

ii. We, as God's "little children," are to make Him known through our love one for another.

iii. John 13:34-35

B. Love precedes proclamation.

Jobes: "Only those who exhibit this love are qualified to testify to the supreme act of God's love, the sending of his Son as Savior of the world." (ZECNT, 188)

i. Gospel preaching is an invitation into a shared life (fellowship) and that fellowship is one of sharing in the love between the Father and the Son (1:3).

ii. John 17:21

C. "Live the gospel" precedes logically "advance the gospel."

LIVE THE STORY

The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- How does John make it clear that orthopraxy (right practice) is essential to orthodoxy (right belief/doctrine)?
- In the statement, "God is love," how different might it read to put the emphasis on the word "is" vs. the word "love"? ... the word "God"?
- Why is human love unable to tell us what God is like?
- How can human beings know what love is?
- What is a key reason in the context of 1 John that one must believe in God's Son, Jesus Christ in order that God would live in them and they in God (4:15)?
- Did it surprise you to hear that the Gospel comes with obligations? Is that true? What does our text say?
- Why must loving the Gospel logically precede living the Gospel?
- Why must living the Gospel logically precede advancing the Gospel?

Light, Life, Love – the Gospel we heard from Him God is Love

Jerry Cisar — November 1, 2020

Text: 1 John 4:7-16

Keyword: Love

Introduction

A believer must not only believe the Gospel, a believer must also apply its meaning in life, or they simply don't know that truth at all.

Jonathan Pennington: "Bible reading is not just informative, but it must be transformative; otherwise its meaning is not truly understood."

A. *Orthopraxy and orthodoxy are inseparable.*

B. "Love one another," is not merely an implication of the Gospel, but is essential to the Gospel *itself*.

I. God is Love (7-8, 16)

A. *God is love.*

i. "God's is love" is not an abstract meditation on the essence of God's being.

ii. Is the command to love one another merely an *implication* of the Gospel?

Calvin: "Whosoever boasts that he has God and loves not the brethren, his falsehood is proved by this one thing, because he separates God from himself."

iii. God can never be separated from His acting in love.

Miroslav Volf: “‘Love’ describes all God's *dealings* with the... world, from its creation, through redemption, to consummation. The Christian Bible makes clear, in manifold ways, that, whatever else the world is, it is a theater of divine love - Love whose face shines on creatures; Love whose anger sometimes burns against their all-too-prevalent nastiness; Love who, divine anger notwithstanding, bears human sin and enmity so as to return us back to our original good.”

B. John says all this in the context of telling us to test the spirits.

i. Matthew 7:15-20

ii. You can't know the fruit of those who come to you through the internet and aren't available for observation.

C. *No orthopraxy, no orthodoxy. Know orthopraxy, know orthodoxy.*

II. This is How Love Was Made Known (9-10, 14-15)

A. “The God Who revealed Himself through Jesus Christ laying down His life for us, *is*, love.”

i. 1 John 3:16

ii. 1 John 4:10

a) We are made in God's image, so love is woven into our being. However, because sin has marred God's creation thoroughly, we rarely interpret human love properly.

b) “Loved ones, let us love one another” (7) reminds us why we *can* love before telling us *to* love!

B. Vs. 10 explains why v15 is essential:

i. If one does not acknowledge Jesus as God's Son they deny the love of God; they do not know the love of God.

ii. It does not begin with, “And so we should lay down our lives for one another.”

C. We must “love the Gospel” before we can “live the Gospel,” but, having loved the Gospel, we *must* live it!

III. The Gospel's Obligation to Love (11)

A. The Gospel Obligates Us

i. 1 John 3:16

a) “ought”

b) Christ's death for us puts us in debt, obligates us to lay down our lives for one another.

ii. Loving our neighbor is an *obligation* of the Gospel.

B. Victor Hugo's Les Misérables

“Do not forget, never forget, that you have promised to use this money [think, grace] in becoming an honest man.”

“Jean Valjean, my brother, you no longer belong to evil, but to good. It is your soul that I *buy* from you; I withdraw it from black thoughts and the spirit of perdition, and I give it to God.”

i. Redeemed (1 Cor. 6:19-20)

ii. When we are saved by the bountiful grace of God through Jesus Christ Who gave Himself for us, we have made a promise, we have therefore an obligation, to love one another.

IV. This is How God is Made Known (12-13)

A. John 1:18 w/ 1 John 4:12

i. Jesus the unique Son of God made God known.