

1Pet 1.22-25—Love one another earnestly from a pure heart

The Distinctives of Christian Love

- I. It's sincere, without hypocrisy, Rom 12.9; 1Jn 3.18
 - A. The profession of love for our Christian brethren should arise from the truth of that love in our heart.
 - B. If there's no love in the heart, then everything we do for our brethren that looks like love is lost before the Lord.
- II. It's brotherly, Heb 13.1; Rom 12.10
 - A. The love we're commanded to show to one another is the love of a family. Being united to Christ as His Body, we've been united to one another as members of the family of God.
- III. It's earnest, Col 3.14; Lk 22.44
 - A. Our love shouldn't be cold, formal, and perfunctory, but warm and hearty.
 - B. It shouldn't be sporadic, but constant, loving at all times.
 - C. It should be a love that we work at and strive in.
- IV. It's from a pure heart, 1Tim 1.5
 - A. A love which seeks for them all the Lord has for them and desires nothing more than to help them farther down the road to glory.
- V. It's the inevitable fruit of being born again to God, 1Jn 4.8
 - A. Peter presupposes that love for the brethren will flow out of love for God because it's God's purpose to work in us the very love to which He calls us, Phil 1.6

Reasons in Support of this Duty

- I. We're all children of God.
 - A. We've been born again to love God—and His family. God, who is love (1Jn 4.16), teaches and enables us to love all those whom He loves, 1Jn 5.1
 - B. The mutual love we have for one another is natural to our new life. So Peter challenges us to live out that reality.
- II. Our souls have been purified by salvation for and in order to a sincere brotherly love.
 - A. The Spirit of God is at work mortifying our selfishness and self love so that we can love one another purely.
 - B. Even though the purging of our self-centeredness is still imperfect, the infusion and implanting of a brotherly affection for God's people has definitively taken place, Rom 12.10

- C. This enables us to give ourselves wholeheartedly to this duty because we know the transformation has already begun by God.
- III. The change which God made within us wasn't a temporary or superficial change, but a real, impactful, and enduring change.
 - A. It was a change produced by the living and abiding Word of God, vv. 23, 25
 - B. All efforts of the flesh at loving selflessly, purely, earnestly, sincerely, and sacrificially will all come to naught—like the grass which withers and the flower which falls.
 - C. But the gospel produces such a real change in us that we can love one another as God loves us—because the gospel is an imperishable seed which produces enduring and abiding fruit.
 - D. In fact, so natural is this fruit of brotherly love to those who are born again by the gospel, that if this fruit doesn't appear in our lives, then the seed of God's love has never been planted in the heart, 1Jn 4.19-21

Applications

- I. We need to take seriously how often and how strongly the Lord presses us in His Word on this matter.
 - A. Why is brotherly love so often raised as the great evidence of the truth of our salvation? Because of all the graces of a Christian, none so adorns and distinguishes him in the eyes of a self-centered world as a disciple of Christ as a sincere love for the brethren, Jn 13.15; Mt 25.40; 1Cor 13.1-3; Gal 5.6; Pr 23.26
 - B. Love is the badge of a true saint because love is the fulfilling of the Law, Rom 13.8
 - C. This call to mutual Christian love is no small matter. In the gospel of grace, it's a deal breaker. An unloving person is an unsaved person; and an unloving Christian is, at best, a miserable person.
 - D. We need to take this call seriously and look to our own heart for this preeminent sign of true saving grace, 1Jn 4.19-21
- II. Be convinced from this text that true conversion isn't the superficial and easy work of the flesh men make it out to be.
 - A. It's a change of heart and nature, a veritable work of GOD.
 - B. Which is why our greatest comfort in all this chapter is found in v.25: that we've been born again by God. Look again at the imperatives of vv. 13, 15, 17, and 22 and praise God that He who calls you to such holiness is already at work to bring it about.