

THE INSEPARABLE CONNECTION BETWEEN LOVE OF GOD AND BROTHERLY LOVE

1Jno.4:7-5:3

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The resumption of the subject of brotherly love is not by way of a sharp break from what has immediately preceded.
2. On the contrary, which is typical of John's practice in the entire Epistle, it is closely connected with the preceding, inasmuch as "the spirit of truth" produces brotherly love, whereas "the spirit of error" is ever against it.
3. John has written so much about love that he has often been called "the apostle of love."
4. The verses of our text compose one of the outstanding passages on love in the N.T. Along with Paul's great tribute to love in 1Cor.13, it adds to the divine store-house on the subject of love which enriches our lives as God's servants.
5. Genuine love proceeds from God and is completely unselfish and always produces unselfish brotherly love.
6. This is the third and last time in this Epistle John introduces the subject of brotherly love.
 - a. It was first introduced as a consequence and sign or the effect of walking in the light, 1Jno.2:7-11.
 - b. Next, it was introduced as a special form of practicing righteousness as a mark of the righteous conduct of God's children, those begotten of God, 1Jno.3:7-28; Cf. 2:29.
 - c. Here in our present text of 1Jno.4:7-5:3 it appears as a contrast to the antichristian spirit, and above all as an effluence (an issuing out) of the very being of God, and proof of being born of God, and as having been manifested by God in Jesus Christ in sending him to be the Savior of the world by becoming the propitiation for our sins.
7. Also, in what he has just said about false spirits, or pseudo-spirits, and or the "spirit of error," he has shown himself thoroughly capable of opposing evil and error, and all who espouse it; and teaching the brethren to do the same.

8. But his opposition to such things is not due to any harsh or unchristian spirit; it is, rather, due to his intense love for God and truth.
9. John, in our text, leaves no doubt that true love of God carries with it brotherly love; that they are inseparably connected; there is no such thing as one without the other; the absence of brotherly love is proof of the absence of the love of God.
10. It is an erroneous evil to assume there is a difference between the love one is to have for God and the love one is to have for his brother in Christ.
 - a. How often our feeling may be, though secretly cherished, “we cannot be expected to love the brethren just as we love God.”
 - b. But it may properly be maintained that there can be no varieties in the love we have for God and the brethren.
 - c. There may be differences in quality and degree, but not in kind.
 - d. There must be relation to its object, but our love for the two can never be anything but just itself – love.
 - e. Whether it goes out to God, or goes out to our brethren in Christ, it is just the same thing – love.
 - f. And John affirms that love is not love when it is set only upon God, and restrained or withheld from our brethren in Christ.
11. The point of connection in John’s mind between this and the preceding section may be found in the fact that false doctrine is always self- centered, self-serving, and consequently tends to separate, divide and alienate brethren into warring camps.
 - a. You cannot love your brethren if you only want to make a gain of them. Cf. 2Pet.2:1-3; Jude 3,4,11-13,16,19.
12. Furthermore, no doubt, John is endeavoring to impress the truth that mere profession of either love of God or love of the brethren can be of no avail; it must find fitting and adequate expression in practice in every-day life.
13. Even God’s love had to be **manifested** in order to be in any sense an effective power on men. So it must be with our love for both God and the brethren.
14. With this introduction, we begin our study of 1Jno.4:7-5:3.

II. DISCUSSION

A. FIRST, THE EXHORTATION TO LOVE THE BRETHREN WITH THREE REASON WHY, 1Jno.4:7,8.

1. The exhortation, V.7a: “Beloved, let us love one another.”
 - a. “Beloved,” or “divinely loved ones,” that is, “beloved ones, loved of God.”
 - b. “Let us be habitually loving one another,” it’s continuous action.
 - c. Those loved of God, as are brethren in Christ, should love one another.
 - d. The words “one another” are a reciprocal pronoun in the Gr. text, indicating there should be reciprocity (reciprocal obligation or right) in the exercise of love.
 - e. Inasmuch as love is the foundation stone of all the commandments, it was and is imperative that each saint should be impressed with its necessity. Cf. Mk.12:29-31; Rom.13:8; Jas.2:8.
 - f. Perhaps John emphasized this necessity because some brethren then, as some now, were guilty as he suggested in 1Jno.4:20.
2. The first reason for the exhortation: “For love is of God,” V.7b.
 - a. That is, love finds its origin in him and proceeds from him.
 - b. The love brethren are to have one for another is the **agape** love which God is in his nature.
 - c. This is the love, the constituent elements of which are defined and illustrated for us in 1Cor.13:4-7.
 - d. It is self-giving love, not acquisitive (eager to acquire; avaricious; materialistic) love. It involves a consuming passion for the well- being of the brethren, and has its wellspring in God.
 - e. V.4 stated, “Ye are of God, little children”; V.6, “We are of God.” Therefore, from this statement in V.7, that “love is of God,” the inference is clear that love is a uniting bond of the heavenly family, of God and God’s begotten ones.
3. The second reason for the exhortation, V.7c: “And everyone that loveth is born (begotten) of God, and knoweth God.”
 - a. “Is born” or “is begotten” is perfect tense in the Gr. text. Lit. “has been begotten with the present result that that one is and or stands begotten as a child of God; of having been and being begotten of God, and not as a condition precedent to it.

