



Sunday school at 9:30, Service at 10:30 with King’s Kids.

NEWS

Wednesday Nights at Alêtheia 6:30 🛎 Christmas Party December 10, 6:00 - See Karen Dalton

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The proper activity of physical care and concern for the people in your own church family is the _____ of, and for, Christianity. That proves many things...

The reason you would be reluctant to love others with abandon, is that you are _____. The person who has become _____ that God’s love for them is endless has no fear of the future because they know in Whom they Trust - they believe in their future with Him.

In 4:7 we were given the 1) command, the 2) source of compliance and the 3) motivation for obeying.

His love was meant to be shared, not hoarded - we’re people, not packrats.

In 4:20 we saw that the Christian who proclaims that they love God, but who remains unmoved by their brother in need is not one who lies, but is a _____. That speaks to their character. (Revelation 21:8).

Logical loops: Point A leads to B, which leads to C, but then C leads _____.

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

I JOHN 4:21-5:2 ~ 4:21 And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their fellow believers. 5:1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God when we love God and observe His commandments.

Point A: God has commanded us to Agapê. That is in _____ (Luke 10:25-37), but the focus here is on your fellow Christians. If you cannot love the people under your own _____, any love for the people in this room is a lie, and if you cannot love the people in this _____, any love for the people out there is a lie.

Verse 1 defines who qualifies as your fellow Christian. Any person who “Believes that Jesus is the Christ” qualifies as a Christian to be _____ by you. That would be point B.

The second half of verse 1, is ambiguous, but it’s actually better to see it as _____.

Point C: If you’re “Born of the Father,” you do love the Father and you also love His “Child,” _____.

Verse 2 extrapolates that out to the rest of the Father’s children. Since we love the Father’s _____, it follows that we love the Father’s _____. That reality is proven by the love we have for the Father because the proof of that love is that we _____ Him enough to obey Him... And what has He commanded? Right back around to the basis of point A.

Verse 2 seems like _____ things, but it’s really only one thing progressively. It’s a mini logical loop all by itself.

The word “Believes,” is πιστεύων (pĭs-tū-ōn), the participle form of the verb πιστεύω (pĭs-tū-ō). It is clear that the only requirement to be a Christian is to “Believe,” in Jesus.

1) Individual

2) Action

3) Habitual

4) Directed

5) Important

6) Considered

Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

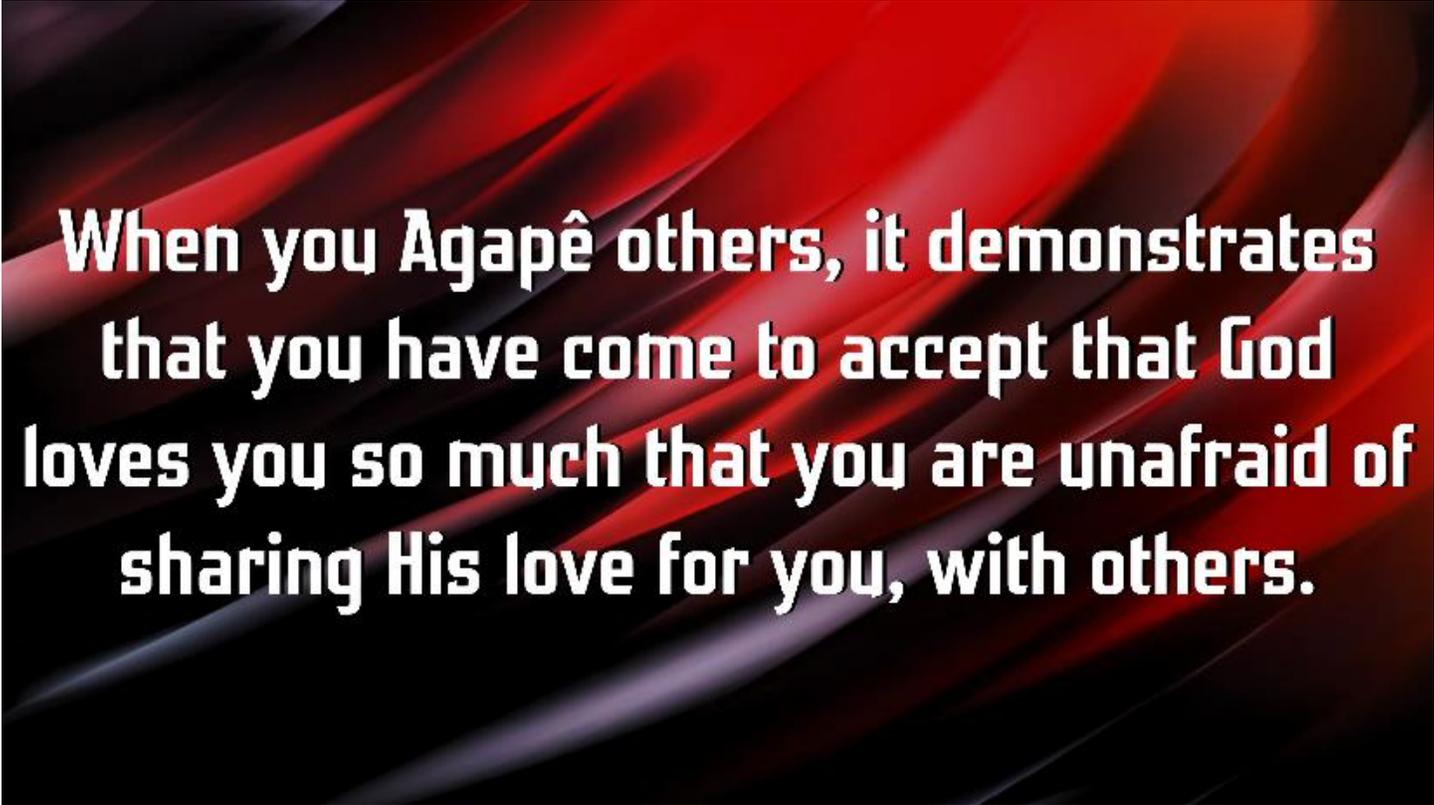
Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____



While we finished chapter 4 last week, we just kind of skimmed the final few verses. The opening of chapter 5 is so closely interrelated with the end of chapter 4, we would have needed to review those verses anyway.

The big point last week was that the proper activity of physical care and concern for the people in your own church family was the evidence of, and for, Christianity. That means it proves that you are a Christian and it proves that Christianity is conformity to Christ, and it proves that Christ loves - that God loves - us... people. God loves people.

