

**NOTE TO THOSE SEEING THIS STUDY ON THE WEB SITE:**

Our aim is to regularly post a new lesson on the first part of each month. So if you wish to follow this course of study, please check regularly each month. If no new lesson appears at the beginning of a particular month, it indicates that we were unable to get it ready in time. In such a case, please check for it after the first of the following month. Your questions or comments are welcomed and will be responded to as much as possible.

**PATHWAY OF LIGHT STUDY COURSE**

by R. W. Young

**“But the path of the just is as a shining light that shines more and more unto the perfect day.” (Prov. 4:18)**

**“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of Yahweh; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” (1 John 5:13)**

**LESSON 163, 1 John 4 continued**

As we continue with chapter 4 in 1 John, let us remember that the basic purpose of this letter is to tell of those things that are marks of the true believer, and, therefore, the things whereby we can “know that” we “have eternal life” (as stated in verse 13 of chapter 5). John just finished telling us, and warning us (in verses 1-6) concerning testing the spirits (spirits working through men), “because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (Verse 1). Then, he specifically warns against the spirit of the anti-Messiah, which denies “Messiah has come in flesh”. We go on from there as John returns to the main theme.

**VERSES 7-11 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of Yahweh; and every one that loves is born of Yahweh, and knows Yahweh. (8) He that loves not knows not Yahweh; for Yahweh his love. (9) In this was manifested the love of Yahweh toward us, because that Yahweh sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. (10) Herein is love, not that we loved Yahweh, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. (11) Beloved, if Yahweh so loved us, we ought also to love one another.**

This is the one issue that John emphasizes over and over as evidence or proof of being a true believers and, therefore, of having eternal life – the issue of having love for one another. Here he connects it again with the new birth, which Yahshua spoke about as recorded in the gospel of John chapter 3 in His conversation with the Pharisee named Nicodemus.

Love is, in fact, the very essence of what happens to a person when they become a partaker of the promised “New Covenant”. The promise of that covenant is two fold: (1) the full pardon of our sins, and (2) the writing of Yahweh’s law upon our hearts. Both of these elements involve our receiving of Yahweh’s love.

First of all, we receive His love as it “was manifested” by His giving His only begotten Son “that we might live through Him”. This is best expressed in that very well known verse of John 3:16, which says, “For Yah so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Or, as the John expresses it here in verse 10, “Herein is love, not that we loved Yahweh, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.” (The Greek word translated “propitiation” is the word used for “mercy seat” in the Tenach, or “Old Testament”, as translated into Greek in the Septuagint.)

So this is how love fulfills that part of the New Covenant” under which our iniquities are forgiven. We read of this in Jeremiah 31:34, which says, “And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Yahweh: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Yahweh: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

(Some claim the New Covenant is not in effect yet, because, they say many of our neighbors do not yet know Yahweh. But the Bible makes it very clear that we are now under the New Covenant. For example it is said in 2 Corinthians 3:6 that Yahweh “also has made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter kills, but the spirit gives life”.

The truth is that everyone who is under this New Covenant does already know Yahweh and does not need to be taught to do so. That is what Jeremiah is referring to. In other words, our “neighbor, and ....brother” is speaking of those within the covenant”. Even in the millennial kingdom it is evident that not everyone will know Yahweh in the way Jeremiah is saying, for at the end of the 1000 years a great multitude show they really did not know Him in this intimate way, because they accept the devil’s deception and go up against Yahweh at Jerusalem.)

The way love enters into the other part of the covenant, the part that says, in Jeremiah 31:33, “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people, is found in Romans 5:5, which says, “And hope makes not ashamed; because the love of Yahweh is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.” When His love is put within us by Him indwelling us by His Spirit, His law is, thereby, written within us, for in Galatians 5:14 we read, “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Also, Romans 13:10 says, “Love works no ill to his neighbor: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law”.