- b. It indicates or serves as **proof** of continued divine relationship and divine acquaintance, not as a **condition** to becoming a child of God.
 - c. Those who genuinely practice brotherly love give evidential proof thereby that they have been begotten of God, that they stand begotten of God, with all the abiding effects of that divine relationship.
 - d. Here John is further showing how the claim to be true children of God may be tested.
 - e. The bottom line is that it's very difficult, if not impossible, to fake brotherly love, at least for very long, because where it exists it will be openly, publicly manifested in active good will.
 - f. "Knoweth God". He knows God in an experiential way; that is, involving or based on experience.
4. The third reason for the exhortation, V.8: "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."
- a. He that does not continue to love (the brethren) does not know God (is without an acquaintance with God, and or an acceptable spiritual relationship with God).
 - b. No man can live a loveless life and continue in an acceptable spiritual relationship with God.
 - c. As per V.7, the practice of brotherly love identifies that one with knowing God; so the lack of love, according to V.8, identifies one that knoweth not God regardless of his claim to the contrary.
 - d. "for God is love"
 - (1) God as to his nature is love.
 - (2) God is a loving God.
 - (3) It is his nature to be loving.
 - (4) Saying that "God is love" is not designed to be exhaustive as to his nature. For God is also "light" (1Jno.1:7), and "spirit" (Jno.4:24), and "power," and "wisdom," and "goodness," etc.
 - e. It's true that "God is love" as he also is "light" and "spirit." But the statements are not reversible.
 - (1) One can no more correctly say that "love is God" than he can correctly say "light is God" or that "spirit is God."

- (2) For the one is an affirmation about God and his nature, while the other is not!
- f. God is love, and brotherly love or a failure to love the brethren, becomes the infallible text of the existence of the birth from above, and as to whether or not one continues to stand in that relationship with God.
- g. Inasmuch as love is a characteristic of God's nature, it follows that all who partake of his nature, as his children do (2Pet.1:4), acquire the characteristic of love; therefore, in love's absence, sonship itself is wanting. Cf. 1Jno.2:29; 3:7-10.
- 5. Of course, it is the acts of God that give meaning to his love as is affirmed in the following verses.

B. 2ND, THE MANIFESTED DEMONSTRATION OF GOD'S LOVE, 1Jno.4:9-11.

- 1. 1st, How his love was manifested to us, V.9a: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world."
 - a. "In this was manifested"; that is, in "the sending of his only begotten Son into the world."
 - b. "Toward us", or in our case; this is the way God's love was manifested toward us. Cf. Jno.3:16.
 - c. Of vital significance here is the phrase "only begotten" with reference to Jesus Christ as God's Son.
 - (1) Lit., "His son, the only-begotten"; the uniquely begotten Son of God.
 - (2) From "monogenes", translated "only begotten", signifies the-only-one-of-its-kind, and was so used to distinguish Jesus from all other sons, or other children of God begotten by means of being born again.
 - (3) All who are born again, or begotten of God, by means of obeying the gospel, are members of God's family, and are God's sons, and are often so identified in the N.T.
 - (4) But Jesus, alone, is the "only begotten Son." He is the Son of God in a sense characteristic of no other being in the universe; which is something the various Gnostic sects denied; so do the Modernists of our time; so do the Islamic religionists, etc.

2. 2nd, God's purpose for sending his only begotten Son into the world, V.9b: "that we might live through him." Cf. Jno.1:4.
 - a. The verb "sent"
 - (1) Is a translation of the word rendered apostle. Cf. Heb.3:1.
 - (2) It signifies "to send on a commission as an envoy with credentials, to perform certain duties;" here, "that we might live through him," or he was to die for our sins, providing a salvation to be offered on the basis of justice satisfied to the one who places his faith in him as the Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of sinners. See Eph.2:1-6; Rom.7:9-11,24; Jno.10:10; 3:14-18,36; Mk.16:15,16.
 - (3) Is in the perfect tense in the Gr. text speaking of a past action having present results.
 - b. By directing our attention to this unique position of Jesus Christ relative to the Father, it is no doubt designed to sharpen and enhance our concept of the vastness of God's love for us – his love for us being SO great that he was willing to send such a Son into the world solely for our benefit. Cf. 1Jno.5:11,12; Jno.3:16,17.
3. 3rd, The initiative of God's love for us, V.10.
 - a. Viewed negatively: Not on our part, V.10a: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us."
 - (1) "Herein," i.e., in the gift of God's Son is love – in this is a demonstration of its vastness, its comprehensiveness, its quality, its unselfishness. Cf. Rom.5:8.
 - (2) Wuest's Word Studies: "In the expression, 'Herein is love,' the definite article 'the' appears before the word 'love,' not any kind of love, but the particular love that inheres in God's nature, divine love..."
 - (3) Wuest's Word Studies: "'He loved' is constative aorist, giving a panoramic view of God's love for the human race. God has always love sinners."
 - b. Viewed positively: because of his prior love for us, he "sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins," V.10b. Cf. 1Jno.2:1,2.
 - (1) God did not love us and manifest his love toward us because we first love him and thus provoked him to love us, but rather because of prior love existing on his part toward us prompting him to send his Son. Cf. Tit.3:3-7.

