

## ***Love Defined***

### ***What's Love Got To Do With It?***

To have an intimate relationship with God, we must develop loving relationships with one another.

From a vertical perspective, obedience is indicative of Christians love for God. John added a horizontal perspective: **loving God and loving one another are inseparable concepts.**

In fact, Jesus taught His disciples that keeping all the commands depends on keeping the two greatest commands.

***“He said to him, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important command. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands.” Matthew 22:37-40 HCSB***

***APPLY IT: Want to know how you are doing on the 1<sup>st</sup> command? Measure how you are doing on the 2<sup>nd</sup> one.***

***In essence, John was stating that we can measure our love for God and our intimacy with Him by the way we love our brothers and sisters in Christ. If we are out of fellowship with one another, we cannot have an intimate relationship with God.***

***These two concepts are also reciprocal. The more we love God, the better we'll know Him and the more we'll love our brothers and sisters in Christ. The more we love our fellow Christians, the more we'll love God. In fact, having godly and intimate flesh-and-blood relationships will help us relate more intimately to the God we cannot see.***

## **Love Counterfeit:**

### **Don't accept idols as a replacement for God**

1 John 2:15-17 Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB)

A Warning about the World

**15** *Do not love the world or the things that belong to the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him.*

**16** *For everything that belongs to the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride in one's lifestyle—is not from the Father, but is from the world.*

**17** *And the world with its lust is passing away, but the one who does God's will remain forever.*

*Overcoming means winning the battle over the lure and temptations of the world. Ex: being hateful, gossipers, haters, jealous, prideful*

*Our goal should be to escape the grip of sinful habits and desires. To overcome the world, we need the power of Christ activated in our lives through faith in Him.*

*We must be on guard against worldly influences that interfere or distract us from our love for God and for one another.*

*John uses the word "world" to refer to Satan's evil influence in this age, which includes three enticements:*

- 1. "the lust of the flesh"- any sinful desire or interest that interferes with our relationship with God and with fellow Christians.*
- 2. "the lust of the eyes"- any sinful desire or interest that come through what we see and leads us to violate God's will; and*
- 3. "pride in one's lifestyle"-a sense of arrogance based on wealth or rank that violates a Christ-like spirit of humility.*

*When Jesus Christ was tempted by Satan in the Wilderness, in His human nature he faced all of these worldly impulses. He defeated Satan by relying on the power of God's Word. (See Mt 5)*

God loves the world- that is- God loves his creations and the people in it.  
John 3:16 But God hates worldly ways (Zech 8:17> Plotting evil against or swearing falsely against a neighbor)

John uses the word “world” in the second sense here. We dare not love the sinful ways of the world.

### **Reflection and Response:**

*How can we use Scripture to overcome the worldly influences that are impacting all Christians in today’s World?*

### **A New Family Tree & Getting to Know The Family Rules**

- **1 John 3:1** Look at how great a love the Father has given us that we should be called God’s children. And we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it didn’t know Him.

### **Reasons our “family” loves**

- **1 John 3:14** We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers. The one who does not love remains in death.
- **1 John 3:23** Now this is His command: that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as He commanded us.

### **Reasons Explained and Shown Through Love in Action**

- **1 John 3:16** This is how we have come to know love: He laid down His life for us. We should also lay down our lives for our brothers.

### **Apply It**

- **1 John 3:18** Little children, we must not love with word or speech, but with truth and action.
- **1 John 3:23** Now this is His command: that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as He commanded us.

