

THE LOGIC OF LOVING ONE ANOTHER

1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. (NASB)

I. IF GOD LOVED US.

A. The reasoning of the Spirit is undeniably strong. If God "so loved us" that He sent His Son to be the Propitiation for our sins, ought not we, the loved ones, reciprocate by loving one another? If not, we are choosing to scorn those God loves, thereby confirming we do not have His nature.

B. Our obligation to love one another is twofold:

1. As the "offspring of God," we are in His "image." We are therefore morally obligated to love one another.

2. We are a new creation in Christ Jesus, and are made "partakers of the Divine nature." For this reason, we will find the greatest benefit and fullest expression of that nature in loving others also possessing that the Divine nature.

C. When we consider the "manner" (3:1) in which God "loved us," what possible reason can be adduced for failing to love the brethren? God loved us when we were "dead in sins," "enemies," "without hope," and "carried away" by our iniquities. His love was not a response to our kindness to Him.

D. Nothing has shed as much light on God's view of man as the mission and work of His only begotten Son. The investment is so staggering we simply cannot take it all in. No matter how long and extensively we ponder God's love for us, it seems we have only touched the hem of the garment.

E. Our love for one another, while not in the same measure as that of our God, is to be of the same kind or manner. Thus we are admonished, **Ephesians 5:1-2** Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. (NASB)

F. It is the manner of the Spirit to reason with us in this way. God and Christ are to be our considerations when thinking about loving one another. When those incentives are taken seriously, it becomes totally UNreasonable to NOT love the brethren. Thus it is written, **Romans 15:7** Wherefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God. (NASB)

II. WE ALSO OUGHT.

A. It must not be viewed as a mere obligation that goes against our nature, but is necessary anyway. That is the manner of Law, but grace reasons differently. While the word "ought" does carry the idea of obligation or necessity, its emphasis is unique. The obligation is owing to the nature of life in Christ. In the New Covenant, it is utterly unreasonable to act contrary to what we "ought" to do. Spiritual life cannot be expressed unspiritually, or in violation of the Divine nature. Such expressions are always of the flesh, and never of the Spirit.

B. By saying "we ought to love one another," the Spirit is saying there really is no room for any other response. God Himself has shown us the manner of Divine love. What is more, He has given us His own nature which cannot act in contradiction of God. **Colossians 3:10** and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him (NASB). This is nothing less than a summons to "walk in the Spirit" and live "by faith" (Gal 6:16,25; Rom 1:17). Spiritual life cannot be sustained in any other way.

III. ONE ANOTHER.

A. It will be profitable to briefly consider the significance of loving "one another." This is a family term, applying to members of the "household of faith" (Gal 6:10). The admonition to "love one another" is never addressed to those outside of Christ. Also, it is never used to admonish unbelievers concerning their relationship with unbelievers.

B. During Christ's discourse with His disciples on the evening of His betrayal, He thrice mentioned their love for one another. He declared this was a "new commandment," in that they were to "love another" as He had loved them (John 13:34). Twice, He commanded them to "love one another" (John 15:12,17).

C. The Epistles also strongly admonish believers to love one another, and to do so "fervently" (Rom 12:10; 13:8; 1 Pet 1:22). This is evidenced through "all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love" (Eph 4:2). It is also made exhibited in "serving one another" (Gal 5:13), "preferring" one another (Rom 15:10), and "considering" one another" (Heb 10:24).

IV. JESUS SETS THE TONE FOR LOVING ASSOCIATING WITH THE BRETHREN.

A. This is no strange doctrine. Jesus revealed this was His manner, which is the only acceptable manner. On one occasion, He was told that His mother and brothers were standing outside of the house in which He was ministering. His response is arresting, and worthy of the most serious deliberation. "But He answered and said unto him that told him, Who is My mother? and who are My brethren? And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, Behold My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother" (Matt 12:47-50). Jesus was certainly not unmindful of His mother, as seen in His care for her while upon the cross (John 19:26-27). His primary associations, however, were those who heard His word.

B. Another example of this is seen in our Lord's activities on the evening of His betrayal. As He drew near to the time when He would make His "soul an offering for sin" (Isa 53:10), He preferred to be with His disciples. He had ministered to the multitudes, healed their sick, and even fed them. But now He withdrew from the multitudes, choosing to be with His primary associates. Do you remember His words to them? "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" (Lk 22:15).

V. THE MANNER OF GOD HIMSELF

A. And what of God Himself-our heavenly Father? Whose company does He prefer, and with whom does He dwell? He will speak to us for Himself. Isaiah 57:15 For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell [on] a high and holy place, And [also] with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite. (NASB) And again, Isaiah 62:2 And the nations will see your righteousness, And all kings your glory; And you will be called by a new name, Which the mouth of the LORD will designate. (NASB) And again, Psalm 25:14 The secret of the LORD is for those who fear Him, And He will make them know His covenant. (NASB)

B. Is there any question about who God prefers? Whom he blesses? Those with whom He fellowships? Those to whom He gives exceeding great and precious promises? And if this is the manner in which God and Jesus conduct themselves, how is it that some professing identity with them think less of His people, and prefer those of the world?