

NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH BIBLE STUDY INSTITUTE

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***LOVE, HONOR, AND OBEY (PART I)***

I JOHN 4 VS 17-25

**INTRO:** THE PROSPECTIVE BRIDEGROOM WAS EXTREMELY NERVOUS AS HE AND HIS FIANCÉE WERE DISCUSSING THEIR WEDDING PLANS WITH THEIR PASTOR. ***"I'D LIKE TO SEE A COPY OF THE WEDDING VOWS,*** "THE YOUNG MAN SAID, AND THE PASTOR HANDED THEM TO HIM. HE READ IT CAREFULLY, HANDED IT BACK TO THE PASTOR, AND SAID," ***THAT WON'T DO! THERE'S NOTHING WRITTEN IN THERE ABOUT HER OBEYING ME!*** "HIS FIANCÉ SMILED, TOOK HIS HAND, AND SAID, ***"HONEY THE WORDS OBEY DOES NOT HAVE TO BE WRITTEN IN A BOOK. IT'S ALREADY WRITTEN ON MY HEART. "***

THIS IS THE TRUTH IN VIEW IN THIS PORTION OF I JOHN. UP TO THIS POINT, THE EMPHASIS HAS BEEN ON CHRISTIANS LOVING ONE ANOTHER; BUT NOW WE TURN TO A DEEPER – MORE IMPORTANT – TOPIC; A BELIEVER'S LOVE FOR THE FATHER. WE CANNOT LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR OR OUR BROTHER UNLESS WE LOVE OUR HEAVENLY FATHER. WE MUST FIRST LOVE GOD WITH ALL OUR HEARTS; THEN WE CAN LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR AS OURSELVES.

THE KEY WORD IN THIS SECTION IS PERFECT. GOD WANTS TO PERFECT IN US HIS LOVE FOR US AND OUR LOVE FOR HIM. THE ***PERFECT*** CARRIES THE IDEAL OF:

1. **MATURITY**
2. **COMPLETENESS**

A BELIEVER IS NOT ONLY TO GROW IN:

1. **GRACE**
2. **KNOWLEDGE** ( I PETER 3 VS 18 )

BUT HE IS TO ALSO GROW IN:

1. **HIS LOVE FOR THE FATHER** - HE DOES THIS IN THE RESPONSE TO THE :
2. **FATHERS LOVE FOR HIM**

JOHN HAS ALREADY GIVEN US THE EVIDENCE THAT GOD LOVES US BY REMINDING US THAT:

1. **GOD SENT HIS SON TO DIE FOR US ( JOHN 3 VS 16 )**
2. **HE LOVES HIS CHILDREN THE SAME WAY HE LOVES CHRIST ( JOHN 17 VS 26 )**
3. **JESUS TELLS US THAT THE FATHER WANTS THE LOVE WITH WHICH HE LOVED THE SON TO BE IN HIS CHILDREN ( JOHN 17 VS 26 )**

IN OTHER WORDS THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS TO BE A DAILY EXPERIENCE OF GROWING IN THE LOVE OF GOD. IT INVOLVES A CHRISTIAN'S COMING TO KNOW HIS HEAVENLY FATHER IN A MUCH DEEPER WAY AS HE GROWS IN LOVE. IT IS EASY TO FRAGMENT THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND BECOME PREOCCUPIED WITH INDIVIDUAL PIECES INSTEAD OF THE TOTAL PICTURE. FOR EXAMPLE GROUPS MAY EMPHASIZE:

- A. **HOLINESS**
- B. **WITNESSING**

BUT BOTH OF THESE ARE JUST A BYPRODUCT OF SOMETHING ELSE: A BELIEVER'S GROWING LOVE FOR THE FATHER. MATURE CHRISTIAN LOVE IS THE GREAT UNIVERSAL NEED AMONG GOD'S PEOPLE.

QUESTION IS TO DAY – HOW CAN A BELIEVER KNOW THAT HIS LOVE FOR THE FATHER IS BEING PERFECTED? THIS PARAGRAPH OF I JOHN SUGGEST FOUR EVIDENCES:

I. **CONFIDENCE** ( I JOHN 4 VS 17 -19 ) JOHN INTRODUCES TWO MORE WORDS IN THIS TEXT “ FEAR AND TORMENT. “ AND THIS IS WRITTEN TO BELIEVERS ! IS IT POSSIBLE THAT CHRISTIANS CAN ACTUALLY LIVE IN FEAR AND TORMENT? YES, UNFORTUNATELY, MANY PROFESSED BELIEVERS EXPERIENCE BOTH FEAR AND TORMENT DAY AFTER DAY. AND THE REASON IS:

1. **THEY ARE NOT GROWING IN THE LOVE OF GOD** - A BELIEVER WHO EXPERIENCES PERFECTING LOVE GROWS IN HIS CONFIDENCE TOWARD GOD. HE HAS A REVERENTIAL FEAR OF GOD, NOT A TORMENTING FEAR:

A. **SON WHO RESPECTS HIS FATHER**

B. **NOT A PRISONER WHO CRINGES BEFORE A JUDGE**

WE HAVE ADOPTED THE GREEK WORD FOR FEAR INTO OUR ENGLISH VOCABULARY: PHOBIA. ALL SORTS OF PHOBIAS ARE LISTED IN PSYCHOLOGY BOOKS:

