

**Text:** Various

**Title and Truth:** Love One Another

**Date/Location:** Wednesday 6/24/2020 at FBC

## Introduction

When you search for the words related to “love” in the Bible (loved, loving, lovingkindness, etc.) you find over 600 occurrences. 291 of those are in the New Testament, with the apostles John and Paul easily at the front of the pack in terms of number of occurrences.

Many of these uses refer to the love of people for God (or how we do not love God). This repeated emphasis tells you something about God and mankind, doesn't it?

## I. The Scriptural Command

A search of all the Bible verses that use the words “love one another” (not necessarily in that order) gives 21 verses, as follows. Read them and let them sink in.

Jn. 13:34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you **love one another**; as I have **loved** you, that you also **love one another**."

Jn. 13:35 "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have **love for one another**."

Jn. 15:12 "This is My commandment, that you **love one another** as I have **loved** you."

Jn. 15:17 "These things I command you, that you **love one another**."

Rom. 12:10 *Be* kindly affectionate to **one another** with brotherly **love**, in honor giving preference to **one another**;

Rom. 13:8 Owe no **one** anything except to **love one another**, for he who **loves another** has fulfilled the law.

Gal. 5:13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through **love** serve **one another**.

Eph. 4:2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with **one another in love**,

1 Thess. 3:12 And may the Lord make you increase and abound in **love to one another** and to all, just as we *do* to you,

- 1 Thess. 4:9 But concerning brotherly **love** you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to **love one another**;
- Heb. 10:24 And let us consider **one another** in order to stir up **love** and good works,
- 1 Pet. 1:22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere **love** of the brethren, **love one another** fervently with a pure heart,
- 1 Pet. 3:8 Finally, *all of you be* of **one** mind, having compassion for **one another**; **love** as brothers, *be* tenderhearted, *be* courteous;
- 1 Pet. 4:8 And above all things have fervent **love** for **one another**, for "**love** will cover a multitude of sins."
- 1 Pet. 5:14 Greet **one another** with a kiss of **love**. Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.
- 1 Jn. 3:11 For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should **love one another**,
- 1 Jn. 3:23 And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and **love one another**, as He gave us commandment.
- 1 Jn. 4:7 Beloved, let us **love one another**, for **love** is of God; and everyone who **loves** is born of God and knows God.
- 1 Jn. 4:11 Beloved, if God so **loved** us, we also ought to **love one another**.
- 1 Jn. 4:12 No **one** has seen God at any time. If we **love one another**, God abides in us, and His **love** has been perfected in us.
- 2 Jn. 1:5 And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we **love one another**.

Now, let us ask the usual questions about these instructions. Who, what, where, when, why, how? The when and where are pretty obvious—all the time and everywhere.

## II. When?

We could probably spend some more time thinking about the **when** question. For example, is it when there is a need? Or is it also when there is not a need? When there is harmony? When there is some kind of discomfort or disagreement? When times are good? When times are bad? In season or out of season?

### III. Who?

**Who** specifically are we talking about? In the verses cited above, basically all the references speak to the love of a believer for brothers and sisters in Christ.

Yet this does not exhaust our love-responsibility. We must also love our enemies (Matt 5:43-44, Luke 6:27, 35). We must also specially love our children and husbands (Titus 2:4). We must love our wives (Eph. 5:25, 28, Col. 3:19).

### IV. Why?

**Why** does the Lord tell us to **love one another**?

1. So others know we are followers of Christ (John 13:35)
2. We are commanded (John 15:12, 17; 1 John 3:23; 2 John 1:5).
3. It fulfills the moral law of God (Rom. 13:8).
4. It is a natural outworking of God's work in the believer's life (1 Thess. 3:12, 4:9; 1 John 4:12). Love is from God (1 John 4:7) and it is a mark of the new birth and knowledge of God.
5. It helps stir up other people to love one another (Heb. 10:24).

### V. How? What?

**How** exactly do we **love one another**? **What** are various ways we can do that? **What** kinds of things do we do to express that **love**?

1. Generally God's desire for the measure of our love for one another is "as I have loved you" (John 13:34, 15:12). **Eph. 5:2** instructs us to walk in love as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us. Love cannot therefore be selfish love. It has to be selfless love, love that puts others ahead of ourselves. The needs of your spouse, children, family, church family, extended family, acquaintances, etc. are to be ahead of your own.
2. Another bar to measure against is if our love is "as brothers" (1 Peter 3:8). This instruction falls flat if we read it as an analogy for our human sibling relationships, which can be quite distant in some of our families. That does not seem to have been the case with family structures in societies where there was not as much mobility as in ours. Prosperity also makes us less inter-dependent upon family, or even upon others generally.
3. Yet another bar to compare with is the one in **Leviticus 19:18, 34** and **Matthew 22:39**: "love your neighbor as yourself."

4. Christian love prefers one another to ourselves (Rom 12:10).
5. *Fervently* and *purely* and *sincerely* are adverbs that describe the kind of love that we have toward each other (1 Peter 1:22, 4:8). Fervent refers to the quality of persevering, not wavering in devotion, constant. Like Jesus continuing to pray in the garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:44) and the church's prayer for Peter's release from prison (Acts 12:5).
6. 1 John 3:18 specifies our love must be "in deed and in truth," not merely in word only.
7. Natural family love lays upon us the responsibility to support our family in the way that God calls, particularly for men to support their family (1 Tim. 5:8).
8. Some practical thoughts: your homework assignment is to fill in the many blanks left here. What exactly is included in loving our Christian brothers and sisters?

## **Conclusion**

We have to ask the honest question of ourselves: "Do I love myself more than my family and more than my fellow believers? Does my self-love override my love for others in the church or make it so that I don't recognize when I am not loving others?" Sin in our hearts shows itself when we fail to love one another as Christ loved us.

A complementary message could be given, entitled "Love God." We could visit verses like Deut. 6:5, 10:12, 11:22, 19:9, 30:16, Joshua 22:5, Matthew 22:37. This is also such an important topic perhaps we should do just that!

MAP