"The Love of God"

1 John 5:1-3 and Selected Scriptures
12/9/07

Introduction:

All believers share the same attitude toward God:
1) Reverential Fear of God (Respect) and 2) Agape Love for God.

> Fearing God comes before Loving God. It is our respect (reverential fear) for God and His Word that motivates us to listen to Him and when we listen to Him, we learn of His amazing grace which is rooted in his love (Eph. 2:4-5). It's then our knowledge of His love for us that motivates us to love Him in return. *1John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.*
>
> Just as Fearing God is the Key to attaining His Wisdom *(Prov.9:10)*, Loving God is the Key to Obeying His Wisdom. The whole of the Law hangs on the command of Love, because Love is the secret to obeying every aspect of God's Law that applies to us (*Matthew 22:37-40).*

*** How do I know I love God?**
Answer: See: 1 John 5:1-3

I. ***You know you love God when you…***
LOVE HIS CHILDREN (v.1)

II. ***You know you love God when you…***
OBEY HIS COMMANDS (v.2-3)

A. Your love for God gives you the incentive to obey Him <u>CONSCIENTIOUSLY</u>

B. Your love for God gives you the drive to obey Him <u>CONTINUALLY</u>

C. Your love for God gives you the attitude to obey Him <u>CHEERFULLY</u>

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Introduction:

All believers share the same attitude toward God: 1) Reverential Fear of God (Respect) and 2) Agape Love for God.

Although it may seem strange to the World’s ears, when it comes to Christians fearing God, the Bible says that the fear of the Lord is "clean" (Ps. 119:9). It’s a good thing to fear God.

1. A fear of respect
   Ps. 112:1; Mal. 1:6; Luke 12:4-5; I Pet. 2:7; Rev. 14:7

2. A fear of displeasing Him
   II Cor. 7:1; Eph. 6:5; Phil. 2:12; I Pet. 1:17

One of the biggest problems (even among some professing Christians today) is a lack of a fear of God. Verses from Proverbs on *"the fear of the Lord"*: Prov. 1:7, 3:7, 8:13, 9:10, 14:16, 15:16, 16:6, 23:17.

"Fear God" (1 Peter 2:17) - we must continually live in reverence for God (*"holy and reverend is His name"* - Ps. 111:9).

Stand in awe of God! (Ps. 33:8 - *"Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.")*

The highest authority (God) deserves the highest respect.

Heb. 12:28-29

Rev. 14:7
Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

Having a "fear of God" is to fear disobeying Him and to fear displeasing Him.

As N.T. believers we need both a healthy fear of God and a wholesome love for God. Just as a child should have both a balanced respect for his parents and love for his parents, so we should have such a balance when it comes to God.

Fearing God comes before Loving God. It is our respect for God and His Word that motivates us to listen to Him and when we listen to Him, we learn of His amazing grace which is rooted in his love (Eph. 2:4-5). It's then our knowledge of His love for us that motivates us to love Him in return. *1John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.*

Just as Fearing God is the Key to attaining His Wisdom *(Prov.9:10)*, Loving God is the Key to Obeying His Wisdom. The whole of the Law hangs on the command of Love, because Love is the secret to obeying every aspect of God's Law that applies to us (*Matthew 22:37-40).*

Matthew 22:37-40
Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

See: Matthew 22:35-f

V. 35

"Tempting Him" - testing Him

After hearing Christ's good answer to the Sadducees, this lawyer (doctor of the Law of God; a master in the Scriptures) tested Him with an ethics exam.

The Jews of Christ's day had documented 613 commandments in the Law (248 positive and 365 negative) (Wiersbe, p. 81).

V. 36

"The great commandment" - Which command is paramount? reigns supreme? ranks as the top? is first and foremost?

Loving God is not merely a N.T. priority, but is an eternal priority that also applied to the <u>Old Testament</u> saint.
SEE - Deut. 6:4-7 & Deut. 10:12

(Such an emphasis on the command to Love God shows that this is not merely a NT priority, but is has always been)

<u>HOW</u> should we love God?