- (2) “To be the propitiation for our sins” refers to his atoning sacrifice for our sins; it means “expiation, atonement,” where sin is covered and remitted by means of the death of Jesus Christ upon the cross. A fact which the various Gnostic sects denied!
 - (3) The essentials of a sacrifice are two in number: (1) A priest to offer, and (2) a victim to be offered.
 - (a) Jesus Christ himself was **BOTH**, in that he **offered up himself** for our sins, Heb.9:14.
 - (4) The propitiation makes it possible for all men to be saved who would obey him (Heb.2:9; 5:8,9); or makes salvation become a reality to all who allow themselves to be reconciled to God, 2Cor.5:17-21.
4. 4th, Our consequent duty: God’s love for us obligates us to love one another, V.11: “Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.”
- a. V.11 refers back to what is said about God’s love in V.10.
 - b. Then it adds that the saints, the ones so loved by God, have a moral and a spiritual obligation to be constantly loving one another in the same manner, to the same extent.
 - c. For “to love” with reference to loving one another is in the Gr. present tense, speaking of continuous action.
 - d. The “if” does not raise doubt. It means “since,” or “in view of the fact.” It directs attention to the inference based on what has been written in Vv.9,10.
 - (1) Since, inasmuch as, or in view of the fact that, God loved us to the extent which is there affirmed, we **also ought to love one another**.
 - (a) What we “ought” to do, we can do; otherwise, God would not say we ought to do it!
 - (2) Once again, this reminds us not only that God loved us, but that he **SO** loved us, i.e., in such measure, or to such a degree, as to give the priceless treasure of heaven as a sacrifice to die in our stead. Cf. Rom.8:32.
 - e. The word “also” establishes a basis of comparison.
 - (1) Since God loves us to such an extent, and with such a selfless quality of love.
 - (2) We, on our side, **ought also** to love (keep on loving) one another.

do.

- f. "Ought" is *opheilo* which speaks of moral obligation.
 - (1) That which we "ought" to do we have the obligation to do.
 - (2) Furthermore, we have the ability to do it.
 - (3) We are held accountable for doing it.
 - g. This obligation rests on the very nature of God and on the great foundation truth of the atonement provided by his love through his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.
 - h. John is emphasizing here the fact that God took the initiative; and that God love man into loving him. See V.19.
 - i. God's love for us supplies the motive power for his people's love for one another, for brotherly love.
 - j. If we must be holy because he is holy (1Pet.1:4-16), and merciful because he is merciful (Lk.6:36); is it any less necessary that we must be loving because he is loving?
5. As a summation of Vv.7-11, let us notice the contextual force of John's reasoning therein.
- a. That God is love.
 - b. That God's love for man exists.
 - c. That God's love toward us has been manifested, i.e., revealed, made known to us.
 - d. That God's love toward us has been manifested or revealed to us in the sending of his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him.
 - e. That we should constantly practice brotherly love, for love is of God.
 - f. That the existence and faithful practice of brotherly love is proof of having been begotten of God, and of still standing begotten of God, and knowing God.
 - g. That as John showed in Ch.1, the sin question must be settled before life is bestowed to sinners; here in Vv.9,10, as he did in 1Jno.2:1,2, John takes us back to what is antecedent to the gift of life.
 - (1) God sent his Son that we might have life – be redeemed from sin.
 - (2) To effect that, the Son was sent to be the propitiation – the atoning sacrifice for sin.
 - h. These verses once again prove that sin and evil do exist, that they are real, in spite of the fact that some, even some religious people, deny it and even say they are illusions.

- i. That God has condemned sin and sinners (Cf. Jno.3:36; 8:21,24). But because he loves the world of sinners in danger of perishing in sin, he has provided a remedy for sin through the gift of his Son, Jesus Christ.
- j. In these verses we have:
 - (1) Evidence of the falsity of the theory of the human creeds teaching that God was angry with man and that Jesus came to appease the wrath of a vengeful God.
 - (2) Proof that we did not first receive God's love in consequence of the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ; that the sending of the Son to die for sinners resulted from God's previously existing love for us. Cf. Jno.3:16; Rom.5:8.
 - (3) Absolute proof that it is absurd to assume and claim that God's love for man was evoked by the prior love of man for God. Rather:
 - (a) God loved us.
 - (b) God loved us before we loved him. It was not the result of any act of love on man's part.
 - (c) God loved us while we were yet sinners.
 - (d) God demonstrated his prior love for us while we were yet sinners in the sending of his only begotten Son to die for us that we might live through him.

C. 3RD, THE GREAT SPIRITUAL EFFECTS AND OR BLESSINGS OF BROTHERLY LOVE, 1Jno.4:12-18.

- 1. God whom no man hath seen, or can see, dwells in those who practice brotherly love, V.12a: "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us."
 - a. But, of course, the Son who was the Word, was with God, was God, was made flesh, hath declared or revealed God unto us. See Jno.1:1,2,14,18; 14:7; Mt.11:27.
- 2. "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us," V.12b.
 - a. On the condition that we love one another, two things result:
 - (1) God dwelleth (abideth) in us.
 - (2) His love is perfected in us.
 - b. But how does God dwell in us?

