

## The Love God Produces I John 5:1-3

Please open your Bible to I John 5:1. Henry Scougal lived from 1650-1678. He was a pastor and a professor who died at the young age of 28. During his short life Scougal wrote a letter to a friend trying to explain the essence of true Christianity — He wanted his friend to rightly understand God's love and how we respond to God's love. The letter was eventually turned into a book called *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*.

“The love of God is a delightful and affectionate sense of the divine perfections, which makes the soul resign and sacrifice itself wholly unto him, desiring above all things to please him, and delighting in nothing so much as in fellowship and communion with him, and being ready to do or suffer anything for his sake, or at his pleasure.” Later in the book he writes, “The worth and excellency of a soul is to be measured by the object of its love. He who loveth mean and sordid things doth thereby become base and vile, but a noble and well-placed affection doth advance and improve the spirit into a conformity with the perfections which it loves.”

Understanding God's love biblically and responding by giving the whole of our lives back to Him in loving sacrifice is the essence of true Christianity. Scougal wasn't the only man in history to be concerned with our understanding of God's love and how we respond to His love. The apostle John had that chief concern as well.

John wrote his gospel primarily so that unbelievers would come to faith in Christ and receive life in His name. John 20:30-31, “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” Obviously, as the Living Stones ABF is learning, there are many other things we can learn from the gospel of John, but the primary reason he wrote it was for unbelievers to arouse their faith. I John has a different purpose - I John was written to give professing believers a biblical basis of the assurance of salvation. John Stott, “John’s desire for the readers of the gospel was that through faith they might receive life; for the readers of the letter that they may know they already had it.”

What we learn from I John 5:1-5 is that a person who has received the new birth, a person who has been given spiritual life by God will be marked by three things - The right belief, the right behavior, and the right battle against sin and temptation. In John’s understanding, the child of God is first made alive by God as a result of which he comes to believe on Christ, pursue righteousness, and love the brethren.” Those three things - faith, love, and obedience are the three abiding results of the new birth. Three things that change in the life of everyone who has received spiritual life from God are that they believe the truth, they love the truth and they obey the truth.

This morning I want us to focus on the second abiding result of the new birth - Right behavior that stems from a new heart. When a sinner is born again by faith in Christ they receive two

things - Forgiveness from God and a new heart. Hebrews 10:16-17, "his is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds," then he adds, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more." Because of the Person and work of Christ we are forgiven and we are cleansed and that cleansing on the inside results in a new pursuit on the outside.

I John 5:1-3 shows how God changes the affections of someone who is truly born again. There are three things you if you have really been born again. You love the God the Father (The Cause of our new birth), you love other believers (The receivers of the new birth) and you obey God's Word (the way you show you love God).

- 1.You love God the Father - The Begetter
- 2.You love God's people - Those He begets
- 3.You love and obey God's Word - How you show love

The new birth produces in the believers heart love for God. Those who are born of God love the one who caused them to be born again. The beget love the begetter. John writes in the middle of I John 5:1, "Everyone who loves the Father." What does it mean to love God the Father?

What does it mean to love God the Father? It means to cherish, to have affection for, to take pleasure in, to delight in. It means to have love for someone or something, based on sincere appreciation and high regard. On Thursday morning I was getting ready to fly from Wichita to Indianapolis to do a men's conference. I had a 7:00 am flight. When I got to the

airport they told me my flight was overbooked and they asked if I would be willing to take the earlier flight that left at 5:45. I said sure and they gave me a boarding pass and I got on the plane. I had a great seat - 1a with plenty of room. They closed the cabin door and we were ready to push back and then in an instant the lights in the plane all came on and the pilot says, "Sorry folks this flight has been cancelled." I sat there thinking - I got moved from my flight to this flight and now this flight is cancelled. I got off the plane and when I walked back into the airport a man was waiting for me and told me they had rebooked me on my original flight. My heart was warmed to him, I had a sincere appreciation for him in that moment. Why? Because I was in need and he gave me the help I needed.

What is clear from I John 5:1 is that believers love God the Father because God the Father is the cause of the new birth. God the Father saw our need and He met our need. I John 4:19, "We love, because He first loved us." God's love is found in His willingness to meet our greatest need. Titus 3:5, "He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit."

Look back at I John 4:10, "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." What I want you to notice in I John 4:10 is who loved who. We did not love God. John makes it clear back in John 3:19 that men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. We did not love God. He loved us. God the Father loved us and sent Christ to be the propitiation for our sins.

