

LOVE GOD, LOVE OTHERS

A Study of John's Three Letters.

Our study begins in: 1 John 3:24–4:6

Throughout this book, John has developed the important themes that define the church - the big picture concept about God's love for us, and our love for God and others. Now, in this passage, John communicated the major theme about the Holy Spirit dwelling in the members of Christ's church; both there and then in first century Asia Minor, as well as here and now in the 21st-century at Cornerstone Fellowship in the Bay Area.

John explained that the way we can know for sure love is real is that "it must be love not in word or speech, but in truth and action." The deeds of love authenticate love. It is the deed of God's love for us in Jesus Christ crucified that demonstrates the reality of God's love.

John also reminded us of two principles: we abide in Jesus if we keep His commands, and we know Jesus is working in us and abiding in us by the Holy Spirit He gave us.

John wanted us to be sure of the reality that Christ is in us. He wanted us to be confident that love is really love and that our feelings of spiritual things really come from the Spirit of God—the Holy Spirit. John wanted to ensure it is that Spirit, and not some other spiritual notion floating around, influencing us.

There is complete unity in God. And because of that, we can be confident that everyone who knows that Jesus Christ came in the flesh is from God. The Greek word we translate as "spirit" is pneuma. It means inner life and self. Disposition and state of mind. Spirit, spiritual power, and power. Life and breath. John was ensuring we know that any spirit or way of thinking, any person, disposition, or inner life that does not recognize and demonstrate Christ, is not from God.

This is the exceptionally powerful truth of the Gospel; Jesus, the Logos of God, loved us so much that He became one of us. He didn't just appear to us, or visit us, or speak to us; He became us. The Son became flesh and blood, lived a sinless life, taught us how we could live in His Kingdom now and into eternity, and was crucified, died, and resurrected. That is love.

Our response is simple—we accept that truth. We live out of that love for us, which also brings us into an indwelling relationship with God. It is this relationship which replicates that same active love, internal life and way of thinking into our hearts, our attitudes and our actions.

Discussion Questions

Reflect on what Jesus' active love for you makes you feel. Share these thoughts and feelings with the group.

What kinds of inner life, disposition, attitudes or state of minds have you experienced that do not recognize or demonstrate Jesus is the Son of God? Which do you struggle with?

Does Jesus becoming human matter? Why or why not?

Next Steps

Spend 20 minutes journaling, thanking Jesus for what His becoming human means to you.

Ask God how you can demonstrate the same type of love to others.

Visit the Serve counter at Church and find active ways to allow the Spirit of God in you to demonstrate the same kind of sacrificial love Jesus did.