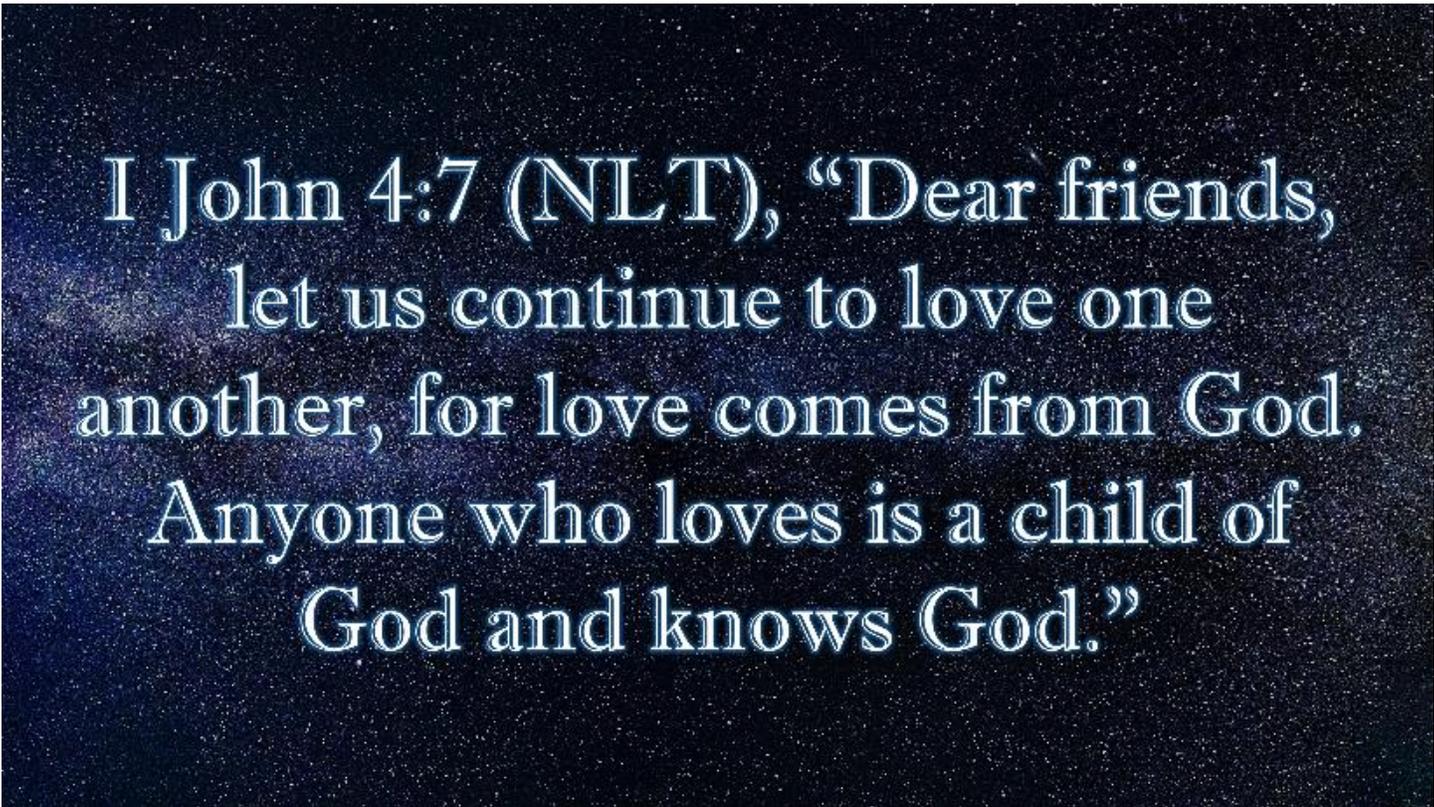


When you Agapê others, it demonstrates that you have come to accept that God loves you so much that you are unafraid of sharing His love for you, with others.

Why? Because Agapê can only come from God and so in order to Agapê others, you must allow His Agapê to flow into you, and then, through you. When that happens, it demonstrates that you have come to accept that God loves you so much that you are unafraid of sharing His love for you with others.

You have accepted His job offer of being in the family business, of being one of His ministering agents on earth. The reason you would be reluctant to love others with abandon, is that you are afraid. Afraid of rejection, afraid of being taken advantage of, afraid of running out of love, all of which is afraid of loss. The person

who has become certain that God's love is endless and that He loves them no matter what, is the one able to love others, no matter what. Such a person has no fear of the future because they know in Whom they believe and they Trust in His eternal love for them, no matter what.



I John 4:7 (NLT), "Dear friends,
let us continue to love one
another, for love comes from God.
Anyone who loves is a child of
God and knows God."

The final major section of this Epistle started in chapter 4, verse 7, which was the 1) command, the 2) source of compliance and the 3) motivation for obeying. "Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God." Keep on loving your fellow Christians because the power to do so is God's love poured out in

and through you and as such it shows that, not only are you His very own - but that you know who you are in Him.

When that's true, fear is gone. Perfected Agapê and fear cannot coexist. It isn't that God's love poured into your heart pushes fear out of your heart, it is that when you have enough confidence in His love that you share it with others fear has been defeated.

That sharing of His love because you know for certain it will never run out is the definition of Christian maturity. You might object and ask where is obedience - where is self-control - where is Biblical knowledge and Christian wisdom? Actively, intentionally sharing God's Love with those around you is obedience, it is all of the Fruit of the Holy Spirit including self-control, it is the outworking foundation for all the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, it is knowledge and wisdom perfected in action.

