

STUDIES IN 1 JOHN

STUDY NUMBER TEN: Fellowship is Generating "Agape" Love

1 John 4:7-21

Key Verse 4:12: "No one has beheld God at any time; if we are loving one another, God is abiding in us, and His love has been brought to its fullness in us."

TEXT:

v. 7 Beloved, let us be loving one another, because love is from God; and everyone who is loving has been born of God and is knowing God.

v. 8 The one who is not loving has not come to know God, because God is love.

v. 9 In this the love of God was made clear in our case, because His Son the only begotten one God has sent into the world in order that we might live through Him.

v.10 In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that He Himself loved us and sent His Son to be the satisfaction for our sins.

v.11 Beloved, if God so loved us also, we ourselves are under moral obligation to be loving one another.

v.12 No one has beheld God at any time; if we are loving one another, God is abiding in us, and His love has been brought to its fullness in us.

v.13 In this we are knowing that we are abiding in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

v.14 And we ourselves have beheld and we are bearing witness that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.

v.15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God is abiding in Him--he is abiding in God.

v.16 And we ourselves have known and have believed the love which God is having in our case. God is love, and the one who is abiding in love is abiding in God, and God is abiding in Him.

v.17 In this the love has been brought to completion which is in us, that as a result we are having boldness in the day of judgment; because just as that one is, also we ourselves are in this world.

v.18 Fear is not in love; but perfect love is casting out fear, because this fear is having to do with punishment. And the one who is fearing has not been brought to completion in this love.

v.19 As for us, let us be loving because He Himself first loved us.

v.20 If anyone should say, "I am loving God," and is hating his brother, he is a liar; for the one who is not loving his brother whom he has seen, he is not able to go on loving God whom he has not seen.

v.21 And this commandment we are having from Him, that the one who is loving God should also be loving his brother.

INTRODUCTION:

SECOND THOUGHTS

Paul: "You told me it was love at first sight when you started going out with Jane, but I don't see you around together anymore."

Pal: "I took another look."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

NOBODY WANTED TO MAKE IT OFFICIAL

A very wise old minister had kept on his desk for over a half century a notebook labeled COMPLAINTS OF MEMBERS. Whenever any member of his church came in to complain about somebody else's conduct, the old pastor would nod and pick up the notebook, saying, "Thank you, I'll just write it down so I can take it up officially with the church board."

The book and the poised pen worked. The opportunity was offered hundreds of times, but nothing was ever written in the book.

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

PRETTY POWERFUL PILLS

A man was a member of a church where they were having a lot of difficulty. He became so nervous that he couldn't speak. He went to the doctor, and the doctor gave him some tranquilizers. Two days later he went back to the doctor and asked, "Doctor, what did you give me?"

He replied, "I gave you some tranquilizers."

"Well, I don't want any more of them."

The doctor asked, "Why not?"

He replied, "They made me act friendly with people I don't like at church."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

I.D. PROBLEM

She: He pays so little attention to me that if I died I don't think he'd be able to identify the body.

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

FOOLISH FUGITIVE FINDS FATHER'S FORGIVENESS

Feeling footloose and frisky, a featherbrained fellow forced his fond father to fork over the farthings and flew far to foreign fields and frittered his fortune feasting fabulously with faithless friends. Fleeced by his fellows in folly and facing famine, he found himself a feed flinger in a filthy farm. Fairly famishing, he fain would have filled his frame with foraged food from fodder fragments. "Fooey, my father's flunkies fare far finer!"

The frazzled fugitive forlornly fumbled, frankly facing facts. He fled forthwith to his family. Falling at his father's feet, he forlornly fumbled. "Father, I've flunked and fruitlessly forfeited family favor."

The farsighted father, forestalling further flinching, frantically flagged the flunkies to fetch a fatling from the flock and fix a feast.

The fugitive's faultfinding brother frowned on fickle forgiveness of the former folderol.

But the faithful father figured "Filial fidelity is fine, but the fugitive is found! What forbids fervent festivity? Let flags be unfurled! Let fanfares flair!"

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

(Pack Up Your Gloomees in a Great Big Box, then Sit on the Lid and Laugh! by Barbara Johnson)

In fact, I've talked to parents who could easily find some dark humor in the quip:

WE SHOULD HAVE HAD RABBITS
INSTEAD OF KIDS . . .
AT LEAST WE WOULD HAVE GOTTEN
ONE GOOD MEAL OUT OF THE DEAL!

p. 75

We are pursuing the subject of FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER in our studies in 1 John:

Study #1:Fellowship Is Restored by Jesus Christ

Study #2:Fellowship Is Broken by Sin

Study #3:Fellowship Is Nourished by Obedience

Study #4:Fellowship Is Escalated by Growth

Study #5:Fellowship Is being Educated by His Spirit

Study #6:Fellowship Is a Rehearsal for the Future

Study #7:Fellowship Is Apparent by Fruit

Study #8:Fellowship Is Sacrificial Servanthood

Study #9:Fellowship Is Preserved by Discernment

This brings us now to Study #10:

FELLOWSHIP IS GENERATING "AGAPE" LOVE

Sometimes it is hardest to show Jesus' love to those who are closest.

We are different, and sometimes I let that difference come between us. May Jesus' love draw us together.

People are all around, why should I care? Why should I reach out? Because You love them Lord, and You want me to love them too.

We are talking about FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER. Flowing out of that fellowship is going to be AGAPE, or a Godlike kind of love.

The Greeks had 3 WORDs for LOVE:

- 1.EROS--which was nothing but physical or lustful type of love,
- 2.PHILEO--referred to human affection, it was a friendship kind of love;

3. AGAPE or God's kind of love.

The only way this kind of love can be revealed in our lives is as a direct result of God working in and through us to produce it.

It cannot be produced in a disobedient heart or a heart out of fellowship with the Father.

