

Responding to God's Love

Text : **I John 4: 4 – 5: 4**

A. Our previous lesson considered God's incomprehensible Love for us.

S#1.
S#2.

1. We noted the concept of love and how we learn to develop it in our lives.
 - a. Real love is not the chemistry which fosters the desire to satisfy self.
 - b. Definition : Love is the delight in, the commitment to, the taking pleasure in, and the affection for the best interest of another.
2. We looked at the general context of Ephesian 3.
 - a. It is a transition from the doctrinal section of the book to the practical section.
 - b. Paul asserted that he was proclaiming a message from God.
 - c. He clarified that it was God's eternal plan to save all men, including gentiles.
3. The Apostle prayed that the brethren would come to understand the love of God.
4. We observed that there is no limit to God's love for us.

S#3.

- a. We looked at the dimensions of God's love.

S#4.

God's love is so wide you can't get around it,
so high you can't get over it,
so deep you can't get under it,
so long it covers everyone.

- b. Understanding God loved all mankind reassures us of His special love for us.

Rom. 5: 8-9 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

S#5.

B. What does God's love mean to us ? How should we respond to God's love.

S#6.

1. The normal response to love is to requite that love.
2. Mankind is required to love the God who created them.
3. Loving God demands that we obey His commands.
4. Love for God will motivate us to love His family.

I. The normal and most logical response is to requite love.

S#7.

A. What is unrequited love.

S#8.

1. Definition of "Unrequited love."
 - a. Wikipedia defines it as : "Unrequited love is love that is not reciprocated"
 - b. An urban dictionary defines it simply as : "A one-sided love" (*not a relationship*)

2. Unrequited love is one of the most often repeated plots in romance literature.
 - a. Twelfth Night ... by Shakespeare
 - b. Gone With The Wind ... by Emily Bronte
 - c. Great Expectations ... by Charles Dickens
3. It is also a theme in popular movies.
 - a. The Notebook
 - b. Forest Gump
 - c. My Best Friend's Wedding
4. It even appears in the bible.
 - a. Leah seeks Jacob's love, but he loves Rachel.
 - b. Potiphar's wife is infatuation with Joseph, but he will not respond.
 - c. David loved Saul, but Saul kept trying to kill him. (*God loved Israel, but ...*)

B. God feels the pain of unrequited love.

S#9.

1. When those that God loves turn their back on Him, God is grieved.
Ezek. 6: 9 – Then those of you who escape will remember Me among the nations to which they will be carried captive, how I have been hurt by their adulterous hearts which turned away from Me, and by their eyes which played the harlot after their idols; and they will loathe themselves in their own sight for the evils which they have committed, for all their abominations. S#10.
2. God loved Jerusalem, but they would not accept His love.
Luke 13: 34 – O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it! (cf – **Luke 19: 41-44**) TODAY S#11.

C. God's love is given to all, even when it is not required.

1. God loved us before the foundation of the world. (**Psa 139** ... *knew we would sin*)
2. His love is more than a positive feeling toward us; it is total commitment.
I John 4: 9 – By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. S#12.
3. **Rom. 5: 8-9** But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. S#13.

D. The “normal” response to such an act of love is to requite it, to reciprocate.

1. **I John 4: 19** – We love, because He first loved us.

2. Even so, many respond negatively to God's love.

a. "Jesus died for you" "SO WHAT" **S#14.**

b. This is an illogical response to the love and provision of God.

James 1: 17 – Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above,

c. **Prov. 17: 13** – He who returns evil for good, evil will not depart from his house.

3. God must feel as David lamented : **S#15.**

Psa. 109: 4-5 In return for my love they act as my accusers; but I am in prayer.

5 Thus they have repaid me evil for good and hatred for my love.

II. Mankind is required to love the God who created them.

S#16.

A. God has always desired for those whom He blesses to love Him.

1. God commanded Israel to love Him.

Deut. 6: 4-5 Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! **5** You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. **S#17.**

a. This is the command that Jesus said was the greatest command of all. **Mt. 22**

b. Every Israelite repeated these words every morning upon rising.

2. God requires that people love and worship Him ONLY. **2nd command :** **S#18.**

Exod. 20: 4-6 You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. **5** " You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, **6** but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

B. God will not accept love that is not given from the heart.

1. The prophets warned us that God would not accept empty words of devotion.

Isa. 29: 13-14 Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words and honor Me with their lip service, but they remove their hearts far from Me, and their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote, **14** Therefore behold, I will once again deal marvelously with this people, wondrously marvelous; and the wisdom of their wise men will perish, and the discernment of their discerning men will be concealed." **S#19.**

2. Jesus Himself repeated this warning to us via the Jews. **S#20.**

Mark 7: 6 – He said to them, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me.'