AGAPÉ

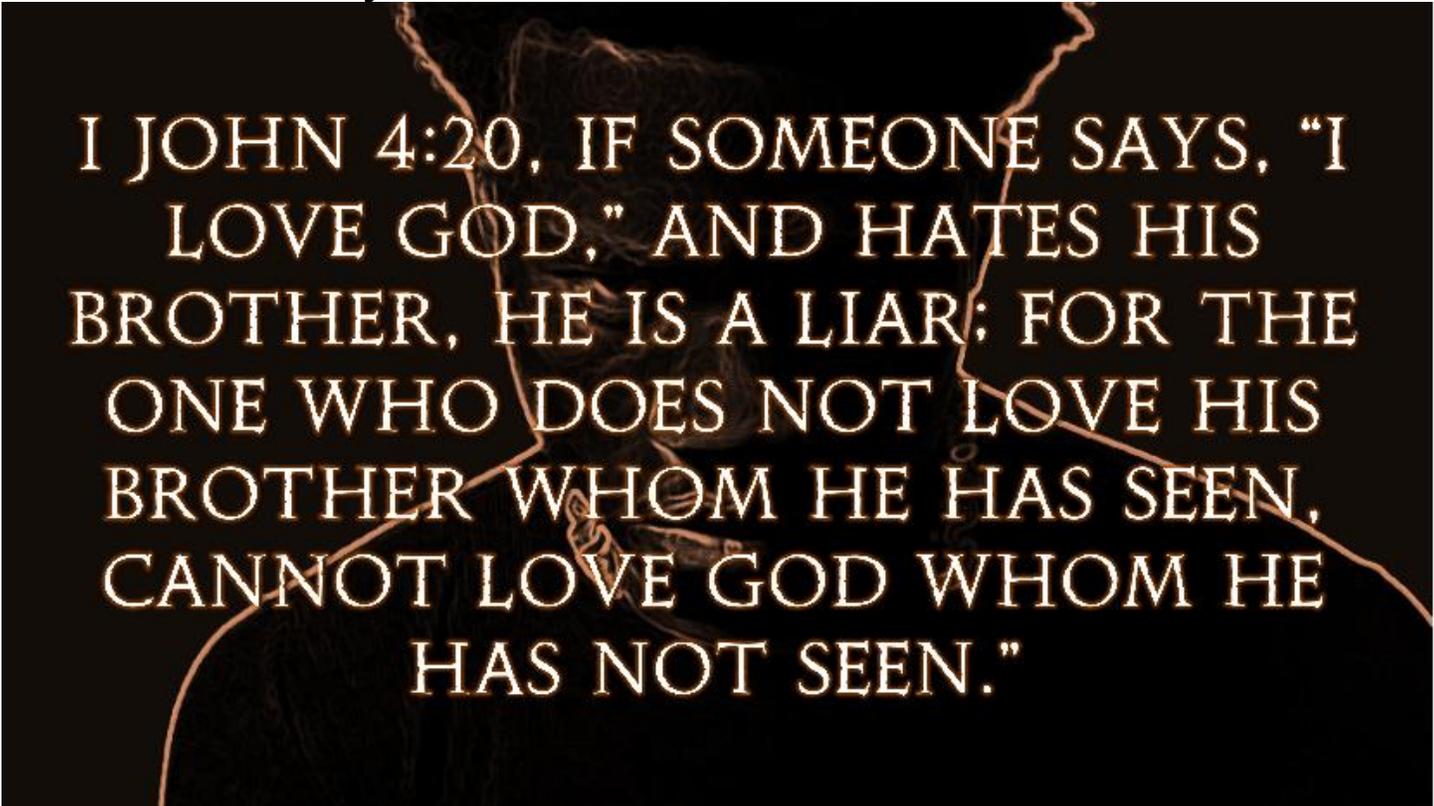
I John 4:19, *"We love, because
He first loved us."*

That's why, "If you would just love, it would be enough." It's stated in a profound way in verse 19, essentially, "We love, because He first loved us." There are actually a few different ways you could take that tiny little sentiment.

Without distracting you with all the wrong ways, I'll just cut to the chase and tell you that "We love," is intentionally ambiguous and so means that all Christians are able to Agapê generally. We can Agapê our fellow Christians, as we've seen repeatedly. And, for the first time in this Letter, we are able to Agapê God. It also includes the unspoken and out-of-view

Agapê for the lost. We are able to Agapê across the board and why? How? Because of the revealed source of that Agapê.

The source and supply of that Agapê is that God loved us first. That does not mean that He loved us and now we reciprocate out of a sense of duty, or gratitude, or joyous elation, but that His Agapê has already been given to us as a currency we can spend. We can reflect His love back to Him, we can share His love with our brothers and sisters, and we can even extend His love to the unsaved, because He has first given it to us to use in that way. It's not meant to be hoarded.



I JOHN 4:20, IF SOMEONE SAYS, "I LOVE GOD," AND HATES HIS BROTHER, HE IS A LIAR; FOR THE ONE WHO DOES NOT LOVE HIS BROTHER WHOM HE HAS SEEN, CANNOT LOVE GOD WHOM HE HAS NOT SEEN."

