



**Bible Study**  
**September 19, 2018**

**What Does It Mean To Love God?**

**1 John 4:20-21**

When most of us say that we love God, what do we really mean? When we say we hate others; can't stand others; or want nothing to do with other believers, what are we really saying? Do we really understand what it means to love God? Just knowing about God is not loving Him . . . reading about God is not loving Him. Just going to church, praying, worshipping, and studying the words of the Bible or knowing your gift does not mean that you love God. All that is good, necessary, and important but that's not what loving God means. If loving God is only a list of things that we do, those things can be imitated, interrupted and even become a burden to some. As a matter of fact, many people who say they love God have ceased to do those things. And, some individuals who do those things still hate their brothers. So, just those things do not reflect what it means to love God.

In our text today, John makes the powerful declaration that one cannot love God without loving his fellow believer. They claim to love God is a delusion if not accompanied by unselfish love for other Christians. **So what does it really mean to love God?** Our text explains that loving God is understanding who God is . . . Who is God? God is not just who we think He is or the blessings He gives us. He is not just someone you call when in trouble. John helps us understand who God is and in so doing, explains what it means to really love God. If we love God, we must understand that God is:

- A. **Invisible—Verse 20b.** We can't see God. **John 1:18a** sways no one has ever seen God at any time. In **Exodus 20:4**, God gave specific instructions not to make any image or anything that you think looks like Him. So, since God is invisible, when you say you love Him, what do you have in mind—**Deuteronomy 4:15-19**? **1 Timothy 1:17** says He is the king of the ages, immortal and invisible. **Isaiah 44:6** says that He is the first and the last. So, when you say you love God, do you love the first and the last? **Malachi 3:6** says He does not change. **Isaiah 40:28** says that He is from everlasting to everlasting, the creator of the earth, He does not grow weary, and His understanding is unsearchable. So, when you say that you love God, what are you really saying?

**Nahum 1:7** says the Lord is Good, a stronghold in the day of trouble. **So, when you say that you love God, what are you pointing to? Where is He?** God told Moses in **Exodus 33:12-20**—you cannot see My face; no man shall see Me and live? God is invisible. When you say that you love God, you must understand that you love an invisible God.

- B. **Illustrated—Verse 20a.** This verse deals with how the invisible God illustrates or shows Himself. This is the greatest explanation of why a believer cannot hate his brother and love God. Saved mankind is the visible illustration of God. **Saved man is how God reveals or shows Himself.** One writer says it this way—by nature, we love the things seen before we love things unseen. The eyes are leaders in love. Seeing is an incentive to love. You love the GM product, then you love the company, GM, that makes the product. If you do not love the product that reveals God, then you cannot love God. The only way that one sees GM is through the product it produces. Likewise, the only way that we see God is through the product He produces, saved man.

The true idea of man was lost in Adam but realized in Christ who God revealed Himself as He is and as man ought to be. Thus, by faith in the man, Jesus Christ, we learn to both love the true God and the true man—**Romans 10:9**. We first love the God—Man, Jesus Christ, by faith and then love God—**1 John 4:19**. God loved us through His Son, Jesus. Jesus says in **John 10:30**, my father and I are one. Listen to what Jesus told Phillip in **John 14:8-9**—Phillip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.” Then Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? The man, Jesus, is God in the flesh, who came to save man and man could become like Him—**John 1:14**. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren—**Romans 8:29**. **1 John 3:2** says we shall be like Him. Jesus is God in the flesh and saved man becomes Jesus in the flesh—**2 Corinthians 5:17-21**. To reject our brother is to reject Jesus and to reject God. He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me—**Luke 10:16**. **Therefore, there is no way a person can love God without loving his brother when God is actually in the brother. That’s why John says he is a liar—He who loves God must love his brother.** Consider **John 21:15-22**.