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Sunday School Lesson

TOPIC:

“The Love of God”

1 John 4:7-19

VERSE DISCOVERY: 1 John 4:7-19 (KJV, Public Domain)

Prepare

- John was one of Jesus’ closest disciples while He was alive on earth (It would be good to point out examples of this by searching the Scriptures. Some good examples are the Transfiguration where he was present as one of the three chosen to be there, and his close proximity to Jesus during the Last Supper).
- John wrote this letter to combat the ideas of false teachers (read 1 John 2:18-29, paying particular attention to verses 18-19).
- Make an acrostic with the words *God is Love*. Writing the words vertically on a board or poster, have students come with words and/or ideas that match the corresponding letters that express God’s love for us.
- Lead into the lesson with one of the suggested object lessons (links found on site) or one like it. The point is to show just how much everyone is valued in the eyes of God. We are all precious to Him and He loves us more than we could ever know. When we know and understand His love for us, then can we give it to others also.

Explore – Full Lesson Available on pages 5-12

Verses 7-10

What do you do when false teaching and heresy seeks to break up the church and disrupt the work of God and fellowship within its community (cut up a picture of a group or a crowd to show how this disunity works to separate people from one another)? You go back to the reason you are there in the first place. You go back to the story that reached down from heaven to bring you out of the horrible pit of sin. You go back to the ultimate source of love, learn of His example, and follow it through it your own life.

God is love, and as His children we are to emulate His love (Note: God’s love seeks to heal, reconcile, and bring together. Using the tore up picture from above, tape the crowd back together). False teachers will always try to teach against the truth of God’s love being alive in His people. Divisiveness is their plan. Disorder and disunity are their mark. But, God’s

children are to reflect Him (mirror). They are to imitate His character. And, His character is centered around love.

Oh, how we appreciate that **manifested** love which tore us away from the grip of Satan. That love which pulled our drowning souls out of the muck and mire of our wrongs and sinfulness. That love which nailed His holy **Son** to a tree **that we might live through him**.

His motivation? Not our righteousness, because we had none to speak of (Isaiah 64:6). Nor was it because we were deserving of such a graceful act (Psalm 103:10; Lamentations 3:22; Ephesians 2:2-5). It was not even that fact **that we have loved God**, for we did not make the first move in this relationship. The only, and true answer to it all is **that he loved us**, and by the blood of His **Son** did He take our **sins** far from us.

Verses 11-19

Knowing this inexpressible gift we have been given (2 Corinthians 9:15). Living day by day in His faithfulness that produced such a love act, should we not then extend that gift to **one another**? Should we not then give away freely the same **love** which we have received? (Ask for ways that we can give God's love away to others.)

"I love God" the soul says, without even laying an eye on His person. By faith it is declared. By faith it is accepted and believed. Should we not then, by faith, have His **love perfected in us** when we choose to act, move, and live according to His holy nature when we love those whom we do see? For the Bible declares, **"He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in Him."**

Is God in you, dear friends? If He is, the love which shows who He is should show who you are in Him, and He in you. In that love, division must leave, and false teachers ignored as we walk this earth leaving footprints of His love, which we have received and claim to be, in the lives of others (Note: footprints leave impressions when we walk in the sand. This could be a great demonstration of how love can make a mark on other's lives. Another way to demonstrate this is by leaf rubbing and impressions on paper with pencil).

Activities

- Love is a subject we can never tire of hearing about, especially when we are talking about God's love for us. Find one thing you absolutely love during this week. Take an inventory of your chosen thing. Think on the different ways it brings joy and satisfaction in your life. Now, think on the love of God and the extremes He went through to express that love to us. While we have things that we find great interest and some fulfillment in, none can compare to the love that God has for us.
- God. Loves. You. They are the three smallest words that will have the hugest impact on your life if you believe and accept the truth of what they pronounce. God has personally

attached Himself to His creation (you and me) because He loves us. What does the impact of those three words mean to you? Jot down what you feel on the adult journal page found on wordforlifesays.com. There is also a kid's journal page for kids to think on and write about the different ways we can show God's love to others.