John so beautifully records in his gospel the account between PETER and his RISEN SAVIOR in John 21:

1. First of all, the Lord Jesus asks Peter if he loves him with an AGAPE love.
Peter's response is, "You know all things; I love you with a PHILEO love."
2. The second time the Lord says, "Do you love me with AGAPE love?" Peter gives the same response by saying that he loves him with a PHILEO love.
3. The third time the Lord Jesus asks Peter about his love, He says, "Do you love me even with a PHILEO love?" Peter responds, "Yes, Lord, you know all things. I love you with a PHILEO love."

Peter is really honest and transparent here. He is also very vulnerable and recognizes that apart from God's grace he could never be a vehicle for God's kind of love.

When PAUL is writing to the CORINTHIAN CHRISTIANS who are having so many problems--in the middle of that letter he stops and says, "I want to show you a more excellent way." That way is described in the beautiful love chapter,
1 Corinthians 13.

Barclay says:

It is in this passage that there occurs what is probably the greatest single statement about God in the whole Bible, the statement that God is love. It is amazing how many doors that single statement unlocks, and to see to how many questions it is the answer.
p. 117

v. 7 Beloved, let us be loving one another, because love is from God; and everyone who is loving has been born of God and is knowing God.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The writer now returns to the subject of love which like faith in God's Son, is a product of the Spirit.

John addresses these Christians as "BELOVED" again. He is practicing what he preaches, and he begins the section with an exhortation:

"LET US BE LOVING ONE ANOTHER."

When His life is flowing through me, His love will be seen.

Following the exhortation, he gives the reason:

"BECAUSE LOVE IS FROM GOD,"

that is, from God, the originating source.

John is saying that I am only manifesting my relationship to God when I am loving others.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Just as a confession of the incarnate person of Christ marks one off as being activated by God, so does love since love comes from God.

John continues by saying:

"AND EVERYONE WHO IS LOVING HAS BEEN BORN OF GOD AND IS KNOWING GOD."

Love is that which marks those who have been "BORN OF GOD."

Those who are loving have "BEEN BORN OF GOD" and are "KNOWING" Him.

It is a genuine new birth that has issued in a relationship.

Philippians 3:10

that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;

John has used the phrase "BORN OF GOD" in:

chapter 2:29,

chapter 3:9,

chapter 5:1,

chapter 5:4,

and chapter 5:18.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Love stems from a regenerate nature and also from fellowship with God which issues in knowing Him.

1 John 2:3-5

And in this we are knowing that we know Him, if we are keeping His commandments. The one who is saying, "I have come to know Him," and is not keeping His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in this one. But whoever is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God has been brought to maturity. In this we are knowing that we are in Him.

Once I have been born into His family, it is my next responsibility to get to know God by a personal experience through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Flowing out of this fellowship is going to be a love that will be revealed to those around me.

It will be the fruitage of my union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

I cannot plan to be loving.

Revelation 2:4

But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

It is possible to:

be drifting out of fellowship,

and become:

lukewarm,

complacent,

and indifferent in the relationship.

Van Gorder says:

Before we can feel and express love, we must have a nature that loves. The Bible says, "God is love." It's part of His nature. Back in 1 John 1:5, John told us that God is light. The Lord's first recorded manifestation and words were in connection with light. "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). But note, He never said, "Let there be love, and there was love," for love is His nature. It can only be communicated, it cannot be created. It is expressed by self-sacrifice. It is unbought, unsought, unconditional, and undeserved. Such is the love of God!
p. 134

Dr. Mitchell says:

May I plead with your heart, let us love one another. There are hundreds of Christians who are lonely, longing for a little manifestation of love from other Christians. They might not be very loveable, but perhaps this is because they need love. I know it is easy for us to love somebody who loves us, but God loves us even when we are unlovely and unloveable. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us" (1 John 4:10). The very energy of God's nature to man is love.

Blaiklock records:

Jerome's story is well known: Saint John the Evangelist living in Ephesus in his extreme old age, when he was with difficulty carried into the church by his disciples had no strength for longer exhortation but could only say: "Little children, love one another." At length, the disciples and brethren who were there, wearied by the repetition said: "Master, why do you always say this?" He replied in words worthy of himself: "Because it is the Lord's command, and if that alone is done, it suffices."

v. 8 The one who is not loving has not come to know God, because God is love.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The absence of love is evidence that a person does not know God. Significantly, John did not say such a person is not born of God. Since God is love, intimate acquaintance with Him will produce love. Like light, love is intrinsic to the character and nature of God. And one who is intimately acquainted with God walks in His light.

Here is the CONTRAST with the preceding statement.

Back in verse 7:

"everyone who is loving has been born of God and is knowing God."

In chapter 1:5 we learn that God is light, and now we learn that He is love. We are to walk in the light, and here we are to be loving.

An evidence of my lack of relationship with the Father is my inability to love, because God is love.

You can see God's love in creation,
 you can see God's love in providing man with free will,
 you can see God's love in redemption's story and the sacrifice of His Son,
 and you can see God's love in the life beyond the grave.

Barclay raises the question:

Why should God create a world which was to bring Him nothing but trouble? The answer is that God created the world because creation is essential to the very nature of God. If God is love, it means that God cannot exist in lonely isolation. Love, to be love, must have someone to love, and someone to love it. God's act of creation was a necessity of His divine nature, because, being love, it was necessary for God to have someone whom He might love, and who might love Him.
 p. 117

(Pack Up Your Gloomees in a Great Big Box, then Sit on the Lid and Laugh! by Barbara Johnson)

Honest Hymn Singing

If I were entirely honest every time I sang a hymn or gospel song, here's how some of the old titles would come out:

I Surrender Some
 Oh, How I Like Jesus
 He's Quite a Bit to Me
 Take My Life and Let Me Be
 There Is Scattered Cloudiness in My Soul Today
 Where He Leads Me, I Will Consider Following
 Just As I Pretend to Be
 When the Saints Go Sneaking In

--Source unknown

* * *

YOU ARE NOT WHAT YOU THINK,
 BUT WHAT YOU THINK, YOU ARE.

