International Bible Lessons Commentary
Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series
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1 John 4:7-19
King James Version
March 5, 2017

The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, March 5, 2017**, is from **1 John 4:7-19**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the *International Bible Lessons Commentary* website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the *International Bible Lesson Forum*.

(1 John 4:7) Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

John heard Jesus teach on love, and especially on love for one another, even our enemies. God is love and all love comes from God. Without God, there would be no love. Even as God created all things and makes life possible,

with every living thing depending on God at each moment for existence, so we depend on God for all the love we give and receive. Those not born of God are by their moral and spiritual nature self-centered and selfish. At the foundation of their lives, any "love" we see them express flows from their personal, selfish interests. Those born of God love God supremely, because God in Christ first loved them and saved them from sin, especially the sin of selfishness. Christ has so changed them by a new birth that their moral and spiritual nature is now God-centered and filled with love for God, others, and rightly for themselves.

(1 John 4:8) He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

Whenever we meet a person who is self-absorbed or self-centered, we know they do not know God as God wants them to know Him. They may know a great deal "about" God and "about" the Bible's teachings and "say" they believe in God. But only through trusting in Jesus Christ with sincere faith will they be transformed, born again, and come to know God personally through the Scriptures, prayer, praise, singing, and worship. Only through Jesus Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit will they turn from self to devoted, loving, God-directed living, and to praying for others, and to serving God and others without concern for selfish advantages.

(1 John 4:9) In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only

begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

From creation and the Scriptures, we know something of the love of God, but God made His love real to us and personal to us by revealing His love supremely through Jesus Christ — God's one and only begotten Son, fully God and fully man. God is not self-centered, and He proved that to us through Jesus Christ. God focused on us and our needs in spite of our sins and rebellion against God and His Kingdom; therefore, and the Father sent us His Son as a gift that we might be born again and live in the world as God intended. Now, we can really live our lives to the fullest within the circle of God's love forever. God the Father and Jesus Christ deserve our undivided love and loyalty.

(1 John 4:10) Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Another good word to describe the love the Father has for us and we should for have for others is "charity." In charity, God gave us what we needed when He sent Jesus Christ to die in our place, a sacrifice for our sins; thereby enabling God the King and Judge of the universe to uphold His law and justice when graciously and mercifully forgiving us for our sins and rebellion against Him. In charity, we give to others to meet their honest needs. We deny ourselves some things, even if our giving is not

sacrificial or costly. We came to understand true love or true charity when God extended His love toward us and sacrificed His Son for us to free us from slavery, so we could turn from our sin and selfishness to love God and others. We love after first receiving God's love through Jesus Christ. And now, we love as God the Father and Jesus love, but in a much smaller way, when we share the gospel to save and bless others, even sacrificing our time, treasure, and talents.

(1 John 4:11) Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

Notice how John expressed his love for all who will read his letters. To love others, especially those in the family of God, we need both the loving and indwelling Holy Spirit and sound instruction (telling us what we ought to do as Christians). We need to be told to love one another, because we can easily forget to do so in tense situations, especially when fellow believers forget to show love for us and instead express their hatred in ungodly ways.

(1 John 4:12) No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

We cannot see God with our physical eyes: they are not equipped to do so, and the finite physical cannot see the infinite spiritual. We could never see God in His fullness with our limited intellectual capacity. I doubt we know any

created thing (not even ourselves) completely. But we can assuredly see and know some truths about God; the truths God revealed in the Bible, and we continue to expand our knowledge of God as we study the Bible. We can also see and know whether we are acting in loving ways toward others. If we are expressing love as the fruit of the Holy Spirit, we know we are God-centered and not living like those of this world (see 1 Corinthians 13 and Galatians 5:22-23). We can know that God is living in us and helping us love God and others. As we grow in knowledge of God and the truth (Jesus said, He is the way, the truth, and the life: John 14:6), God's love is made complete in us.

