

## **Comments on I John 4:19-21**

### **V.19:**

- The more accurate rendering is “we love” (agapomen) rather than “we love Him.” It is a love that is both vertical and horizontal: for God and for sister/brother.

- “Love” is contrasted with the “fear” of v.18. Our posture toward God is not that of fear. As the love of God fills us, fear is cast out.

There is no reason to fear because “punishment” is not a reality for Christians.

- God’s love is our example and our empowerment

The experience of being loved is what enables us love.

How does being loved by God help us to love one another?

### **V.20:**

“if anyone says...” is one of John’s ways in this letter of referring to actual claims made by those who left (see 2:9). There are those in John’s community who have “I love God” on their lips, but their actions gave a contrary testimony. Loving God and loving one another were completely separate for them.

Is it possible to love God and at the same time be sexist, racist, classist...?

- for John it is ludicrous to think this way. We see one another. We can't see God. It is easier to test our love for people than our love for God. The evidence of our love for God is not always observable. The evidence of our love for one another is easily seen.

To love is to "go out of your way" to advance the highest good and well-being of others. It's hard to falsify that!

- John identifies this person as a "liar". John uses this strong word in 2:4 and in 2:22,23
- "Every claim to love God is a delusion if it is not accompanied by unselfish and practical love for brothers and sisters." - John Stott

V.21:

- Love for God and for our brother form one single commandment.
- people are made in God's image Genesis 1:27; thus to love "them" is to love God
- One commandment: Matthew 22:37,38