* * *

May those who love us, love us.
 And those who don't love us,
 May God turn their hearts.
 And if He doesn't turn their hearts
 May He turn their ankles,
 So we will know them by their limping.

--Source unknown

* * *

RUB IT OUT, DON'T RUB IT IN.

Perhaps you have heard of the little boy who prayed, "Father, forgive us our trespasses, as we give it to those who trespass against us."
 p. 177

(Victory through Surrender by E. Stanley Jones)

Jesus is the Great Affirmation. He affirms the most radical proposition ever made to the mind of man, the proposition that the present unworkable world order, based upon greed and self-seeking, be replaced by God's order--the kingdom of God based upon self-giving service and love.
 p. 89

v. 9 In this the love of God was made clear in our case,
 because His Son the only begotten one God has sent into the world in order that we might live through Him.

How do I know God is love? Now John is going to reveal to us how we can know that God is love.

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

John 15:13

Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

"IN THIS THE LOVE OF GOD WAS MADE CLEAR IN OUR CASE."

The "IN THIS" is now defined in the remainder of the verse:

"BECAUSE HIS SON THE ONLY BEGOTTEN ONE GOD HAS SENT INTO THE WORLD IN ORDER THAT WE MIGHT LIVE THROUGH HIM."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary translates the phrase:

"only born one."

John 1:14

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:18

No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Our verse tells us that God the Father sent His Son into the world, and He sent Him to die:

"IN ORDER THAT WE MIGHT LIVE THROUGH HIM."

There are 3 THINGS that we know about the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ to the world:

1. 1 John 3:5

And you know that that one was made visible in order that He might take away sin; and sin is not in Him.

2. 1 John 3:8

The one who is doing sin is of the devil; because the devil is sinning from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was made visible, in order that He might destroy the works of the devil.

3. Now we see "BECAUSE HIS SON THE ONLY BEGOTTEN ONE GOD HAS SENT INTO THE WORLD IN ORDER THAT WE MIGHT LIVE THROUGH HIM."

And so He came:

1. TO TAKE AWAY SIN,
2. TO DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL,
3. "THAT WE MIGHT LIVE THROUGH HIM."

All the promises of God's love for us are signed in the blood of Jesus Christ.

O, help me, Lord, to understand
How great is Thy rich grace.
I should have died upon the cross,
But Thou didst take my place.

His purpose in coming was:

"IN ORDER THAT WE MIGHT LIVE THROUGH HIM."

Having shed His blood upon the cross, He now makes it possible for us to have eternal life through Him that we might live through Him.

A VISIT FROM GOD!

Charles Spurgeon wrote, "This great Prince entered our abode. This little planet of ours was made to burn with a superior light among its sister stars while the Creator sojourned here in human form. If for the first time you had heard of the visit of the Incarnate God to this world, you would be struck with a wonder which would last throughout eternity. This is the heart of the Gospel--the incomparable fact of the incarnation of the Son of God, His dwelling upon the earth, and His presentation of Himself as a sacrifice unto God for the sins of mankind."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

v.10 In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that He Himself loved us and sent His Son to be the satisfaction for our sins.

God the Father saw us in the bondage of sin under the penalty of death, and His heart went out to us in love.
He willingly sent His Son to die on the cross in our place.

The word "SATISFACTION" takes us back to chapter 2:2:

"And He Himself is satisfaction for our sins; not for ours only but also for the whole world."

Romans 3:25

Whom God hath sent forth to be a satisfaction, a satisfaction made effective in the shedding of His blood to be received and made effective in ourselves by faith;

The Bible Knowledge Commentary calls it:

... "an atoning sacrifice," "a propitiation." Nothing less than God's love in Christ is the model for the love Christians should have toward one another.

J. Vernon McGee says:

Propitiation means "mercy seat"; it is the same as the Old Testament word atonement, meaning "to cover." Let me make this as clear as I possibly can. In the tabernacle in the Holy of Holies there was the ark of the covenant. On top of that ark there was a highly ornamented lid crowned with two cherubim of solid gold, facing each other and looking down upon the lid of the box. The ark was a very beautiful thing, for it was all made of acacia wood, and covered inside and outside with gold. The lid was called the mercy seat. It was here that the nation of Israel met God in the person of the high priest. Once a year and only once a year, the high priest came into the Holy of Holies, bringing blood to be sprinkled on the mercy seat. That is what made it a mercy seat because they could meet God only in that way. God loved them, but He didn't simply slop over with love and say, "You can come to Me any way you want." This was the way they were to come to God: On that great Day of Atonement, the high priest went in and sprinkled the blood on the mercy seat. That meant that the nation was accepted by God for another year, and then they would need to go through it again the next year.

Now here in the verse before us, the Lord Jesus Christ is called "the propitiation for our sins" which means that He is the mercy seat for our sins. Jesus is Himself the mercy seat because He died down here for us--"Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). He has made expiation for our sins so that you and I can come with boldness to God's throne of grace. That throne is now a throne of grace because there is mercy there for us. That is what Christ did, and that is the way God demonstrated His love for us.

p. 806

Hebrews 9:11-14

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Dr. Mitchell says:

May I suggest this to your thinking? We manifest our love for God by our obedience to His Word. We found that in chapter two. In chapter three we learned that we manifest our love for each other by sacrifice. We do that through an imparted, divine love.

Here we find that God manifested or displayed His love for us by sending His only begotten Son into the world to die for us. Has it penetrated your heart that God loves you enough to send His Son to die for you? Do you know that God sent Jesus, heaven's best, to die on the cross to put away your sins by the sacrifice of Himself, and then God raised Him from the dead and put Him at His own right hand and gave Him glory so that your faith might be in God.

