

# LOVE ONE ANOTHER

## 1 Peter 1:22-23

### INTRODUCTION

- One of the most misused words in the world today is “love”
- It should be no surprise that the devil would take such an important Biblical word, a word that describes God himself, and pervert its meaning so thoroughly
- God is the originator of love, and from eternity, before the creation, loved within the Persons of the Godhead (John 17:24)
- Therefore to understand what true love is, we must look to God and his revelation – love cannot be known or experienced independently of God
- The whole of man’s duty towards God is summed up in one word: “love” (Matthew 22:37-40; Romans 13:8-10)
- In the previous verses (vv.13-21), Peter exhorted the brethren to a holy walk, based upon a number motives, concluding with the redeeming work of Christ
- So having dealt with our duty towards God, the focus here shifts to our duty towards our fellow man, particularly the brethren
- There is a single imperative (command) in the closing verses of this first chapter, which form the central thought: “love one another”
- Peter does not merely command us to love one another, but provides a theological basis for that love
- We are reminded here of the vital importance of the community of saints in the church to the outworking of our faith
- Despite these believers being scattered abroad due to persecution, they were united together in churches, which strengthened their faith under difficult circumstances
- The church and the brethren are essential in times of spiritual darkness
- There are nearly 60 “one another” commands repeated in the New Testament, but they are all summed up in the one: “love one another”
- It is Christ’s “new commandment”, sometimes called “The Eleventh Commandment” (John 13:34)

### I. THE ORIGATION OF BROTHERLY LOVE

A. The truth must be obeyed

1. Many people today think truth is relative – there is absolute truth; no way to distinguish truth from error

2. Yet God has given us his absolute, eternal truth in his word
  3. We are to receive it, and reject all error (Psalm 119:128)
  4. In our natural state, we are darkness and error, and therefore must forsake our ways for God's ways (Isaiah 55:6-9)
  5. Truth is not merely to be *believed*, but to be *obeyed*
    - a. Faith is regarded as an act of obedience (Romans 1:5)
    - b. To believe in God is to obey God's command (Hebrews 5:9)
    - c. To be saved, we must obey the gospel (Romans 10:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17)
  6. Unbelief is an act of disobedience (1 Peter 2:7)
- B. We obey the truth "through the Spirit"
1. Note that this phrase is omitted from modern Bible versions
  2. There is no salvation without the work of the Holy Spirit
  3. The Spirit brings conviction of sin (John 16:8-10)
  4. The Spirit works godly sorrow for sin and repentance (2 Corinthians 7:8)
  5. The Spirit brings the knowledge of Christ (John 15:26)
  6. The Spirit effects the new birth (John 3:5; Titus 3:5-6)
- C. The soul is purified by obedience to the truth
1. The fact our souls require purification shows that our souls by nature are filthy and corrupt (Genesis 6:5; Job 15:16; Isaiah 64:6)
  2. We are powerless to cleanse ourselves from sin (Proverbs 20:9; Jeremiah 13:23)
  3. We "purify ourselves" in the sense of repenting and believing in Jesus Christ for salvation – it is his blood that purifies our souls (Titus 2:14)
  4. "Purify" (*hēgnikotes*) is in the perfect tense, indicating a past act with continuing results
  5. Having been purified by Christ's blood in justification, we are then called to purify ourselves in sanctification, separating from sin and walking in holiness (James 4:8; 1 John 3:3)
- D. The new birth enables us to love the brethren (v.23)
1. Our carnal, adamic nature has no capacity to love
  2. By the new birth we receive a new nature, or the "new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24)

3. The born again believer now has within him the capacity to love God and love the brethren
4. This is true unity between man and man that the world has throughout history attempted to accomplish, yet always failed in
5. This shows the absolute importance of ensuring a regenerated church membership

## II. THE DEMONSTRATION OF BROTHERLY LOVE

### A. Brotherly love

1. "Love" (*philadelphia*) was used in secular Greek of the mutual family love of brothers and sisters
2. In Scripture it denotes the divinely instilled love within the children of God towards the brethren in Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:9; Hebrews 13:1; 2 Peter 1:7)
3. This love is found in all true believers, and is one of the most distinguishing evidences of saving faith
  - a. It shows we are born of God (1 John 4:7-8)
  - b. It shows we are children of God (1 John 3:10)
  - c. It shows we have passed from death to life (1 John 3:14)
  - d. It shows God dwells in us (1 John 4:12)
  - e. It shows we love God (1 John 4:21)
  - f. It shows we are Christ's disciples (John 13:35)
  - g. It shows we are in the light (1 John 2:9-11)
  - h. It is the response of experiencing God's love to us (1 John 4:11)
  - i. We cannot love God without it (1 John 4:20)

### B. It is an "unfeigned" love

1. This word (*anupokriton*) is literally "unhypocritical", hence, sincere, genuine, free from deceit, authentic, undisguised, without pretence, without dissimulation
2. The love of this world is tainted by lust, greed, selfishness and hypocrisy
3. Our love is to be modelled upon the love of Christ towards us that sacrificed himself on our behalf (John 13:34; 15:12; 1 John 3:16)
4. We are to love the brethren as ourselves (Matthew 22:39)
5. We are to love not just in word, but in deed and truth (1 John 3:17-18)

### III. THE CULTIVATION OF BROTHERLY LOVE

- A. This an exhortation to love one another
  - 1. These saints already had love one for another by nature of their salvation
  - 2. Yet Peter calls them to actively grow in their love to one another
  - 3. In our relationships, over time, love can be diminished and grow cold (Matthew 24:12; Revelation 2:4)
  - 4. Therefore love must be nurtured
  - 5. This love is *agape* – the highest, divine love, not of emotion or feeling, but of the will
  - 6. It is the love described in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8
- B. With a pure heart
  - 1. The first part of the verse referred to the purified *soul*, but here the *heart*
  - 2. This love must proceed not from the head, but the heart, the innermost part of our beings, from which our whole life is directed
  - 3. We can love from the heart “because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Romans 5:5)
  - 4. Holy hearts are loving hearts
- C. Fervent love
  - 1. “Fervently” (*ektenōs*) is intensely, continually
  - 2. There is an energy and genuine warmth of ardour in this love that begins in the sanctified heart and manifests in loving action

### CONCLUSION

- 1. In 133 AD, a teacher of philosophy named Aristeides, was requested of Emperor Hadrian to report on the sect called “Christians”. His report is summed up with the statement: “Behold how they love one another!”
- 2. Love for the brethren is a clear proof of salvation
- 3. Am I born of God, and do I find this divine love within my heart, and in my behaviour?
- 4. “Fervent charity” should be a chief grace in every believers life (1 Peter 4:8) – is it a priority for me?
- 5. Am I endeavouring by God’s grace to “increase the more and more” in love towards the saints? (1 Thessalonians 4:9-10)
- 6. Seek for God to give opportunities to minister to the brethren, and for a heart that desires to do it