

# Love One Another • 1 Peter 1:22

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Looking Ahead

1. As you have heard me say several times, the task of the shepherd is to lead, feed, and protect the flock
2. Since this is the last Sunday of 1999, I thought it would be a good idea to give you a glimpse of what I believe the Spirit of God is *leading* us into this next year.
3. Our vision and mission can regularly be found on the back page of the bulletin.
4. Today, they're on the insert that goes along with today's message
5. I'd encourage you to read that and to regularly refresh your memory with what we're about as a church and where we're headed.
6. As we faithfully pursue the direction God has given us, He will bless
7. And we will continue to grow both numerically and in spiritual maturity

### B. The Challenge

1. I want to speak to *both* of those areas of growth this morning
2. You see, as more and more people make Calvary Chapel their home, there is going to be a challenge to our *spiritual* growth
3. *Larger* does not equal *deeper*!
4. But it *is* God's will that as we grow *wider*, we also grow *higher*!
5. 2000 is a year of going back to basics at Calvary
6. In this age of increasing complexity, when life seems to keep accelerating, we need to return to our roots and hold fast to the things that make for a solid foundation
7. And we find what that is in 1 John 3:11

## II. BODY

### A. 1 John 3:11

**This is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another,**

1. The *beginning* John speaks of here is the first few times they had heard the gospel
2. In those early years, the message of Christ was one in which people were told how to enter into a new relationship with God that brought love and harmony with Him and His creation
3. From the beginning, people understood the central and critical role *love* played in their new life in Christ
4. The new birth meant a radical reordering of priorities and values so that *people* became more important than *things*
5. And being a Christian meant *membership in a new community* governed by love instead of selfishness
6. In this letter, John is reminding Christians of the call to love
  - a. he has to remind them because while it was one of the *first* lessons they had learned –
  - b. because they live in a fallen world where *selfishness* and *greed* are the status quo,
  - c. it's easy to forget.

7. It *is* easy to forget our call to love one another, isn't it?
  - a. all you have to do is spend 5 minutes on the freeway
  - b. or pull up at a 4 way stop
  - c. or stand in line at McDonald's
  - d. living in this world militates against a mind-set and lifestyle of love
8. God knows that – and that's why the call to love one another is by far the most frequent command in the New Testament.
9. Look at the list in your study insert this morning . . .
10. Getting back to basics means *recapturing the truth* that *loving one another* is a central call in the believer's life
11. When the Apostle Paul wrote his letters to the churches, the one thing he commended them for was their love for one another [\[1\]](#)
12. For Paul, this was the bottom line
  - a. if they loved one another, it was *sure evidence* that the Holy Spirit was at work among them
  - b. this is the one fruit that evidenced their conformity to Christ
13. Many people think that the *real evidence* of spiritual maturity is the gifts and manifestations of the Spirit
  - a. they think that tongues and prophecy and other such things are sure signs of spiritual depth
  - b. but Paul wrote first Corinthians to clear up this misconception
  - c. there was no church *more* active in spiritual gifts than Corinth
  - d. and there is no other church that Paul refers to as carnal and spiritually immature!
  - e. at the end of a whole chapter dealing with spiritual gifts, Paul concludes by saying – “but now let me show you a more excellent way.”
  - f. a more excellent way to what? To build each other up, to edify and encourage one another
  - g. that next chapter is what is known as the love chapter
14. Spiritual gifts are important, and they are still available to the Body of Christ today; *all* of them and they ought to be in evidence among those who are born again -
15. But the supremely important thing is *love* for love is the *greatest of all*.

## **B. Doing It!**

1. Now, I know I'm preaching to the choir here - you all know this
2. But here's the challenge – *are we doing it?*
  - a. we know we're called to love one another
  - b. are we?
3. Our motto is to learn and LIVE God's word – to not just be *hearers*, but *doers* of the word.
4. The great Challenge we face as a local church that is growing *numerically* is to maintain and deepen our love and commitment to one another
5. But how do we do that?
6. There are only so many people that a person can know and show meaningful care for
7. There are only so many hours in a day, and when we gather on Sundays and Wednesdays and for other events, there is only a certain amount of time we have
8. Even if you're involved in a small group, there are only so many people that you can engage in a meaningful way
9. How do we carry out the mandate to love one another and to make sure that as we grow in numbers, each member here at Calvary Chapel is plugged in to a circle of

people who love and care for one another?

### **C. The Plan**

1. Well, there are two ways we could go about this -
2. First, the leadership could devise a *structured format* of small groups and then we could do formal sign-ups and call each and every person in the directory and harass them until they either start going or leave the church.
3. **Or**, we can depend on the Holy Spirit to speak to each person about reaching out to others and start making friends and let those relationships develop naturally
4. Uh – I think we'll go with the second option!
5. All the leadership can and should do is to provide the example of love and make sure we are doing our job of reminding you, as John and Paul and Peter did, that loving one another is more than a doctrine – it's supposed to be the atmosphere we breathe.