God the Father was satisfied because He raised God the Son from the dead.

John says in this verse, "If you want to see a real picture of love, it is not in our love for God but in His love for us. He is showing that love by sending His Son into the world to take care of the sin problem by making a sacrifice of Himself."

v.11 Beloved, if God so loved us also, we ourselves are under moral obligation to be loving one another.

God's love for us demands something from us in return.

John is saying we ourselves are under moral obligation to be loving one another.

This is the 3RD TIME in the epistle that we have run into this phrase: "UNDER MORAL OBLIGATION."

1. Back in chapter 2:6:

we are "under moral obligation" to be walking around even as Christ walked around.

2. The 2nd time we see it is in chapter 3:16:

we are "under moral obligation" on behalf of our brethren to lay down our souls.

3. Here in chapter 4:11:

we are "UNDER MORAL OBLIGATION TO BE LOVING ONE ANOTHER."

We can summarize it by saying we are to be:

LIVING like Christ,

LAYING down our lives like Christ,

And LOVING just like God in Christ has done for us.

You cannot plan it. It is the level of maturity that is revealed as a fruit from our fellowship with our Father.

This love is IMPARTIAL, it is INNOCENT, and it is INVOLVED.

It is IMPARTIAL in that it does not play favorites.

It is INNOCENT in that it has no ulterior motive.

It is INVOLVED in giving oneself sacrificially for others.

Westcott outlines things by saying:

St John has shewn that love must come from God Who has revealed in the Incarnation what it is essentially, the spontaneous communication of the highest good. He now considers what must be the effect upon men of this manifestation of love, which is the assurance and the revelation of the Divine Presence.

The character of God's love carries with it an obligation to love (v. 11) through the fulfilment of which by the Spirit we gain the highest possible assurance of fellowship with God. And the experience of the Church attests equally the love of God and the effects of His love among men.

p. 150

Mitchell says:

Our relationship with God makes us right in our relationship with men. I can know that I am in right relationship with God when I am in right relationship with my brethren. One is the outflow of the other. Our love for God is displayed by our love for the brethren. If this is not true, then love is just an empty word.

This love is illustrated in the marriage relationship.

Ephesians 5:25

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her;

(Victory through Surrender by E. Stanley Jones)

A colleague on an evangelistic tour in China said something to me which I've never forgotten. He said: "There can be no love between husband and wife unless there is mutual self-surrender. Love simply cannot spring up without that self-surrender to each other. If either one withholds the self, love cannot exist." He was profoundly right.
pp. 91-92

(The Grace Awakening by Charles R. Swindoll)

Here's a fresh thought: The wife is told to love her husband so much that she lives for him, but the husband is told to love his wife so much, he would die for her.

The wife is given the analogy of the Savior's life. But the husband is given the analogy of His death. I call that love, men. Each husband is to love his wife enough to die for her.

I can't remember how often, following funerals, I have stood alongside men who have just buried a wife. Almost without exception I've had them fall on my shoulder in tears and say, "Oh, Chuck, why did it take this to stop me and to show me what I had in my wife?"
p. 246

LOVE HUNGER

Theodor Reik tells of a youngster in an orphanage who constantly annoyed everyone. It seemed that she never did anything right, and no one liked her. One day her roommate told the matron that the girl had scrawled something on small scraps of paper and tied them to the limbs of a nearby tree. Hoping for an excuse to send her to a mental institution, the woman went outside and read one of the notes. In silence she handed it to an assistant as she hung her head in shame. It said, "Whoever finds this--I love you!" The child had a craving for compassion and understanding that had not been fulfilled. This accounted for her exasperating behavior.

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

v.12 No one has beheld God at any time; if we are loving one another, God is abiding in us, and His love has been brought to its fullness in us.

I have chosen this 12th verse as the KEY VERSE for:

"FELLOWSHIP IS GENERATING AGAPE LOVE."

Concentrating on my fellowship with the Father in turn produces a self-sacrificing type of love through me for other brothers and sisters in the family, as well as those who do not know Jesus Christ as Savior.

This is not something which I plan to do, but it is something that is produced through me as a result of my relationship with the Father.

I meet so many people who are concerned about their lack of love as Christians. Really, this lack of love points up a deeper problem of fellowship and relationship, because once that is right, there is going to be God's kind of love flowing from our lives for others.

The capacity to love grows with depth of fellowship.

We discerned this kind of love earlier in the epistle when John challenged the Christians in chapter 3:18 to "not be loving by word nor by the tongue, but in deed and in truth."

"NO ONE HAS BEHELD GOD AT ANY TIME."

John 1:18

No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

Jesus Christ has unfolded God to us.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

In verses 12-16 he shows how this love experienced among Christians can make God visible to them.

"NO ONE HAS BEHELD GOD AT ANY TIME; IF WE ARE LOVING ONE ANOTHER, GOD IS ABIDING IN US, AND HIS LOVE HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO ITS FULLNESS IN US."

It is true that no one has seen God at any time, but if we are loving one another, they are seeing God in us.

When this is true, then the love of God "HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO ITS FULLNESS [or to maturity] IN US."

There is a growing up in love, as we saw back in chapter 2, where John spoke to the "little children," the "young men," and the "fathers."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The idea of God's love reaching completeness in a believer may suggest a deep and full experience of that love.

He will speak of this again in verse 17 of this study.

