

# THURSDAY 03 November 2022 "The Love Standard"

## 1 John 4:9-13

*I imagine you hear the word "LOVE" many times each day in all types of different contexts.*

I live in a community where many people have pets, especially dogs, and they walk their dogs several times each day. Some speak with their dogs, as they walk, as if they were their own children. Some cuddle with their cats or dogs and speak very loving things to their pets. I know some people who let their pets climb in bed with them at night!

Of course, you and I see parents and grandparents with their kids and grandkids every day and often we observe lots of expressions of love. If you live in a part of the world which is a wedding destination, then of course you are surrounded by love celebrations!

So, I wonder what you would write as one, concise statement which defines **LOVE**:

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About 2000 years ago, John the apostle and friend of Jesus, wrote this to Christians all across the Roman empire, during a very tumultuous time of great persecution for Christians and Jews: ***"This is how God showed His LOVE among us: God sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love: not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."*** (1 John 4:9,10)

Now friends, I'm going to ask you to re-read, very slowly, those two sentences that John wrote. *In John's day, and in ours, true love, helpful love, mutually beneficial love, selfless love, sacrificial love was and is very, very rare.* John wants us to consider that the ultimate standard, the ultimate example of the very best love is actually two great acts of love. Do you see them in those two sentences?

*First, it is the love of Almighty God the Father, sending His only Son Jesus to planet earth, to live among a human race He has been creating one person at a time. But Jesus wasn't sent from heaven to earth on vacation! **Jesus was sent to live the ultimate contrast... every day.** God's holiness in contrast with humanity's sinfulness, wickedness, and Satan's evil which permeates our world and our lives. God's selfless, holy love, in contrast with humanity's manipulative, sadistic, selfish love. God's loving acceptance in contrast with humanity's rejection, abandonment, and abuse. But God not only sent His holy, pure Son Jesus to live in a wicked world, but God sent Jesus on a Redemption mission which would require Jesus to submit Himself to the injustice, the horrific terrorism, the excruciating execution of humanity through crucifixion. **It was the only way perfect Jesus could pay the full atonement price so sinful, wicked humanity could be rescued from our sin bondage and sin condemnation to eternity in hell!***

*But the second remarkable example of this outrageous love is seen in Jesus, the Son of God.* Jesus had to agree to leave His glory and majesty in perfect heaven, to come and be born into a human baby body, in a stable in Bethlehem. Jesus had to agree to live for a time as a child refugee in Egypt, and then to be assumed, in His earthly hometown of Nazareth, to be the illegitimate child of Mary and Joseph. No amount of explanation, no amount of debate or insistence could convince anyone of the miraculous conception of Mary by the Holy Spirit.

Further, Jesus had to agree to God's plan that He would NOT own a home, nor would He marry and have a family, nor would he ever run for public office or in any other way seek human accolades. Rather Jesus would serve His Father's self-sacrificing plan by walking from town to town to proclaim God's truth and by doing everything His heavenly Father instructed Jesus to do, at all times, in all situations... even if Jesus would have preferred to do or say something else. Jesus told the people: **"The Father who sent me commanded Me to say all that I have spoken. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told Me to say."** (John 12:49,50) Of course, as John explained, *the ultimate example of God style love was Jesus' full obedience to the Father's Redemption plan by His willingness to go all the way to the cross, allowing humans He had created, to crucify Him, giving His life as an atonement sacrifice for our sins.*

But friends, notice please that John makes it very clear to the Christians in his day, and it is equally applied to our lives today, that *anyone with an authentic relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ God's Son, will pour out from us that very same type of love to other people, as our act of worship and our gratitude to God!* **"Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another [as God the Father and Jesus the Son have loved us] God lives in us and His love is made complete in us."** (1 John 4:11,12)

Do you see, my friends, that an evidence that we understand both God the Father's love sacrifice by sending His son Jesus, as well as our understanding of God the Son Jesus' personal love sacrifice, is this: *we receive that love of God; we allow God to change us through His love power; and then we in turn pour out God's love from ourselves to others?*

*Do you also see that both our experiencing this love from God as well as our extending this great love to other people are NOT reliant upon our having seen Jesus with our own physical eyes, nor having witnessed His crucifixion, nor seeing the resurrected Jesus.* Our faith in God strong enough, we don't need to SEE God or Jesus to believe it all to be true and experience the genuine life transformation that God promises and both Jesus and the Holy Spirit accomplish in us as we experience...

- \* God's forgiveness from our sin.
- \* God's birthing of a new, holy, spiritual nature in us.
- \* God's restoration of our relationship with Him and
- \* God the Holy Spirit taking up residence within us.

Now did you get all that my friends? *It's very powerful and it is ONLY found in the miracle of authentic Christian faith, so don't rush past this friends, without making sure you understand and are experiencing these life changing truths!*

Let's remember John is writing to respond to the uncertainty many people had regarding their salvation. Since they'd not seen Jesus, they wondered if the Gospel was really true and their salvation was authentic? Some were afraid it was all a myth, they needed tangible, practical evidence. So here John was again giving them something tangible: *IF the selfless, sacrificial, unconditional love of God was in them and poured out of them to other people, even though they lived surrounded by anger, hatred, violence, and death, and even though they themselves were often on the receiving end of that hatred... God's love in them was proof of the authenticity of their Salvation!* That unconditional God love in them and pouring out of them to a broken world, was evidence it was all true and they were living it.

In closing, consider this summary statement from John in verse 13: ***"We know that we live in God and God in us, because God has given us of His Holy Spirit."*** (1 John 4:13) So once again, a powerful evidence of your authentic salvation is *the Holy Spirit of God alive in you, guiding you, teaching you, convicting you of sin and helping you love others, even in a pain filled world!*

Oh my, let's praise God for these truths! And here's a wonderful worship song to help us:

**Today's Scripture is 1 John 4:9-13.**