



**Title: Foundational Love**  
**Theme: Truths to Grasping God's Love**  
**Series: The One Another in Scripture**

*The Word of God gives us at least 34 passages of Scriptures to govern ourselves by as we live out the Christian life in practical ways. The church God can use has a Body of Christ who examines herself to God's Word, trusts in Jesus and walks in step with the Holy Spirit of Christ. The beloved John, being led by the Holy Spirit of Christ gives us a powerful truth to guide ourselves by as we look to the Word of God for instructions on living out "Foundational Love."*

"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us." (1 John 4:7-12)

### **God's love originates in Himself**

The beloved John has just laid the foundation for us that indicates whether or not we are responding to God's Holy Spirit with a right heart. The truth found in this text is a powerful conclusion, God's love originates in Himself, (1 John 4:7-8) is manifested in Jesus Christ as God in the flesh and through God giving His one and only Son to pay the ultimate sacrifice. (1 John 4:9-10; John 3:16)

God's love is also expressed through Christians (1 John 4:12) as they have Biblical fellowship. Westcott wrote, "It is through man that the love of God finds its fulfillment on earth." God has chosen in this dispensation to show His love through His children as they walk in obedience to Him.

As Christians take time to grasp and respond to this truth they begin to understand John's concern for the fellowship of believers. Christians who grasp the truths of today's message come to understand that Christian fellowship is above fruit bearing and blessings, which are in themselves great. It is God's presence and manifestation in a person's life as observed by those in the world. Jesus said, "A new commandment I give you, that you love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13: 34-35)

*I would propose to you the Christian's goal is to live in such a way that people know they are disciples of Christ.*

*Just how is that goal achieved?*

## **“God is love...”**

*The Christian that is able to achieve the high goal of expressing Biblical love understands where true love comes from.* The beloved John in writing about God's love and the love that is to be expressed by a Christian writes, “God is love...” (1 John 4:8,16) John also writes, “For love comes from God.” (1 John 4:7) Never was a more important declaration made than this; never was more meaning crowded into a few words than this short sentence, “God is love” (*Theos agape estin*).

It would be inadequate to think of salvation as mere deliverance from the punishment of hell. It is best enjoyed in this lifetime as enjoying Christ's salvation as freedom from the love of the flesh, freedom from love of this world and freedom from the lies of the devil who led Adam and Eve to love his lie over loving God's perfect will for them.

Everything in life and creation reflects God's revealed truth and the truth worth grasping in this first division is that God is the only source for true love. “Source” means that spring or fountain, the beginning of a stream from which it gets the flow that feeds life to all who would drink from it. “Source” is that from which anything rises or originates. Nothing finds its beginning or existence on its own.

All babies born since the creation of Adam and Even exist because there was a source. No baby or person came about or exists by his or her own efforts. You and I exist not by our own efforts but because we had a source, our parents. All who ever existed before us and all who will exist after us had or will have a source, parents. Biblically all parents can trace their source of existence to the first two earthly parents, Adam and Eve. They did not come into existence of themselves, they had a source, God. Genesis 2:7 says, “...the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.” (Genesis 2:7) The Bible says, “But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, He took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib He had taken out of the man, and He brought her to the man.” (Genesis 2:20-22)

The Hebrew word “breathed” (*nesamah*) is understood that such breath originates with God. He can withhold that breath thereby withholding life from humanity. Without His breath there is no life. Our source of life begins and is determined by Him.

God is love means that true love originates from God just as our lives originate

from Him. His love does not change because true love is His nature. One day a boy in a certain family told one of his brothers that he had to be good or their father would not love him. The boy's father overheard the conversation and spoke to the boys. He told them "That is not true, I will love you always, when you are good I will love you in a love that makes me glad. When you follow sin I shall love you in a love that grieves me. Never-the-less I will still love you."

"That is the way it is with God, He is not obligated to love us because we are good. He loves because He is love, love is who He is." True love exists because God is love, people do not enjoy true love as an reward for doing good. Just as we exist because life originates with God, true love exists because God is love.

### **What His love is**

*In order for the Body of Christ to enjoy "Foundational Love" she must look to God who is the source of true love and she must understand just what His love is. God is love. (1 John 4:8-6) "Love" (agape) in regard to God's love in today's key text means that it is an expression of His willful action toward man. It involves God doing what He knows is best for man not doing or giving man what he deserves. It is God's love that allows a man to go through what he must in order to cause man to call upon God or choose to reject Christ's sacrifice made for him. It is God's willful act to draw men to Christ and it is His willful act to give man what he needs to faithfully serve Him.*

There is nothing we can do to impress God which would cause Him to want to express His love to us. He saw our need and willfully did everything needed for us to have a restored relationship with Him. Jesus Christ was obedient unto death so we could have what we need to have our greatest need met, a live vibrant relationship with the Lord. Our key text is very clear, This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. (1 John 4:9-10)

God did not give His Son as the last and final sacrifice for the cost of sin because we are attractive, because we are good, or because we made a promise to do something. Our redemption was decided before the creation of the world. God showed His love sacrificially by sending His Son and Christ showed God's love by sacrificially giving His life.

