

## WHAT TO LOVE AND WHAT NOT TO LOVE

### I. 1 John 2:1-6

A. The author of First John is the Apostle of love, formerly a redneck fisherman and *son of thunder*. That according to Jesus. John's letter (or sermon) is illustrated with stark contrasts: light vs darkness; love vs hate; truth vs lies; faith & obedience vs sin & disobedience. He seeks to provide assurances to believers that they are truly believers and point to behavioral evidences that some claiming to be believers are not. Jesus said, "*You will know them by their fruits.*" John elaborates on their fruits...

B. John has come along way from his "*Torch-the-Samaritans*" days to his "*Love one another*" days. We'll see John reiterate the Great Commandment first taught to him by Jesus. Jesus shared the Great Commandment following a question by a scribe seeking to test the Messiah. Mark 12:28-34 (ESV) tells the story like this: **28** *And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that He answered them well, asked Him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?"* **29** *Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'* **31** *The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'* *There is no other commandment greater than these."* **32** *And the scribe said to Him, "You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that He is one, and there is no other besides Him. 33 And to love Him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."* **34** *And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that no one dared to ask Him any more questions.*

C. First, what to love: Implicit in John's words is the notion that if you don't have the vertical aspects of the Great Commandment then the horizontal aspects will be missing and if you don't have the horizontal aspects, the vertical will be missing. John posits that the prime evidence or fruit of knowing Christ is LOVE.

D. 1 John 2:7-17 (ESV) is our text, written by '*the disciple whom Jesus loved.*'

1) **V7-8: 7** *Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. 8 At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. (Jesus is the Word made flesh. He embodied all He taught. When He said, "*It is written*" it was because He was the Author. He not only wrote the Commandments, He kept them perfectly. Likewise the Great Commandment. What's exciting is John sees it reflected in these believers too!)*

2) **V9: (Next is another if/then statement) 9** *Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. (Remember 1 John 1:5-7 (ESV) from a couple weeks ago: 5 This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. (Light represents holiness, truth, knowledge, wisdom, moral excellence, purity, mercy, kindness, & LOVE. Darkness represents: evil, wickedness, rebellion, falsehood, immorality, hatred, lies & deception, and hidden sins of every kind.)*

3) **V10-11: 10** *Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. 11 But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes. (Haters are blind. You don't want to follow a hater because they'll lead you off a cliff. Even when haters tell the truth it sounds false! The Bible gives us plenty of things to hate, like our own sin, but people aren't among them. People aren't meant to be targets of hatred. Remember Jesus on the cross--a lot of hate was being spewed in his direction--from Jewish leaders, Roman soldiers, and bystanders. But His reply as He bled for their sins was: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.")*

4) In 1996 the KKK held a rally in downtown Ann Arbor, Michigan. An angry counter protest ensued. During the clan march, someone pointed to a white male who'd infiltrated the crowd of counter-protesters. His t-shirt with a confederate flag and his Nazi tattoo gave him away. The man ran, fell down, and people started beating him. But a young black woman named Keshia Thomas pushed her way through the crowd and covered the man with her body to protect him from the bludgeoning. Keisha likely saved his life. Several months later a young man approached Keisha in a coffee shop and said, "*Thanks for what you did.*" She said, "*Thanks for what?*" And he simply said, "*That was my dad.*" What's that a picture of? Love coming down and love going forth!

5) **V12-14: (Next John gives his why for writing. He's direct, emphatic, and repetitive. While he's confident in their salvation, he wants to impart assurance. Is he writing to certain age groups? Writing folks with differing levels of maturity? This we know-he's writing to us! 12** *I am writing to you, little children, because your sins*

are forgiven for His name's sake. (Your sins are forgiven! And forgotten! You've been pardoned, justified, ransomed, set free, and reconciled!) **13** I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning. (You know Jesus--God the Son, from eternity past!) I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. (You've transferred kingdoms and have a new King!) I write to you, children, because you know the Father. **14** I write to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one. (In **Rev. 12:11** (NKJV) John writes: "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.")

**6) V15a: Next, what not to love:** **15** Do not love the world or the things in the world. (Are we talking about planet earth and this marvelous creation? 'Hate the Grand Canyon?' 'Hate Niagara Falls?' No! Are we talking about hating the people? Remember **John 3:16**?! Doesn't God plan to rescue and adopt people from every nation, tribe, and tongue? John's talking about the fallen realm of this dark world under the influence of Satan--a world organized in systemic opposition to its Creator.)

**7) V15b-17: (Now another if/then statement.)** *If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. **16** For all that is in the world--the desires (OV lust) of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life--is not from the Father but is from the world. **17** And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. (John's not saying: 'If you do God's will, you'll live forever?' He is saying: 'If you truly know Christ, then you'll do God's will and live forever!')*

**E. So let's talk about love coming down and going forth. How many of you have experienced God's love coming straight down into your heart? How many of you have experienced the blessing of the that same kind of love--welling up inside you--and then flowing out to others? That kind of love is transformational and that's the kind of love John recognizes as evidence of new birth. Paul referred to it as *the fruit of the Spirit*. Faith, hope, and LOVE, and the greatest of these is? LOVE!**

**F. In Romans 5:6-11 (NLT) Paul says this about the impact of God's love:** **6** *When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. **7** Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. **8** But God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. **9** And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, He will certainly save us from God's condemnation. **10** For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of His Son while we were still His enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of His Son. **11** So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God. (God's LOVE did that!)*