"Heart . . . soul . . . mind. . . strength" = Love Him with your whole being; with everything you have.

When we love God totally (with our whole being), He is:

1. The center of my affections

   "Heart" - my inner being which thinks, feels, and chooses (what I feel deeply about reflects my priorities).

2. The center of my life

   "Soul" - the immaterial part of man as it relates to this life (what I live for reflects my priorities).

3. The center of my thoughts

   "Mind" - my ideas, convictions, thoughts, philosophies of life should revolve around God. (what I spend my time thinking about [dwelling on, pondering] reflects my priorities).

4. The center of my activity

   "Strength" - my physical ability (so translated in I Pet. 4:11), talents, etc., should be used for God (what I use my abilities on reflects my priorities)

WHY should we love God?

1. Loving God is the key to obedience
(the greatest stimulus [motivating factor] to obeying God is to love Him)

I Jn. 5:3 - "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous."

--Love makes obedience easy!

The reason "Love" is stated as the top priority attitude is because it is the motivating factor behind everything we do.
If one loves God, he will seek to please God.
If one loves God, he will be holy.
If one loves God, he will do right.
If one loves God, he will keep His commandments.--John 14:15, 21

2. Loving God is the key to close fellowship with Christ

Jn. 14:23 - "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."
I Cor. 8:3 - "But if any man love God, the same is known of Him."
Ja. 4:8 - "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you . . ."

3. Loving God is the key to blessedness.

Showers of benefits fall upon those who make it their priority to love God.

Rom. 8:28 - "...All things work together for good to them that love God..."

Ja. 1:12 - "He shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

V. 39

Note: Jesus does not command us to "love ourselves"; we automatically do already (Eph. 5:29 - *"For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church")*

It is natural to love yourself; it is supernatural to love others int he same way as you love yourself.

How do you know when you are loving others the same way as you love yourself? Ask yourself: What do you do to help or benefit yourself? Do the same for others.

You are concerned about:
--Your relationship with God . . . then concern yourself with others'
--Your health, wealth, prosperity. . . then concern yourself with others'
--Your protection. . . then concern yourself with others'
--Your pleasure . . . then concern yourself with others'
--Your success . . . then concern yourself with others'

If you love God, totally, you will love others mutually.

A true love for God will manifest itself in a love for others who were made in God's image. No one can love God without loving our brother (I Jn. 4:20, 21).

Christ's combines Lev. 19:18 with Deut. 6:5 to summarize the whole Law.

V. 40
All of the Old Testament Law and prophets could be hung on these two commands. The pole that supports the hanger holding all of God's commands is love.

Rom. 13:9-10 - *"For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."*
Gal. 5:14 - *"For all the law if fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."*

*SEE Psalm 91:14-16

If the greatest command is to love God, then the greatest sin is to not love Him!

"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema" (I Cor. 16:22).

God foretold that in the last days men would be "lovers of their own selves . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (II Tim. 3:2, 4).
As the End draws near, lovelessness will be a sign: "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Mt. 24:12).

See: **1 John 5:1-3**

v. 1

"Jesus is the Christ" - This is a loaded statement; it's not as simple as it appears.

To believe Jesus is the Christ is to believe He is the Messiah.

The definite article indicates Him to be "the" One and only Christ (He is exclusively the Messiah).

To believe that Jesus is the Messiah is to believe that Jesus is:

1) The Eternal One - because the Messiah is prophesied as being eternal (Mica 5:2 - But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting.)

2) The Sacrifice for sin - because the Messiah is prophesied as being "cut off" from the land of the living on behalf of others (Dan. 9:26a - And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: Is. 53:8 - He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.)*

3) The future world Ruler - because the Messiah is prophesied as ruling the entire earth (Ps. 2:12a - Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish *from* the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.)

4) The One to be trusted - (Ps. 2:12b - Blessed *are* all they that put their trust in him.)

"Is born of God" - (*gegennetai)*

1. The New Birth is God's work (not man's) (note: the passive verb) (Jn. 1:12-13 - But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name:
13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.)

2) The New Birth occurs at a point in time and has abiding continual results (note: the perfect tense)

Here, the New Birth is connected to faith in Christ. There is no regeneration apart from faith in Christ. Regeneration does not precede faith in Christ (as Calvinism teaches). The New Birth begins the moment one believes and apart from such belief, no birth exists!

"Belief" - means more than a head knowledge of Jesus as the Christ, but a personal trust or reliance upon Him as the Christ.

"Believeth. . . loveth Him" - love for God is always the result of faith in God. Faith is the foundation for the Christian life. All other Christian virtues flow out of faith (II Pet. 1:5).

Faith is the victory over the world (I Jn. 5:4).

How do I know I love God?

Answer:

I. *You know you love God when you…* LOVE HIS CHILDREN (v.1)

Our response to God's giving us the New Birth into His family is gratitude. We now love Him, because He has first loved us (4:19).

"Loveth him that is begotten" - "Saint Augustine held that this phrase referred to Christ, 'the only begotten of the Father'." (Guy H. King, p. 100).

It is true that if you love the Father you will love His Son (Jn. 8:42 - Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.)

However, as Westcott saw, the whole context and book of I John would support the view that He is speaking of loving not only His Son, but His sons - "the children of God" (v. 2).

"Loveth him" (singular) - John's use of the singular throughout this verse indicates that this God-prompted love operates on an individual basis.

It's not merely that we love Christians (as a whole) (though we do). It's that we love the one sitting next to us.

"This love does not spring from something loveable in the person himself, but from his paternity" (Hodge, cited by Hiebert, p. 225).

"Everyone that loveth" - No exceptions; all who love God love His kids.

If you find that you have no common bond with Christians, that you'd rather avoid them, that their company is undesirable – then you had better doubt your relationship to God.

If you love the "Begetter," you will love the "begotten."

If you love the "Adopter," you will love His adopted.

If you love the Regenerator, you will love the regenerated.

If you love the Father, you will love the son.

You can't truly love someone and hate his kids (they are his family, his offspring, the object of is affection).

If you love God, you will love that which he loves/treasures.

The world may have a philanthropic, humanistic "love." A love for man motivated by a love for man (or by a love for self-recognition, etc.).

However, we have a greater motivated; we have a love for man because man is "created in the image and likeness of God." Hence, we love man because his life has a dignity that originated in the Almighty.

How can the Holy Spirit who lives in you do anything other than love others through you who share that same Spirit?

If Jesus live in you and if He lives in your fellow believer, don't you think that there will be a common bond between you?

If you are in the family of God, won't there be a desire to be with your family members?

--Ladies should want to come to the ladies fellowships;

--Men should want to be at the men's breakfasts;

--Christians should love to get together with other Christians.

To defect is to give indication that something is wrong (I Jn. 2:19 - They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.)

To love other believers should be as natural as loving your own family, because we <u>are</u> family, real family.

We know the same God.
We are partakers of the same Spirit.
We are joint heirs with the same Son (Jesus Christ).
We share the same faith.
We eat the same food (God's Word).
We have the same name ("Christian").
We will inherit the same future (eternal life).
We face the same battles.

II. *You know you love God when you…* OBEY HIS COMMANDS (v.2-3)

v. 2

"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God" - John puts a unique slant on the point. We would expect him to say: "By this we know that we love God, when we love the children of God" (as he did in v. 1).

But John is making his point from two angles. To love God is to love His "kids," and to love His "kids" is to love God.

John further makes a peculiar point so as to get our attention back to loving God. He does this so that he can make a second point regarding one's love for God.

To love God's children is to love God, and to love God is to obey God.

A. Your love for God gives you the incentive to obey Him CONSCIENTIOUSLY

v. 3

"This is the love of God" - Love for God is very specifically defined – it is not ecstatic feelings for God; not mental acknowledgement of God; not a religious experience from God; but it is practical, thought out, conscientious obedience to God.

Love is action; love is effort; love sweats for God; love gives time and effort for God; love yields one's own wants, desires, and pleasures, in order to fulfill the wants, desires, pleasure and will of the one it loves.

Jesus said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

"Keep" - *tereo*. Two ideas:

1) to keep in the sense of guard; to watch over something so as to protect it (cp. protection in Rev. 3:10; Jn. 17:15)

2) To keep in the sense of to observe, to obey (Mt. 28:20).

Both ideas imply a conscientiousness toward God's commands.

"His commandments" - "The Christian life is a life of principled, conscientious obedience to God's will as revealed in the Bible." (A.N. Martin).

Obedience is not real obedience if we do not obey God . . .
*exactly
*completely
*without delay
*without excuse

- Husbands, you love God when you obey His command to love your wives and lead your family.
- Wives, you love God when you obey His command to submit to your husbands and serve your family's needs.
- Children, you love God when you obey His command to obey and honor your parents.
- Singles, you love God when you obey His command to "flee fornication" and "be content."
- Employees, you love God when you obey His command to work, not as men pleasers but as diligent servants of Christ.
- Christian, you love God when you obey His command to fulfill the Great Commission and make disciples of all nations.
- Christian, you love God when you obey His command to not forsake the assembly of the saints (Heb. 10:25).

We often say that hate is the opposite of love. In actuality, sin is the antithesis to love. Hence, Jesus said regarding the last days: "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Mt. 24:12).

Whenever we sin, we sin because at that moment, our love for God isn't what it should be. The degree to which you love God will determine the degree to which you keep from deliberately sinning against Him.

"Ye that love the Lord, hate evil."

Don't say you love God when you are downing a six-pack of Budweiser or reading pornography or pursuing a divorce of your spouse or committing fornication or adultery or snorting cocaine.

B. Your love for God gives you the drive to obey Him <u>CONTINUALLY</u>

"Keep" - the present tense of the verb implies a continual, habitual or repetitive activity – not a one-time deal, not a mere month-long, explosive, excited, storm of obedience to God, followed by a long, dry, desert-like duration of disobedience.

One who loves God is not a "fire cracker Christian" who burns hot then explodes, but whose flame dies out into cold uselessness.

Love for God is the plodder, who day by day, week by week, year by year, decade by decade, is still serving God faithfully, still in the Word, still in the class teaching, still to be found doing humble acts of service.

C. Your love for God gives you the attitude to obey Him <u>CHEERFULLY</u>

"His commandments are not grievous" - when love for God is your motive for obedience, the obedience is not a heavy burden; it is not painful drudgery; it is not an oppressive weight.

When you love Him you are close to Him, and when you are close to Him, you find yourself yoked to Him, and since you are yoked to Him, He shares the heavy end of the load and you find that "his yoke is easy" and His "burden is light."

Nothing God expects from us is too heavy for us to bear.

He would not ask you to do something which He didn't equip you to do.

This does not mean that obedience to God is so easy that it will never require sweat, patience, and great effort. Indeed it will! But obedience will never be so heavy that it is impossible.

I Cor. 10:13 - There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.)

Love never gives up, but "beareth all things. . . endureth all things" (I Cor. 13:7).

Love is the power for obedience – Have you turned on the power switch?

Doing our Christian responsibility does not elicit the response:

"Oh, do I have to?!"
"I'm too tired!"
"I'll do it, but I don't like it!"

It is no drudgery to give of your money to the Lord, when you love Him, "for God loveth a cheerful giver" (II Cor. 9:7).

Conclusion:

So you say, "I love God."

Is there visible, tangible, concrete evidence to substantiate that statement?