

- a) We must keep God's commandments. Which ones? He answers that question for us in verse 23.
 - (1) Believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ. We must truly be a Christian.
 - (2) Love one another, as He commanded. We must selflessly love others as Christ loves us.
- b) We must do those things that are pleasing in His sight. This takes us back to 1:6-7 (Read). We must walk in the light in fellowship with the Lord so that we can keep our hearts clean.
- 2) When we do those two actions whatever we ask from God we will receive. **How can that be?**
 - a) These two things enable us to be in fellowship with God. Abiding in fellowship with God is absolutely essential for answered prayer.
 - b) Jesus said the same thing in John 15:7, "*If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*"
 - c) When we are in fellowship with God, our thoughts will be in harmony with His. We will only ask for things that He desires us to have. If he truly desires for us to have the request, He will give it to us.

b. Keeping these commands enables to abide in Christ, v.24

- 1) God requires that we keep His commandments in order to abide in Him. We learned that back in 1:6-7.
- 2) When we abide in Him, the Holy Spirit will give us peace and assurance of that fellowship.

Conclusion: How well are you reflecting God's love? Are you sacrificing for other Christians, whether they be in your family or in our church? Do you love in deed and in truth? Are you obeying and pleasing Christ and receiving answers to prayer? If you are not reflecting God's love as you should, is there a sin you must confess? What changes do you need to make? If the mirror of your life is dirty, now is the time to scrub it clean so that you can reflect Christ as He desires.

Song: Cleanse Me - 166

Reflecting God's Love

9 June 2019 PM - 1 John 3:16-24 - 1Jn19 - Scott Childs

Introduction: Reflections are amazing. Reflections on a lake can be almost as clear as the landscape behind it if the water is totally calm. Spiritually, God wants us to be a clear reflection of His love.

The greatest evidence that God loves us is the fact that He laid down His life for us. God's love for us is not a selfish love, seeking only what He can get from us. It is not a family love that cherishes us because of a natural tie. It is not a friendly love that enjoys our companionship. God's love is a self-giving love that gives without expecting or demanding repayment. It is a love that gives to the unlovable and to those who reject it. God loves simply because He is love and He chooses to love us. (Romans 5:8) "*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*" Lovingly, Christ laid down His life for us. Voluntarily, He bore our sin and died to rescue us from the Hell we deserve. Now He wants us to abide in close fellowship with Him and reflect His love.

Transition: If we are abiding in fellowship with God, we will reflect God's love in three ways.

First, if we are abiding in fellowship with God, we will reflect God's love by

1. Laying down our lives for the brethren, v.16-17

a. Understand what Christ did for us.

- 1) He loved us though we were unworthy. (Romans 5:6) "*For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*"
- 2) He initiated His love for us. (1 John 4:19) "*We love him, because he first loved us.*"
- 3) We can never repay His love.
- 4) He still loves us even when we fail Him. (Hebrews 13:5) "*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*"

b. We must love the same in practical ways.

- 1) Laying down our lives for the brethren, though it may never require that we die for them, is sacrificially sharing with them.

- 2) Laying down our lives is a practical duty.
 - ✧ *It reminds me of the husband who told his wife that he loved her so much that he would die for her. However, in action he did not love her enough to help her with the dishes, fix the leaking faucet, watch the kids so she could take a needed nap, or to praise and thank her for all she did for him.*
- 3) If we have of *this world's good*, we have the means to share with others. God has blessed us with an abundance compared to many in the world.
- 4) If we *see* a Christian *brother in need*, we ought to sacrifice to help him with his need.
 - a) It may be your spouse who needs your help.
 - b) It may be your child who needs some one-on-one time with you.
 - c) It may be a Christian who needs a ride to the store.
- 5) If we shut up our bowels or heart of compassion toward the needy brother, we are not reflecting God's love. (James 2:15-16) "*If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?*" We are not abiding in fellowship with God as we should.

Second, if we are abiding in fellowship with God, we will reflect God's love by

2. Loving the brethren in deed and in truth, v.18-21

a. Love is not just verbal but visible

- 1) Anyone can love in word and in tongue. Just saying that we love does nothing for the other person if it is not followed up with action.
 - ✧ *If you have a pet, you know that love must be visible not just verbal. Animals sense your love through your touches, your attitude, your actions, and your kindnesses rather than from the words you say. You may say loving things to your pet, but if you treat it harshly, it will not sense your love.*
- 2) John reminds us that to reflect God's love, we must love in deed and in truth.

- 3) Charles Spurgeon said, "Love that consists only of words is utterly worthless. If it is true love, it must prove itself by kind deeds and gracious actions."
 - a) Loving in *deed* is loving with helpful actions. It is meeting needs. It is showing care. It is sharing.
 - b) Loving in *truth* is loving with a true and sincere heart as God loves. True love is loving with action.
 - c) Some wise person penned these words, "*I love Thee, I love Thee and that Thou doest know; But how much I love Thee, my actions will show.*"

b. Visible love gives evidence of fellowship

- 1) When we love in truth "visibly", we can know that we are of the truth (v.19). In other words, this assures our hearts that our actions are reflecting God's love because we are abiding in fellowship with God (v.19).
- 2) The "*heart*" here refers to our inner spirit or conscience. Solomon called it "*the candle of the LORD*". (Proverbs 20:27) "*The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.*"
- 3) If our heart condemns us, saying that we are not loving in deed and in truth, it is because the Spirit of God living in us knows that the thoughts and intents of our hearts are not right. He knows our if motives for loving are true or not. (Hebrews 4:12) "*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*"
- 4) If our heart does not condemn us, then we have *confidence* or freedom to speak to God. Being in fellowship with God with a clean heart, we are close to God and able to talk to Him freely. This leads to our next point.

Third, if we are abiding in fellowship with God, we will reflect God's love by

3. Obey and please the Lord, v.22-24

a. Obeying and doing right unlock prayer

- 1) John says that two actions unlock prayer for us.