- (1) Not literally, physically, bodily or directly or personally any more than Jesus Christ, his Son, does. Cf. Eph.3:17; Gal.2:20.
 - (2) God dwells or abides in us through that inward relationship which establishes fellowship with him according to 1Jno.1:1-7; Cf. Mt.28:18,19.
 - (3) Thus God abides in us as we conform to his will and walk in harmony with his precepts, 1Jno.2:3-6; 1Jno.3:24; 4:12,15,16; 5:1,2.
 - (4) Thus, therefore, though God, in his essence and divine nature is invisible to our eyes, we may enjoy the blessed privilege of his abiding presence if we love one another, which is a part of doing or practicing righteousness, or keeping his commandments as those begotten of him.
- c. “And his love is perfected in us”; i.e., if we love one another and God abides in us, V.12c.
- (1) “His love” is not simply our love to God, nor again is it simply God’s love to man.
 - (a) The meaning seems to be that of the love that characterizes him, which is peculiarly his own, which answers to his nature (Vincent), vv.7,8.
 - (b) That this is the meaning seems to be confirmed by Vv.16,17 (Vine’s Commentary, p.83).
 - (2) “Perfected” is from “teleioo,” meaning “to bring to completion; to bring to an end by completing; to accomplish; to finish; to maturity.”
 - (a) It is used of bringing completeness or perfecting of things. In the case of:
 - (1) The love of God operating through him who keeps his word, 1Jno.2:5.
 - (2) The love of God being perfected in those who love one another, 1Jno.4:12.
 - (b) If saints habitually have this **agape** love for one another, that shows that this love which God is in his nature has accomplished its purpose in their lives.
 - (c) It has made them loving and self-sacrificial in their character and in their actions toward their brethren in Christ.

- (d) Thereby, this love has been brought to its human fullness in the lives of the saints. Or, we thus develop and bring to maturity his love as we love one another.
 - (3) “Is perfected” in the Gr. is in the perfect tense, speaking of a past completed act having present results.” (Wuest’s Word Studies)
 - (a) That is, “If we habitually are loving one another, God is in us abiding, and His love has been brought to its fullness in us, and exists in that state of fullness.” (Wuest’s Word Studies)
- 3. Also, there is a mutual indwelling: We in God, and God in us, Vv.13-16.
 - a. V.13: “Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.”
 - (1) “Hereby know we,” lit. “in this we know”
 - (2) What we know “hereby” and how we know it.
 - (a) We know that we dwell in him, and that he dwells in us.
 - (b) We know this because he has given us of his Spirit – the Holy Spirit.
 - (3) V.13 is almost a repeat of 1Jno.3:24.
 - (a) By the two passages we have absolute assurance of the fact of this mutual indwelling of God in us and we in God.
 - (b) Also, the two passages taken together leave no doubt that the practice of brotherly love is one of God’s commandments whereby we know the fact of this mutual indwelling.
 - (4) Therefore, from 1Jno.3:14; 4:13; Rom.5:5, we learn that the Spirit of God is given to Christians through which the “love of God is shed abroad in our hearts”, and “his love is perfected in us,” as well as by which we know that he dwells in us, and we in him, when we love one another.
 - (5) But how is the Spirit given to us? How is it that we possess the Holy Spirit? And how does the Spirit he has given us supply evidence of this mutual indwelling? Briefly:

- (a) According to Gal.3:2, the Galatians received the Spirit by the hearing (marg. Message) of faith; that is, the gospel; for this is how faith comes, Rom.10:17; Cf. Rom.1:16,17; Gal.2:16; Also, 1Cor.1:21; 3:5; 15:11; Mk.16:15,16; And, Eph.6:17b.
 - (b) The word of truth – the gospel – the sword of the Spirit – is the instrument by which the Holy Spirit exercises the influence of God on both saint and sinner.
 - (c) Thus, as one receives the truth of God’s word into his heart and allows it to motivate his life, his actions, he is, to this extent, persuaded, motivated, enabled, and influenced by the Holy Spirit, or has received the Holy Spirit or the power of the Holy Spirit abiding him.
 - (d) This, of course, is not to be understood or interpreted as meaning that the Holy Spirit is the word of truth.
 - (e) It means that the Holy Spirit **uses** the word of truth as the medium by which he operates, persuades, leads, and influences us (Eph.6:17b; Ac.2:1-4,37), and his influence is limited to this medium.
 - (f) The Spirit who is said to be given to us thus prompts brotherly love (which is the first fruit of the Spirit, Gal.5:22,23) through the instruction which he has given in the scriptures, and at the same time and in the same way affirms and confirms this is how we know that God dwells in us and we dwell in him.
 - (1) How else could we know the fact of this?
- (6) Furthermore, the Epistle of 1Jno. and the Gospel of John, as well as most of the N.T. revealed and written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, are filled with instructions touching the duty of the saints to love one another by which they dwell in God and God dwells in them.
- (a) Now, if it is the case that the Spirit, independent of, or separate and apart from, or in addition to,

the word of truth revealed and delivered by means of the Spirit, which produces such brotherly love, why was such instruction given?

(b) Why, indeed, is there any teaching on **any** theme if all faithful saints, then and now, possess an indwelling of the Spirit from which they derive (independently) such instruction?

(1) In fact, some brethren, I have recently been told, are now claiming they don't need the Bible, the written word, because they have the Holy Spirit!

(c) The question is not, Do Children of God possess the Spirit? This, the N.T. scriptures affirm.

(d) Neither is it, Are children of God influenced by the Spirit today? This, too, the scriptures abundantly assert!

(e) The question is the **manner or mode** of such indwelling, and not the **fact** of it, which we raise.

(1) Paul settled it in the rhetorical question of Gal.3:2.

(2) The only impact of the Spirit on the heart of either the alien or the Christian, in our day, is by means of the word of truth, which is the sword of the Spirit.

(3) There is no more scriptural ground upon which to claim an immediate and direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon and individual after his conversion to Christ than there is for such an operation before his conversion to Christ.

(4) The one is as untenable as the other, and both wrong!

