



PART 14: LOVE IS...

1 John 5:1-12

Introduction/Context

Last week, Doug showed us what the love of God (agape) looks like:

Radical. Sacrificial. Others-Centered.

From 1 John 4:8, "God is love," he reminded us that the source of all love comes from God. He then went on to challenge us with the idea that talk is cheap, so love must be embodied and experienced in relationships. This takes effort and time, but it is powerful and effective in our culture that is broken and insistent on keeping us from sincere faith in Jesus.

This week, I am adding one more element to Doug's lesson ...

In 1970 the movie "Love Story," starring Ryan O'Neal and Ally MacGraw, came out, and the famous line from the movie was, "Love means never having to say you're sorry." I'd love this to be true (when I mess up), but it is far from the truth and opposes what we teach and believe from scripture. It became one of many cultural contrasts to Biblical teaching.

The same year, this cute and seemingly innocent comic strip began appearing six days per week and continues even today. As a sweet and simple way to describe love, it also shows how convoluted the word "love" has become in our complicated culture. A biblical description and application of love have been lost over time, leaving each of us to determine for ourselves what we think love is.

love is...



...reassuring her you can't see any cellulite.

love is...



...knowing he'll never let you down.

What does John say love is?

Four-Part Progression to Understanding Biblical Love

Why does it matter that we get this right?

GOD IS LOVE

1. Love is God

"Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love."

1 John 4:7-8

- essence, being, the core of who God is? Love.
- it's beyond our comprehension, but it is His source of compassion, grace, mercy, justice.

AGAPE love

RADICAL, SACRIFICIAL, OTHERS-CENTERED LOVE

THE SOURCE OF ALL LOVE COMES FROM GOD!

JESUS SHOWS LOVE

2. Love is Jesus, and more specifically, Jesus' great act of love

"This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loves us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." 1 John 4:10

- to reconcile us with Himself, God sacrificed His own Son, Jesus, to shed his blood and pay the penalty for our sins

Definition from *"The NIV Topical Study Bible"*: Atonement describes the process whereby God draws sinful men and women back to be "at one" with himself. Our Lord entered heaven to present his blood before God, thus making us clean and acceptable; through faith in the blood of the great reconciler, we can be welcomed back home into the arms of our loving Father. Because of Jesus, the atoning Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, we are accepted as righteous, and we are declared not guilty.

- The extent of God's love, given and displayed
 - *"God presented him (Jesus) as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood." Romans 3:25*
 - *"He (Jesus) was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification." Romans 4:25*
 - *"...when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly." Romans 5:6*
 - *"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8*

HOLY SPIRIT GIVES US THIS LOVE

3. Love is Ours Now

"We love because he first loved us." 1 John 4:19

- New creations, new hearts of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26) – filled with the Spirit, empowered in LOVE!
- "...God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who he has given us." Romans 5:5

- we can now reconcile with one another
- we begin to live out of AGAPE love – RADICAL, SACRIFICIAL, OTHERS-CENTERED

LOVE IS OUR RESPONSE

4. Love is OBEDIENCE

"This is love for God: to obey his commands." 1 John 5:3a

- observe His commands, keep His commands, fulfill His commands

TWO key elements to this progression:

1. You must get the right order.

<God is - Jesus displays - Holy Spirit gives> <We can obey>
NOT

<We should obey> <God is - Jesus displays - Holy Spirit gives>

Out of order: It's about us, not God ... we're first, He's second ...

Out of order: We think we are earning our way to God's heart, God's acceptance, our way to heaven ...

"One of the most staggering truths of the scriptures is to understand that we do not earn our way to heaven. ...works have a place--but as a demonstration of having received God's forgiveness, not as a badge of merit of having earned it." - Ravi Zacharias (passed away 5-19-20)

EARNING or RECEIVING?

Out of order: We think we are trying to make God love us ...

"Do I do the things God wants me to do to please Him, or do I do these things because I am already pleasant to Him?"
Greg McFarland

PLEASING or PLEASANT?

OUR MOTIVATION: it is NOT FEAR, it is NOT COMPLIANCE,
it is NOT EARNING ... it is LOVE

2. You must understand the essence of His commands (we are prone to think OBEDIENCE is burdensome).

DO'S & DON'T'S RIGHTS & WRONGS RITUALS RELIGION

"His commands are not burdensome ..." 1 John 5:3b

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-29 (FREEDOM, REST, SATISFACTION)

Greatest commandment:

Matthew 22:37-39

- Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.
- Love your neighbor as yourself.

To OBEY then is to LOVE - God and man ...

- we are motivated out of love from God, to love others, to focus on others ... not self

Results of obedience:

- Freedom to ... shine like God made us to
"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free." Galations 5:1 (not a restriction)
- Blessing
"Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them." John 13:17
- ZOE life!!
1 John 5:11-12

FREE – BLESSED – SATISFIED

Application:

Q: If obeying means loving God over all else, WHERE HAVE I SPENT TIME INVESTING IN the idols of the day instead of time well-spent with God?

Q: If obeying means loving my neighbor (fellow man), WHERE HAVE I SPENT TIME complaining about others, drawing opinions of others, being pulled into factions about others instead of withholding those judgments and drawing close to my fellow man?

Q: Obedience takes action... What can I actively do to love God and others well?