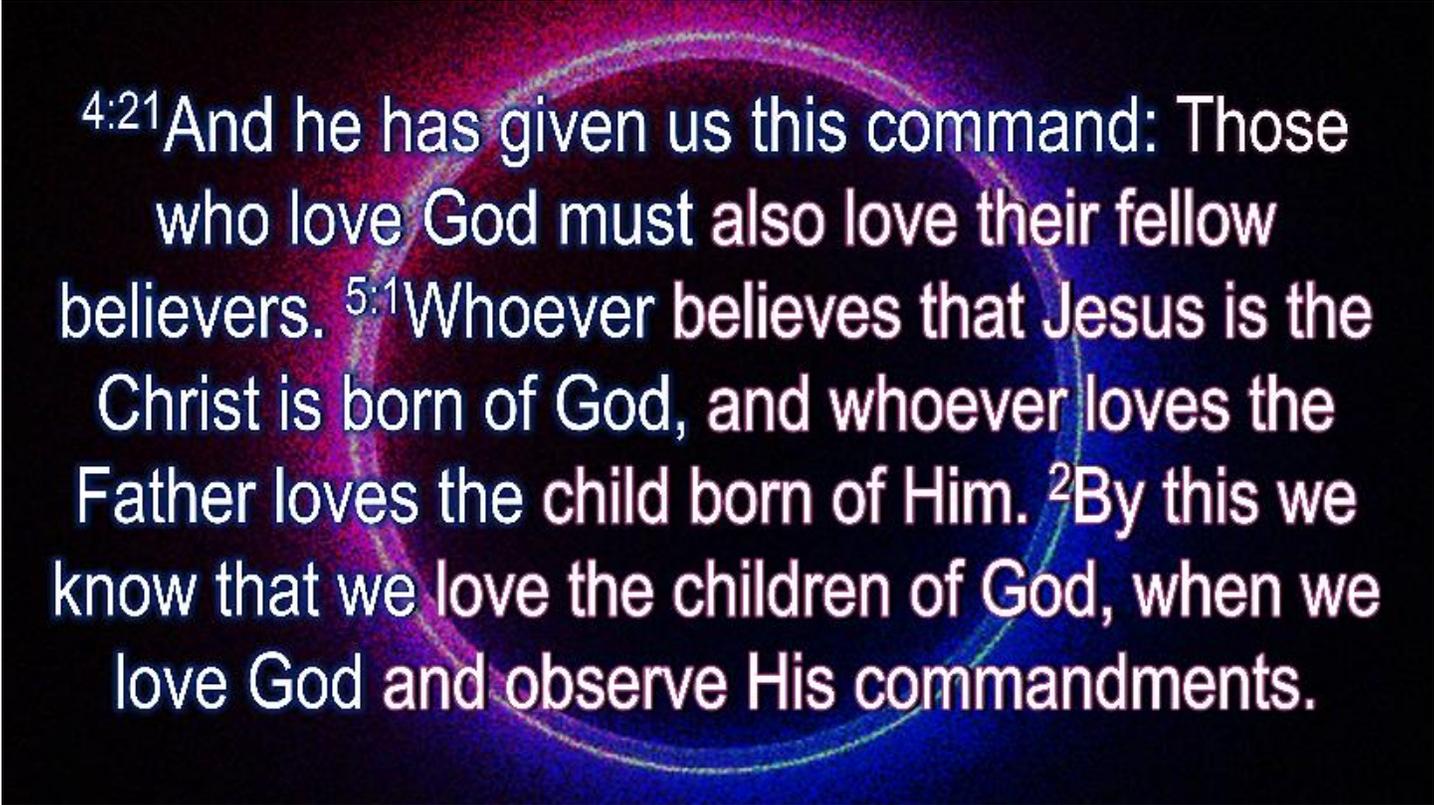
I wanted to highlight verse 20 because it's more important than it seems, and I don't want anyone misunderstanding the danger presented. "If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen." This is a chiasm that makes the point far more dramatically in Greek. I won't go into the details, but the gist is that the word "Hates," is used in the chiastic structure to be a synonym for "Does not love." In this verse it is merely two ways to state the exact same concept a concept defined and made crystal clear back in chapter 3, verse 17, as anyone aware of a brother's need and able to help who is emotionally unmoved by their plight and so refuses to be of concrete help is one who "Hates."

Anyway, the gist again is that the Christian who proclaims that they love God, but who remains unmoved by their brother in need is not one who lies, but is a liar. That speaks to their character. A character at odds with itself - intentionally deceiving others, attempting to deceive God and inevitably deceiving themselves.

We keep seeing that loving others is not a requirement for Salvation, but rather an outworking of it. It is, however, something that needs serious attention because Revelation 21:8, also written by John states that for, "All liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." A word of caution. There is tremendous peril in staying an infant.

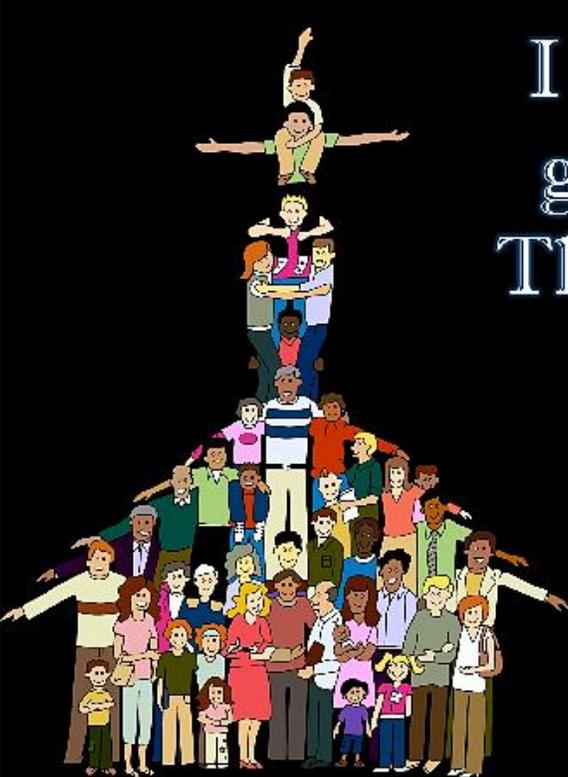
That is precisely why we dig deep here. We're trying to grow up in Christ and abide in the Truth rather than lies, abide in Christ rather than in the world.

Now the cool thing about the Semitic take on Greco-Roman argumentation is that there are these ideas that keep circling back connecting with each other and gathering steam as they do - I call them logical loops. Point A is established and upon it is built point B, which in turn becomes the foundation for point C. In our culture that would be the end of it. A is the foundation, B is the wall, and C is the roof - the building block approach. For our friends like the Apostle John, it isn't. Just because B and then C flow logically from A, how do we know that A was right? The logical loop connects C back around as the foundation of A.



4:21 And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their fellow believers. 5:1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.

Let's take a look with the final verse of chapter 4 and the first 2 verses of chapter 5. 4:21 And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their fellow believers. 5:1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.



I John 4:21, “And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their fellow believers.”

 **lêtheia**
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Point A, God has commanded us to Agapê. The Command is to reflect His love back to Him with all abandon. It is demonstrated with a trust in Him great enough to obey Him and this is the first of what He commands. Be entirely devoted to Him in right relationship.

Secondly, the command is to love one’s neighbor with God’s Agapê. People who don’t want to obey try to tightly define those who would qualify as a neighbor. The Jewish legalist asked Jesus that very question with that very motive. In response, Jesus told the Parable of the Good Samaritan. It means that any person on the

planet could qualify as your neighbor, the ones that do, are the ones that come into your life. The ones to whom you are connected.

That means the people most closely associated with you first and then radiating out from there. That is why Jesus and John talk extensively about loving your brothers and sisters in Christ, which is to say that group of Christians closest to you, which again is to say the local church to which you belong.

