

King's Way Church
Message for Jan. 28, 2007
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SETTING THE STANDARD
1 John 4:1-10

If there was a "Greatest Hits" package for the Bible, 1 John would be well represented, especially chapter four. In this chapter John writes a number of verses that, if you grew up in the church, you have heard all your life. Many of these phrases are used in poetry and literature:

- (v. 4) *Greater is he that is in you than he that is the world.* [KJV]
- (v.7) *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God and everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God for God is love.*
- (v. 12) *No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.*
- (v. 15) *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God.*
- (v. 18) *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear.*
- (v. 19) *We love him because he first loved us.*
- (v. 21) *And this commandment we have from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.*

This chapter is foundational to understanding what it means to live the Christian life. This chapter defines the standard that God expects us to live by. There are three things I want you to notice.

1. GOD SETS THE STANDARD FOR WHAT LOVE IS. (v. 10)



Real love is not defined by what a human does, but by what God has done.

This is because he revealed it to us. (v. 9)

In God, we see that real love is a sacrificial love. (v. 9-10) God's love cost him something — it cost him everything. He gave up his Son, and his Son gave up his own life, so that we could experience forgiveness of sins and inherit eternal life. This was the only way it could be done.

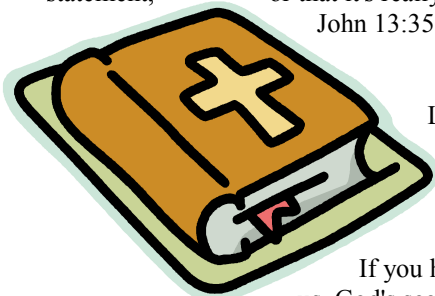
God also sets the standard for love by loving the unlovely.

While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8) We don't receive God's love because we're worthy. We'll never be worthy. We receive God's love because he is loving, and he loves even the unlovely — you and me. And this is the example we must follow in loving others.

2. LOVE SETS THE STANDARD FOR THE WHAT THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS.

The Christian life is, first and foremost, about love. Don't let anyone tell you that it's really about having a particular political view, or that it's really about being against certain social issues, or that it's really about adhering to a certain doctrinal statement, or that it's really about being organized, efficient and self-disciplined.

John 13:35



We learn from 1 John that love is the evidence for God's presence in your life. (v.7), (v.8) Like we saw in chapter 3, John isn't trying to make his readers doubt their salvation. He's already made it clear that he knows they're saved. He's trying to help them evaluate the message they hear and actions they observe from others. (v. 20) John is saying, **“Don't listen to those who claim to love God but who show no love to anyone else.”**

If you have been born of God, you have, at the very least, a kernel of love in your heart. As John 3 tells us, God's seed is in you. And just as you let that seed of righteousness grow, you also let the seed of God's love grow. You have God's love in your life, but you need more. (v. 12), (v. 16)

Love sets the standard for the Christian life. That's how you evaluate yourself, and, when necessary, it's how you evaluate others. Christians are known by how much they love. (1 Corinthians 13:1-2) Do you want to grow in the Christian life? Your first priority needs to be to grow in love. Love sets the standard for the Christian life.

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Being a Christian comes down to **being in a relationship**—a relationship built on love, not facts. Believing and knowing and understanding the facts of the gospel are important, **but they can't replace love**. That's the standard—that we love God and we love others. (v. 21)

The next question is usually, “**OK, then, how? How do you love others?**” (v. 18) The NIV says let's love “*with actions and in truth.*” Love is expressed in what you do. You love people by doing good for them. You love people by helping them.

3. WE NEED TO SET THE STANDARD FOR THE WORLD TO SEE.



I think we have been guilty of emphasizing the wrong things. Sometimes we're known only for what we're against. We need to direct our message to what's most important. **Too many people think taking a stand means being against something.** I want to take a stand for Jesus Christ. I want to take a stand for loving others. In order for the church to make a difference in our culture, we must love the world *as God so loved the world*. God's idea of love is “I will love you because I am love, and because you are precious and valuable to me.” Imagine the difference we could make if the world perceived this as our message.

CONCLUSION

Jesus said, “*By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*” (John 13:35). This is where the Christian life begins. It's where it ends, too. Loving God, loving people. He's shown us what love is. He's given us an example to follow. By loving others as he loved us, we become complete in our love for him.

“Our vision is to make a change in our community by being a *life-giving* church that is *true* to the Bible and *relevant* today by helping You find *Your way!*”

-King's Way Church

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