The word propitiation is probably not a word we hear a lot today. When I get stumped on some of the big Bible words I turn to a man named Jerry Bridges. He helps break down these big words so I can understand what they mean. Jerry Bridges, "I believe a word that forcefully captures the essence of Jesus' work of propitiation is the word exhausted. Jesus exhausted the wrath of God. It was not merely deflected and prevent from reaching us; it was exhausted. Jesus bore the full, unmitigated brunt of it. God's wrath against sin was unleashed in all its fury on His beloved Son. He held nothing back." Someone else describes propitiation as, "A sacrifice that absorbs God's wrath and turns it to favor."

God saw our need and He met our need by sending Christ to bear the just wrath our sins deserved. John Stott reminds us, "The coming of Christ is a concrete, historical revelation of God's love, for love is self sacrifice, the seeking of another's positive good at one's own cost. A greater self giving love than God's gift of His Son there has never been, nor could ever be." God sent His Son to the the wrath absorbing sacrifice for our sins and God sent the Holy Spirit to make us alive together with Christ.

It is good for us to be reminded this morning that the reason we love God is because He first loved us. Again, you delight in God and have a sincere affection for God because God the Father saw your need and He met your need. You have to understand the gospel the right way to receive God's love and to begin to love Him back the right way.

I realize most of you have heard these truths before. Preaching on these verses takes me back to a story I once read about Charles Spurgeon. How many of you have ever listened to a new preacher? A Young man who has just started preaching? I started preaching in the 1990's to my dad's sunday school class in Tyler, Texas. Man, they were amazingly loving toward me. I would give them like 15 pages of detailed notes for a 30 minute lesson and talked like someone had pressed fast forward on my brain. They have a phrase for people like me in Texas, "Bless his heart." I tried hard, but I spoke very fast. I can imagine I had some good things to say, but I probably had so much to say I was hard to learn from.

When Charles Spurgeon began his preaching ministry his grandfather would come and sit on the front row and listen to him preach. Charles, like most young preachers, would really get going and every now and then in the middle of his sermon he would overhear the soft voice of his grandfather say, "Tell them that that again Charles. Tell them that again." Charles had said something helpful and his grandfather felt like it needed to be repeated so the people understood it.

Listen - Love for God the Father begins by making sure you have received life from Christ. You will never love God the Father until you've been to Calvary and look on the One your sins have pierced and put your faith in Him and receive life from the Holy Spirit. Everyone who loves God the Father has received life from His grace. The second thing you love as a result of the new birth:

## 2. You love God's People - Those He begets

Look back at the end of I John 5:1, "whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him." When you love God the Father you love what He loves. Love for God's children stems from love for God. John reminds us here that whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. Sinners who are born of God love other sinners who are born of God. That doesn't mean we don't love or care about unbelievers, but our affections are reserved most for the local church.

Men's conference. Kirk Welch has 5 boys. I love Kirk and so I love spending time with his boys. I love Hadley and so I love Hunter and Ashlyn and Kenna. **When you love a Father you love their children.** What is John's point? Someone who has experienced the new birth wants to make a God-glorifying contribution to the local church. Where is the glory of God put on display in our day? Ephesians 3:21, "To Him be the glory in the church." I Peter 2:9-10 describes the church this way, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."

Everyone who is truly born of God wants to be involved in the local church and you want to love and to serve the people of God. Why? Because believers are children of God and everyone who loves the Father loves the children He loves and gave His Son to die for.

In Indianapolis on Friday - talked to my wife on the phone who was feeling a little overwhelmed with not having me around to help with the kids. After I talked to her on the phone I received a text from Bart and he asked how things were going. I told him I thought Brianna might need a little help since I was gone. 2 hours later I got a picture from Bart with a picture of my daughter Molly sitting at the dinner table. The Hortons had reached out to my wife and asked her to meet for dinner. They saw a need and they met a need. That really touched my heart because I love my wife and to see other believers care for people you love moves your heart. When you love and serve God's people the right way the God who loves His people is pleased - He is glorified.

How does this work? How do you demonstrate you love God's people?

### 3. You love and obey God's Word

Look back at I John 5:2, "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments." Loving God's people comes down to two things - Love God, Obey God. To love God's people that's all you need to focus on. Two things - Love God and obey Scripture. The overflow of that focus, that pursuit, will be love for other believers.

By this we know one of John's favorite phrases. John wants to clarify how we know if we really love the people of God. One cannot love God and keep his commands without loving the children of God, and one cannot love the children of God without loving God and keeping his commands. I John 3:23,

“This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.” I John 4:21, “And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.”

What does that mean practically? One thing it means is that if you go home from church and talk critically about other believers to your wife or to other people who go to church here without talking to that believer first you are in sin. **You don't love God if you don't show kindness to His children.** If you gossip and slander God's people behind their back you don't love God. Why? John makes it clear that loving God means you love those who belong to God. Love for God is seen through a willingness to treat His children the right way. If you really love someone and you have a problem with what they are doing the right thing to do is to go to that person directly and share your concerns in private.