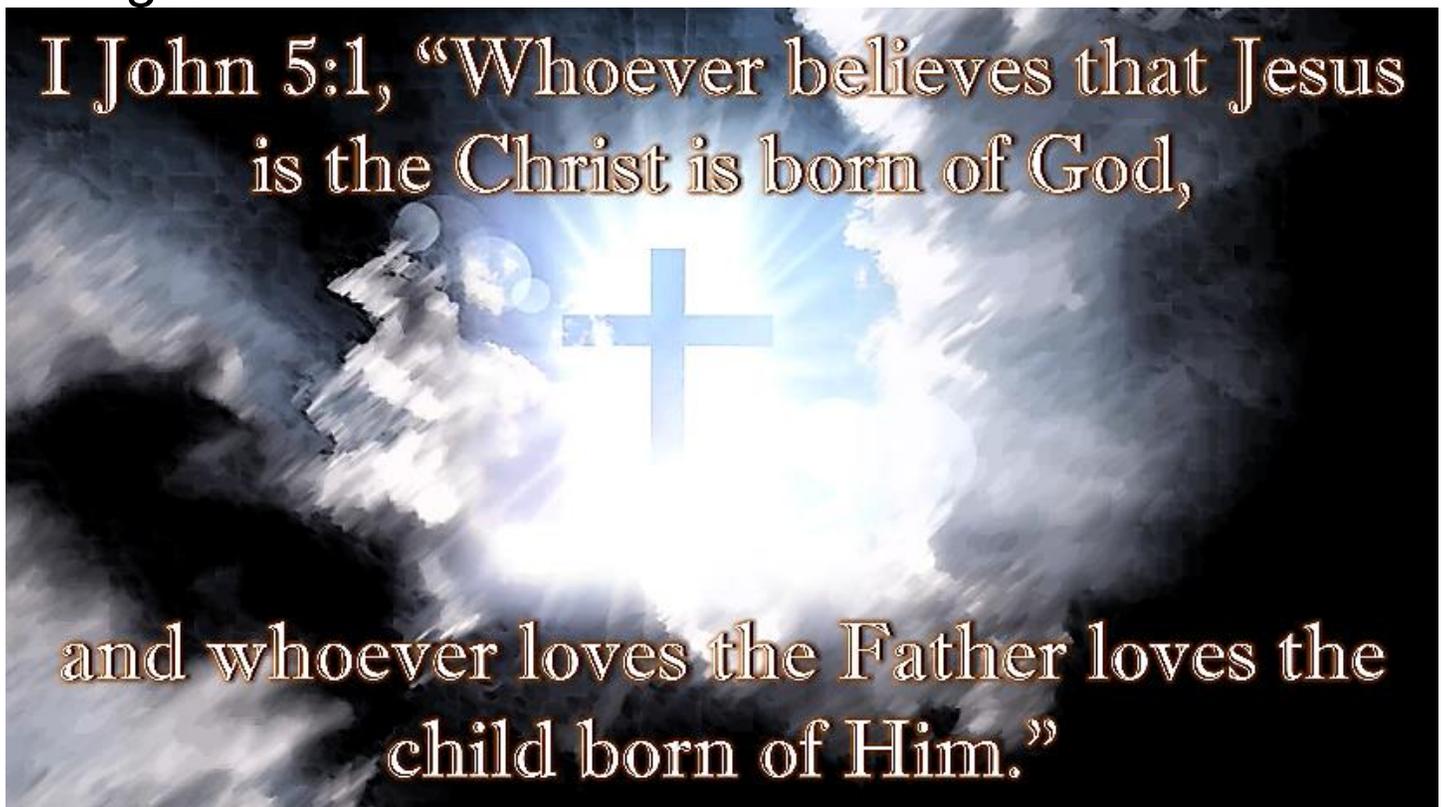
If you cannot love the people under your own roof, any love for the people in this room is a lie, and if you cannot love the people in this room, and love for the people out there is a lie. If you insist you love others, but cannot actually love those nearest, you are a liar, and we know what awaits liars.

Anyway, that's the entirety of what God commands. All the Law and Prophets hang on those two principles (Luke 10:25-37).

Verse 21 confirms that by zeroing in on the Agapê we would share with our fellow believers. The not-so-subtle point is that if you truly Agapê your fellow

believers it's only because you have accepted God's Agapê for you and reflected that back to Him, which is proven by obeying His command to love.

Additionally, loving one another is the prerequisite for loving the lost - the other of a different kind.



The command is here is love your fellow Christians. Then in verse 1, it is going to define who qualifies as your fellow Christian. John was there when the Pharisaic Lawyer queried Jesus, he's anticipated the attitude. Many people would say, and actually do say, "I love my fellow Christian - The four, or five, of them on earth, who make my cut for being Christians."

God answers that desire to be unloving by defining it for us here. Any person, regardless of anything, race, color, background, citizenship, political affiliation, baptism status, regardless of anything, anyone who “Believes that Jesus is the Christ” is the one who qualifies as a Christian to be loved. That’s all it takes to be “Born of God.” Because it is a work of God, not man. That would be point B.

Now, I’m torn, because I want to talk about what that means more fully, but I also want you to see the logical loop. Set aside your mental cogitations concerning Salvation, and what it takes to be a Christian, and whom you must love as a fellow Christian, for a moment... We’ll return.

The second half of verse 1, is ambiguous, but it’s actually better to see it as Jesus being the child. The gist is if you love the Heavenly Father, you will love Jesus Christ, His One and Only, handed over to death in order to be Salvation.

That would be point C. If you are “Born of the Father,” in this way and in this sense, you by very definition love

the Father. It then logically follows that you love His “Child,” Jesus.



I John 5:2, “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.”

Verse 2 extrapolates that out to the rest of the Father’s children, His adopted children through Christ Jesus the One and Only Lord and Savior Who enables that adoption. Since we love the Father’s child, it follows that we love the Father’s children. That reality is proven by the love we have for the Father because the proof of that love is that we trust Him enough to obey Him and what has He commanded? Right back around to the basis of point A.

Verse 2 seems like two things, but it's really only one thing progressively. In fact, it is a mini logical loop all by itself. The way you know that you love the children of God is when you actually love them. Watch, God pours out His love into your heart. You come to believe that He loves you enough, to love Him in return. In giving Him His love back, you notice no loss of love, but rather more love.

That's hopeful and so you give some of His love to other people near you, and again, you don't have less love, but more. You are now on track to trust in His love so much that you give more away. In doing so you are actually obeying His commandments to love Him and love others, which is then proof that you "Love the children of God" in reality.

It obviously wraps all the way around to verse 21 in a bigger picture. There are these logical loops all over this Epistle in all sizes from encompassing the whole Letter, to just a single verse.