(5) The scriptures teach that the Holy Spirit, the Father, and the Son, all dwell in the Christian by faith, as well as the Christian dwelling in the Father and in the Son, as we conform to God's will and walk in harmony with his precepts taught by the Holy Spirit, Eph.3:17; 1Jno.1:7; 2:3-6; 3:24; 4:12,13,15,16; 5:2,3.

- (6) Such indwelling is made know by relationships. They dwell in us and we dwell in them as the word effectively works in us.
 - (a) The word is not the person of God; nor the person of Jesus; nor the person of the Holy Spirit.
 - (b) But all three are effectuated in us through the word.
 - (c) Their work is accomplished in us in the manifestation of the truth in our lives.
 - (7) Even the devil is said to be able to “put into” or “enter” the heart of man, Jno.13:2,27. Personal indwelling? Direct, miraculous? See Ac.5:3.
- b. V.14: “And we have seen and to testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.”
 - (1) The word “we” of this verse bears stress and signifies the eye and ear witnesses to the Son whom the Father sent.
 - (a) These witnesses of necessity would have been John and the other apostles of Christ who had been eye and ear witnesses to the risen Lord, 1Jno.1:1-3; Cfl.Lk.1:1,2; Ac.1:1-8,21,22,32; 1Cor.15:3-5,7,8.
 - (2) The word rendered “seen” (or “beheld”) is the same word as in V.12, and the connection is somewhat as follows: While no man had seen (or beheld) God at any time, yet John and the other apostles “have heard and seen” (beheld) the Son of God in the flesh, and thus were qualified to be testimony (eye and ear witness testimony) to the fact that the Father had indeed sent the Son into the world to be the Savior of the world.
 - (3) The apostles of Jesus Christ were personally selected by Jesus, personally promised the Holy Spirit by Jesus, and personally empowered by the Holy Spirit to fulfill their earthly mission as the witnesses of the risen Lord. Yes, they were men, but specially selected, qualified, and sent men!

- (a) Personally selected by Jesus, Jno.15:16,19; Ac.9:15,16; 22:12-16; Rom.1:1..
 - (b) Personally promised the miraculous guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, Jno.14:18,25,26; 15:25,26; 16:7,13-15; Lk.24:44-49; Ac.1:1-8.
 - (c) Personally empowered by the Holy Spirit, Ac.2:1-4; 2Cor.12:12.
- (4) The perfect tense of “sent” designates an act that is past, the results of which continue to exist. Cf. 1Jno.1:3.
- (5) That the Son of God is described as and declared to be “the Savior of the world” was a testimony against the national prejudice and exclusiveness of the Jews, as well as against the erroneous ideas of any particular sect such as the Gnostics.
- c. V.15: “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.”
 - (1) Obviously, there is connection between V.15 and V.2, with the confession there emphasizing the real humanity of Jesus Christ, and here his divine Sonship, or his deity.
 - (2) Once again John emphasizes this confession of Jesus, its necessity and its resultant blessings, and, no doubt, he does so because of the prevailing circumstances of the day.
 - (a) The Ebonites declared that Jesus was a mere man.
 - (b) Certain of the Cerinthian Gnostics maintained that his body was, for a time, a temporary period, occupied by a separate being or entity called the Christ.
 - (c) The Docetae (Docetism) argued that he only appeared to possess a human body, but was, in reality, only a shadowy phantom.
 - (3) The confession, “Jesus Christ is come in the flesh,” and or “Jesus is the Son of God,” was and is a repudiation of each of these heretical positions, and all those who thus confessed him confessed:
 - (a) His humanity.
 - (b) His deity.
 - (c) His reality.
 - (d) Him as the divine Son of God.
 - (e) Him as God Incarnate; God in the flesh.

- (4) Implied in this confession of Jesus is, of course, the complete surrender of one's will to the will of the Lord, not mere lip service; such surrender expressing itself in willing, loving obedience to his commands, Mt.7:21-27; Lk.6:46; Mt.16:24,25; Heb.5:8,9; Cf. Jno.14:21,23,24.
- (5) All those who make this confession of Jesus dwell (abide) in God, and God dwells (abides) in them. Cf. Mt.28:18,19.
 - (a) There could be no closer relationship or communion with God than what is expressed in this statement.
- (6) But what does it mean, and how does God dwell in us and we in him?
 - (a) It cannot mean that **Deity** actually, personally, literally, directly, and bodily takes up his abode in the one who confesses that Jesus is the Son of God.
 - (1) If so, then would it not also mean that the one confessing this truth actually, personally, literally, directly and bodily takes up his abode in God? For we are said to dwell in God!
 - (2) But God is a Spirit – pure Spirit – which makes that impossible!
 - (b) It cannot mean that God the Father dwells in us through his Spirit – the Holy Spirit, who is also Deity – that that he dwells in us directly and personally.
 - (1) If so, then would it not also mean that we through our spirit dwell in God directly and personally?
 - (2) This also is hardly possible!
 - (c) The truth is that God abides in us as we allow his teaching to fill us and motivate our lives. And we abide in him as we believe and practice the precepts of the gospel of God and find fellowship with him and his children in life.
 - (d) To state is another way:
 - (1) The one who sincerely confesses this truth about Jesus the Son of God abides in that

truth and that truth requires of him as a follower of Jesus; for it is not a lip service, a faith only; but an obedience of faith that is understood and previously stated in this study.

(2) The truth about the Son of God abides in him and all that truth requires in practice as this whole Epistle indicates.

(3) Since God is the essence of truth and love, God abides in the one who abides in truth and love.

(e) In a similar manner does the Spirit abide in us.

