

LOVE ONE ANOTHER FERVENTLY

1 PETER 01:22–25

Introduction: Love

There is no greater force than love. If two people truly love each other, they will do anything for the other. There is no greater bond on earth than true love. This is especially true of the love between believers. Why? Is there a difference between the love that believers have for one another and the love that neighbours have for one another? Scripture says yes, emphatically yes. Believers are to have a different kind of love than neighbours have for one another. The love that believers are to have for one another is what the Greek calls *philadelphia* love, a very special kind of love. The word is “scarcely found except in Christian writings” (B.C. Coffin. *First Peter*. “The Pulpit Commentary,” Vol. 22, ed. by HDM Spence and Joseph S. Exell. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1950, p. 11.) *Philadelphia* love means *brotherly love*, the very special love that exists between the brothers and sisters within a loving family, brothers and sisters who truly cherish each other. It is the kind of love...

- that binds one another together as a family, as a brotherly clan.
- that binds one another in an unbreakable union.
- that holds one another ever so deeply within the heart.
- that knows deep affection for one another.
- that nourishes and nurtures one another.
- that shows concern and looks after the welfare of one another.

The importance of believers loving one another with a Philadelphia love cannot be overstressed. Note what verse 22 says:

⇒ We are to have *unfeigned love* for our Christian brothers. Unfeigned means genuine, sincere, without pretension, hypocrisy or play-acting. We are not to pretend, play and act like we love one another; we are to love one another genuinely and sincerely.

But note this: there can be no mistake about the importance of love, for verse 22 says more and it is forceful: “love one another deeply, from the heart.” The word “deeply” (*ektenos*) “does not mean ‘with warmth’ but rather ‘with full intensity’.” It literally means to *stretch love fully out* or to love one another *in an all out manner* (Alan M. Stibbs. *The First Epistle General of Peter*. “The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries,” ed. by RVG Tasker. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1959, p. 94).

This is the love believers are to have for one another, a Philadelphia kind of love. Now note: there are three reasons why we are to love one another fervently.

- I. Reason 1: you have purified your souls (v. 22).
 - II. Reason 2: you are born again through the Word of God (v. 23).
 - III. Reason 3: your flesh withers and falls away (vv. 24-25).
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I. 1 Peter 01:22 Salvation and Obedience

Believers are to love one another because God has *purified their souls*. This means that the soul of a true believer is cleansed of sin. He is forgiven and purified from every sin he has ever committed. His soul is pure and clean, completely free from all guilt and moral dirt, pollution and corruption. The true believer is no longer guilty of any misbehaviour or sin, no matter what it is. He stands before God with a pure and clean soul, a soul that is perfect and acceptable to God.

But note a significant point — note what it is that cleanses the believer's soul: it is obedience to the truth. The believer obeys the truth and as he obeys the truth, the Spirit of God continually cleanses his soul from sin. This is critical to note: a person is cleansed only while he is walking in the truth, only while he is obeying the truth of God's light. When a person walks in the light of the truth, the Spirit cleanses his soul through the blood of Christ.

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

This is the reason we are to love our brothers. God has cleansed our souls from sin for the very purpose of loving others, and we are obedient when we love them. It is a circle: we are obedient when we love them and we love them when we are obedient. God has cleansed our souls so that we can love people with a clean and pure heart — with no restraints of guilt or shame or weakness whatsoever. Therefore, let us love one another in the freedom of a pure and clean soul.

John 13:34-35 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

John 14:21 "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."

John 15:10-12 "If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."

Rom 12:9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

1 Th 3:12 May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.

1 Tim 1:5 The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

1 Pet 1:22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.

1 John 3:23 And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.

II. *1 Peter 01:23 Born Again through the Word of God*

Believers are to love one another because they have been born again through the Word of God. All believers have been spiritually born again and spiritually remade. They have been spiritually created into new men and new women, created anew by God to be brothers and sisters to one another and to love one another. Note two points.