Barclay says:

We cannot see God, because God is spirit; what we can see is the effect of God. We cannot see the wind, but we can see what the wind can do. We cannot see electricity, but we can see the effect that electricity produces. Now the effect of God is love. It is when God comes into a man that a man is clothed with the love of God and the love of men. God is known by His effect on that man. As it has been said, "A saint is a man in whom Christ lives again," and the best demonstration of God comes not from argument, but from a life of love. In such a life God is seen as He is seen nowhere else.
p. 115

Dr. Mitchell says:

Our love for God is displayed by obedience to His Word. Our love for each other is displayed by sacrifice.
p. 128

THE FELLOWSHIP OF LOVE

In 1765 John Fawcett was called to pastor a very small congregation at Wainsgate, England. He labored there diligently for 7 years, but his salary was so meager that he and his wife could scarcely obtain the necessities of life. Though the people were poor, however, they compensated for this lack by their faithfulness and warm fellowship. Then Dr. Fawcett received a call from a much larger church in London, and after lengthy consideration decided to accept the invitation. As his few possessions were being placed in a wagon for moving, many of his parishioners came to say goodbye. They realized that a man of his abilities could not soon be replaced. Others would gladly take the pastorate in the city, but few would sacrifice to work in their needy community. Even though the farewell sermon had already been preached, some of the people refused to accept the decision of their pastor. Once again they pleaded with him to reconsider. Touched by this great outpouring of love, he and his wife began to weep. Finally Mrs. Fawcett exclaimed, "O John, I just can't bear this. They need us so badly here." "God has spoken to my heart too!" he said. "Tell them to unload the wagon! We cannot break these wonderful ties of fellowship."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

O WHAT LOVE!

Years ago the ship known as The Express of Ireland sank, and many passengers were drowned. Among those who perished were 129 Salvation Army officers. When their bodies were recovered later, not one had on a lifebelt! Survivors told how these servants of God had reacted with calmness and courage when informed that the vessel was sinking. There were not enough life preservers to go around, so they bravely removed theirs and gave them to people they felt were not prepared to meet the Lord. Some witnesses told of hearing those gallant crusaders say, "We know the Savior, so we are ready to die!" Prayerfully, the courageous soldiers of the cross remained on deck until the waters engulfed them and they were welcomed into God's eternal Haven. No wonder General Booth's slogan, OTHERS, took on special significance when he sent that one-word telegram to every Salvation Army outpost in the world.

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

The questions that we are raising in this particular study are:
Are you walking in fellowship with the Father?

Is your heart open before the Lord?

Is your life generating AGAPE love?

Psalm 26:2, 3

Test me, O Lord, and try me,
examine my heart and my mind;
for your love is ever before me,
and I walk continually in your truth.

v.13 In this we are knowing that we are abiding in Him and
He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

It is the Spirit of God that generates this love in our lives that otherwise would not be there.

Galatians 5:22, 23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness,
faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

This is participation in the Spirit of God. When a believer loves, he is drawing that love from God's Spirit.

1 John 3:24

And the one who is keeping His commandments is abiding in Him, and He Himself is abiding in Him. And in this we are knowing that He is abiding in us, from the Spirit whom He gave to us.

1 John 4:2

In this you are knowing the Spirit of God: every spirit that is confessing Jesus

Christ has come in the flesh is from God.

Romans 5:5

and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says further:

Thus, both the faith and the love enjoined in the dual command of chapter 3:23 are products of the Spirit's operation in a believer. A believer's spirit-led obedience becomes the evidence that he is enjoying the mutual abiding relationship with God that John wrote about.

(Rediscovering Holiness by J. I. Packer)

We should think out our behavioral strategy with such situations directly in view. Thus, we should think of:

olove as the Christ-like reaction to people's malice;
 ojoy as the Christ-like reaction to depressing circumstances;
 opeace as the Christ-like reaction to troubles, threats, and invitations to anxiety;
 opatience as the Christ-like reaction to all that is maddening;
 okindness as the Christ-like reaction to all who are unkind;
 ogoodness as the Christ-like reaction to bad people and bad behavior;
 ofaithfulness and gentleness as the Christ-like reaction to lies and fury; and
 oself-control as the Christ-like reaction to every situation that goads you to lose
 your cool and hit out.

p. 174

(Success, Motivation, and the Scriptures by William H. Cook)

The road to success is always under construction.

Being filled with the Spirit is an inside job. If you insist on an outer experience, then you make emotions the king.

--Jack R. Taylor

Years ago someone stated, "I used to think a few men had a monopoly on the power of the Holy Spirit. I have since learned the Holy Spirit has a monopoly on a few men."
p. 85

As this love is being manifested in our lives, we are knowing that it is the work of the Holy Spirit in generating that love through us and this assures us that we belong to Him.

v.14 And we ourselves have beheld and we are bearing witness that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The apostle now reached a climactic point in his argument. This great truth can be put on display through the instrumentality of Christian love.

John is saying, "This is something that we have seen firsthand and we are testifying of this to you."

This takes us back to chapter 1:1:

"That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld and our hands touched, concerning the Word of Life--"

Jesus is called the Savior of the world.

John 4:42

and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."

I am sure John's mind goes back to that incident by the well when Christ talked to the woman who was lost in sin. And as a result of her faith, countless others of the Samaritans responded as well to the message.

We read back in:

chapter 2:2

And He Himself is satisfaction for our sins; not for ours only but also for the whole world.

v.15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God is abiding in Him--he is abiding in God.

Even these hated Samaritans were "ABIDING IN GOD." This hated, sinful woman was having God abide in her.

This was something he had seen with his own eyes.

Confessing to His deity and humanity assures us that we are not of antichrist, but that we are abiding in Jesus Christ.

This takes us back to:

chapter 4:2

In this you are knowing the Spirit of God: every spirit that is confessing Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.

There are 2 THINGS true about a person who is confessing that Jesus is the Son of God:

1. "GOD IS ABIDING IN HIM"
2. "HE [that is, the one believing] IS ABIDING IN GOD."

John 15:4

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

v.16 And we ourselves have known and have believed the love which God is having in our case. God is love, and the one who is abiding in love is abiding in God, and God is abiding in Him.