- Using the words *God is Love*, make an entire acrostic poem that expresses God's love for us (try using some examples from the words and/or ideas discussed in the **Prepare** section).
- Younger students can draw pictures of what God's love and our love looks like on the **Draw the Scene** activity sheet found on wordforlifesays.com
- Younger students can create a simple heart craft that expresses God's love for them. Simply fold a piece of construction paper in half and cut into the shape of a half heart. When the students open the heart fully, they can write in the middle "God is Love" and decorate their heart by making designs, or adding stickers, glitter, or other embellishments to it.
- Alternate activity sheets available for those who just want to work with printed materials can be found on wordforlifesays.com.

Review

- Commit to memory the base verse from the lesson: ***"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." 1 John 4:9***
- Fill out the review sheet provided (page 13)

Life

Make love an expression of priority throughout this coming week. Do on purpose acts of love toward others (not looking for anything in return), mimicking the same love God showed toward us.

If need be, fill up your love tank. Every time something reminds you of God's love for you, jot it down on the other side of your journal page. Keep this page in a safe place to use as future reference when you need to be reminded of all the ways God loves you.

TOPIC:

“The Love of God”

1 John 4:7-19

VERSE DISCOVERY: 1 John 4:7-19 (KJV, Public Domain)

Love is a subject very near and dear to my heart. It is probably one of my most written about topics to express. And, we find out from today’s lesson that love is the essence of who God is. We will learn deeply how our love is an identifying factor in proving us to be of Him and it shows the depth of all He feels for us.

In fact, the whole of our human story has been entirely of God’s love for us. From our beginning in Genesis to the ending of the story to come, God’s love for humanity has been at the forefront of His relational chase of us. If you have followed me and my writing for any amount of time you have probably come across a time or two an article I have written titled, Know Real Love. In that I write:

“God loves you! Throughout the pages of the Bible, the overflow of all He feels for us is pronounced over and over again. He has plenty of evidence to mark the extremes of His love for us . . . in Deuteronomy 23:5, He is noted as reversing a curse because He loves His people. But His ultimate show of love came when He initiated His plan to reverse the curse of sin once and for all. The plan was successful, but it didn’t come without a price. His love for us cost the life of His Son, John 3:16. All that was done so that one day we might experience the joy of what it really means to be loved; such a tender embrace wrapped around us that can’t be felt anywhere else.” (Word for Life Says/Know Real Love).

Because He loves us so, may we extend that same love to one another, is the pleading of this lesson. We are His real-life examples to a lost world. We are the only Bible that some people may read in their entire lifetime. Let the story they see in you and I be one of love.

Think of it, in a world filled with hatefulness, selfishness, and condemnation, I personally believe we can never tire of hearing of the love of God. And, as Christians we constantly need

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to be on our toes; to be retaught over and over again the importance that we show that same love God gave to us to one another.

The ugliness of this world's characteristics DOES NOT have to infect us. We can shine brighter above it all knowing that we are loved in a special way by Him. With that knowledge, we too can return what we have received of Him to others.

When we truly know how much God loves us, we can love others better.

GOD IS LOVE

1 John 4:7-10 “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

God doesn't birth ugliness (nasty characteristics and ungodly traits). If one is **born of God**, then as His spiritual children that one should possess the character and nature of their heavenly Father (just as natural children inherit some of the nature and traits of their parents).

False teachers and naysayers will always try to usurp what God wants to do in the life of the Christian and how they ought to live. In his letter, false teachers are an enemy that John had to deal with and because of them, he had re-educate the people on what God says is true and encourage people to live and follow that truth which revolves, here in this lesson, around love.

As a matter of fact, John opens chapter 4 with this warning: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world,” (1 John 4:1). After that he gives a summation of the contrast between the Christian and the world; “Ye are of God, little children . . .” (1 John 4:4), and “They are of the world. . .” (1 John 4:5). Immediately following this comparison of who is in truth and who is in error, 1 John 4:6 begins to admonish the saints how we ought to live. How the love of God is to be manifest in our culture.

Christians are to operate in a love culture for this is what we have learned from our heavenly Father. For John to keep pushing this key point means there must have been a serious

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disturbance and dissension going on in the church that made it necessary for this subject's continual address. I wonder how many disturbances in our modern-day churches are due to a lack of this godly love culture being produced within its walls.