(7) The scope of the Son's mission as Savior was as boundless as humanity, and only man's unbelief and impenitence puts a limit on its actual effect. Cf. Heb.2:9; Mk.16:15,16; 1Tim.2:3-6; 2Pet.3:9.

(8) Vv.14,15 explain the whole of the 1st 12 verses of Ch.4.

d. V.16a: "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us"

(1) "We know" (perfect active). We have arrived at this knowledge, and continue to possess it.

(2) "And have believed (and continue to believe) the love God hath to us", or "in us," or "in our case."

(3) How did the arrive at this knowledge and come to believe in this love of God?

(a) First of all Jesus taught it and made it known during his personal ministry.

(1) To Nicodemus, Jno.3:16,17.

(2) Then, to his apostles, Jno.17:20-26 (analyze).

(b) The apostles, in turn, by means of the Holy Spirit revealed message, taught it to all believers. Cf. Mt.28:18-20; Rom.5:8-11; Eph.3:1-11; 1Jno.1:1-3; 4:9,10.

e. V.16b: "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."

(1) "God is love" is a repetition of V.8b.

(2) The latter portion of V.16 is similar to the latter portion of V.15 in that both speak of God dwelling in the saints and the saints dwelling in God.

- (3) Thus V.16 combines the ideas advanced in Vv.7,8,15, with the meaning that the one who abides in love abides in God and God in him, because God is love, all of which is further proof that that one is doing righteousness, is righteous, and is born or begotten of God, as per 1Jno.2:29; 3:7; 4:7; and not merely one who claims to have fellowship with God while walking in darkness as indicated in 1Jno.1:6.
 - (4) By tying together 1Jno.3:24 and 4:15,16, we can't miss how inseparably associated are doctrine and practice, or faith and obedience! Cf. Gal.5:6; Jas.2:14-26; Lk.6:46; Heb.5:8,9.
4. Still another great spiritual effect and or blessing of brotherly love is the fact that we will have boldness (confidence, assurance) and the absence of fear of condemnation in the day of judgment, 4:17,18.
- a. V.17a: "Herein is our love made perfect"
 - (1) That is, in the fact that he who abides in love, abides in God, and God abides in him (V.16).
 - (2) "Is made perfect" is perfect tense, "has been made perfect or complete, and exists in its finished results"
 - (3) It represents a past fact in the saint's life and a present reality because he keeps on loving as God requires, and keeps on abiding in God.
 - (4) That fullness or completeness of love results in a life devoted entirely to the Lord.
 - b. V.17b: "that we may have boldness in the day of judgment"
 - (1) Boldness here speaks of unreservedness of speech, a free and fearless confidence, with nothing to hide, or of which to be ashamed even at the judgment.
 - (2) All those who continue to love both God and their brethren will have boldness, confidence or assurance that they will not be condemned in the day of judgment.
 - (3) For to be a lover of God and the brethren expresses itself in service to God and man as a faithful doer of God's commandments by which we are judged and saved. Cf. 1Jno.3:22,23; 5:1-3; Mt.25:31-46; Jno.12:28-50.
 - c. V.17c: "because as he is, so are we in this world."
 - (1) The occasion or ground of the confidence or boldness those who love feel is that they are in this world as Christ is in their faith and practice.

- (2) That kind of life is a Christ-like life, and that makes the saint like Christ, as the saint so dwells in the midst of a world of sinful people (1Jno.5:19).
- (3) He (Christ) is the embodiment of perfect love; the example we are called to imitate.
- (4) When we do so, the Lord, who is to judge all men, will certainly not condemn those who, while they lived on earth, were like him.
- (5) We can be certain of that. Cf. 2Tim.4:6-8.
- d. V.18a: "There is no fear in love"
 - (1) Confidence excludes fear; and since those who love have confidence (v.17), they have no fear.
 - (2) "Fear" meant here is:
 - (a) Not the "fear of the Lord" which is "the beginning of wisdom" of Psa.111:10, a reverential, godly fear, which shrinks from any action which would displease God.
 - (1) Cf. Eccl.12:13; Heb.12:28; 1Pet.1:17.
 - (b) Not the fear (respect) which an obedient child has for a loving father, 1Pet.1:17; Heb.12:9.
 - (c) Not the fear mentioned in 2Cor.7:1, where we are taught to perfect holiness "in the fear of God."
 - (d) Not "the fear of the Lord" which "is clean, enduring forever," Psa.19:9.
 - (e) Not that wherein we are to submit ourselves "on to another in the fear of God" in Eph.5:21; and work out our "salvation with fear and trembling" in Phil.2:12.
 - (f) The **terror, dread, slavish fear**, such as is characteristic of a slave in the presence of a cruel and heartless master; the fear of the whip in the hands of such a master.
 - (g) The dread of the chastisement which comes to the disobedient, the unprepared at the day of judgment.
 - (3) The divine love produced in the heart of the obedient saint includes the former, but not the latter.
- e. V.18b: "but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment (or punishment).He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