Westcott says:

In the two preceding sections St John has shewn what love is in its essence and origin, and how it necessarily becomes an inspiring power in the believer, answering to a confession of the Incarnation. He now developes more fully the activity of love; and this in two relations, as to the believer in himself (vv. 16b-18), and as to the believer in his dealings with his fellow-Christians (vv. 19-21). On the one side, it is by continuance in love that the divine fellowship is realized by the believer, while love is perfected in the divine fellowship, so that the last element of fear is cast out of the soul of him who loves (vv. 17-18). And on the other side love, which is of a divine origin (v. 19), must be fulfilled after a divine type, in love to the brethren (v. 20), according to the divine commandment (v. 21).
pp. 155-56

Here John repeats the fact that "GOD IS LOVE" from verse 8.

God has manifested His love in the original act of creation--creating us that we might have fellowship with Him, and that He might have an object of His love.

He has manifested this by giving us a free will to choose whether or not to follow Him.

He has manifested His love for us by His constant care for us.

He has shown us His love by the death of His Son upon the cross.

And He will yet ultimately show us His love by the life beyond that is going to be ours who know Christ as our Savior.

We can say that His love for us is manifested:

IN CREATION,

AT THE CROSS,

IN HIS CHOICE,

IN HIS CARE,

AND IN HIS COMING AGAIN.

John 14:23

Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him.

v.17 In this the love has been brought to completion which is in us, that as a result we are having boldness in the day of judgment; because just as that one is, also we ourselves are in this world.

His love has been brought to maturity when we no longer have to be afraid to have a freedom and confidence in His presence.

This takes us back to chapter 2:28

And now, little children, keep on abiding in Him, in order that whenever He is revealed, we might have boldness and not shrink away in shame from Him in His coming.

1 John 3:21

Beloved ones, if our heart is not condemning us, we are having boldness toward God.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary titles this section from verses 17-19 as:
"THE THEME REALIZED"

The writer now returns to the theme of boldness at the 2nd advent which he had introduced at chapter 2:28. At the midpoint of his argument, he had spoken of boldness in prayer (chapter 3:21, 22), but now he went a step further. Loving Christians can even have boldness at the judgment seat of Christ when their Lord returns.

The writer was not referring here to a final judgment in which the final destiny of each believer hangs in the balance. There is no such judgment for a believer.

John 5:24

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

A believer's life will be assessed at the judgment seat of Christ:

2 Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

1 Corinthians 3:13-15

each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary goes on to say:

Even on this solemn occasion a believer may have confidence. An unloving Christian is unlike His Lord and may anticipate rebuke and loss of reward at the judgment seat, but a loving believer is one in whom the work of God's love has been made complete. And the fruit of that is boldness before the One who will judge him. In this way he achieves the goal of confidence and no shame before Him that was expressed back in chapter 2:28.

(Laugh Again by Charles R. Swindoll)

The dictionary on my desk defines attitude as "a manner of acting, feeling, or thinking that shows one's disposition . . . opinion, mental set." That means that how we think determines how we respond to others. As a matter of fact, I have found that my view of others is a direct reflection of my own "mental set."

Our attitude toward the world around us depends upon what we are ourselves. If we are selfish, we will be suspicious of others. If we are of a generous nature, we will be likely to be more trustful. If we are quite honest with ourselves, we won't always be anticipating deceit in others. If we are inclined to be fair, we won't feel that we are being cheated. In a sense, looking at the people around you is like looking in a mirror. You see a reflection of yourself.

p. 77

Guy King, speaking on this 17th verse, says:

Love is not a merely static thing, but is forever growing deeper as the days go by--from the cupboard love of the cat, to the childish love of the infant, the callow love of the youth, the awakening love of the sweetheart, the deepening love of a married couple. . . . So does it come about, in the higher sphere, that the more we know God the more we love Him--and, incidentally, the more we love others. As the Christian should be always on the go, so should he also be always on the grow "as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby." We are to grow in all kinds of Christian excellencies--for instance, in grace, in knowledge, and in love. This love that the Epistle is so full of is a supernatural quality--"shed abroad in our hearts [not by our effort] by the Holy Ghost who is given unto us."
p. 95

v.18 Fear is not in love; but perfect love is casting out fear, because this fear is having to do with punishment. And the one who is fearing has not been brought to completion in this love.

If there is "FEAR," then there is something wrong in our lives that we are afraid of that we are not pleasing to the Lord.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

If a believer looks forward to with trepidation to the judgment seat of Christ, it is because God's love has not yet reached completeness in him.

"FEAR" has punishment. Fear carries with it a kind of torment that is its own punishment. Ironically, an unloving believer experiences punishment precisely because he feels guilty and is afraid to meet his judge; such fear prohibits a completed love. But a Christian who loves has nothing to fear and thus escapes the inner torment which a failure to love can bring.

1 Timothy 1:7

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Proverbs 29:25

Fear of man will prove to be a snare,
but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.

Norman Wright, in his book Communication: Key to Your Marriage, says:

The ability to love yourself and other people is the result of God reaching out and loving you first. When you accept God's forgiveness and acceptance you experience His love. But for many people right here is where the "catch" comes in. God doesn't cause the problems, we Christians do. Deep down, we really don't believe God accepts us--and the result is that we really don't accept ourselves.

But if Scripture plainly says that God forgives and accepts you, why go on rejecting yourself? Why reject what God has accepted? And not only has God accepted you, but He accepts you unconditionally. God attaches no strings to your relationship with Him, so why should you? Why not drop your guard as far as God is concerned? Relax in His presence and your confidence in yourself--as well as in Him--will grow.
pp. 73-74

As John points out:

"FEAR IS NOT IN LOVE; BUT PERFECT LOVE IS CASTING OUT FEAR."

So let it happen. Let God love you His way with no conditions and no improvements on your part to make yourself worthy of God's love.

If you try to shape up for God and be worthy of His love, you play the same game with Him that you play with others, especially your mate.