With that, John writes, ***“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God.”*** God loves us – Yes! Love comes from God – Yes! Now, the responsibility to share that love falls on the shoulders of the believers; of the body of Christ, the Church. As Christians, God has lavished on us the best of His love through our Lord Jesus Christ (as well as being offered to the whole world if they will accept Him). Therefore, as Christians, our relationship with one another should express that same spirit of love because what comes out of us gives testimony to what's inside of us (see Jesus' teaching in Matthew 15:16-20).

For a Christian to claim he is of God means that individual should express the same attributes that are characteristic of the God they say they represent. To be without those attributes is to be without proof of who you say are and whose you say you are. The things that come out of our life tell more about the real us than any words of the mouth.

In taking up the responsibility to ***love one another*** we are daring to stretch out beyond our personal comfort zones to the benefit of another soul in need. We are putting our faith in action through the course of loving others. We are pushing past the popular feelings of emotions and commanding of ourselves and our lives to give unto others what we have received from God. We are personally making it our goal to imitate the Father's love toward us.

Romans 12:10 tells us, “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.” As brothers and sisters in Christ, we are all of the same holy family. We share spiritual kindred and as such we should be devoted to one another in well-being and care expressed through a loving relationship as a family should. Our love for one another is to be marked by fervency (see 1 Peter 1:22) which means we should have an on-fire, zealous love for one another in Christ.

Love is of God; love is from God and He has demonstrated His love toward humanity when He ***sent his Son into the world, that we might live through him,*** (see also John 3:16 and Romans 5:8 which we will see later in this lesson as well). The sacrifice of Christ proved to

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us (***manifested; made clear***) and the world how much God loves us and now we are to make that same love evident to all through our daily living and sacrifice.

God is love (vss. 8, 16), something I hinted on earlier. The word ***is*** can be compared to words such as be or exist. God doesn't just love. God doesn't just have love. God isn't just in love with us. Loving is not just a part of Him. God ***is*** love. It's what His entirety ***is***. Thus, whoever claims to be in an intimate relationship with God and knows God should readily and willingly demonstrate the same character He ***is***. In contrast to that, ***he that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.***

This love relationship we get to experience didn't start in or with us. God has been the chaser of mankind since his creation. Love begins and ends with God as the bookends that hold everything together.

To prove His love, He provided a means for mankind to be redeemed from the rift of sin that has torn apart his relationship with God. ***He sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*** The fact of the matter is sin destroys. And, there is no way around atoning (offering of propitiation) for that sin and restoring humanity's relationship with God outside of shed blood. Hebrews remind us, "Without shedding of blood is no remission," (Hebrews 9:22).

With that being said, Christ became that shed blood sacrifice, sent by God, which permanently atoned for our sins. The Bible tells us, "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," (Hebrews 9:24-26), where He not only covered our sins but, took them away forever.

Now, that's love! That's what God's love looks like! Therefore, our response should be to love like God loves.

LOVE LIKE GOD LOVES

1 John 4:11-13 "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love

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is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.”

Since God showed us the kind of love that would give up His only begotten Son, the command is, **we ought to also love one another**. Whatever little meager anything we think we may lose or give up in extending love can never be compared to what God already gave.

Love is the key that opens the door to the reality in showing that we love Him. God will not **dwell** in an environment of hate and selfishness. If those are present, God is not. If we, as His children, are showing His characteristics of love, then we **know** that we **dwell in him, and he in us**. Love or lack of it is the marker that shows one’s stance in his/her relationship with God. Anytime the individual or church is not operating in love, they are not operating in God and He is not in the midst.

There is a personal responsibility that John is pointing to for each individual believer to follow. Approximately 10x’s John uses the word **we** throughout this lesson alone, not including the rest of his book where there are many, many more instances and identifying words which incorporate and reference the whole body of Christ with the use of words like “us” and “our.”

“**We**” identifies us. “**We**” states what we believe. “**We,**” tells our mission. “**We**” also have His **Spirit** living on the inside of us and as such should operate the way His Spirit operates; in love.