1. First, believers are not born again by perishable, corruptible seed, that is, not by the seed of mere man who is perishable or corruptible. If we were born again by the work of some man, we would still be perishable. We would still be...

- abusive • arrogant • self-seeking • bitter
- hypocritical • deceptive • prideful • envious
- angry • snobbish • selfish • neglectful
- jealous • hateful • withdrawn

This is the behaviour of perishable, corruptible seed; it is the nature of human beings. It is the way man acts toward others. But this is not to be the nature of believers, for believers have been born again.

2. Second, believers are born again by the imperishable, incorruptible seed, through the Word of God itself. God spoke and convicted us and led us to repent of our sins and turn to Him. It may have happened when we were reading God's Word or thinking about God or when we were listening to some preacher proclaim God's Word. It does not matter when or how we were born again. What matters is that it has happened. When we turned from sin to God, God spoke the Word and made our spirits alive, making them alive to Him and His Word.

Note that God's Word is the *imperishable, incorruptible seed*; it is the seed that is planted within our hearts and lives. The word imperishable means that it does not perish. Imagine! The Word of God *recreates us*, and it is imperishable. This means a most wonderful thing: we are incorruptible; we will not age, perish, deteriorate or decay. As this verse says, "the living and enduring Word of God." Therefore, we shall live and endure forever.

The point is this: as born again brothers and sisters, God has put His imperishable Word into our hearts. And the very first Word or commandment to believers is to love one another. Therefore, we must love one another deeply, from the heart. We must obey God.

1 John 3:23 *And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.*

John 3:3, 5-6 *In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit."*

2 Cor 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

Eph 4:24 *And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

Col 3:10 *And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*

Titus 3:5 *He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.*

1 Pet 1:23 *For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.*

1 John 5:1 *Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well.*

1 PETER 1:23 BORN AGAIN; NEW BIRTH

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. 1 Peter 01:23

A spiritual birth, a rebirth of one's spirit, a new life, a renewed soul, a regenerated spirit. It is the regeneration and renewal of one's spirit and behaviour (2 Cor. 5:17). It is the endowment of a new life, of a godly nature (2 Pet. 1:4). The new birth is so radical a change in a person's life that it can be described only as being *born again*. Something so wonderful happens to the soul that it is just like a *new birth*. It is a spiritual birth, a birth beyond the grasp of man's hands and efforts. It is so radical, so life-changing, and so wonderful that it can be produced only by the love and power of God Himself.

The New Testament teaching on the new birth is rich and full.

1. The new birth is a necessity. A person will never see (Jn. 3:3) nor ever enter (Jn. 3:5) the Kingdom of God unless he is born again (Jn. 3:7).
2. The new birth is a spiritual birth, the birth of a new power and spirit in life. It is not reformation of the old nature (Rom. 6:6). It is the actual creation of a new

birth within — spiritually (Jn. 3:5-6; cp. Jn. 1:12-13; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:10; 4:24). (See notes, Eph. 1:3: 4:17-19; *New Person, Self*, Eph. 4:24.) A person is spiritually born again:

- a. By water, even the Spirit (see *Water and Spirit*, Jn. 3:5).
 - b. By the will or choice of God (Jas. 1:18).
 - c. By imperishable, incorruptible seed, even by the Word of God (1 Pet. 1:23).
 - d. By God from above (1 Pet. 1:3). The word new (ana) in the phrase “new birth” also means *above*. (Cp. Jn. 1:12-13.)
 - e. By Christ, who gives both the *right* and *power* to be born again (Jn. 1:12-13).
3. The new birth is a definite experience, a real experience. A person experiences the new birth:
- a. By believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (1 Jn. 5:1; cp. Jn. 3:14-15).
 - b. By the gospel as it is shared by believers (1 Cor. 4:15; Phile.10).
 - c. By the Word of God (1 Pet. 1:23), or through the Word of Truth (Jas. 1:18).
4. The new birth is a changed life, a totally new life. A person proves that he is born again:
- a. By doing righteous acts (1 Jn.2:29; cp. Eph. 2:10; 4:24).
 - b. By not practicing sin (1 Jn. 3:9; 5:18).
 - c. By loving other believers (1 Jn. 4:7).
 - d. By overcoming the world (1 Jn. 5:4).
 - e. By not continuing to sin (1 Jn. 5:18).
 - f. By possessing the divine seed or nature (1 Jn. 3:9; 1 Pet. 1:23; 2 Pet. 1:14; cp. Col. 1:27). □