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6. Take the time to *meet people*.
  - a. don't rush off as soon as service is over
  - b. stick around and make yourself available
7. And don't wait for someone to come to you – go to them
  - a. introduce yourself
  - b. engage in small talk at first, that's how you get to know each other
8. Then, next time you see them, get caught up
  - a. exchange prayer requests
  - b. talk about spiritual things – it doesn't have to be heavy
9. Take the relationship outside the walls of the church – go to lunch together
10. Do you share any common interests? Make an appointment to get together.
11. Here's something real practical – Names!
  - a. how many of you have a hard time remembering names?
  - b. I do too
  - c. jot them down – repeat them out loud, and make it a point to say the person's name several times within the next hour

### **D. The Vision**

1. Calvary Chapel of Oxnard has a reputation – a good reputation for being a church devoted to the Word of God
2. People know that if they come here they will be well fed.
3. That's a reputation we want to maintain – but there is something critical we need to add to it
4. It's something that the Apostle Paul looked for and commended in a church.
5. It's something Jesus said that would mark us as His followers
6. It's the sure evidence that we are doing more than just listening to the Word of God but that we are also *doing* it
7. It's loving one another!
8. When visitors enter this building, they should hear God's Word and see God's love!
9. They should see people engaged in conversation
  - a. they should see people praying with and for one another
  - b. they should be greeted with warmth and joy
  - c. quite frankly, when they enter these doors, they should experience a little bit of what heaven is going to be like
10. A couple years ago we started a greeting ministry to help new people feel welcome
11. But let me ask you – if we were all loving one another as the Spirit yearns for us to,

would we need a formal greeting ministry? Would we need designated Greeters? No.  
12. Listen to what Paul says in Romans 16:16

**Greet one another with a holy kiss.**

- a. there are several exhortations in the NT that spell out *how* we are to love one another
  - b. this is one of them – we are to greet one another with a holy kiss
  - c. now, the kiss was a standard custom for that time
  - d. it's equivalent to our hand shake or friendly embrace
13. This is one way we can love one another in a very practical way: When we meet, we can demonstrate our spiritual bond by bonding – by taking hold of each other and either giving a hearty handshake or a warm embrace
14. Now – Paul said it was to be a *holy* act and not one merely for carnal pleasure – so we need to exercise the proper restraint and avoid all impropriety
15. Here's one way we can love each other in a very practical way – Greet one another with a holy hug or handshake!
16. Let me share a couple more ways the Bible tells us to love one another in practical ways
- a. Romans 12:10

**Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;**

- b. being kindly affectionate to one another pictures people who are acting tenderly and carefully toward one another
  - c. they care about how the other person is doing
  - d. there's an affection for one another that means when you hurt, I hurt; when you rejoice, I rejoice.
  - e. honoring one another means recognizing the other person's worth and showing deference to them
  - f. in line for coffee or going out the door, we defer to others and put them before ourselves
17. The insert lists several more ways the Bible tells us to love one another in practical ways

### III. CONCLUSION

#### A. *Let Us Love One Another*

1. I want to end this morning by sharing a story I've told before but which is so apropos at this point
2. Some years ago a pastor was preaching on a Sunday morning
3. While he normally went for almost an hour, his message that morning lasted all of about 15 seconds
4. He told the people to turn to 1 John 4:7 and then simply read,

**Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.**

5. Then he sat down on the chair on the stage that was his usual place
6. He just sat there and looked at the congregation – they looked back at him, expecting him to say more

7. But he didn't – he just sat there and let the seconds turn into a couple minutes
8. Then he rose, went back to the pulpit and once more simply read the text

**Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.**

9. Then he went and sat back down and once more there was a tense staring match between the pastor and the congregation
10. Finally, someone in the congregation realized what was going on and stood, walked over to another person in the church with whom they had an on-going conflict, and asked for forgiveness
11. Other's sitting around overheard their conversation, and that's when it hit them
12. The time had come to put in to action a truth they had long known but had neglected
13. It was time to love one another - because love is part of the very nature and character of God – and being born again means living a life marked by love
14. Pretty soon, all over that building, people were engaged in little groups, overcoming past problems, granting forgiveness and just investing themselves in getting to know others they had sat next to for years but had never taken any time or effort to know and love.

### **B. So Here**

1. Let's do it!
2. Let's love one another and let's start right now
3. By God's enabling grace, may 2000 be a year of love at Calvary Chapel

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[1] Ephesians 1:15 Philippians 1:3-5,9 Colossians 1:4 1 Thessalonians 1:3 2 Thessalonians 1:3