

## Above All — For the Holy (Part 2 of Criterion for Believing)

Nothing is more important than this: *to maintain and to continue to have fervent love – deep affection for each other*. It is because love, this kind of deep love, makes up for our many faults. We must not fail and become *negligent* in this. We all have faults and shortcomings, but love *covers* these.

It takes a community to love with God's love. 1 Pet 4:8 — The word *sins* (#266) in this context means *offenses*, *inadvertencies*. Therefore to not love with deep affection for each other results in *sin*; this could be *intentional or unintentional* offenses and *inadvertencies*. *Fervent* (from the French *fervé*, meaning *to boil*) means burning, glowing, very hot, characterized by great warmth and earnestness of feeling, exhibiting deep sincere emotion. *Sin* is described clearly in Jms 4:17.

### The Failure to Love Adds no Fuel to the Fire

**However, the failure to love as Jn 13:34 commands adds no fuel to the fire** of love (Lk 12:49; Jn 13:35).

Without love, Jn 17:23 will never be — never, never, never. If our love falls short of the “mark” (#266), then we still have 1 Jn 2:1-2, if we truly confess our sins. However, our *calling* is in 1 Jn 2:3-6, as well as Eph 4:1-3,\*4-7; Phil 2:2-4; and 1 Jn 2:3. Whoever keeps His commandments as Jn 14:15,21,23 says, He will make His eternal abode in them (Rev 21:3). But who is verse 24 speaking of in John 14? His *greatest commandment* (above all) is 1 Pet 4:8; 1:22. So, if we don't keep His greatest commandment, why should we keep the rest? If we keep the greatest commandment *for sure* we will keep the rest. There is a sin *unto death*. I wonder which one it is — 1 Jn 5:16-17; 4:7-8,11-13; 3:14-16, 24? To not love is to *hate* (1 Jn 3:15; 4:20-21). How can this be, when He has poured out His love in our hearts, “by” the Spirit He has given us? (Rom 5:5). He who *does not* love, hates his brother and *abides in death* (1 Jn 3:14b). He has not passed out of death into life (1 Jn 3:14a).

To love as He loved, is *above all* (everything). It cannot be overlooked, for on this basis (foundation) He continues to add *revelation* – disclosing Himself to us (Jn 13:34-35; Jn 14:21; 1 Jn 4:21). On this basis, we know we will become His eternal “dwelling place” (Jn 14:23). On this basis, we are one and maintain our unity (Jn 17:23). On this basis, we overcome the world (1 Jn 5:3-5). On this basis, we assure our hearts before him and will be given whatever we ask of Him for we do what is pleasing in His sight (1 Jn 3:19,21-22).

To love as He loved is the “hallmark” of our faith in Him (1 Jn 3:16). So, it is impossible to love as *He commanded* (Jn 13:34) if we do not have His love to love with (1 Jn 2:4-5,15). Then what keeps you from loving as 1 Pet 4:8? Is it because you have *no love for Him* who saved you and poured out His love *in your heart*? (1 Pet 1:8-9; Rom 5:5).

### Prepared and Made Ready

**We must be prepared and made ready** for the revelation of Messiah *in our day* (1 Pet 1:5; Dan 12:9; Jn 14:21; 1 Pet 4:13; Mt 25:4,10; 1 Cor 1:7-8). We are *prepared* for His Coming Again by first having revelation of Him (Jn 14:21) and His purpose on earth. Like the wise virgins whose lamps were *full of oil* (with *extra oil* flasks included), so we too must come to receive the needed *illumination* (insight) necessary to walk out His will on earth. Our lamps must be trimmed and burning until the very end (Mt 25:4,7,10; Dan 12:3,10). Revelation is added to us based upon our *obedience* to Him (Jn 14:21; 7:17).