III. *1 Peter 01:24–25 Body Perishes; Word Endures*

Believers are to love one another because their flesh (body) withers and falls away ever so quickly (cp. Isa. 6-8). Note two facts.

1. Life is ever so short. It lasts no longer than the grass that appears so quickly and then withers away or the flower that appears just as quickly and falls away.

Note the phrase “all their glory.” People work and work to be glorious, to be...

- attractive • charming • acceptable • appealing
- honourable • esteemed • upstanding • dignified
- recognized • beautiful

But no matter how much glory man achieves, he ages, wrinkles, deteriorates and passes off the scene. His flesh is no more than the grass that withers, and the glory of his flesh is no more than the flower that falls away. But this is not true with the believer.

Psa 90:5-6, 16 *You sweep men away in the sleep of death; they are like the new grass of the morning — though in the morning it spring up new, by evening it is dry and withered. May your deeds be shown to your servants, your splendour to their children.*

Isa 40:6-7 *A voice says, “Cry out.” And I said, “What shall I cry?” “All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass.”*

Isa 51:12 *“I, even I, am he who comforts you. Who are you that you fear mortal men, the sons of men, who are but grass.”*

James 1:10 *But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position, because he will pass away like a wild flower.*

1 Pet 1:24 *For, “All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall.”*

Psa 39:5 *You have made my days a mere hand-breadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man’s life is but a breath.*

Psa 49:12 *But man, despite his riches, does not endure; he is like the beasts that perish.*

Psa 49:17 *For he will take nothing with him when he dies, his splendour will not descend with him.*

Psa 78:39 *He remembered that they were but flesh, a passing breeze that does not return.*

Psa 103:14 *For he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.*

Job 7:6 *“My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and they come to an end without hope.”*

Job 9:24 *When a land falls into the hands of the wicked, he blindfolds its judges. If it is not he, then who is it?*

Isa 2:22 *Stop trusting in man, who has but a breath in his nostrils. Of what account is he?*

Isa 5:14 *Therefore the grave enlarges its appetite and opens its mouth without limit; into it will descend their nobles and masses with all their brawlers and revellers.*

Isa 38:12 *Like a shepherd’s tent my house has been pulled down and taken from me. Like a weaver I have rolled up my life, and he has cut me off from the loom; day and night you made an end of me.*

James 4:14 *Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.*

2. The believer endures forever: “the Word of the Lord stands forever” (v. 25). The Word of the Lord lives in the heart and life of the believer. Therefore, the believer lives forever (v. 23). What is this word that stands forever? It is the Word of the gospel that is preached to you. If we receive the word of the gospel — really bring it into our lives — it will live within us forever and keep us living forever.

The point is this: believers have received the Word of the Lord into their lives. Therefore, they are going to be living together forever. We are the family of God. Therefore, we are to live and act like the family of God; we are to love one another deeply from the heart.

***Psa 119:89** Your word, O Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.*

***Isa 40:8** “The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.”*

***Mat 5:18** “I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.”*

***Mat 24:35** “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”*

***1 Pet 1:25** “But the word of the Lord stands forever.” And this is the word that was preached to you.*

***John 5:24** “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”*

***Rom 8:15-17** For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

***1 Cor 15:1-4** Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.*

***Gal 4:4-6** But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.” ■*