I Corinthians 13:4-7, “Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” That's what love looks like. Can you insert your name for love in I Corinthians 13:4-7? Blake is patient and kind. Blake does not envy or boast. Blake is not arrogant or rude. Blake does... You can love that way because of the new birth. God's Spirit empowers a new life of love for God's people.

What do we know about God's commandments? Look at the end of verse 3. I John 5:3, “His commandments are not

burdensome.” The idea behind the word burdensome is something heavy or weighty. The command to love one another does not prove burdensome for those who know God because they have been born of God, and love for others who have also been born of God is a natural outworking of the new birth.

I'd like to close by giving you some things to work on so that you can either start loving God's people biblically or continue loving God's people biblically:

**1. Be Grace Motivated** - What does that mean? Focus on other believers position in Christ before you focus on their practice. Focus on what God has done for that person in salvation before you focus on whatever problem you feel like needs to be addressed in their lives. That's where Paul started with the Corinthians.

Look over at I Corinthians 1:4-9. The Corinthians were all messed up both theologically and practically. Paul tells them their church services cause more harm than good. Paul gets to their sin and he deals with their sin, but I want you to notice where he begins. Notice in I Corinthians 1:4-9 what Paul focused on before he dealt with the sin in their lives. Paul started with a divine perspective of the Corinthians before he dealt with their sin. Paul identified evidences of grace before he confronted their sin. He chose to see the Corinthians from a divine perspective first. I agree with the man who wrote, “Too many Christians are more readily aware of the absence of God than they are of the presence of God, and they are more aware of sin than they are of grace.” Paul had a lot to deal with in the lives of the Corinthians but he began by

thinking about them biblically. If you want to love God's people be grace motivated.

**2. Pray Paul's Prayers** - Prayer aligns your will with God's will. Pray Scripture for believers you find hard to love. Paul's prayers in the New Testament a great place to start. Look at Philippians 1:9-11. Pray for their love to abound. Pray for their ability to discern gospel truths and apply those truths to their lives. Pray for their spiritual growth. Pray for their lives to glorify God. Prayer aligns your will with God's will. Say I use these verses to pray for Seth? Use these prayers to get your mind going in the right way.

**3. Mortify sin** - You love other believers by living a holy life. I Corinthians 5:1-8. The Corinthians were taking the Lord's supper together with obvious sin taking place in the church. A man was sleeping with his step-mother. Adultery was taking place. Everyone knew about it and nothing was being done about it. Paul says to get rid of the man, why? Because a little leaven leavens the whole lump. Leaven represents influence. **When tolerated, sin will permeate and corrupt the whole local church.** Your sin corrupts the whole church. So, if you want to make a God-glorifying contribution to the local church, if you want to show love for God and His people take your sin serious and turn away from it. Replace your sin with righteousness and the body will be purified and built up.

**4. Serve** - use whatever spiritual gift you've been given to serve the body of Christ. Look at. I Peter 4:10-11, "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”  
Speaking gifts and serving gifts. One is not greater than the other. Both are vital and both are to be exercised the right way - Serve in the strength God supplies and teach His Word accurately. Service ministry - Rely on the power of the Spirit. Teaching ministry - Make sure you get the Word you are teaching right.

I realize you don't always get to use whatever gift you think you have exactly the way you want. I remember one church I was at really wanting to teach, but the problem is that all the teachers were seminary trained and I was working on my fifth year of college. There were no opportunities to teach. So I got involved in the kids'c club. My role on Sunday nights was to talk kindergardeners from play time to song time to teaching time. But you know what - I still remember something a kindergardener told me years ago. We were talking about the gospel one night and this little boy looked up at me and said - It was my sin that nailed Jesus to the cross. I learned from that experience that little kids can process good theology and they need good theology and if my role is to help them get from play time to the teaching time to sit and hear about the cross I can rejoice in that even if I am not the one teaching.

Want to stop and say something - I have never ever been a part of such a loving serving congregation as Grace Bible Church. I've never encountered as much personal love as I

have here. I've never seen so many people willing to get their hands dirty for Christ. I've never seen a body all working together in love like this one. Here is what I believe God would want me to say. You guys remind me of what Paul wrote to the Thessalonians in I Thessalonians 4:9-10, "Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more." You are loving. Do this more and more.

To be born of God is to be brought into a new family. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. The new birth produces the right affections. You love God, you love the people of God and you love and obey the Word of God that shows you love God's people. Loving the Lord, His people and His Word are the abiding results of the new birth. You and I cannot produce that kind of love in our own strength. Loving the right things is the result of God's power at work in our lives. If you love the right things this morning you can trace your love back to the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. He saw your need and He met your need and this has made all the difference in your life. Amen! Let's pray.