Upon this revelation in our hearts, we can then be *made ready* for Him by what 1 Pet 1:6-7 says (our faith is tested by fire/various trials) and by our deeds done in righteousness in the Body (Rev 19:7; 2 Cor 5:10). These righteous deeds are the spotless fine linen of our priesthood and come forth out of a *deep love and appreciation* for one another. So, we are also made ready by our love for Him (1 Pet 1:8), which is made evident by our *love for one another* (1 Pet 4:8, 1 Jn 4:12,20-21).

### Love is our Confidence Taught by God

**How can we say we love God, whom we have not seen**, if we do not love our brothers whom *we have seen*? (1 Jn 4:20-21). The two go together like a horse and carriage. As Paul said, concerning love for brothers and sisters, he has no need to write to them since they were *taught by God* to love

another (1 Ths 4:9; Rom 12:10; Jn 6:45). God is love and He is the *teacher* (Lk 6:40). He has given us His love, so He will teach and train us how to love with His love.

What is love? (#26, 1 Pet 4:8; 1 Cor 13:1). Who has this *Agape* love? This love is shown by giving the person who is loved what he *needs*. Love is not expressed by doing just what someone desires or wants. God did not give man what he *wanted*, but what he *needed* (Jn 3:16). So love is 1 Jn 3:16. The need is perceived by the “brethren” who have passed out of death and into life – *a life of loving* (1 Jn 3:17). God’s love dwells in only those who *love as He loved*, and “by this” shall we know that we are “of the truth”, and shall assure our hearts before Him (1 Jn 3:18-19). We know that we are of the truth (Jn 18:37) and our heart is assured by the Holy Spirit giving us *confirmation* (1 Jn 3:24).

### **Hope in Condemnation**

**So, if our hearts do not condemn us** we are the ones who have His love and love with His love – doing what is pleasing in His sight (1 Jn 3:23-24). However, if your heart *condemns* you, then we know (since God is greater than our hearts and knows all things) He also condemns us. *There is the “witness”* that you have not passed out of death and into a life of loving. As 1 Jn 5:13 says, there is hope that you may come to believe – finally, if you are condemned.

God is good and if our conscience is good, it will confirm that we need His love (Rom 5:5). God would not be good if He would not condemn us when we only love in word and speech (1 Jn 3:18), but not in *reality* (verse 16). No one knows apart from this. No one knows, but by the Holy Spirit who dwells in our hearts (1 Jn 4:16-18). We know we have His Spirit dwelling in us because we are able to love as He loved. Having *fear* and feeling *condemned* is the “sign” that there is *hope* for you as 1 Jn 5:12-13.

### **The Confirmation of His Spirit**

**The confirmation we have or don’t have (1 Jn 3:14) comes from the Spirit in us or not in us** (1 Jn 3:23-24 4:16,20). We know 1 Jn 3:14, by verse 16. We could try to gain confidence by word and speech (verse 18a), but it must be by *deed and truth* in order to assure our hearts before Him (verse 19). So our heart either condemns us if we do not have confidence before Him and will not be bold (Heb 3:6; 4:16) or we know we are of the truth, assuring our hearts before Him because we love our brothers. Look at 1 Jn 3:20-22. What is His *greatest commandment* (verse 23), and how are we assured and how do we know (verse 24)? Because we love as verse 23 says. He assures our hearts and we have confidence (1 Jn 2:27-28; 4:17). We do not need any one to teach us about love or how to love, for it is impossible to love without His love in us (1 Jn 2:27; 1 Ths 4:9).

We know we have eternal life. How? We know we have eternal life by the *confirmation* of the Spirit in us. Because we have His love we are able to love (Jn 5:24; 1 Jn 3:14). We do not love because we do not have His love. We cannot love (in truth) without His love poured out in our hearts.

Our Master’s *laying down of His life* is not separated from His offspring doing the same (Isa 53:10-11; 1 Jn 3:16). When He said “I lay down my life,” He meant more than the *isolated fact* of the crucifixion. He meant the *whole offering of daily obedience* to the Heavenly Father who sent Him (Lk 9:23). And so who follows Him today? (Mk 8:34; Lk 14:26-33; Mk 10:29-30; Jn 15:18-20). Who then has eternal life?