You set a standard of what you think is lovable, and when you can't reach it or your mate does not reach it, you really fail in your love.

Fear casts out or suppresses the love you once had for yourself and others.

Larry Richards, in his book Becoming One in the Spirit, says:

This unconditional, worth-asserting love is a different kind of love. . . . This is a freeing love. Knowing this love, we do not have to fear, because we know our acceptance is not based on our efforts. We don't have to prove ourselves over and over. We are of worth as persons. Duty and struggle are replaced by the joy for returning the love of Him who loves us. With our motivation changed, with the focus shifted from us and our efforts to God and His love, we grow and change.
p. 53

(The Signature of Jesus: On the Pages of Our Lives
by Brennan Manning)

"The opposite of conversion is aversion. The other side of metanoia is paranoia. Paranoia is usually understood in psychological terms. It is characterized by fear, suspicion, and flight from reality. Paranoia usually results in elaborate illusions and self-deception. In the biblical context paranoia implies more than emotional or mental imbalance. It refers to an attitude of being, a stance of the heart. Spiritual paranoia is a flight from God and from our true selves. It is an attempt to escape from personal responsibility. It is the tendency to avoid the cost of discipleship and to seek out an escape route from the demands of the gospel. Paranoia of the spirit is an attempt to deny the reality of Jesus in such a way that we rationalize our behavior and choose our own way."
p. 91

(Jumping Hurdles, Hitting Glitches, Overcoming Setbacks
by Steve Brown)

Do you ever feel helpless? I can identify with the fifty-year-old pastor who said, "When I was young I prayed that God would allow me to win the world for Christ. When I was thirty I prayed, 'Oh, God, may I win my city.' When I was forty I prayed, 'Lord, let me win the people in my church.' And now I pray, 'Lord, help me not to lose too many.'"
p. 144

We all feel helpless at times, and for good reason--we are helpless. (Did you hear about the psychiatrist who was counseling the man who had an inferiority complex? He said to the man, "Sir, the reason you have an inferiority complex is because you are inferior.")
p. 146

v.19 As for us, let us be loving because He Himself first loved us.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

His love for God originated in God's love for him

Here John makes the plea on the basis of the previously stated "moral obligation." We are under moral obligation to be loving one another because of His love for us.

1 Peter 1:22

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,

Romans 12:9

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.

Stott says:

Our very capacity to love, whether the object of our love be God or our neighbour is due entirely to His prior love for us and in us.

Barclay says:

Human love is not a product of the human heart; it is not something which a man could create for himself; it is the response to the divine love of God.

p. 116

(Who You are When No One's Looking by Bill Hybels)

I did not realize how much I had bought into today's misplaced values until, during my junior year in college, I was shocked awake by a professor's statement: "True personal fulfillment never comes through self-gratification."

"That is the boldest, most radical, most countercultural statement I have ever heard," I thought. "It flies in the face of everything I've been taught." But, I began to realize, it does not fly in the face of Jesus' teachings.

pp. 83-84

v.20 If anyone should say, "I am loving God," and is hating his brother, he is a liar; for the one who is not loving his brother whom he has seen, he is not able to go on loving God whom he has not seen.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The high-water mark of the epistle was reached in chapter 4:11-19. John often pointed up false claims by using the word "liar" (1:10; 2:4, 22; 4:20; 5:10). Love for the unseen God can only be concretely expressed by love for one's visible Christian brother.

You cannot love the one without the other.

If you are truly loving God, it is going to show up in your relationship with people.

Not only is this person a "LIAR," he is also walking in the darkness.

1 John 2:11

But the one who is hating his brother is in the darkness and he is walking around in the darkness, and he does not know where he is going because the darkness blinded his eyes.

Barclay says:

As C. H. Dodd finely puts it: "The energy of love discharges itself along lines which form a triangle, whose points are God, self, and neighbour." If God loves us, we are bound to love each other, because it is our destiny and our highest aim to reproduce the life of God in humanity, and the life of eternity in time. John says, with an almost crude bluntness, that a man who claims to love God, and who hates his brother, is nothing other than a liar. The only way to prove that we love God is to love the men whom God loves. The only way to prove that God is within our hearts is constantly to show the love of men within our lives.
pp. 116-17

Stott says:

Love for God does not only express itself in a confident attitude towards Him, devoid of fear, but in a loving concern for our fellow Christians. The perfect love that casts out fear, casts out hatred also. If God's love for us is made perfect when we love one another so is our love for God. John does not mince his words. If what a man is contradicts what he says, he is a liar. To claim to know God and have fellowship with God while we walk in the darkness of disobedience is to lie. To claim to possess the Father while denying the deity of the Son is to lie. To claim to love God while hating the brethren is to lie also. These are the three black lies of the Epistle, moral, doctrinal and social.

"IF ANYONE SHOULD SAY, 'I AM LOVING GOD,' AND IS HATING HIS BROTHER, HE IS A LIAR; FOR THE ONE WHO IS NOT LOVING HIS BROTHER WHOM HE HAS SEEN, HE IS NOT ABLE TO GO ON LOVING GOD WHOM HE HAS NOT SEEN."

Now John gives us the reason for his opening statement in the last phrases of this verse:

"FOR THE ONE WHO IS NOT LOVING HIS BROTHER WHOM HE HAS SEEN, HE IS NOT ABLE TO GO ON LOVING GOD WHOM HE HAS NOT SEEN."

How can you love that which is invisible if you cannot love that which is visible?

The expression of love on the HORIZONTAL is only a manifestation of love on the VERTICAL.

