

The First Divine Test of Fellowship

I John 2:7-17

Intro:

1. What's a test of fellowship?
2. It's an issue that determines whether you accept someone as a Christian brother or sister.
3. What are some traditional tests of fellowship?
 - a. Acceptance of the Apostles' Creed (an ancient test of fellowship).
 - b. The right understanding of the Millennium question.
 - c. In Fundamentalist churches - The 5 doctrines.
 - d. In acapella churches, the use of instrumental music in the worship service.
 - e. In our churches, the form & purpose of Christian baptism.

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4. The Bible concept:
 - a. When a person invites the Lord to take control of their lives & is baptized, the Lord adds him to His church (**Act 2:47**). They are to be accepted as a Christian brother or sister!
 - b. Are there biblical tests of fellowship? I know of only two - both found here.
 - c. Commitment to the Lordship of Christ (next time) & to love one another!

I. What's Love?

- A. Is it the feeling you get when you meet an attractive person? Is it cuddling a little baby? Is it petting a cute puppy?
- B. Biblical love is giving of yourself to satisfy someone else's needs.
 1. It's an attitude, like faith, expressed in actions. The Greeks had 4 words for it!
 - a. **ερωσ** = Giving to get something in return - selfish love.
 - b. **φιλέω** = Giving because of your relationship - relatives or friendship love.
 - c. **στέργω** = Giving primarily because of the marriage bond - obligation love. ILL "Fiddler on the Roof".
 - d. **ἀγαπάω** = Giving because of the need regardless of receiving in return, or relationship or the attractiveness of the person receiving - God's love for you & the love He wants you to have.
 2. It's a command! **II Jn 6 - And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.**
 - a. It's old - because it's in the Old Testament. **Lev 19:18 - Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.**
 - b. It's old - because Lord Jesus repeated it. **Jn 13:34 - A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.**
 - c. But it's also new - in that the Lord's life gave it a new dimension & His death gave it a new scope - v8.
 - d. It's new - because a Christian's transformed life proves it's workable today! **Rom 12:1-2 - Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.**

II. What's the Incentive for Love?

- A. You are to love because love was expressed to you. (John uses poetry here to show you the benefits).
1. **v12** - You have forgiveness.
 2. **v13** - You have the power to overcome Satan in your life.
 3. **v14** - You are an over comer because of the Holy Spirit & the Word of God in your life.
- B. You are to love because it determines where you have fellowship.
1. Love **puts you in the light** where you have fellowship with God & His church.
 - a. **Eph 5:8** - For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light.
 - b. **v8** says you will shine & **v17** says you will live forever!
 - c. So **v9-10** says you can know you are in the light if you are really loving one another!
 2. Lack of love **puts you in the dark**, where you have fellowship with the world - secular society apart from God.
 - a. **Jam 4:4** puts it well - You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.
 - b. **v11** - This darkness makes you blind! (**II Pet 1:9; II Cor 4:3-4**).

III. Who Should I Love?

- A. **v15** - You are not to love the world = attitudes opposed to God's attitudes. **The consequences of loving the world** are:
1. **v15-16** - You will not have the Father's love in you. Worldly things don't come from the father!
 - a. **The cravings of sinful man** = worldly ambition - selfish aims - passing judgments using the world's standards.
 - b. **The lust of the eyes** = the motivation to get material things & placing value only on them.
 - c. **The boasting of what he has & does** = the continual attempt to impress others & deceive by pretending to be someone he is not.
 2. **ILL: "The Reluctant Lover"** - How are you with your relationship with the Lord? Are you a reluctant lover spiritually?
- B. **v10** - You are to love your brother. **I Jn 4:21** - And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.
1. Who is my brother?
 2. The Lord's answer was **The Parable of the Good Samaritan** (**Lk 10:29-37**).
 3. Your brother is anyone who has a need you can satisfy!

While you must live in the world, you must not let the world live in you! Do you really love the person sitting next to you? Would you really give of yourself sacrificially to meet their needs? If you wouldn't, you may not really be loving God!