

1 Peter 1:22 – Part TT

1Pe 1:22 (NKJV) Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,

What Peter is addressing regarding the attribute of God’s “love” in this passage is foundational to everything that relates to the Christian life. Listen to the following verses and how explicit they are in defining the kind of “love” that believers are to have for one another. This is a long list, so simply listen as I read these verses to you. These are just some of the passages that clearly identify that believers, if they truly love God, will have a reciprocal love for other believers. In my understanding, this is non-negotiable and is a defining attribute of someone who is truly born-again. To not have this kind of love for one another is so very often a definitive marker that someone is not actually saved. [John 13:34-35](#), [Romans 12:10](#), [2 Corinthians 5:14](#).

Jn 13:34-35 (NKJV) A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Ro 12:10 (NKJV) Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;

2Co 5:14 For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died;

Most of the translations use the word “compels” or “constrains”. It is a present tense verb that means that Christ is always pressing and constraining us by His love in a certain direction.¹ The Holy Spirit is exerting pressure on our life through difficult circumstances in order to allow our life to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ so that the love of God can flow through us personally. In the context of what we have been addressing so far, if the issue is always about us having to have things our way, then the love of God will actually be hindered from flowing through us. [Ephesians 4:2](#), [1 Thessalonians 3:12](#), [1 Thessalonians 4:9](#), [2 Thessalonians 3:5](#).

Eph 4:2 (NKJV) with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,

1Th 3:12 (NKJV) And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we *do* to you,

1Th 4:9 (NKJV) But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;

2Th 3:5 Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

The word “direct” means to guide someone toward something specific.² It is a word that means to remove obstacles out of the way so that the individual can actually get to where they need to be. That is what Jesus Christ does for the believer. He opens up their heart to the truth so that he can direct them and focus the believer’s heart on what it means to love the way that God loves. He teaches us the truth so that the obstacles that prevent our life from being productive and godly can be removed out of our life. [1 Peter 4:8](#), [1 John 3:11](#), [1 John 3:23](#), [1 John 4:7](#), [1 John 4:12](#).

1Pe 4:8 (NKJV) **And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."**

In [1 John](#), John uses the phrase “**love one another**” five times – more than any other author in the New Testament.

1Jn 3:11 (NKJV) **For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another,**

1Jn 3:23 (NKJV) **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.**

1Jn 4:7 (NKJV) **Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.**

1Jn 4:11 (NKJV) **Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.**

1Jn 4:12 (NKJV) **No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.**

The principle that can be gleaned from the [1 John](#) passages is that a love for other people is directly related to a person’s love for God. Stated negatively, the less that someone honors God, reverences God, and loves God, the less that person will love other people. They will become fault finders, criticizers, complainers, and nitpickers of others. They will call them names and make them look bad before other people. Why? Well, [1 John](#) says it is simply because they do not actually love God. So, from a practical perspective, every believer should be able to evaluate how much he or she actually loves God by identifying how much they love other people, and especially other Christians.

So, what Peter is describing is the kind of love that God wants believers to have for “**one another**”. He provides two adjectives and one adverb to make his point. A believer’s love for other believers is to be “**sincere**”, it is to be “**pure**”, and it is to be “**fervent**” (adverb). Before proceeding into the exegesis of the three words, is important to appreciate that there was a very definitive need for Peter to address these issues simply because of how he begins [1 Peter 2:1](#) when he says,

1Pe 2:1 (NKJV) **Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking,**

The “**Therefore**” points back to what was just taught – that there was a deep need for genuine Christian love within the churches to which Peter was writing. He literally tells them to just “**lay aside**” all of their “**malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and evil speaking**”. All of these were reminders of how some of them had been deprecating and speaking down about other believers, and Peter says to place all of this aside, to lay it down.

The word “**sincere**” is the Greek word “*anypokritos*” and it simply means to be without hypocrisy.³ It comes from two Greek words. The first is simply the Greek prefix “*a*” which is the negative prefix and means “not” or “without”. The second word is “*hupokrisis*” and means to pretend or to fake. It is where we get the English word “hypocrite”, but when the negative prefix “*a*” is added to the word, it literally means not to pretend, not to fake, not to be a hypocrite. In the New Testament it came to mean someone that was genuine, real, true, or sincere.⁴ For instance, [Romans 12:9](#) says,

Ro 12:9 (NKJV) **Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.**

2 Corinthians 6:4-6 is Paul talking about his personal ministry and he says,

2Co 6:4 (NKJV) **But in all *things* we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, ⁵ in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; ⁶ by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love,**

James 3:17 says,

Jas 3:17 (NKJV) **But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.**

The Greek word “*hupokrisis*” (the English word “hypocrite”) was used of an actor on the Greek stage, one who played the part of another. Normally what would happen in a Greek play was that one actor would play multiple characters, and for each character the actor would wear a differ mask. The Greek prefix “*hupo*” means under and the Greek word “*krisis*” means to judge, or to judge under. So, it was used of someone communicating his judgment from behind a screen or mask. Obviously, some of these to whom Peter was writing, did not really have a sincere love for their Christian brothers, but were only **pretending** to have a sincere love for someone else. It is very, very difficult, almost impossible, to actually hide hypocrisy and insincerity. It is hard to pretend that we love and care about people when we really do not like them at all.

If we are going to gain a meaningful appreciation for these words that Peter gives to us, then we have to remember the definition of the kind of love that Peter is talking about – the “*agape*” love of God Himself. Please remember that God’s “*agape*” love is a love that is not built on emotion or feeling – not at all. We love because we have a deep emotion for someone, we have intimate feelings for them. However, God’s “*agape*” love has nothing whatsoever to do with emotion or feeling. Why? It is because emotions and feelings fluctuate and change – sometimes quickly, and other times over an extended period of time. We may love someone today and not like them at all tomorrow. Maybe they offended us or mistreated us or did something to one of our children. However, the “*agape*” love of God is a love that chooses to embrace someone and to care for them when they actually do not deserve that kind of love. It is a love that wills to love, that chooses to genuinely care for someone when outwardly they may not deserve it all. We have seen that it means that God is full of sacrificial love. God loves the individual when they do not actually deserve to be loved. God loves the individual when they are unworthy of being loved, and that is exactly the kind of love that Peter is addressing that every believer should have for other believers.

ENDNOTES

¹ Practical, *compel*, ep.

² Zodhiates, 849-850.

³ Strong, *sincere*, ep.

⁴ Zodhiates, *anypokritos*, ep.

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