- (1) “Torment” is KOLASIS, “correction or punishment, and brings with it or has connected with it the thought of punishment,” Thayer.
 - (2) Fear does not exist where perfect love is because such love casteth out fear.
 - (3) Fear hath torment or punishment because in the anticipation of the punishment expected in the future there is torment in the present – a foretaste of it before it actually begins.
 - (4) For instance, the child, aware that punishment is deserved for disobedience, is pending, and sure to come, suffers before the lash is felt. (Cf. my own experience with my dad).
 - (5) Thus, the saint who has experienced the fullness of this divine love in his earthly life, will have no fear of condemnation in the day of judgment. All others will have such fear.
 - (6) When and if we entertain fear in the day of judgment, that fear evidences imperfect love, or that God’s love is not perfected in him, Vv.12,18c.
5. Some concluding thoughts on Vv.12-18
- a. There is nothing more important in any religion than the character of its god. John is saying here (Vv.7-16) that the God made known in his Son Jesus Christ is a God of love.
 - (1) Some theologians and their blind followers have perverted this to mean that he is a God of love to the exclusion of his justice and his righteousness.
 - (a) Therefore, he does not and will not condemn sinners to a devil’s hell for eternal punishment!
 - (2) The truth of the matter is that the love of God must not be allowed to cancel either his justice or his righteousness. Nor must his justice be allowed to cancel his love.
 - (3) Love is the essence of his being, and no thought or action of God can be inconsistent with his love; for he is infinite in love and holiness. See Rom.11:22.
 - b. The life of love is not only generated by God but is also sustained by him; it is sustained in constant fellowship with God.

- c. The necessity for reproducing God's love in the lives of Christians lies in the fact that God is invisible to men. No man has ever beheld him.
 - (1) In Jno.1:18 says that this God whom no man has ever seen has been revealed through the only begotten Son, but this Son himself is not now visible to the world.
 - (2) The God of love whom this Son has unveiled can be seen in those who reproduce the love of God in their lives.
 - (3) God abides in those who love one another, and the world can see him and know him as a God of love.

D. BROTHERLY LOVE THE INEVITABLE CONSEQUENCE OF LOVING GOD, 1Jno.4:19-5:1.

- 1. God's love for us, the reason for, or the inspiration of, our love for him, 4:19.
 - a. Why do we love God?
 - (1) Not in order to get God to love us. In fact, just the opposite!
 - (2) Jesus did not come, or was not sacrificed, to appease the wrath of an angry God and to obligate him to love sinners. Cf. Jno.3:16,17; Rom.5:8; 1Jno.4:9,10.
 - (3) "Instead of 'we love him,'; it is, 'we love, because he first loved us.'" – F.F. Bruce.
 - b. Wuest's Word Studies: "In the original it actually expresses an exhortation: 'as for us, let us be loving, because he himself first love us.'"
 - c. God's amazing love manifested in sending his Son "that we might live through him", that he "sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins," is the inspiration of all the love that stirs in our hearts.
 - d. His love awakens within us an answering love – a grateful love for him, a love manifesting itself in love for both God and our brethren in Christ; which is what it ought to do, V.11.
- 2. From the negative standpoint: It is impossible to separate love for God and love for our brethren; impossible to love God and hate the brother in Christ, 1Jno.4:20-5:1.
 - a. The argument of V.20.

- (1) Here we have an argument supported by analogy, which once again teaches a principle often emphasized in the sacred writings, that it is impossible to separate love for God and man.
- (2) John calls the man a liar who says he loves God and hates his brother in Christ. Cf. 1Jno.1:6,8,10; 2:4.
- (3) “for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? V.20b.

- (a) Guy N. Woods: “It is a characteristic of love to fix its attention that which is visible and near; if, therefore, one does not love his brother whom he has seen, it is impossible to love God whom one has not seen.

“Ordinarily it is easier to love that which is seen and near; if, therefore, one fails in the easier task of loving that which is seen – his brother – he will obviously fail in the more difficult task of loving God.

“The love which we feel for our brethren is produced by the qualities in them which they have acquired from God. If follows, therefore, that if one is repelled by the qualities of goodness in his brother which are derived from God, he will feel the same aversion toward these qualities in God himself!

“It is thus literally true that one who does not love his brother cannot love God. The one may be verified by the other.

“If genuine love for man exists, there is a corresponding love for God. Conversely, where one does not love his brother, it is proof that he does not love God. If he says he does, he is a liar.”
Comm. On 1Jno., page 306.

- (4) “hath seen,” perfect tense, expresses an abiding condition. The brother is viewed not as one simply whom we can see but as one who is constantly before our eyes.
- b. The divine command supporting and enforcing the argument of v.20, V.21: “And this commandment have we from him, That

he who loveth God love his brother also.” Cf. 1Jno.3:23; 4:7,11.

- (1) In this verse what has been regarded as spiritually inevitable in the preceding verse, is now put as a direct command.
- (2) Not only is love to God impossible where we do not love our brethren, but love to our brethren is binding upon us.
- (3) When and where was this command given?
 - (a) In principle, by Jesus to his apostles in Jno.13:34,35.
 - (b) In essence and in the great summary of the law by Jesus in reply to the lawyer’s question in Mt.22:35-40.
 - (c) Jesus made application of it when he depicted the judgment scene in Mt.25:31-46.

c. 1Jno.5:1 contains the same idea advanced in 1Jno.4:20, only here it is in the positive sense.

Note this: John is still enjoining the duty of brotherly love; that one who loves God must, as a necessary consequence, love his brother in Christ, also.

Note also: This verse establishes who is one’s brother, or who the brother in Christ is. He is one who has been begotten of God. Cf. Jno.3:3-6; 1Pet.1:22,23.