**G. And in 1 John 4:7-12 (AMP) John also gives us a picture of God's love coming down and then going forth:** **7** *Beloved, let us [unselfishly] love and seek the best for one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves [others] is born of God and knows God [through personal experience]. **8** The one who does not love has not become acquainted with God [does not and never did know Him], for God is love. [He is the originator of love, and it is an enduring attribute of His nature.] **9** By this the love of God was displayed in us, in that God has sent His [One and] only begotten Son [the One who is truly unique, the only One of His kind] into the world so 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 [that is, the atoning sacrifice, and the satisfying offering] for our sins [fulfilling God's requirement for justice against sin and placating His wrath]. (What's the impact, the fruit to be expected?) **11** Beloved, if God so loved us [in this incredible way], we also ought to love one another. **12** No one has seen God at any time. But if we love one another [with unselfish concern], God abides in us, and His love [the love that is His essence abides in us and] is completed and perfected in us.*

**H. And then of course it was Jesus who after washing the disciples feet at the Last Supper who said in John 13:34-35 (ESV):** **34** *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. **35** By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."* (Let's leave them no doubt whose disciples we are!)

\* Close with Prayer...

## **Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff**

### **1 John 2:7-17 (ESV)**

**7** Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. **8** At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. **9** Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. **10** Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in

him there is no cause for stumbling. **11** But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes. **12** I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for His name's sake. **13** I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, children, because you know the Father. **14** I write to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one. **15** Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. **16** For all that is in the world--the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life--is not from the Father but is from the world. **17** And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

#### **Mark 12:28-34 (ESV)**

**28** And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that He answered them well, asked Him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" **29** Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. **30** And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' **31** The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." **32** And the scribe said to Him, "You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that He is one, and there is no other besides Him. **33** And to love Him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." **34** And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that no one dared to ask Him any more questions.

#### **Romans 5:6-11 (NLT)**

**6** When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. **7** Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. **8** But God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. **9** And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, He will certainly save us from God's condemnation. **10** For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of His Son while we were still His enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of His Son. **11** So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.

#### **1 John 4:7-12 (AMP)**

**7** Beloved, let us [unselfishly] love and seek the best for one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves [others] is born of God and knows God [through personal experience]. **8** The one who does not love has not become acquainted with God [does not and never did know Him], for God is love. [He is the originator of love, and it is an enduring attribute of His nature.] **9** By this the love of God was displayed in us, in that God has sent His [One and] only begotten Son [the One who is truly unique, the only One of His kind] into the world so 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 [that is, the atoning sacrifice, and the satisfying offering] for our sins [fulfilling God's requirement for justice against sin and placating His wrath]. **11** Beloved, if God so loved us [in this incredible way], we also ought to love one another. **12** No one has seen God at any time. But if we love one another [with unselfish concern], God abides in us, and His love [the love that is His essence abides in us and] is completed and perfected in us.

#### **John 13:34-35 (ESV)**

**34** A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. **35** By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

#### **Film Clips & Other Links**

**Black Woman, Keisha Thomas Saves a KKK Supporter at a Clan Rally in 1996**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M59MKP-ezRc>

**Millersport Covenant Church Sermon Podcasts (MP3s on iTunes)**

<http://millersportcc.com/feed/podcast>

#### **Bonus Stuff**

##### **Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (ESV)**

**4** "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. **5** You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."

### **Leviticus 19:17-18 (ESV)**

**17** "You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. **18** You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord."

### **Matthew 22:34-40 (ESV)**

**34** But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. **35** And one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question to test Him. **36** "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" **37** And He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. **38** This is the great and first commandment. **39** And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. **40** On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

### **Luke 10:25-37 (ESV)**

**25** And behold, a lawyer stood up to put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" **26** He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" **27** And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." **28** And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." **29** But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" **30** Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. **31** Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. **32** So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. **33** But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. **34** He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. **35** And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' **36** Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" **37** He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

### **John 15:9-17 (ESV)**

**9** As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Abide in My love. **10** If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. **11** These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. **12** "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. **13** Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. **14** You are My friends if you do what I command you. **15** No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. **16** You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give it to you. **17** These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

### **Romans 12:9-16 (NIV)**

**9** Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. **10** Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. **11** Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. **12** Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. **13** Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. **14** Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. **15** Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. **16** Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

### **Romans 13:8-10 (ESV)**

**8** Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. **9** For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." **10** Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

### **1 Corinthians 16:13-14 (AMP)**

**13** Be on guard; stand firm in your faith [in God, respecting His precepts and keeping your doctrine sound]. Act like [mature] men and be courageous; be strong. **14** Let everything you do be done in love [motivated and inspired by God's love for us].

**Galatians 5:13-15 (AMP)**

**13** For you, my brothers, were called to freedom; only do not let your freedom become an opportunity for the [e]sinful nature (worldliness, selfishness), but through [f]love serve and seek the best for one another. **14** For the whole Law [concerning human relationships] is fulfilled in one precept, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself [that is, you shall have an unselfish concern for others and do things for their benefit]." **15** But if you bite and devour one another [in bickering and strife], watch out that you [along with your entire fellowship] are not consumed by one another.

**1 Peter 3:8-9 (NIV)**

**8** Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. **9** Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

**1 Peter 4:7-11 (ESV)**

**7** The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. **8** Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. **9** Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. **10** As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: **11** whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies--in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To Him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.