

1 John

Dr. Charles "Buddy" Parrish
August 25, 2021



1 John 5:1-4

Vss. 1-2

- For John, the love of God and our love for one another are inseparable. And not for John only, but throughout the New Testament. In Mark 12:28-31 Jesus is asked by a scribe which did Jesus think was the greatest commandment. The Lord responds not with one, but two because they are inseparable. First, Deuteronomy 6:4-5, "Hear O Israel! The Lord our God is One Lord. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." Second, Leviticus 19:18, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus, then John, make these two commandments into one.
- Further, John is also looking at the church as a family. If you love the Father, then how can you not love the child and vice versa. As families we understand that dynamic. Don't tell me you love me when you hate my child. Don't invite me over for a big multi-family dinner but single out my child as one who is not invited. Often in our time we experience it the other way around. "Oh by all means, we would LOVE to have you for dinner, but let's leave all that God stuff out of it all, OK?" People may love you exactly because you ARE a Christian, but they don't love your Father and don't want Him included in any way.
- And we ARE a family! Did not Jesus say in Mark 3:35 that those who did the will of His Father WERE His "brother, sister, and mother"? There are many who have lost their families as a result of becoming Christian. The traditional Jewish response to a child who accepts Jesus as Messiah and Savior and becomes Christian, is to have a funeral for that child, for they are dead to the family. Whether from an atheist family or from another religion, often has been the case where the decision to follow Christ has cost the new believer their old family, only to have Christ give them a new family. I have heard many over the years say that their church is a far better family to them than their biological family ever was!
- Two other points here: First, we do not get to pick our Christian family any more than we get to pick our biological family. Friends may come and go, but we're stuck with our biological family and our Christian family. And not just stuck with them, we have to love them, actively

love them, because all of God's love is active! It doesn't matter where they're from, what their race is, what their social status is, or what their educational level is. All of those things are tools of Satan used to divide us. Look at the New Testament church: slave and free, Greek and barbarian, Jew and Gentile; there were Europeans, Africans, and people from the Middle East. And they were all one in Christ because of the love of Christ. Second, entry into the family of Christ is by adoption and rebirth. Because God first loved us and has chosen us, we respond in love and through Him we are reborn. Then, as He in us and we are in Him we are able to love and keep/observe his commandments. This is what makes us brothers and sisters in God's family.

Vss. 3-4

- In the Gospel of John, there in the Upper Room, Jesus told His disciples in John 14:15, "If you love Me, you will keep my commandments" and again in 14:21, "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him." Obedience then is the ONLY proof of love. Either we love our brother or we hate our brother. Jesus does not leave any middle ground for us to hide in. If then we love our brother, keeping His commandments, then we are IN, and only those in the family are able to truly know the secrets of Christ, the secrets He only discloses within the family.
- When John says the commandments of Jesus are not burdensome, are not heavy, he does not mean they are easy. And surely he is recalling Jesus saying that "My yoke is easy and My burden is light". We must always remember that whatever Jesus demands from us, He gives us the power to accomplish. Nothing is ever done on our own strength. What is impossible for us is possible with God. On my own I could never lift 1000 pounds. But with a fork life 1000 pounds is light. The Holy Spirit in us empowers us the same way. He gives us strength beyond our own strength so that the burden is truly light, so that keeping the commandments of Christ is itself a joy and never a burden.
- Finally, back in 4:4 we are reminded that "greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." Just as Christ overcame death and sin, he now empowers us to likewise overcome the world. By faith, as the entire chapter of Hebrews 11 tells us, we are able to overcome the world. Not by our power, but by the power of God that comes to us by faith. It is this faith that causes us to KNOW that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.