When Christians grasp this truth they sacrificially do what God has called them to do. Everyone has a different call upon their lives, but all callings must be accomplished through a certain amount of sacrifice.

One person who grasped his call was Lough Fook, a Chinese Christian who was

given a Holy Spirit compassion for the coolies in the South African mines. He felt led of the Lord to sell himself into slavery for five years for the opportunity to take the Gospel of Christ to the Chinese slaves working in the mines. He worked hard, suffering as a slave and he preached and shared Christ to those who worked with him. Before his five years were up Lough Fook died, but not before he saw 200 slave miners receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Lough was connected with God through Christ and God's love was lived through Lough as he met the need of the Chinese slaves in South Africa. He saw the need of the slaves and he willfully sold himself into slavery, giving up his freedom so the slaves in the South African mines could hear the Gospel of Christ.

It must be noted that not every Christian is called to make the type or depth of sacrifice that Lough did, however, all Christians will sacrifice something so others may hear the message of Christ because the love of God is flowing through them by the Holy Spirit of Christ. This sacrifice may come through financial giving, fasting and prayer or through all sorts of ways set forth by God.

### **Biblical ways of expressing the love of God**

*Foundational love comes from God, His love is lived through His obedient children and there are Biblical ways of expressing the love of God to one another.* The Bible says, "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12:7) It also says, "Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. (1 Corinthians 12:1) The Apostle Paul gives these instructions so that the Body of Christ may know how to exercise their Holy Spirit given gifts, "Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy." (1 Corinthians 14:1) 1 Corinthians 14:3 says, "But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort." (1 Corinthians 14:1)

Two truths worth grasping in this part of the message are "love" (*agape*) and "prophecy" (*propheteuo*).

Scripture is clear, God has made the way for Christians to accomplish His command, "Love One Another." He has sent the Holy Spirit to give them His power to express true love.

The Holy Spirit has given at least 21 different gifts to the Body of Christ as He determines (1 Corinthians 12:11) for the common good of the local church. This is accomplished as Christians walk in obedience to what the Bible says. The New American Standard Bible give us this powerful instruction "Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. (1 Corinthians 14:1)

Christians are able to accomplish their Biblical call to love one another as they

“pursue” God’s love. “Pursue” (dioko) means to press hard after with diligence in order to obtain. This is the heart much like that person who so longs to accomplish a certain goal that he sacrifices certain pleasures or rights to spend the proper amount of time, energy and expense to obtain his goal. The pursuer of God’s love has the mindset of C. T. Studd who wrote, “If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.”

The Christian who is in hot pursuit of God’s love will first allow God to do a cleansing within his own heart, will ask God to control the meditation of his spiritual heart and will continually ask the Lord to enable him to let Jesus’ love be expressed through him. This takes persistence and a lifelong act of surrender.

In the pursuit of making honey we are told that honey bees must visit 56,000 clover heads consisting of 3,360,000 visits to make one just pound of honey. It has been estimated that the worker bee will fly up to eight miles looking for a nectar flow. Their persistence in accomplishing God’s design for them has enabled millions of people to enjoy one of God’s natural sweeteners. The sweetest most natural thing for mankind to enjoy is to be connected to the nectar flow of God’s love.

This will require a constant pursuing of His children so they and the world can enjoy “agape” love, the God-kind of love. Holy Spirit given gifts operated through agape love are the highest expression that a Christian can live before the eyes of everyone. By exercising Spiritual gifts selflessly and sacrificially, Christians are given the ability to discipline their minds and the will to minister to others--even those they feel are unworthy or undeserving of being loved. It is unconditional love expressed for the glory of God and Christ, exercised only through the influence of the Holy Spirit.

During the Revolutionary War an American officer felt led of the Holy Spirit to show love to an enemy who he felt should die. During a very dangerous assignment Duncan McColl, a British Soldier was protected from being shot and killed when an American officer gave an order “Do not to shoot Duncan McColl. The American officer told his men that God had work for Duncan to do.

After the Revolutionary War Duncan became a minister of the Gospel. He was led of the Lord to oversee a congregation on the Canadian side of the St. Croix River. The congregation was made up of Christians from both Canada and Maine. They exercised their Spiritual gifts sacrificially, meeting each other’s needs and when the War of 1812 broke out, Pastor McColl told his congregation to keep ministering to each other as though nothing was going on. It is said that even today the people on each side of the river go out of their way to minister to each other. There is a sweet fellowship between the sister towns of St. Stephen and Calais. Though separated by a national border, the Americans still cross to congregate in Christian fellowship. They share an expression of love that causes all who will take time to see that the Lord is doing a work among them.

