

BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF ERIE
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**WHY WE MUST LOVE OR
LOVE ON THE LINE**

Series from 1 John on Genuine Christianity

1 John 4:7-11

It is told by historian and early church father, **Jerome** that when the apostle John was in his extreme old age, he was so weak that he had to be carried into the church meetings. At the end of the meeting, he would be helped to his feet to give a word of exhortation to the church. Invariably, he would repeat, “*Little children, let us love one another.*” The disciples began to grow weary of the same words every time, and they finally asked him why he always said the same thing over and over. He replied, “*Because it is the Lord’s commandment, and if this only is done, it is enough*”

Thus far we have learned love for the brethren has been shown as proof of fellowship with God (1 John 2:7-11); then it has been presented as proof of sonship (1 John 3:10-14). In the earlier passage, love for the brethren is a matter of light or darkness; in the second it is a matter of life or death. But in *Vs. 7-11*, we get down to the very foundation of the matter. Here we discover why love is such an important part of the life that is real. Love is a valid test of our fellowship and our sonship because “God is love.”

We also note that love is not opposed to truth. John has just spent six verses warning us (4:1-6), “do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” He did not say, “Let’s just set aside those points of doctrine where we disagree and come together where we do agree, loving those who differ on these matters.” Because these men denied essential truth about Jesus Christ, John calls them false prophets, whose teaching is the spirit of antichrist. Love does not mean that we set aside the truth for the sake of unity.

He tells us why we *must* love one another

**I. WE SHOULD LOVE ONE ANOTHER BECAUSE GOD IS LOVE
(4:7-8)**

Twice (4:7, 11) John practices what he preaches by addressing his readers as “beloved.” *Biblical love is a self-sacrificing, caring commitment that shows itself in seeking the highest good of the one loved.* At its heart, biblical love is a *commitment*, and thus it may be **commanded**. But it is not a commitment without feeling but a *caring* commitment.

In other words, biblical love involves delight, not just duty. Also, this caring commitment is not just an attitude, but an action: it *shows itself* in deeds.

John shows us the source of genuine love and then draws an inevitable conclusion:

- A. God is the source of genuine love, because it comes from His very nature.*
- B. God’s true children display His nature.*

**II. GOD SHOWED HIS LOVE BY SENDING HIS SON AS THE
PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS (4:9-10)**

John makes two points in verses 9-10:

- A. God’s love is seen in us in that He sent His Son so that we might live through Him (4:9).* Exhibit A of His great love that sent His only begotten Son to this wicked world. “Only begotten” focuses on the uniqueness of Jesus in relationship to the Father.
- B. Love is truly seen, not in our loving God, but in His loving us by sending His Son to be the propitiation for our sins (4:10).* “Propitiation” means *. to satisfy God’s justice and wrath toward our sin, to cover our sin with His precious Blood*

III. THEREFORE, WE OUGHT TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER (4:11)

“Ought” implies obligation or commandment. That love can be commanded shows that it is not primarily a feeling, but rather an action based on commitment. As I said, love is not devoid of feeling, but it is not based on it. We must love others, or we are being disobedient to God. Implicit in what John is saying here is that we must love those who may not be especially lovable or easy to love.

If you’re having trouble loving someone, remember that God loved you while you were yet a sinner.