

Sent: Wednesday, October 28, 2015 2:36 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on I John

So why did Wiersbe label the text we considered last nite (I John 3:11-24) "a matter of life and death"? Was he being overly dramatic? Is he some kind of extremist? Was he really "being real"--in line with the title he gave to his book on I John--when he came up with this?

As we all know by now, John's epistle was clearly addressed, first and foremost, to believers! He speaks of them, among other things, as "children of God," "beloved brothers," those "born of God," those "who believe in the name of the Son of God," and--most apropos of Wiersbe's line of thinking--those who "have passed from death into life"!

One of the key purposes of John's writing is to give evidence and assurance to believers that they are, in fact, all those things cited above--"so that they may know that they have eternal life"!

Last week, John's main point was that while genuine believers still struggle with sin and don't live sinless lives, they don't, and can't, continue to live in habitual sin, and they don't practice pretense! Instead, they practice righteous living--and have the Holy Spirit living within them to make that possible!

Last nite, we talked about another "mark" of true believers! John writes, in 3:12, "We know that we have passed from death into life, because we love the brethren!"

John notes that love has been a central theme of Christianity "from the beginning"--speaking of the beginning of Christ's earthly ministry! Interestingly, believers and followers of Christ were commanded to love one another, right from the "get-go"! In John 13:35, Jesus said: "A new commandment I give you that you love one another, just as I have loved you, that you love one another! By this will all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another!"

But how can you command someone to love? It's just not "natural"! But maybe it is! In a different kind of way! We know God (Jesus) never commands us to do anything He doesn't give us the ability to do! Paul writes in Romans 5:5 that "...the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us!" And, in Ephesians 3:14, Paul prays that we would be "rooted and grounded in love!" Peter adds that "...that we have in obedience to the truth purified our souls for a sincere love of the brethren..." and that we should "ferently love one another from the heart" (I Pet. 1:22).

Sounds like a "second nature"!

And there's so much more on this thing of love in the Bible! We know that it's listed first in the "fruits of the Spirit," as described in Galatians 5. And, in that same chapter, we're instructed to "serve one another through love"!

So what is this love really like? I Corinthians 13:4-7 describes it best:

"Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fail..."

And it's all written in the context of verse 2, which says: "...If I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing!"

James puts it this way: "Even so faith, if it has no works is dead!" Which gets us back to Wiersbe! It's "a matter of life and death"!

And so, it's fair and appropriate for us, as brothers, to ask each other the question: "How's your love life?"

May we all be looking this week for new ways we can show love to others! A little bit more like the "second nature" for believers - which it's supposed to be!

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