(1 John 4:13) Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

If someone wanted to know whether they were Christians or not, John's answer in this verse could help them. First, Christians abide in or remain in Christ and Christ abides in or remains in them. Second, the Holy Spirit within them can give them the assurance that Christ abides in them and they are abiding in Christ. Third, the Holy Spirit will give that assurance through the Holy Scriptures (see the verses below and 1 John 3:24; 2 John 1:9 and John 15:5-10). The Apostle Paul wrote, "And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us" (Romans 5:5). We love because the Holy Spirit loves in us.

(1 John 4:14) And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

John and the other apostles saw and touched Jesus. They heard what He taught and saw what He did. They saw Him after He rose from the dead; they received the Holy Spirit; and they accepted His Great Commission (1 John 1:1-4; Matthew 28:18-20). They testified with evidence acceptable in a court of law that God the Father truly exists: the Father sent His Son into the world; His Son came as the Savior of the world (John 3:16).

(1 John 4:15) Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

John gave additional evidence that someone can use to know if they are Christian: do they confess that "Jesus is the Son of God." John gave the reason God abides in someone. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God – not "a" son of God or one of many important people, but Jesus is "THE" Son of God (see John 3:16). God abides in those who confess Jesus is the Christ, and when they also abide in God, they "bear much fruit" (John 15:5). Bearing much good fruit flows from a right relationship between God and the believer: another evidence for assurance that a person is a Christian.

(1 John 4:16) And we have known and believed

the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

Christians believe Jesus is the Son of God, and they know and believe that God loves them. John restated such truths as we find in John 3:16 – because God loved the world so much, "God gave" His only Son. The Father did not simply "send" Jesus into the world to teach us truths about how to live for God and serve others. Jesus did that, but we know and believe that God loves us because God "gave" His only Son to die as the "atoning sacrifice for our sins" (see 1 John 2:2; 1 John 4:10). God's nature is love. God's character and choice is love and to love. Love motivates God to do all God wisely can to promote the happiness and well-being of every creature. Those who abide in love abide in the circle of love that God has created with His commandments through the Scriptures and the perfect example of His Son, Jesus Christ. God empowers and enables true believers in Jesus Christ to live within His circle of love as God lives within them and through them. Christians remain (abide) in love in all they do. Love motivates them and they remain (abide) in God: they express their love by obeying His commandments.

(1 John 4:17) 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.

God perfects His love within and among the true followers

of Jesus; through those who truly believe Jesus is the Son of God and who relate to Jesus as the Scriptures have revealed Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. A Day of Judgment is coming, and those who are born-again are transformed by the presence and love of God in Christ within them; therefore, they can be bold and unafraid of punishment on that day. In this world they become increasing like Jesus; they develop and display His moral and spiritual character in what the Bible calls sanctification as they love God and others. As they draw closer to Jesus and become more like Jesus, they can have confidence in the Day of Judgment.

(1 John 4:18) There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

When God in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit come to live within us, they fill our hearts with their love, and we love others and bear much fruit as their love overflows out of our hearts. Their love in us and our loving response to their love as described in the Bible casts out all fear of punishment from God on the Day of Judgment. If we fear punishment from God we need to move closer to God in Christ and pray for the Holy Spirit to help us love God and others according to biblical teachings. We need to remind ourselves of all God the Father, Jesus Christ (the Son of God and Savior), and the Holy Spirit have done for us and will do for us according to the Scriptures.

(1 John 4:19) We love him, because he first loved us.

We love God and others according to the commands, example, and teachings of Jesus Christ only because God first loved us, sent His Son to die for us, and then sent His Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, to live in us, guide us, empower us, and help us understand and wisely apply the Bible's teachings in everyday life. We did not first love God. God created us in His love; we rebelled against God; then God in love redeemed us, and we came to love God, others, and ourselves as we ought.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Give one way that we can know we abide in Christ from 1 John 4:13.

2. Describe who Jesus is from your reading of 1 John 4

3. Who does John say God abides in or lives in?

4. What commandment did John emphasize in 1 John 4:7-19?

5. What is one of the things we can do to demonstrate our love for God?

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