

IMPACT

I Must **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; *in all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: John 13:34-35 “A new **commandment** I give to you, that you love [agapao] one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. **By this** all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love [agape] for one another.”

Quote: Agape love is the fundamental **expectation** and **evidence** of saving faith.

Love is not an option. It is a necessary indication that a person is placing his or her trust in the Person and work of Christ. The Apostle John repeats the commandment of Jesus to love one another, and he ties it closely with the command to believe! “And this is His **commandment**: that we should **believe** on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and **love** one another, as He gave us **commandment**.”¹ Without question, we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone for the glory of God alone. Once we begin placing our exclusive and entire trust in Who Jesus is and what He accomplished in His perfect life, sacrificial death and victorious resurrection, the response is a demonstration of biblical love that is part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit.²

James asks, “What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ Show me your faith without your works, and *I will show you my faith by my works*. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!”³ Like love, saving faith is shown by the actions that it prompts.

The Apostle Paul declared, “*By grace* you have been saved *through faith*, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, *not of works*, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *for good works*, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” “...Be imitators of God as dear children. And **walk in love**, as Christ also has loved us

and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.”⁴ He wrote to the believers in Philippi, “And this I pray, that your **love** may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be *sincere and without offense* till the day of Christ, being filled with the *fruits of righteousness* which are by Jesus Christ, to *the glory and praise of God*.”⁵ He also wrote to the Christians in Thessalonica, “And may the Lord make you **increase and abound in love** to one another and to all, just as we do to you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.”⁶

No Love, No Life!

When you read the book of First John, the place that love has in God’s plan is clearly evident. “God IS love,” and “we love God because He **FIRST** loved us!”⁷ I Corinthians 13 outlines what biblical love really looks like; it also shows how very short of it we fall in our attitudes and actions. Love edifies or builds up fellow believers, and evangelizes unbelievers by being patient and kind. Love is not jealous, boastful, proud, or rude. Love does not seek its own advantage, nor is it easily provoked into keeping a record of wrongs incurred. Love is never glad about injustice or unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth. As it relates to difficult circumstances, “love bears what otherwise is unbearable; it believes what otherwise is unbelievable; it hopes in what otherwise would be hopeless; and it endures when anything less than love would give up.”⁷

John gives a most sobering warning to all people. **No agape love, no spiritual life!** “In this the children of God and the children of the devil are *manifest*: *Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother*. For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.... We know that we have passed from death to life, *because we love the brethren*. *He who does not love his brother abides in death*.”

1 | Jn.3:23 2 Gal.5:22-23 3 James 2:14-19 4 Eph.2:8-10; 5:1-2 5 Phil.9-11 6 | Thess.3:12-13 7 J.MacArthur 8 | Jn.3:10, 11 14