C. The only way one can have a relationship with God is to truly love Him. S#21.

1. **I John 4: 7-8** Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.⁸ The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.
2. God does not force or persuade.
 - a. He has already made the ultimate expression of His love for us.
I John 4: 9 – By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. S#22.
 - b. Now we he waits for us ... ready to respond.
James. 4: 8 – Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

III. Loving God demands that we obey His commands. S#23.

A. Man's relationship with God has always depended upon his willingness to obey.

1. Obedience has always been linked to love.
Deut. 11: 1 – You shall therefore love the Lord your God, and always keep His charge, His statutes, His ordinances, and His commandments. S#24.
** We would not think our child loved us if that child refused to obey us.*
2. God established His relationship with Israel based up their obedience to Him.
Exod. 19: 5 – Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; S#25.
3. God blessings upon His people were conditional upon their loving and obeying Him.
Exod. 20: 6 – but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

B. God is consistent, man's relationship with Him is still contingent upon obedience.

1. One can't say he loves God if he is unwilling to obey Him, to surrender his own will.
John 14: 15 – If you love Me you will keep my commandments. S#26.
2. We must not only obey God, we must do so without feeling oppressed.
I John 5: 3 – This is the love of God that we keep his commandments; And His commandments are not burdensome.
II John 1: 6 – This is the love of God that we walk in His commandments;
3. Obedience is easy IF love, remember the attitude of Jacob as he worked for Rachael.
Genesis 29: 20 – So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her.

IV. Love for God will motivate us to love God's family.**S#27.****A. Our text deals with this directly :**

1. **I John 4: 7-8, 11** Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; **S#28**
and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. **8** The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.
11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.
2. **I John 4: 20-5:2** If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a **S#29.**
liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. **21** And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also. **5:1** Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. **2** By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.
- a. * Note : *Chapter divisions are not part of the original text.*
- b. The word "hate" (*miseo*) does not necessitate a feeling animosity. **S#30.**
Luke 14: 26 – If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.
3. We are to understand that we must love our brother **in the proportion** we love God.

B. Love is the distinguishing mark of a true Christians.**S#31.**

1. **John 13: 35** – By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.
2. Christian love is more than words or feelings.
 - a. **I John 3: 16-19** We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; **S#32.**
and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. **17** But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? **18** Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. **19** We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him
 - b. Anything we will NOT do for the brethren, we would NOT do for God.
 - c. It's easy to say I love my brother, but much harder to dip into my 401K for him.

C. God draws a direct correlation between our love for others and love for Him.

- Matt. 25: 37-40** Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see **S#33.**
You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? **38** 'And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or

naked, and clothe You? ³⁹ 'When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' ⁴⁰ " The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'

S#34.

D. God loved us when we were unlovable so we must love others who are unlovable.

CONCLUSION :

S#35.

A. How does one respond to God's love for him ?

1. He should reciprocate by loving Him back.
2. Love motivates us to obey His commands.
3. We must love those who are created in His image.

S#36.

B. We are all made in the image of God so we are all capable of these responses.

1. The more we learn of and experience the love of God the easier it is to love Him.
2. When we sincerely love someone, we desire to please them so obedience is easier.
3. Loving the father makes it easier to love His children, even when they are spoiled.

ILL. ... My family worked one of 8 buses in a bus ministry. We visited every child's home every Saturday. When the parents saw how much we loved their children and how much the children loved us, we were able to set up many bible studies with the parents. As a result, **29** of the parents were baptized in one year.

INVITATION :

S#37.

A. How are we responding to the love God shows toward us ?

S#38.

B. God desires your love and offers you salvation IF your faith is strong enough to motivate you to surrender your life in obedience to His will.

S#39.

C. Surrender begins with obedience to His gospel.

S#40. ... Communion Slide

Lesson Text :**I John 4: 7-5:4**

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. **8** The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. **9** By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. **10** In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. **11** Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. **12** No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. **13** By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. **14** We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. **16** We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. **17** By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. **18** There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. **19** We love, because He first loved us. **20** If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. **21** And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

5:1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. **2** By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. **3** For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. **4** For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith.