

1st John 3:11-12 Love One Another

For a Christian, we cannot fail to love our brothers and sisters in Christ, and be walking in our New Nature. We see this in Paul's warning in 1 Cor 3:3 **3 for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like ordinary people?** In other words, the Corinthians expressing jealousy and strife toward each other instead of love shows that they are walking in the flesh, and not by the Spirit. They are walking like ordinary, unregenerate, unsaved people, in their old nature, instead of walking by the Spirit.

11 For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we are to love one another; John is saying that an elementary, basic lesson of Christianity is that we are to love one another. In John 13:34 Jesus taught, **"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."** It was the only New Commandment that he ever gave. A distinguishing mark of being a follower of Christ is a deep, sincere love for brothers and sisters in Christ. In giving this command, Jesus did something the world had never seen before—He created a group identified by only one thing: love.

How did Jesus Love?

He loves unconditionally Romans 5:8 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. And that means that there was nothing commendable in us that Christ would die for us. He loved Sacrificially. Jesus bore our sins on the cross, shedding his blood as a sacrifice for sin, 2 Cor 5:21 **He made Him who knew no sin to be sin in our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.** Jesus bore our sin, so that we wouldn't have to bear it, and be under God's wrath eternally. God loves with Agape love, self-sacrificial love concerned only about the well-being of the one loved, and not their worthiness of the love given. Jesus' love is holy, pure, sincere, without adulteration, or anything that defiles—because He is holy Hebrews 7:26 **26 For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens;**

Commanded to Love

Love, the Bible insists, is a choice, and a commitment to keep making the choice to love.

By the Spirit

We have the Holy Spirit, who loves us, and others with the Love of Christ, encouraging us, enabling us to obey. 1 Cor 1:19-20 **19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought for a price: therefore glorify God in your body.** That means that we are not only commanded to love, but made capable of loving with the love of Christ.

Because we are empowered by the Holy Spirit, we share the love of Jesus with others, and it is apparent in the way that we relate to Brothers and Sisters in Christ. We see a model of how to live this out in Eph 5:18-21 when Paul encourages us to make our priority to **be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your hearts to the Lord; 20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to our God and Father; 21 and subject yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ.**

Jesus said in Matthew 22:36-40, when a lawyer asked him 36 **"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37 And He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 This is the great and foremost commandment. 39 The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 Upon these two commandments hang the whole Law and the Prophets."**

By obeying the Spirit, through the Word of God, the believer can love like Christ does. We can emulate the love that Jesus has shown us, the unconditional, sacrificial, forgiving love because He first loved us. We will find that as we walk by the Spirit, the flesh has less opportunity to mess up the relationship that we have with God, and with each other. Gal 5:16 **16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry**

out the desire of the flesh. And, by the Spirit, we will find that we express the fruit of the Spirit by walking by the Spirit. Gal 5:22-24 **22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.**

Show God to Others Through Love

As will all of God's Commandments, they are for our Good. We are to shine as examples of how God loves people, and reflect that especially in how we love our brothers and sisters in Christ, because, as the song says "They Will Know We are Christians by Our Love, and by this we are able to point them to God. Or as Jesus put it in Matthew 5:16 **16 Your light must shine before people in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.** We Glorify God by having, and showing love for one another. In giving this New Commandment, Jesus made sure that we would understand the reason, by following it up in John 13:35 saying that when Christian brothers and sisters love one another with the Love of Christ, "**By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another**". Gal 5:16 **16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.** And, by the Spirit, we will find that we express the fruit of the Spirit by walking by the Spirit. Gal 5:22-24 **22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.** We have the Holy Spirit living within us, and as we obey His urgings to love one another, we love like Christ.

Love as Christ

Christ's love displayed through the believer is unlike the "love" generated by the flesh, which can be selfish, egotistical, unforgiving, and insincere. First Corinthians 13:4-8 gives a wonderful description of what Christ's love will be like in and through the believer who walks in the Spirit. **4 Love is patient, love is kind, it is not jealous; love does not brag, it is not arrogant. 5 It does not act disgracefully, it does not seek its own benefit; it is not provoked, does not keep an account of a wrong suffered, 6 it does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 it keeps every confidence, it believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails;** This kind of love isn't just a feeling, these words demand action—these descriptions of love all call for an action on our part to love our brothers and sisters in Christ, not just to talk about it! 1 John 3:18 **My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.**

Not as the world

People don't naturally love with a 1 Corinthians 13-type love. To love like that, there must be a change of heart. In 1st John 3:12, John continues

12 not as Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And for what reason did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil, but his brother's were righteous. I'm sure that Cain said that he loved his brother many, many times as they were growing up, but really Cain just loved Cain. He would not come under the authority of God, and chose a life of sin instead. Ultimately, this manifested itself in him rising up against his brother, and killing him out of jealousy of his relationship with God. His failure to love God in obedience, and love his brother in truth ultimately resulted in tragedy for his brother and himself, and their whole family. But when we are forgiven by Christ, we become a participant in the divine nature **2 Peter 1:4 4 Through these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world on account of lust.** When we receive the New Birth, the New Nature in Christ, we also receive the capability to love like Jesus.