- 1. **ACROPHOBIA** –FEAR OF HEIGHTS
- 2. **HYDROPHOBIA** – FEAR OF WATER

THE FEAR JOHN IS WRITING ABOUT IS:

3. **KRISISPHOBIA** – FEAR OF JUDGMENT (I JOHN 2 VS 28)

NOTE: IF PEOPLE ARE AFRAID, IT IS BECAUSE SOMETHING IN THE

- 1. **PAST HAUNTS THEM**
- 2. **PRESENT UPSETS THEM**
- 3. **FUTURE THREATENS THEM** - OR A COMBINATION OF ALL THREE

A BELIEVER IN JESUS CHRIST DOES NOT HAVE TO FEAR PAST, PRESENT OR FUTURE FOR HE HAS EXPERIENCED THE LOVE OF GOD, AND THIS LOVE IS BEING PERFECTED IN HIM DAY BY DAY.

THE SCRIPTURE SAYS ***“IT IS APPOINTED UNTO MEN ONCE TO DIE, BUT AFTER THIS IS JUDGMENT”*** (HEB 9 VS 27).

BUT A CHRISTIAN DOES NOT HAVE TO FEAR FUTURE JUDGMENT, BECAUSE CHRIST HAS SUFFERED HIS JUDGMENTS FOR HIM ON THE CROSS. (JOHN 5 VS 24) (ROM 8 VS 1) READ NOW – WE DO NOT HAVE TO BE AFRAID OF THE FUTURE, BECAUSE OUR SINS WERE JUDGE IN CHRIST WHEN HE DIED ON THE CROSS. THE FATHER CANNOT JUDGE OUR SINS AGAIN WITHOUT JUDGING HIS SON, FOR AS HE IS, SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD. NOT ONLY SHOULD WE NOT BE AFRAID OF OUR FUTURE BUT WE SHOULD ALSO NOT BE AFRAID OF OUR:

**PAST** – BECAUSE “HE FIRST LOVED US. “FROM THE VERY FIRST, OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD WAS ONE OF LOVE. IT WAS NOT THAT WE LOVED HIM, BUT THAT HE LOVED US (I JOHN 4 VS 10) (ROM 5 VS 10) IF GOD LOVED US WHEN WE WERE OUTSIDE OF THE FAMILY, DISOBEYING HIM, HOW MUCH MORE DOES HE LOVE US NOW THAT WE ARE HIS CHILDREN! NOT ONLY DO WE NOT HAVE TO FEAR THE FUTURE AND THE PAST, BUT WE ALSO DO NOT HAVE TO FEAR THE

**PRESENT** – BECAUSE “PERFECT LOVE CASTETH OUT FEAR “( I JOHN 4 VS 18 ) AS WE GROW IN THE LOVE OF GOD WE CEASE TO BE FEARFUL OF WHAT HE WILL DO. OF COURSE THERE IS A PROPER “FEAR OF GOD, “BUT IT IS NOT THE KIND OF FEAR THAT PRODUCES TORMENT. (ROM 8 VS 15) (2 TIM 1 VS 7).

FEAR IS ACTUALLY THE BEGINNING OF TORMENT. WE TORMENT OURSELVES AS WE CONTEMPLATE WHAT LIES AHEAD. MANY PEOPLE SUFFER ACUTELY WHEN THEY CONTEMPLATE A VISIT TO THE DENTIST. THINK OF HOW AN UNSAVED PERSON MUST SUFFER AS HE CONTEMPLATES THE DAY OF JUDGMENT. BUT SINCE A CHRISTIAN HAS BOLDNESS IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT, HE CAN HAVE BOLDNESS AS HE FACES LIFE TODAY, FOR THERE IS NO SITUATION IN LIFE TODAY THAT BEGINS TO COMPARE WITH THE TERRIBLE SEVERITY OF THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

GOD WANTS HIS CHILDREN TO LIVE IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF LOVE AND CONFIDENCE, NOT FEAR AND TORMENT. WE NEED NOT FEAR LIFE OR DEATH, FOR WE ARE BEING PERFECTED IN THE LOVE OF GOD (ROM 8 VS 35, 37-39)

IMAGINE! NOTHING IN ALL CREATION – PRESENT OR FUTURE- CAN COME BETWEEN US AND GOD’S LOVE!

#### ***THE STAGES OF THE PERFECTING LOVE OF GOD IN OUR LIVES***

- 1. WHEN WE WERE LOST - WE LIVED IN FEAR AND KNEW NOTHING OF GOD’S LOVE***
- 2. AFTER WE TRUSTED CHRIST – WE FOUND A PERPLEXING MIXTURE OF BOTH FEAR AND LOVE IN OUR HEARTS***
- 3. AS WE GREW IN FELLOWSHIP WITH THE LORD – GRADUALLY THE FEAR VANISHED AND OUR HEARTS WERE CONTROLLED BY LOVE ALONE***

**CLOSE:** A GROWING CONFIDENCE IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD IS ONE OF THE FIRST EVIDENCES THAT OUR LOVE FOR GOD IS MATURING. BUT CONFIDENCE NEVER STANDS ALONE; IT ALWAYS LEADS TO OTHER MORAL RESULTS.