

1 Yochanan ~ Part 5

In 1 Yochanan 4:7-5:21, we see the profound call to love as a fundamental expression of our faith. Picture someone walking through a storm, rain hammering down, each drop a reminder of the world's challenges. Amidst this, a friend approaches with an umbrella, lifting it over the storm-tossed soul. This act of love reflects **God's** unconditional love for us and our calling to extend that love to one another, even in adversity.

Knowing God through Love

4 ⁷ Beloved friends, let us love one another; because love is from God; and everyone who loves has God as his Father and knows God. ⁸ Those who do not love do not know God; because God is love.

God is love (also v. 16). This simple sentence embodies the deepest religious truth; yet it can be perverted:

(1) **God's** love is not mere feeling, but action, as the familiar Yochanan 3:16 teaches: *God so loved the world that he sent his only-begotten Son to die for us sinners who needed rescue* (compare v. 12 below and 3:16–18 above).

(2) **God** is not only love; He is also justice, pouring out wrath on those who reject his mercy (Romans 1:18–2:16, 3:19–20). **Believers** must proclaim not only **God's** love, but also His hatred for sin and His intolerance of human pride that presumes on God: God is not mocked (Ga 6:7).

⁹ Here is how God showed His love among us: God sent His only Son into the world, so that through Him we might have life. ¹⁰ Here is what love is: not that we have loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the kapparah ("atonement) for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved friends, if this is how God loved us, we likewise ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God remains united with us, and our love for Him has been brought to its goal in us.

People saw **Yeshua**, **Yeshua** as the Word "is" God (Yochanan 1:1, 14), and yet **Yochanan** writes that no one has ever seen **God**. The **Brit Hadasah** faith is not so simplistic as some make it out to be. See Yochanan 1:18.

¹³ Here is how we know that we remain united with Him and He with us: He has given to us from His own Spirit. ¹⁴ Moreover, we have seen, and we testify that the Father has sent His Son as Deliverer of the world. ¹⁵ If someone acknowledges that Yeshua is the Son of God, God remains united with Him, and he with God. ¹⁶ Also we have come to know and trust the love that God has for us. God is love; and those who remain in this love remain united with God, and God remains united with them. ¹⁷ Here is how love has been brought to maturity with us: as the Messiah is, so are we in the world. This gives us confidence for the Day of Judgment. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love. On the contrary, love that has achieved its goal gets rid of fear, because fear has to do with punishment; the person who keeps fearing has not been brought to maturity in regard to love. ¹⁹ We ourselves love now because He loved us first. ²⁰ If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar. For if a person does not love his brother, whom he has seen, then he cannot love God, whom he has not seen. ²¹ Yes, this is the command we have from Him: whoever loves God must love his brother too.

These verses stand against making religion a matter of "**words and talk**" rather than "**actions**" and "**reality**."

Keeping God's Commands

²⁰ If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar. For if a person does not love his brother, whom he has seen, then he cannot love God, whom he has not seen. ²¹ Yes, this is the command we have from him: whoever loves God must love his brother too. ⁵ ¹ Everyone who believes that Yeshua is the Messiah has God as His father, and everyone who loves a father loves His offspring too.

The previous chapter emphasized love. In this chapter, **Yochanan** affirmed that faith paves the road to love.

² Here is how we know that we love God's children: when we love God, we also do what he commands.

Yochanan refers to **Yeshua's** commandments, not the **Jewish** law (1 Yochanan 2:7–8). **Messianics** are not called to keep these commandments out of obligation or mere duty; rather, they are commanded to express their love of **God** by loving their fellow **Believers**.

³ For loving God means obeying his commands. Moreover, His commands are not burdensome,

Love for God is not separate from keeping His commands. **God's** commands teach His people how to do what **God** accepts as pleasing (Romans 12:1–2). Knowledge of **God** transforms the human will, making what was once a burden light and easy to carry (Matityahu 11:30).

⁴ because everything which has God as its Father overcomes the world. And this is what victoriously overcomes the world: our trust. ⁵ Who does overcome the world if not the person who believes that Yeshua is the Son of God?

Confessing **Yeshua** as the **Son of God** should be understood as including His status as the Christ and that He has come in the flesh. To believe anything less about **Yeshua** is to believe in somebody who does not have the ability to save us from the power of the godless world.

The Certainty of God's Testimony

⁶ He is the one who came by means of water and blood, Yeshua the Messiah - not with water only, but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit bears witness, because the Spirit is the truth. ⁷ There are three witnesses - ⁸ the Spirit, the water and the blood—and these three are in agreement. ⁹ If we accept human witness, God's witness is stronger, because it is the witness which God has given about his Son. ¹⁰ Those who keep trusting in the Son of God have this witness in them. Those who do not keep trusting God have made him out to be a liar, because they have not trusted in the witness which God has given about his Son. ¹¹ And this is the witness: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² Those who have the Son have the life; those who do not have the Son of God do not have the life. ¹³ I have written you these things so that you may know that you have eternal life - you who keep trusting in the person and power of the Son of God.

Life is often like watching a sporting event. There are shocks and surprises, frustrations and fears, because we are unsure of the outcome. However, followers of Yeshua can find comfort in the fact that, though many of life's situations are uncertain, Yeshua's work on the cross has settled our eternal outcome.

Bill Crowder, Stand Strong

Effective Prayer

¹⁴ This is the confidence we have in His presence: if we ask anything that accords with His will, He hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us - whatever we ask - then we know that we have what we have asked from Him.

The deepest answer to prayer is to know that He hears us. Knowing this means we have what we asked Him for. For **Believers**, prayer seeks communion with the **Father** more than the acquisition of favors or the satisfaction of desires

¹⁶ If anyone sees his brother committing a sin that does not lead to death, he will ask; and God will give him life for those whose sinning does not lead to death. There is sin that does lead to death; I am not saying he should pray about that. ¹⁷ All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.

Conclusion

¹⁸ We know that everyone who has God as his Father does not go on sinning; on the contrary, the Son born of God protects him, and the Evil One does not touch him. ¹⁹ We know that we are from God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the Evil One. ²⁰ And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us discernment, so that we may know who is genuine; moreover, we are united with the One who is genuine, united with his Son Yeshua the Messiah. He is the genuine God and eternal life.

Three things we know. Everyone who has **God** as his **Father** does not go on sinning, ... and the evil one does not touch him, but he can tempt him. The whole world lies in the power of the Evil One (see Lk 4:5–6). He is the genuine **God** and the source of **eternal life**. We can understand this as saying that **Yeshua** the **Messiah** ... is the genuine **God**. But the verse's purpose does not seem to declare **Yeshua's** divinity, but to show that the **Son of God** has come and given us discernment, so that we may know which of the various prophets teaching this, that, and the other is genuine. Not only that, we are united with the **One** who is genuine, that is, we are united with **God**; and also we are united with his **Son, Yeshua the Messiah**. He, not the **Evil One** (v. 18), but the **Genuine One**, the **One** whose **Son** is **Yeshua**, is the genuine **God** and eternal life.

²¹ Children, guard yourselves against false gods! ¹

As you encounter various people in public life, you'll find individuals embodying negativity or harshness. Instead of merely reacting to their negativity, use it as an opportunity to cultivate an atmosphere of love that reflects 1 Yochanan's message. When faced with unkindness, you could respond with kindness. Consider complimenting or thanking someone, regardless of their demeanor. This could create a ripple effect, influencing not just your interaction but also others who witness it, and showcasing **God's** love through your actions.

In our next post, we will move on to 2 Yochanan.

¹ 1 Yochanan 4:7-5:21.