Thus John also emphasizes the importance of our making sure that we exercise this part of the New Covenant by saying in verse 11 of this chapter, “ Beloved, if Yahweh so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” Our ability to do so – to truly love one another – is a major proof we are true believers – that we have been born of Yahweh and, therefore, have eternal life.

Peter also makes it plain that by our new birth we are brought into true love. He writes in 1 Peter 1:22-23, “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: having been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of Yahweh, which lives and abides for ever.” Thus, he also makes it clear, as does John, that love is a primary evidence of the new birth.

However, even though His love is put within us, we are still admonished to be diligent to exercise that love, for we have a free will and must still fight the old nature, or flesh, that is self centered instead of having real love. As Peter says, since we have (in our conversion or new birth) “purified” our “souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto un-pretended (or genuine) love of the brethren” we are to “love one another with a pure heart fervently.”

In other words, we have the love within us by the Holy Spirit – we have the ability to love - but it is not automatic. Rather, it is left up to us as to whether we continue in that love that began when we first became born again. As we will see again in chapter 5 of 1 John, if we are born of Yahweh, we will have a love for those who are born of Yahweh. Nevertheless, it must be exercised. That is to say, we must practice it by an act of our will.

We did not have the power to truly love others before coming to know Yahshua, not with true love, or as Peter says “ unfeigned love”. This sincere love only comes from Yahweh and is planted in us by His Spirit.

As Paul points out in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 it is possible to do many things that look like true love, but are not. You can even give all your goods to feed the poor and yet not have true love (what the Greek calls “agape”). The inner motivation may wrong and the person may be just trying to get praise, or get a sense of personal satisfaction of feeling he is someone great.

True love is called “disinterested benevolence” by Charles Finney in the book they have titled “Finney’s Theology”. He points out that it is the choice of the will to live for the greatest possible good, which, as he points out, is the happiness or well being of each kind of being according to their degree of ability each has to experience happiness.

That is why the law says we are to love Yahweh - choose His well being or happiness - above all others. We are to love Him (choose to live for His happiness or gratification) with all our hearts, soul and mind (or might), because His ability to experience happiness is infinite, for He is the Infinite One.

Next, we are to love our neighbor (choose his good or happiness) as ourselves, because his ability to experience good, or happiness, is the same as ours.

Thus, love is a moral choice and not just a good feeling toward Yahweh or others. We may not really like a person, in the sense of liking his or her ways and manners. But we are still required to do whatever we can properly do to promote that person's well being or happiness.

In addition to the general choice of seeking to promote the happiness of all according to the law of Yahweh, we are to have a special love for other believers. The law says to love your neighbor "as yourself". However, Yahshua said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." (John 13:34) How did He love us? He gave His life for us. This is even greater than loving someone as yourself.

That is why the apostle Paul writes, "...and let each esteem other" (other believers) "better than themselves". (Phil 2:3)

**VERSES 12-15 No man hath seen Elohim at any time. If we love one another, Yahweh dwells in us, and his love is perfected in us. (13) Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. (14) And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. (15) Whosoever shall confess that Yahshua is the Son of Yahweh, Yahweh dwells in him, and he in Yahweh.**

Actually, John is saying "none", or "no one", has seen Elohim at any time. Not even the angels have seen Him in the sense of His essence, or total being. Yes, in Ex 24:10 it does say Moses, Nadab, Abihu and the seventy elders of Israel "saw the God of Israel" (KJV). But that was the Logos or Word making Himself known before He was made flesh in person of Yahshua the Messiah. In His total being, as the Infinite One, no one can see Him for you cannot see Infinity.

As I have explained elsewhere, the Word (or Memra) is the living expression or manifestation of the invisible, un-seeable One. In fact, one of the meanings given by Strong to the Greek "logos", which is translated as "Word" in John 1:1 is "the Divine expression". And, of course, any word is an expression of something. "House" expresses a certain type of building. "Car" expresses a kind of vehicle, "dog" a kind of animal, etc., etc. So "the Word of Yahweh" is that which expresses, or shows what Yahweh is.

