

GOD'S LOVE

New Testament Lesson #196

The Apostle John writes one of the shortest, but yet one of the most powerful sentences here in 1 John 4. He writes: "God is Love" (1 John 4:16). John is emphasizing the greatness of God's love towards men and women and children as he writes to a group of believers. He wants them to be encouraged by God's great love, and he wants them to be motivated by such a deep love.

Just how great is God's love? John says: "This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him" (1 John 4:9). God provided his one and only Son so that he might be a sacrifice for sin. And what is amazing about this, according to John, is that God did this, not because we loved God, but because God loved us!

It is this type of love, one that isn't given because of anything we did to deserve it, that causes John to say: "Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4:11). John tells his readers that we need to love one another. If we do that, then God is living within us. This means we are behaving towards others the very same way God behaved toward us. God is love, and if we love one another, then we are demonstrating God's love through our actions towards others. It is in this way that John says: "God lives in us and his love is made complete in us" (1 John 4:12).

Again, the key to being able to love like God is to recognize first how much God has loved us. We first need to appreciate that "the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us" (1 John 1:14-16).

When we appreciate the love God has first had toward us, then it makes it possible for us to live our lives in a way that shows the same type of love towards others. If we allow God's love to be understood then we will not be mean or hate other people. If God's love is working in our lives, then we won't hate our brother or any other person.

Can you imagine how wonderful the world would be if everyone appreciated God's great love for us, and accepted that Jesus is the Son of God and Savior of the world? It would be a wonderful place indeed. So, each and every day that we live, let us remember this simple, yet powerful lesson. God is Love!

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- When John earlier wrote his Gospel, he summarized the greatness of God's love when he wrote: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him" (John 3:16-17).
- Jesus also taught his apostles how they needed to love one another. John was one of these apostles, and his writing is influenced heavily by what Jesus taught him. In the upper room, not long before Jesus was to die, Jesus told his disciples: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:34-35).
- Peter was another of Jesus' apostles. He also wrote about loving one another. He also links this love to the sacrifice of Jesus. He describes how believers are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. Because of this fact, believers needed to respond similarly in love. Peter writes: "Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart" (1 Peter 1:22).

ANSWER KEY:

Gifts, hugs, candy, flowers.

He sent his one and only Son into the world as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Love, fear. Love drives out fear.

We show our love to God by loving others.

Finish John's letter to us. Fill in the missing letters. Trace the letters.

☺☺ = fr ♥ = v 1 = n 4 = o ♥ = l ♥ = G

Dear _____ iends,



... "Lo_ e o_ e another, f_ r



ove comes _____ om _____ od

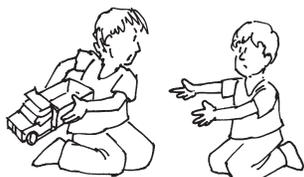


_____ od is lo_ e."



– 1 John 4:7-8

Circle the children who are showing love.



Name _____