first” keep us humble in the way we treat others?

Q13 | What does verse 20 expose about the gap between what we say and what we do?

Q14 | Does the way you treat other people reflect the your relationship with God?

Q15 | Why is love important?

Challenge

- Who might God be calling you to love more intentionally – even if it is hard? How can you show that person the true love of God?