Of course, when it speaks of “the Word” in John 1:1, it is speaking of a being, a being who is “with Yahweh” and yet “is Yahweh”. Again, as I have said elsewhere, this is the expression or manifestation of Yahweh Elohim whereby He makes Himself known or seen to created spirit beings out of (or within) His Infinity. It is the emanation of the Invisible One, coming forth in a form that is visible in the spirit realm, and that perfectly expresses Him.

Thus John says, “none has seen Elohim at any time”. But, then, he says, “If we love one another” He “dwells in us, and we in Him”. What a marvelous thing this is: that Yahweh, the Almighty lives in us, and we live in Him. This is exactly what Yahshua prayed would be, as recorded in John 17:21-23.

Then, John adds that it is by us having the Holy Sprit that we know He lives in us. This is because “Yahweh is that Spirit” as 2 Cor. 3:17 says. Also it is our confession that Yahshua is the Savior and the Son of Yahweh that shows we live in Yahweh and Yahweh in us. 1 Cor 12:3 tells us that, “... no one can say Yahshua is Adonai” (KJV, “Lord”) “except by the Holy Spirit”. Such a true from the heart confession is only made through the Holy Spirit.

**VERSES 16-18 And we have known and believed the love that Yahweh hath to us. Yahweh is love; and he that dwells in love dwells in Yahweh, and Yahweh in him. (17) Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. (18) There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear: because fear hath torment. He that fears is not made perfect in love.**

John continues with this central theme that our being in Yahweh and Yahweh in us is seen by the love we have to one another. He specifically says that “Yahweh is Love”. Therefore, he is saying that this is the reason why we will have love if He is in us and we in Him.

Then, he points out that if we are like Yahweh in this world – if we have His love operating through us – “we may have boldness in the day of judgment”.

Next John tells us that “there is no fear in love”. He says “perfect love cast out fear.” Why? “Because fear has torment” (and love promotes happiness not torment or punishment). Then, he says that the one who fears is not made perfect in [or “by”] love.

The kind of fear being spoken of here is not the “fear of Yahweh” that we all should have and that is commended in the Bible. Proverbs 1:7, for example, says, “The fear of Yahweh *is* the beginning of knowledge: *but* fools despise wisdom and instruction.”

Peter says, “And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judges according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning *here* in fear.”(1 Peter

1:17) And Paul writes, “ Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” (Philippians 2:12) But these are what I would call latent, or inactive, fears.

By that I mean, they do not make you fearful in the sense of causing anxiety. But they are fears in the sense that you know the seriousness of things and, therefore fear to do wrong and to be careless. Yet, because you have set your mind to trust Yahweh and to strive to do His will, you do not actively dwell in fear.

(The expression, “Fear and trembling” is an idiom, or manner of speech, that means with a great realization of the importance or seriousness of the matter. This is seen by the fact that Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 2:3, “And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.” Obviously Paul was not fearful and literally trembling all the time he was with the brethren at Corinth. But he realized the seriousness of his ministry to them.

Also Paul wrote to the Corinthians about their attitude toward Titus when he came, saying, “And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembers the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him” 2 Corinthians 7:15. Surely they were not actually trembling, but they were very concerned to treat him well, seriously concerned about making him feel wanted and appreciated.)

We all need the kind of fear that a seasoned electrician has. He realizes the extreme danger of being careless in working with electricity. Yet, he is so experienced and so careful that he is not afraid, because he fully obeys the rules in working with it.

So we are to realize the seriousness of life and are to be afraid to live carelessly and sinfully. Yet, we are to believe Yahweh is there to keep us from falling (Jude 24,25, I Peter 1:5, etc.) and have made up our minds to serve Him to the best of our knowledge while trusting in His grace and mercy. Therefore, we do not dwell in active fear.