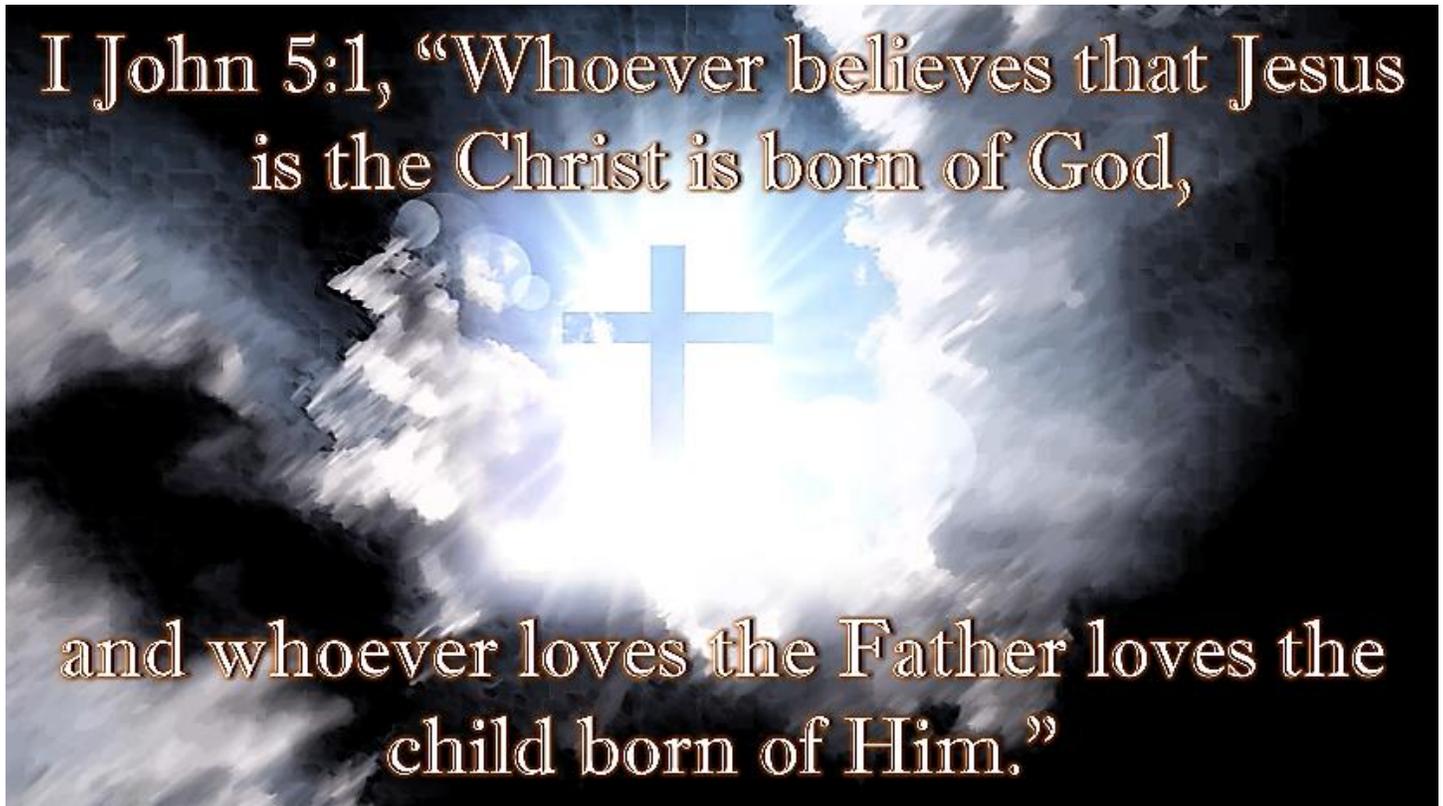
Everything is interwoven to the degree that it cannot be separated. Loving the Father cannot be separated from trusting Him enough to obey His command to love. If I

give a kid a cookie and then ask him to give me the cookie back, she will probably balk until she realizes that if she does, I'll give her two cookies. If I ask her to give one to another kid, again she may balk until she trusts that I will keep giving her as many cookies as she can give away and then some.

There is no other form of legitimate Christianity. This is it. Seek the Father's Agapê in order to obey Him by returning His Agapê back to Him, to Jesus, to the rest of the children and yes, even to the lost as we share His love with the hope that they will join His family and be our new brothers and sisters whom we will love all the more. God has an endless supply of love.

A common experience is becoming a parent for the first time and thinking that you could never love anyone as much as your one and only child. There's no way that I have enough love to spread to a second child, let alone subsequent children. Then, if you're fortunate, you find out that your capacity to love just grows to include more. The more you spend love the more love you have.

Okay, this whole thing in this part of the Bible hinges on loving in actual fact and deed, other Christians... Who are those other Christians?



Back in verse 1 it was all who "Believe." The quintessential verse on Salvation comes in John's Gospel. You all know it by heart. In chapter 3 Jesus was speaking about eternal Salvation with the Pharisee Nicodemus. He told him that he needed to be "Born again," saying "Unless a person is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nick was baffled. Jesus explained, and by the end of verse 14, Jesus said that He, the One and Only "Descended from heaven," Anointed One, the Christ, the 14b "Son of Man

(would) be lifted up; 15so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.

16“FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHALL NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.”

18“HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM IS NOT JUDGED; HE WHO DOES NOT BELIEVE HAS BEEN JUDGED ALREADY, BECAUSE HE HAS NOT BELIEVED IN THE NAME OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD.”

16“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. 17“For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. 18“He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

The word “Believes,” shows up a lot. It is πιστεύων (pīs-tū-ōn), the participle form of the verb πιστεύω (pīs-

tü-ō). It is clear that the only requirement to be a Christian is to “Believe,” in Jesus.

In our culture we commonly understand the word “Believe,” to mean intellectual assent. “I believe there was a guy named Jesus who died on a cross 2,000 years ago.” While that is belief, it is not this.



Biblically, soteriologically, “Believe,” actually means, that you consider a thing (that’s gathering the evidence and seriously trying to make sense of it - meditating on it and its ramifications). Then you choose to accept it as absolute fact (that’s intellectual assent of the highest order - you are all in on the idea). Here’s where we

really diverge from our notion of belief... With full embrasure of a well-considered idea, we therefore behave in accordance with that new belief. In other words, it becomes foundational to your perception and so becomes part of who you are. You are fundamentally a different person after, than you were before, because you have a different perception of reality based upon your newly accepted belief.

As a Greek participle the word itself tells us what we could gather by examining the word in context. When we describe to a person the kind of belief, or trust, or faith, that they must have in order to be Saved based upon our theological understanding we could save our breath if they knew Greek, because the word construction itself, would explain it all for us.

