

God is Love

1John 4:13-21

God's Love Languages

05.10. 09

Read 1John 4:7-21

Intro The giving and receiving of love can be complicated at times. What we intend to be significant messages of love can often be received and interpreted in ways far different than intended. This is true in every human relationship. We must be diligent to communicate love with sensitivity to the needs and perspective of the one loved. This complexity of giving and receiving love is true of our understanding and enjoying God's love for us as well.

Remember from our study last week the summary truth that no one loves God until they know that God loves them. CH Spurgeon's quote supports this need for greater understanding . . . *"a sense of the love of God to us is the main cause of our love to him.* When we believe, know, and feel that God loves us, we, as a natural result, love him in return . . ." We cannot communicate to others that which we do not understand well ourselves.

In order to grow in our understanding and confidence in God's love we must be reminded of our current misunderstanding, instructed as to the desired outcome of what being connected to God's love is and then learning the ways God specifically communicates his love to us.

To know and rely on God's love you must . . .

1. Take ownership of your current misunderstandings regarding love.

Note the 3 'corrective' statements found in these verses. Obviously the readers either had misconceptions about God's love for them or they were being pressured in some way by those who did. Ask God to help you shape your understanding away from these deadly misunderstandings.

- a. God's love is self-originating. 'love comes from God.' 4:7

This truth corrects the thinking that God loves because of the loveliness or attraction of the object loved and that God loves because he needs to love to fill up a void in his being.

- b. God's love is one of his descriptive perfections. 'God is love' 4:8, 16

This truth corrects the thinking that God is simply loving. Rather, all God does is done in love.

- c. God's love is the primary source of love. 'we love because he first loved us' 4:19, 10

This truth corrects the thinking that love resides in us. Our capacity to love is limited to a response to God's love for us.

2. Embrace the objective of being loved by God.

Note the 3 ways or descriptions of what it is like for a person to be loved by God. The understanding of desired outcomes is also a battlefield in knowing and relying on God's love. Being loved by God is described as:

- a. An intimate connectedness with God. 13, 15, 16

Note the 3 repetitions of reciprocal indwelling of God remaining in us, our remaining in him and his love remaining in us.

- b. An experiential reliance on God's love. 16

Note the 'and so' of verse 16 introduces a result or perhaps obligation. If we understand God's love for us in Christ then we will be drawn to rely on that love in our daily experience.

- c. A growing ability to love others as God loves us. 17, 12

Note the concept of love being 'made complete' in us. God's love is perfected, completed in us as we pass it on to others.

3. Receive and enjoy the ways God says 'I love you.'

There are 4 ways that John teaches us that God connects with those he loves. If these experiences are true of your life, then you are fully qualified to know and rely on God's love. You are loved, have been loved and will be loved – all confidently enjoyed as these messages from God are received. Here is how God says 'I love you.'

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|----|--|--------------|-------------------|
| a. | He gives you a new heart by his Spirit. | 13 | 2:20; 3:24; 4:2-3 |
| | Cmp 1Cor. 12:3 | John 14:7-11 | Eph.2:13-14 |
| b. | He gives you Jesus. | 14 - 15 | 9, 10 |
| c. | He removes your fear of deserved judgment. | 17-18 | |
| d. | He gives your life purpose – to spread his love. | 19-21 | |

Conclusion

1. Surrender your search for love and significance in all ways other than God's love to God. Acknowledge and turn from your search for love in the wrong ways and places.
2. Determine with God's help to renew your mind and heart to know and rely on God's love.
3. Respond with repentance and faith to God's expressions of love to you.

Study Questions

1. What observations, questions or concerns do you have from the study of God's love from 1John 4:13-21?
2. Do you ever find yourself questioning or wondering about your love for God? Which of the 'misunderstandings' presented in the sermon do you relate to the most and why?
3. Evaluate/discuss the Spurgeon quote in the 2nd paragraph of the intro. How would you restate his point?
4. What are the potential meanings when people say "I know God loves me?" What do you usually feel, think or mean with that comment?
5. Discuss point #2, what does it mean? Do you equate God's love for you with the 3 descriptions found in point #2? Why or why not?
6. Is it possible to know and rely on God's love without the work of the Holy Spirit in your life? Why or why not? Refer to the verses listed on point 3 a.
7. How have you grown recently in understanding and relying on God's love for you?
8. Share your impressions and observations from reading Psa. 145 this week. Share your memory verses – Psa 145:8,17 with someone in your group.
9. Read/meditate/pray Psalm 89 this coming week. Remember Psa. 89:1-2.
10. What do you want to do, use or remember from this study?