And because we love Yahweh and the brethren, because our focus is on His love and His mercy toward us, and on seeking to serve Him, we need have no fear. If we really love Yahweh and have our center of attention on Him, on serving Him and our brethren we will not fear, because we know He accepts us “in the Beloved” (Eph. 1:6) and His grace and blood covers us while we are walking in the light (I John 1:7).

In other words, since we are saved by grace and not by works, as long as we love Yahweh and know He loves us so that we are walking in line with what we know, we have no reason to fear the judgment to come. As Paul says in Romans 8:15, “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”

When we were in bondage to sin, we had good reason to fear. But now that we have His Holy Spirit (as Yahweh dwelling in us and we in Him) we have been set free to serve Yahweh. And as long as we do so, because of our love to Him, all fear is cast out. Thus as we read in 2 Tim 1:7, “Yahweh has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” And as John writes, “Perfect love” [Yahweh’s love shed in our hearts by His Spirit] “casts out fear, because fear has torment”.

So, in summary, although we fear Yahweh and, therefore, fear to walk in a sinful life, if we have perfect (that is, complete love) for Yahweh and as long as we know how fully He loves us (enough to have given His Son to die for us) we do not dwell in fear. We do not have fear of judgment, because we know we are walking in the light and the blood of Yahshua keeps cleansing us from all sin.

**VERSES 1 John 4:19-21 We love him, because he first loved us. (20) If a man say, I love Yahweh, and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he that loves not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love Yahweh whom he hath not seen? (21) And this commandment have we from him, That he who loves Yahweh love his brother also.**

Indeed our love to Yahweh did not come until we learned that He loved us enough to put His own Eternal Life, His Word, into flesh as His only begotten Son, and, then, give Him to die for us so that we could come into His family.

But if we love Yahweh, we will also love His other children as well. To think and say that we love Yahweh while we hate (or do not love) others is to deceive ourselves and become a liar. As John says, if we do not love our brother whom we have seen, how can we love Yahweh whom we have not seen.

Someone might say that ‘Yahweh is beautiful and wonderful; therefore I love Him. But my brother is not, but is unlikeable; so I don’t love him.’ But to say that is to confuse the meaning of love by making it to mean like or admire, feel good about, etc. And that is just confusing love with “attraction toward”, like a man saying he loves a certain woman, but meaning he is attracted to her - he feels good when he thinks of her.

As has been said, or indicated, love (in the sense of the Greek word “agape”) is to have as one’s overall choice in life the promotion of as much good, that is, as much happiness, as possible. Therefore, to say you have love toward Yahweh (in the sense of choosing to do what makes Him happy or satisfied) but not to have the same attitude, or choice of will, toward others, is not to be choosing to promote all the good possible. Therefore, it is not true love.

If your guiding choice in life is to promote all the good (all the happiness) possible, then, you certainly will love (choose to promote the good) of the one whom you see and have direct effect upon. And, as John indicates, to say you love, in this sense of choosing to seek to promote the satisfaction, happiness, or gratification of one whom you

have not seen or do not have immediate contact with (Yahweh) while you do not seek to do good to the one you do have immediate contact with (your brother) is to be a liar.

John concludes by saying, “ And this commandment have we from him, That he who loves Yahweh love his brother also.” Thus he indicates that not loving is the same as hating. And we must not confuse the kind of love that is mere attraction towards, or good feelings about, etc., with the type of love the Bible speaks of in the commandments. There is no in between place in this sense of love.

We cannot totally control how we feel about something (even though we do have some control there also). But the love spoken of as a moral commandment is a choice of the will, and not a mere emotion, except as the emotion is under our control (which is another matter entirely).

So in conclusion, since Yahweh is love, those who are born of Yahweh will have His love, His disposition to promote blessing and good. Therefore, having such a love for our brothers and sisters, for all our fellow human beings, and for Yahweh, each and everyone to the degree of what they can experience and what we can promote, is evidence that we are born of Yahweh, that He dwells in us and we in Him, and, therefore, that we have Eternal Life.

We have a great chapter ahead in 1 John chapter 5 to look at next.