As a verbal participle it is present, active, singular, nominative. That means...

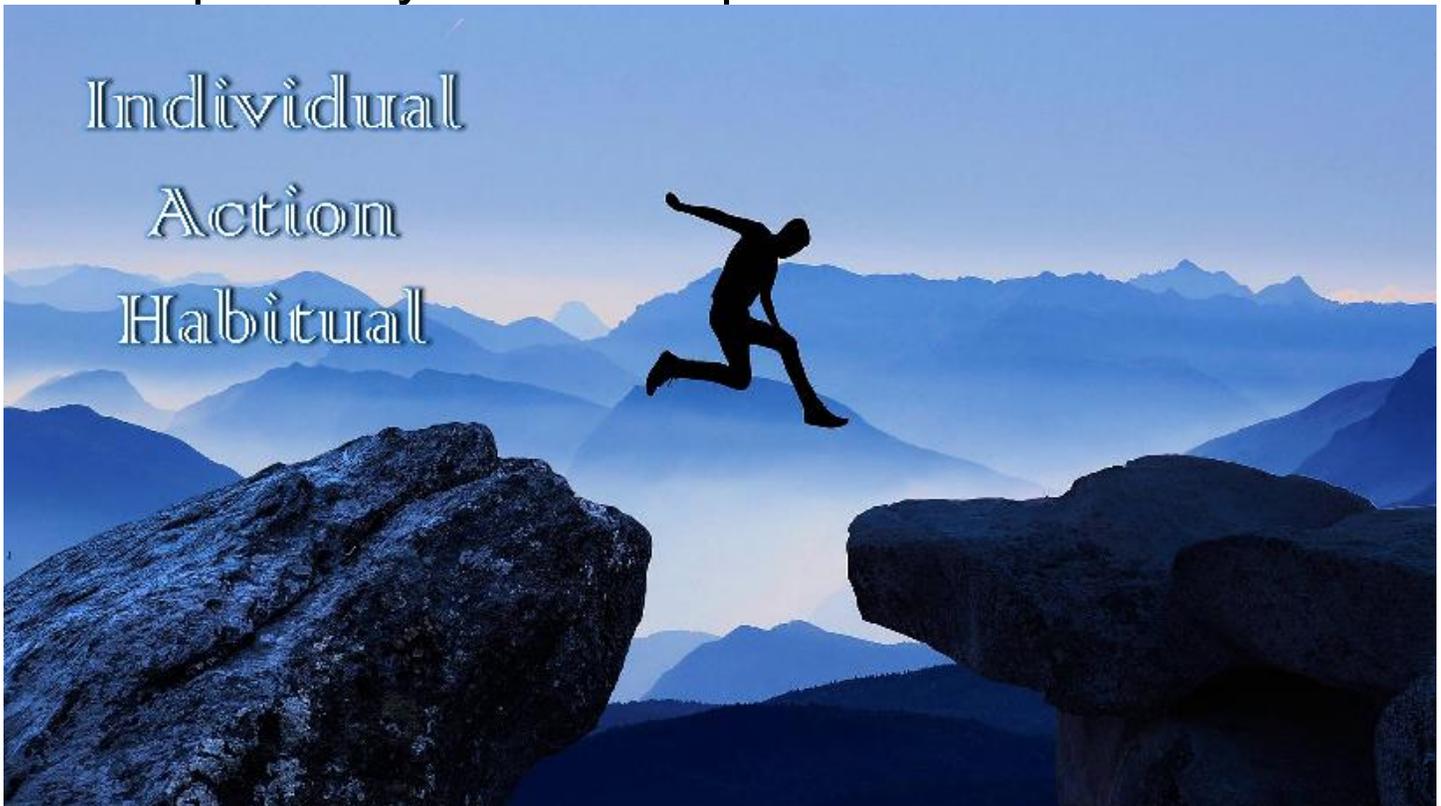


1) Singular. It is individual – you must personally believe, no one can do it for you. Mormon baptism for the dead by proxy isn't going to cut it – it's God's work and individual faith in His completed work. We've been talking a lot about community over the last few months. While we need to think about the local church far more than we typically do, it is your personal relationship with God through Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit that makes you a member of the community. You must choose.