(Victory through Surrender by E. Stanley Jones)

We can see ten bubbles arising to the surface of the lives of the disciples from the unsundered selves. (1) Selfish egoism--they quarrelled over first places. (2) Self-righteousness--"though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended," a "they" . . . "I" relationship. (3) Resentments--"Shall we bid fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" (4) Spiritual impotence--"Why could we not cast it out?" (5) Critical attitudes--"Why this waste?" (6) Group bigotry--"We forbade them for they followed not us." (7) Race prejudice--"Send her (a Syro-Phoenician) away, for she crieth after us." (8) Selfish acquisitiveness--"We have left all to follow Thee, what do we get?" (9) A dislike of self-sacrifice--"Be it far from Thee, Lord, this shall never be." (10) Fear--behind closed doors for fear."
pp. 94-95

(What Makes a Man? by Bill McCartney)

These definitions of a friend are among my favorites: "A friend never gets in your way unless you are falling." From the Bible: "There is a friend that sticks closer than a brother." I like this one: "A friend is someone who when you make a fool of yourself doesn't think you've done a permanent job." Robert Coles, the Harvard psychiatrist, was in my hometown of Charlotte recently. He said, "The best practice of psychotherapy is two friends getting to know one another and sharing with one another."
p. 23

(To the End of the Race by George McDaniel Cole)

WHAT IS A FRIEND?

A friend is a person of great understanding
 Who shares all our hopes and our schemes,
 A companion who listens with infinite patience
 To all of our plans and our dreams,
 A true friend can make all our cares melt away
 With the touch of a hand or a smile,
 And with calm reassurance make everything brighter,
 And life always seem more worthwhile--
 A friend shares so many bright moments of laughter
 At even the tiniest thing--
 What memorable hours of lighthearted gladness
 And pleasure this sharing can bring!
 A friend is a cherished and precious possession
 Who knows all our hopes and our fears,
 And someone to treasure deep down in our hearts
 With a closeness that grows through the years!

p. 30

v.21 And this commandment we are having from Him, that the one who is loving God should also be loving his brother.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

God's command has joined together the two kinds of love.

1 John 2:3

And in this we are knowing that we know Him, if we are keeping His commandments.

1 John 3:23, 24

And this is His commandment, that we should believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and loving one another, as He gave us commandment. And the one who is keeping His commandments is abiding in Him, and He Himself is abiding in Him. And in this we are knowing that He is abiding in us, from the Spirit whom He gave to us.

1 John 5:3

For this is the love of God, that we are keeping His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome (difficult to fulfill).

John 13:34, 35

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

When I have a normal relationship with Jesus Christ, it will be manifested in my love for the Father, and it will also be revealed in my love for my brother or sister in Christ.

(Principle-Centered Leadership by Stephen R. Covey)

Interpersonal quality means giving those twelve hugs a day--physical hugs, emotional hugs, verbal hugs to the people around us--so that those deposits are constantly being made.

p. 254

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Love for one another is a normal outgrowth of a relationship with the God of love.

LESSON #2: Love is a manifestation of the fact that we have experienced the new birth.

LESSON #3: The absence of love is an indication of the fact that we have never come to know God.

LESSON #4: We have learned that Jesus Christ came to take away sin, to destroy the works of the devil, and so that we might live through Him.

LESSON #5: Because of God's unconditional love for us, we have a moral obligation to be loving one another.

LESSON #6: The way people see God residing in our lives is by the love they see flowing from our lives.

LESSON #7: Fellowship with the Father is generating the fruit of agape love.

LESSON #8: Love is a fruitage of the Spirit who indwells us when we become His children.

LESSON #9: As we live with Christ, our love grows more perfect and complete.

LESSON #10: Fear is a manifestation of incomplete or immature love.

LESSON #11: If love is filling and flowing from our hearts, we can have boldness in the day of judgment.

(Never Give Up by Don Hawkins)

What a tragedy! Sir Winston Churchill--the man whose encouraging words, "Never give in, never, never give in" galvanized and motivated a nation--lay on his deathbed. As he thought about the conditions in the world in which he had played such a heroic role, he sighed, "There is no hope."

And with that he died.

p. 266

(Bold Love by Dan B. Allender & Tremper Longman, III)

To forgive another means to cancel the debt of what is owed in order to provide a door of opportunity for repentance and restoration of the broken relationship.

There are many elements of forgiveness, including three aspects that will be highlighted in the next three chapters. Forgiveness involves hungering for restoration, revoking revenge, and pursuing goodness. If we are to understand what it means to forgive another person, we must be clearer what it means for God to express these three elements of mercy to us.

p. 160

Forgiveness is far more than a business transaction; it is the sacrifice of a heartbroken Father who weeps over the loss of His child and longs to see the child restored to life and love and goodness.

p. 163

If forgiveness, fulfilled in reconciliation, is to occur, evil must repent with clarity and conviction.

p. 251

We have been considering together the fact that:

"FELLOWSHIP IS GENERATING AGAPE LOVE."

Our KEY VERSE has been verse 12:

"No one has beheld God at any time; if we are loving one another, God is abiding in us, and His love has been brought to its fullness in us."

F. B. Meyer says:

When there is faith in the Lord Jesus, there will always be love toward all the saints, because faith is the faculty of taking God into the heart. Faith is God-receptiveness. Faith appropriates the nature of God as the expanded lung does the mountain air or as the child does the parent's gift. Faith, like a narrow channel, conveys God's ocean fullness into the lagoons of human need. Wherever, therefore, faith links the believer to the Lord Jesus, His nature, which is love pure as mountain dew begins to flow into the waiting, expectant heart, and to flow out then towards all the saints. The love of God knows no favorite sect, singles out no special school, but as the sun and wind and nature breathe and shine alike on all, it is cosmopolitan and universal. You cannot imprison it within the walls of any one Christian community. It laughs at your restrictions and with equal grace raises up witnesses and standard bearers from all parts of the church. Thus, as we become more like God, our love overleaps the barrier of our little pond and passes out to greet all saints and to extend itself on the great world of men.

STUDY #10 - 1 John 4:7-21

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

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