

No. 4 “Whoever Loves God Must Also Love His Brother” (Visiting speaker)

Note to speaker:

Emphasize that one way we show love for God is by loving our Christian brothers and sisters. Because we are imperfect, we all need the reminder to “continue loving one another.” (1Jo 4:7, 21) Present the material in a warm, appealing manner

A TIMELY REMINDER TO SHOW LOVE (3 min.)

Toward the end of the first century C.E., many dangers threatened the Christian congregation; one of them was identified in Jesus’ message to the congregation in Ephesus (Re 2:4)

[Briefly mention that Revelation 2:4 will be discussed extensively in the concluding talk this afternoon]

The love the Ephesian Christians left was their love for God

That love requires obeying God’s commandments, including the commandment to love one’s Christian brothers and sisters (Joh 13:34, 35; 15:12)

It is generally thought that the apostle John was released from exile on the island of Patmos and thereafter lived in or near Ephesus, some 60 miles (100 km) from Patmos (*it-2* 93)

Likely, he well remembered Jesus’ message to the congregation in Ephesus

John emphasized love in the inspired books that he wrote (*it-2* 91 ¶4; 96 ¶2)

In his first letter, John explained the close connection between loving God and loving one’s fellow Christians

IMPOSSIBLE TO LOVE GOD IF WE DO NOT LOVE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS (6 min.)

[Read and comment on 1 John 4:7-11, 20, 21] Beginning at 1 John 4:7, John discusses the closely connected themes of *knowing* and *loving* God

Verse 7: The God we worship is the Source of love; therefore, we must “continue loving” others who are loved by God and who love him

Verse 8: Jehovah is the personification of love (*w06* 10/1 21 ¶4)

If a person does not show love, he does not really know God

A person can develop godlike love only when he takes steps to come to know God by taking in accurate knowledge of him and acting according to that knowledge

Verses 9 and 10: The ransom is the greatest expression of love ever shown

Without this act of love, we would be completely without hope

How should this act affect us as recipients of God’s love?

Verse 11: God’s love obligates us to love one another (*w16.01* 8-9 ¶7; *w03* 12/1 16 ¶5)

Verses 20 and 21: It is impossible to love God and at the same time not love our brother

Since we can see our brothers and sisters and observe their godly traits, it should be easy to show love for them

However, the imperfections of others can make it a challenge to show love; we need to focus on their good qualities

Loving one’s brother is a commandment from God

We cannot obey the greatest of all commandments, to love God with all that we are and all that we have, and at the same time be violating the second greatest commandment (Mt 22:37-39)

God wants our love for him to be something active that we express toward his people, our Christian brothers and sisters

HOW DO WE SHOW LOVE FOR OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS? (15 min.)

In everyday life, how can we show that we are following “this commandment” from God? (1Jo 4:21)

We will consider three areas

(1) Do not nurse grudges, but be forgiving

When Jesus mentioned the second greatest commandment at Matthew 22:39, he quoted from **Leviticus 19:18 [Read]**

The Hebrew expression rendered “hold a grudge” has been explained as “the retaining or maintaining of some vengeful feelings toward someone”

Holding a grudge against a brother or a sister is displeasing to God and can lead to serious sin

Grudges may lead to abusive speech, as seen in the example of Shimei (2Sa 16:5-13; *it-2* 930)

The danger of “nursing a grudge” can also be seen in the example of Herodias, the wife of Herod Antipas (Mr 6:17-28)

A contrasting example is that of the apostle Peter

Although publicly rebuked by the apostle Paul, Peter did not hold a grudge against Paul (Ga 2:11-14; 2Pe 3:15)

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Instead of nursing grudges, we should be willing to forgive (Col 3:12-14)

If we are unforgiving, we are not showing godly love; we would also be working against our own interests, depriving ourselves of peace of mind (Pr 11:17)

(2) Do not envy, but rejoice with others

As brothers and sisters, we are not in competition with one another [Read Galatians 5:26]

Envy is a feeling of resentment and displeasure toward others because of their belongings, advantages, position, or reputation

Envy is poisonous and leads to hatred, the opposite of love

Note the contrasting examples of Saul and Jonathan (1Sa 18:6-9; 23:16-18)

With the help of God’s spirit, we can resist any tendency to envy our Christian brothers and sisters (w12 2/15 16-17)

Meditating on the blessings that Jehovah has given us can help us, not to envy others, but instead to rejoice with them (Ro 12:15)

(3) Do not be tightfisted, but be generous and show hospitality

Jehovah is a generous God, and he likewise expects his servants to be generous (De 15:7, 8, 10; Pr 11:25; 1Pe 4:8, 9; w10 9/15 8 ¶5)

Among the first-century Christians, we can find many who were outstanding examples of generosity and hospitality, one of them being Lydia (Ac 16:13-15; w07 3/15 32)

Gaius and Diotrephes were evidently members of the same congregation, yet they provided contrasting examples of hospitality (3Jo 1, 5-10; w92 11/15 17 ¶15-16)

Let us imitate Lydia and Gaius and avoid imitating the bad example of rebellious Diotrephes

KEEP ON LOVING OUR WORLDWIDE FAMILY OF BELIEVERS (5 min.)

Our love and generosity should include “the whole association of brothers” (1Pe 2:17)

Help victims of natural disasters

Disciples in Antioch of Syria sent relief to the brothers suffering from a famine in Judea (Ac 11:29)

Relief work is sacred service (kr 209-210 ¶2-6)

With advance planning, we can be “ready to share” when a need arises (1Ti 6:18)

Pray for all our brothers and sisters (2Co 1:11; 2Th 3:1; w07 6/1 29 ¶14-15)

Jehovah’s people “abound in love” for one another (1Th 3:12)

Because of imperfection, we need regular reminders to show such love

Love, like a muscle, is strengthened by use; love, like faith, is dead without works

When we show love, we do not do so to receive something back; but a giving person will be generously rewarded (Lu 6:38; Ac 20:35)

Like no other people on earth, we have been “taught by God to love one another” [Read 1 Thessalonians 4:9, 10]

May we continue to follow the admonition: “We urge you, brothers, to go on doing so in fuller measure”

Review question: How can we show unhypocritical brotherly love?

Answer: 1 John 4:21; we can show love to our brothers and sisters by (1) not nursing grudges, but being forgiving; (2) not envying others, but rejoicing with them; and (3) not being tightfisted, but being generous and showing hospitality

(Speaker does not need to read or comment on every cited text or discuss every subpoint)