Christians who constantly pursue God's love and exercise the Spiritual gifts sacrificially are able to do so because they "especially love the gift of "prophecy." (1 Corinthians 14:1) The gift of "prophecy" (*propheteuo*) is exercised by Christians who have the Christ apportioned gift of "Prophets" (*prophetes*) having the ability to declare truths through the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit... to tell forth God's message, a proclaimer, one who speaks out the counsel of God with clearness, energy, and Biblical authority. These are Christians who have been taught of God by the prayerful study of God's Word, men or women who correctly handle the Word of truth. (Deuteronomy 18:18; Isaiah 1; Ezekiel 2; 1 Corinthians 14:3)

Christians who express lives that demonstrate God's work in them are Christians who desire the Holy Spirit given gift of prophecy. They make every effort to be where this gift is being exercised by a pastor, teacher, evangelist, prophet or apostle. They understand that these are not necessarily offices, but gifts apportioned by Jesus Christ so the children of God may be built up, prepared for works of service, so the Body of Christ may have unity, become mature, have great knowledge of the Son of God and attain the full measure of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:7-13)

Christians who are the most useful to the Body of Christ are those who make it a point to get to services where the Word of God is being spoken forth in preaching or teaching. They are the ones God uses the most to catch the eyes of all who see their lives. It is through the gift of prophecy that Christians get clear direction on what God is calling and directing them to do, how to live and determine their Holy Spirit given gifts and understand the love of God.

We are so blessed to live in a country where exposure to the preaching and teaching of God's Word is so accessible. Sunday mornings all though out the USA you can find Bible believing churches preaching and teaching God's Word. There is so much high quality Christian material out there, Christians can spend the whole Lord's Day being fed the Word of God. With little effort and with reasonable spending churches can offer Biblical teachings covering ever part of life so those who eagerly desire the gift of proclaiming and teaching of God's Word may be fed manna from above.

Christians who feed upon the Word of God listen attentively. Thus they are able to learn more about Christ and find direction regarding living a life that is pleasing to the Lord, prepares them for service to Christ, His servants and to their fellow man.

I remember when I first started coming to church here. It was on the first Sunday

after I became a Christian. I was so captivated by the preaching and the teaching of God's Word from behind the pulpit, in the Sunday school classes and the Wednesday night Bible studies. I was so amazed to hear Christian music and songs that prophesied about the love of God. When I got my first Christian music tapes I listened to them over and over. I was so blessed by listening to Christian radio. My first Christian movie was such a blessing. The Christian testimonies I heard from people who really knew Christ strengthened, encouraged, and comforted me. Christians from all over the USA sacrificed so much so I could grow and mature in Christ all because they were connected to the source of true love, the Lord God and were willing to pay the price so others could grow in their relationship with Christ.

### **“Love feasts”**

*Christians who grasp the love of God serve the Lord Jesus sacrificially so others can enjoy the “Foundational Love” of God.* They also celebrate regularly as an expression of God's love toward one another. In the book of Jude in verse 12 we read that Christians had love feasts.

These “love feasts” (*agapai*) were public banquets instituted by the early Christian church and often connected with the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The provisions were contributed by the more wealthy individuals and were made common to all Christians, whether rich or poor. Portions of the food that was left over was sent to the sick and absent members. These love feasts were intended as an exhibition of that mutual love which is required by the Christian faith...” (Zodiatas; The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament) These meals are referred to by some verses in the New Testament and are mentioned as a common ministry to the Body of Christ in postcanonical literature, which are writings found about the times of the early church. They are recorded as being a very special part of New Testament history. (New Bible Dictionary; History of Christian Agape, J.H. Kelly; F.F Bruce; The Moody Handbook of Theology; Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary)

They are a wonderful way of expressing mutual love and fellowship among Christians today. I remember my first Christian love feast. I was doing farrier work in Glidden, Iowa. A Christian family invited me to go and I was really impressed with the unity and joy they had in being together. They took a real interest in each other and were not ashamed of their faith in Christ. They did have some singing, prayer, but mostly just being together sharing a meal. I know they had no problem seeing that I was not a Christian yet their act of love shown to me and to each other has never left my mind. It was clear that they were a family in their faith in Christ, it was a testimony of God doing a work among them. Christian history shows forth that Christians can most certainly celebrate their faith in Christ over a common meal. Churches today are becoming very creative in reintroducing this special time of Christian fellowship. Instead of setting a certain Sunday of each month for the celebration, they hold a meal for special

occasions. They hold the meal at different times of the day determined by the time and style of the ministry they are holding. Some churches have caught a new vision for Sunday school by having it a different time and having a fellowship meal and a song service that moves into Bible studies. This new vision is bringing a revival among His people, moving them to get together and it has often been celebrated with a fellowship meal.

The modern day church made the same mistake as the early New Testament church, they turned the love feasts into a dead religious observance and sinful flesh took over. However, when guided by the Holy Spirit these meals done with a right heart are birthing life back into this part of love expression for the Body of Christ.

The church that grasps "Foundational Love" understands key truths enabling Christians to live out life expressions saying, "God is doing a work among them." She looks to God because He is the only source of true love. She understands the sacrifice made by Christ and at all costs makes a way for the Gospel of Christ to get around the world. She has a Body of believers who exercise their Holy Spirit gifts through sacrificial love. She is a church that eagerly desires to be exposed to the proclaiming and teaching of God's Word and she celebrates as the Lord leads.

Let us pray!!!!

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