- (1) “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God,” V.1a.
 - (a) Lit. “Whosoever continues to believe,” i.e., whose faith is firmly fixed and abiding in the profession that Jesus is the Christ.
 - (b) And it is an active, obedient faith; not faith only, or mere intellectual assent; it is a faith that is obedient to him who is the object of the faith exercised, which is the only faith that avails, Lk.6:46; Gal.5:6; Jas.2:14-26.
 - (c) It was not John’s purpose here to announce a condition of salvation, nor were the words of V.1 addressed to alien sinners directing them to do anything for any purpose.
 - (d) He is identifying who is a child of God; one who stands born or begotten of God; a brother in Christ

in good standing with God; not one who merely claims to be, but one who **IS!**

- (e) He simply means this is evidence or proof that he is born or begotten of God; that he is in the spiritual family of God in good standing.
 - (f) Sincerely believing and openly confessing the proposition: “Jesus is the Christ,” effectually sifted out the heretics of the day with whom John was dealing. See 1Jno.2:18-23; 4:1-3; 2Jno.7.
 - (1) Some denied that Jesus was Christ, thus repudiating his deity.
 - (2) Others said that Christ was not Jesus, hence denying his humanity.
 - (3) Still others maintained that his fleshly body was merely an apparition, thus denying his reality.
 - (4) But to confess that Jesus is the Christ is to acknowledge all three.
 - (g) The word “Christ” is the English spelling of the Greek word “christos”, which means “the Anointed One,” the Messiah.
 - (1) But the predicted Anointed One, the Messiah, of the O.T., was to be God-incarnate, virgin-born into the human race.
 - (2) Thus, the incarnation is involved here – God in the flesh who came to save sinners by means of his atoning sacrifice on the cross.
 - (3) Certain of the Gnostic sects denied the true identity of Jesus Christ as already indicated.
 - (4) Some of them held that Jesus of Nazareth and Christ were two separate beings; that the Christ had only a temporary existence in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.
- (2) “And every one that loveth him that begat (i.e., God the Father) loveth him also that is begotten of him,” V.1b.
- (a) “Everyone” or “Whosoever loveth,” of this clause in V.1b is exactly parallel with the “whosoever believeth” of the first clause of the verse, and embraces or includes the same individuals.

- (b) While the 1st clause of V.1 teaches that believing Jesus is the Christ is evidence that one is begotten of God; that he is a brother in Christ.
- (c) The 2nd clause once again emphasizes that to love God who beget requires the one begotten of God to love those begotten of him, or to love one's brother in Christ, a duty which has been emphasized in 1Jno.4:7-21.

E. BUT HOW DO WE KNOW WE LOVE THE CHILDREN OF GOD IN FULFILLMENT OF THIS REQUIREMENT? 1Jno.5:2,3.

1. We know we love the children of God when we love God and keep his commandments, V.2.
 - a. "By this," or "Hereby," lit. "in this," or by this test: When or whenever:
 - (1) We love God, and
 - (2) Keep his commandments, one of which is to love one another, or practice brotherly love. Cf. Jno.13:34,35; 1Jno.2:7-11; 4:7,11,21.
 - b. "Keep" is "terio," "to attend to carefully, to take care of, to guard, observe."
 - (1) It is a jealous safe-keeping of his commandments lest they be violated.
 - (2) It is a keep-on-keeping – a continuous action – with the thought that we are concerning with his honor and glory lest we come short of it and sin to our shame and to God's grief.
 - c. By combining the teaching of V.1 and V.2, we have proof that it is not simply a matter of faith only being suggested in V.1, but faith plus obedience, or the obedience of faith.
2. But how do we know when we love God? V.3 answers the question for us by revealing to us two things about the love of God and his commandments.
 - a. 1st, we can know how and when it is possible for us to exhibit and demonstrate our love for God: By keeping his commandments, V.3a: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." Cf. Jno.14:15,21,23,24; 15:9,10.

- (1) “It is the love of God that we keep (keep on keeping) his commandments”, present active subjective, Guy N. Woods, Com.
 - (2) This is the acid test of love for God; it is proof of it!
 - (3) No matter what one’s claim or pretension, if he is not keeping God’s commandments, he is weighed and found wanting; he is no lover of God!
- b. 2nd, it tells us something about God’s commandments, V.3b: “And his commandments are not grievous.”
- (1) God’s commandments are not heavy, burdensome, distressing, irksome, severe, stern, cruel, hard to keep.
 - (2) True love for God lightens them, makes them easily borne, makes the keeping of them a delight rather than a burden. Cf. Psa.1; Psa.122:1; Mt.11:28-32; 2Cor.8:1-5; See also 1Cor.10:13; Jas.1:12.
 - (3) The story is often told of a nine year old lad, struggling to carry his crippled five year old brother, when challenged about the load possibly being too heavy for him, smiled and cheerfully replied, “He’s not heavy; he’s **my** brother!”
 - (4) Let us think about Gal.6:2 in light of God’s command to love our brethren.

III. CONCLUSION

1. Summing up 1Jno.4:7-5:3 and some things the possession and practice of brotherly love proves:
 - a. That we are born or begotten of God and knoweth God, 4:7,8.
 - b. That we understand the obligation placed upon us in sending his Son that we might live through him, 4:9-11.
 - c. That God dwells in us and we in him, 4:12-16.
 - d. That all who possess and practice brotherly love will have boldness (confidence, assurance) with no fear of condemnation in the day of judgment, 4:17,18.
 - e. That we love God, 4:19-21.
 - f. That brotherly love is the consequence of loving God, 5:1.
 - g. The inseparable connection between brotherly love, loving God, and keeping God’s commandments, 5:2,3.