Every true, born-again Christian, must possess the indwelling of His Spirit. The effective and powerful Christian life cannot be lived out without His Spirit. His leading and guiding on the inside is the separating factor between us and the world. The world caters to the things of the flesh while the **Spirit** hones in on the things of heaven; the things of God. Therefore, **he hath given us of his Spirit** and His Spirit should lead every Christian down the path of showing the same love He has shown to us.

1 John 4:14 “And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.”

Here, we see the word “**we**” again. In this usage of the word, John is speaking from his personal experience with Jesus. John was not doing a retelling of a story passed down; rather, he was attesting to the real-life knowledge of the ministry he witnessed following Jesus

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Christ personally for those 3 ½ years. This is a ministry that he has **seen** with his own eyes and now lives to tell about it or **testify** to others.

And, what does he testify? **“The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world!”** How incredibly AWESOME is that! He knows and witnessed His workings while here on earth that Jesus Christ was no less than the **Son** who has come to save! He is the love of God in action!

Jesus Himself told Nicodemus, “For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved,” (John 3:17). This is nothing short of the ultimate act of love. This, throughout every facet of His ministry, John gave witness to, testified of and wrote as a record in the books that bear his name.

1 John 4:15 “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.”

Earlier in this same book John wrote, “Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father,” (1 John 2:23). This goes back to his combatting the false teachers and their teachings. He stated very bluntly in the verse prior to this: “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son,” (1 John 2:22).

Not only are they a “liar,” but have been identified with the “antichrist.” That’s a heavy dose of truth. Christians have to be on guard where they are getting their information from and where they are allowing it to lead them. But he that **shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.**

The false teachings are out there. We are to make sure we are following the way of truth in love.

1 John 4:16-19 “And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us.”

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Here, the **love** issue is unwrapped and exposed for us to understand. What do we understand?

1. **We know and believed the love that God hath to us.** – Before one can dish it out to another, they must believe the love that God has for them. God loves you! We are more than familiar with the John 3:16 statement of love, but what about the Romans 5:8 statement of love: “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” While we were yet in our mess – God loved us so much to send His Son to the cross for us. That’s powerful love!
2. **God is love.** – Again, as already has been stated in our lesson, God cannot be separated from the character of who He is. Love is not what God does, it’s who He is. Now, everything that the world identifies as love does not mean that God is in that. If it is in opposition to His Word, He ain’t there. Point blank. Plain and simple.
3. **He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.** – God’s love was a demonstrative type of love; one He put on display through action, particularly in the sacrificing of His Son. In John 15:13 Jesus said, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” He who possesses the same marks of love He did, has the same “**God in him.**” He that lives in the life of love lives in God.
4. **Perfect love** – We can experience His **perfect love**. When the **day of judgment** comes we can stand with **no fear** in us because we have already been covered by His love. Therefore, we fear no sense of judgment or separation. Romans 8:38-39 reminds us, “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, no powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” There is no fear in His perfect love. **Perfect love casteth out fear**, therefore if any remain in fear he is not in love and needs to reevaluate their relationship with God. “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father,” (Romans 8:15; see also 2 Timothy 1:7).
5. **We love him, because he first loved us.** – Make no mistake about it; humans cannot take credit for this. As already stated before, love originates with God. “God loves

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you!” You, my friends, are so very much and incredibly loved by the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords. There is so much that we face daily that tries to speak contrary to the blessedness we have in Him. But, my God loves you with an undying love. His heart is tied to His people. His people need only to rest in the promises of His mercy, grace, power, and authority that make their hearts soar on the wings of the hope we have in Him all because He chose to love us first despite our sins and flaws.

And, when we truly grasp the understanding of the love of God for us, then can we learn to love others better.

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TOPIC:

“The Love of God”

1 John 4:7-19

Please Answer the Review Questions Below

1. **T or F.** John had to write this letter to combat false teachers.
2. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is _____.
A. Right B. Love C. Holy D. None
3. Describe how God showed His ultimate love for us.

4. Whosoever shall confess that _____ is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him.
A. We B. John C. Jesus D. None
5. There is no _____ in love.
A. Peace B. Help C. Worry D. None
6. **T or F.** God loves us because we loved Him first.
7. The lesson reminds us of just how much God loves us. How can we take the knowledge of that love and better apply it in the lives of people we meet and know?

