

Lessons From I John

Perfect Love

(I Jn 4:7-21)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Morning
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of "Lessons From I John."
 - a. Last week we looked at the ever important lesson from John of "Testing The Spirits."
 - i. The need to test teachers, preachers...but also yourself to make sure you are right with the Word.
 - b. Today we are going to examine how John moves from testing the spirits to testing yourself out to see if you have "Perfect Love."
3. Remembering John's focus with this book.
 - a. That we may know we have eternal life (I Jn 5:13).
 - i. The life that Christ was offering through Himself.
 - ii. The life that came in the flesh to be both our sacrifice and example.
 1. Thus putting away the nonsense of Gnosticism.
 - b. This eternal life is based in love or God since God is love.
 - i. The word love is found 46 times in the ESV, NKJV, NASB95, NIV, YLT
 - ii. The word love is found 37 times in the KJV, ASV
 - iii. The word "agape" in all its forms is found 52 times.
4. With so much focus here on testing it seems appropriate and logical for John, inspired by God, to write what perfect love is and how to know if we have it.
 - a. With that in mind let us examine what we need to understand to have perfect love.

I. Perfect Love Understands That God Is Love (8-10)

- A. It is His nature (8)
 1. He "is" love.
 - i. There is no Greek article to the word love.
 - ii. Thus it cannot be God is loving rather God is love.
 - iii. "God is fundamentally and essentially LOVE: not merely is loving..." (Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments (1 Jn 4:8). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.)
 - iv. "Love is the expression of His personality corresponding to His nature." (Vincent, M. R. (2002). Word studies in the New Testament (1 Jn 4:8). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.)
 2. Concerning this love many have written...
 - i. Wesley wrote, "Love is God's reigning attribute that sheds an amiable glory upon all of his other perfections." (from Coffman's Bible Commentary, Copyright © 1971-1993 by ACU Press, Abilene Christian University. All rights reserved.)
 - ii. Barclay observed, "probably the single greatest statement about God in the whole Bible ... It is amazing how many doors that single statement unlocks and how many questions it answers." (Ibid)

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3. However too many people today take it too far.
 - i. As one man put it, "Love is God; and here is a God we can all handle; bring on the love!" (Ibid)
 - a. In essences saying God is only love, and thus they confine God to this attribute only.
 - ii. This is done to try and circumvent the truth that...
 - a. **Ro 1:18** "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness..."¹
 - b. **Ac 17:31** "he will judge the world in righteousness..."
 4. We must always keep in mind "God's nature is not exhausted by the quality of love" (Ibid)
 - i. God is light **I Jn 1:5**
 - ii. God is spirit **Jn 4:24**
 - iii. God is life **Jn 14:6**
 - iv. God is truth **Jn 14:6**
 - v. God is consuming fire **He 12:29**
- B. God's nature was made manifest (9-10)
1. He sent His only begotten Son.
 - i. **Jn 3:16** "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..." (NKJV)
 2. He sent His only begotten Son for me and you and everyone.
 - i. **Ro 5:8** "but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
 3. He sent His only begotten Son to be a propitiation for our sins.
 - i. **I Jn 2:2** "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world."
 - ii. This word "propitiation" in Greek "ἱλασμός" or "hil-as-mos" is an interesting word.
 - a. It literally means that Christ become the "compensation" or "remedy" for our sins.
 - b. "It is used in the NT of Christ Himself...signifying that He Himself, through the expiatory sacrifice of His death, is the personal means by whom God shows mercy to the sinner who believes on Christ as the One thus provided." (Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, W. (1996). Vol. 2: Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (494). Nashville, TN: T. Nelson.)
 4. Thus God manifested His nature in giving a "remedy" for our sins, His Son.

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

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II. Perfect Love Understands What Makes It Perfect (12-19)

- A. The perfect love is made perfect by God abiding in us
 - 1. We need God in our lives because...
 - i. He is the Creator and as such He knows us better than we know ourselves.
 - a. **Gn 1:1** "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."
 - ii. He is the Redeemer and we must realize that we are sinners in need of His redemption.
 - a. **Ps 34:22** "The LORD redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned."
 - iii. He is the Provider and we must realize nothing is ours and all is His and we are in need of His mercy to provide for us.
 - a. He provides our physical needs.
 - 1. **Mt 6:25-33**
 - b. He provides our spiritual needs.
 - 1. **Ph 2:12-13** "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."
- B. The perfect love is made perfect by us abiding in God
 - 1. This is done through the "spreading" of love.
 - i. Remember that we abide in God if we "love one another."
 - ii. Agape, love in action, is not confined to singular but plural action ie shown to others.
 - a. Hence why God made us, because He loves us.
 - b. God doesn't "need" us but His nature demands the spreading of His nature.
 - 2. This nature "love" should be seen in us as well.
 - i. That is John's point that if we don't love the brethren (share our love) we don't know God because His nature is to share His nature love.
- C. The perfect love is made perfect through confidence in God
 - 1. Fear is necessary to begin with. We become Christians usually out of a fear of going to hell.
 - i. **Mt 10:28** "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell."
 - 2. Love must overcome fear and usurp it.
 - i. **II Pt 1:5-8** "For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

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3. Thus confidence in God shows our love and willingness to share it.
 - i. We aren't afraid of the judgment.
 - ii. We aren't afraid to stand before God.

III. Perfect Love Understands That Love Is Vital (7, 11, 20-21)

- A. It motivates us to be "born of God" (7)
 1. Though fear usually is a main reason, understanding what God did for us is vital for one to become a child of God.
 - i. In other words we see how much God loves us.
 - a. **Ac 2:37** "Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?""
- B. It motivates us to "love the brethren" (11)
 1. Knowing how much God loved us, sending even His Son, should grip us to love each other.
 - i. Ex: The reason a child grows up and loves his/her children, is because he/she sees the love they had bestowed upon them.
 - a. **Jn 15:12** "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."
- C. It motivates us to "not hate our brethren" (20-21)
 1. No matter how much we try we will not make everyone happy and we will not always get along.
 - i. There is nothing wrong with "not liking" someone sometimes as long as we never stop "loving" them.
 - a. **Ac 15:37-41** "Now Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. 38 But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. 39 And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, 40 but Paul chose Silas and departed, having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. 41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches."
 - b. **II Ti 4:11** "Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry."

CONCLUSION

1. Perfect love is not a love for the weak but for the strong. It is not a love for the timid but for the mighty. It is not a love for the shy but for the outspoken.
 - a. The weak person will not hold up against Satan and his onslaught.
 - b. The timid person will not hold up against desires of the world.
 - c. The shy person will not hold up against denominationalism in evangelism.
2. Question: Do you have "perfect love?"
 - a. If so continue to grow in it abounding all the more.
 - b. If not don't worry, you can mature to it if you are willing to put forth the necessary effort needed. If you are willing to come out of your comfort zone for God.

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3. Invitation

- a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
- b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Believe Jesus Is The Christ **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**