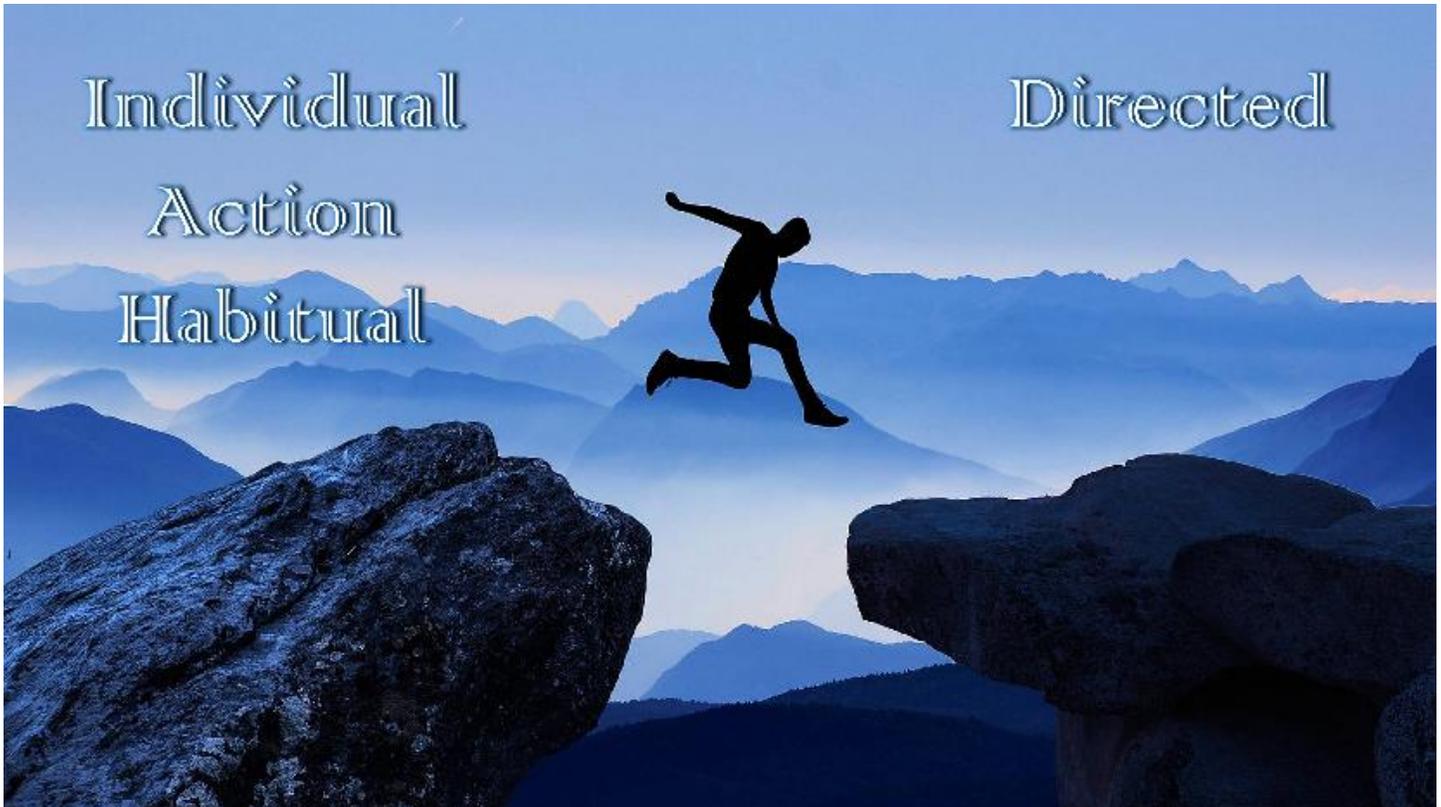


2) Active – think of acting or action. Something must be done. We must act on the faith we are given. I can believe with all of my heart that “Lift, equals the coefficient of lift, times one half rho V squared, times S,” $[L=CL (\frac{1}{2}\rho V^2) S]$. That’s the basic lift equation. I can genuinely and deeply believe that it is completely true, but it isn’t this kind of belief until I strap myself into an airplane and leave the earth. Another analogy I like to use is our son Scotty. He used to love standing on a high place and jumping into my outstretched arms. No matter how certain he was that I would catch him, it wasn’t the kind of belief that’s salvific, until he actually jumped. You’ve no doubt heard the example where I

can be confident that the chair will hold my weight, but I prove that I have the type of belief necessary only when I plunk myself down upon the chair.



3) Present tense in this case means the activity is ongoing. It is continuous or habitual action. It's who you really are not just who you're trying to be. If you believe church is important, you will attend regularly, habitually, continuously. It will be obvious to the most casual observer that you believe in church participation.



4) The nominative case means that there is a subject doing the believing, but also then, an object receiving the action of the verb. The verbal action of believing is directed toward a specific object, rather than an unfocused or general action. That object is a solid thing encompassing the activity of belief. It is not a belief in some theory, some esoteric philosophy, some ambiguous, indefinite and mysterious concept of metaphysical Christianity; it is a belief directly in the person and work of Jesus Christ.



5) As a participle it conveys intensity. This gets one's attention as something vitally important. There is a sense of great urgency. For them to use a participle is like us using an exclamation point. This is serious business with significant ramifications.



6) The word itself points to an intellectual, rather than emotional belief. Much like the word Agapê is unemotional - not driven by emotions, so here. Now our emotions along with all kinds of other things may bring us to the precipice of belief, but genuine salvific faith is an intellectual choice made after considering the evidence. It is to say that I have examined the concepts and potentialities, I have carefully considered the implications, and I choose to believe, I choose to place my trust in God.

To believe in the name of Jesus, means that given where you are, and what you have to work with, you

continue choosing to live your life, focused on trusting that Jesus is your only Lord and Savior. That means that the educated adult who knows far more about theology than an 8-year-old, may be missing Salvation, while the much younger person is flourishing in the Faith. It isn't about how much you know, it's about a proper response to what you know.



Naturally, we should know more and more as we go along. Knowing more and more should lead to doing more and more with that knowledge. We do what we are, not the other way around. If you have Biblical belief commensurate with your resources, it will be conspicuously evident to even the most oblivious

bystander. That just means that you won't be able to "Hide your lamp under a bushel basket."

As an example, there was a movie (Dead Again), where a guy was offered a cigarette and he responded, "No thanks, I'm trying to quit." The other guy said, "Someone is either a smoker or a nonsmoker. There's no in-between. The trick is to find out which one you are, and be that. If you're a nonsmoker, you'll know." In other words, my friends, you are either a Christian, or you are not a Christian. Figure out who you are, and be that person.

Just as James said, truly without works, evidence, or fruit, this faith is dead. In other words, without a change of perspective, then attitude, then thinking, then words, and then ultimately behavior; is there true belief? Can a person have been born again of the Heavenly Father, Saved by the Son, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, if there is no change? Unlikely at best.



We've already seen that Christian behavior, like loving one another, is not automatic. Why? Because human beings are broken. We are fundamentally flawed from our conception as human beings. We inherit the physical DNA of our forebears, as well as their spiritual DNA. All people from cradle to grave, are fallen and depraved just like the world around us. That's who we are as a starting point.

This is the Biblical Truth humanism has turned upside down. We are deceived into thinking that tiny children are innocent and that as we age, we are corrupted by those older than us. Damaged Adults corrupt innocent

children until they are just as damaged. That's the atheistic narrative.

That's the opposite of what God has to say on the matter. As has been noted, there is a logical fallacy at play here. If all humans are born innocent and good, how did they ever get corrupted in the first place - how did the first adults ever get corrupted without adults to ruin them? Certainly, it couldn't be nature itself then that does the damage, but since humanists believe nature is even more pure and innocent than baby humans are, they seem to have a logical fallacy. As one philosopher pointed out, toddlers are the most violent people on the planet. A 2-year-old will lie, cheat, steal - hit, bite, push - in a heartbeat without batting an eye. Put 10 miniature nose miners in a room alone with one cookie and one toy and see what happens. Adults civilize the little monsters and need to.

My point is that since each of us is actually "Brought forth in iniquity, and conceived in sin," as Psalm 51 declares, we have an anti-God nature.



Then, miraculously we are reborn as children of God and have a completely new nature. It isn't that we now have two natures, it's just that our new nature is new. We must intentionally put aside the familiar way of living and act on the altered way. It is a growth in a new direction of being - it is to learn to be in conformity to our new nature as opposed to lazily falling back into old patterns.