

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED UPON JOHN'S FIRST EPISTLE

LOVING AND KNOWING GOD ARE INCLUSIVE

1 John 4:8 "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love."

There are many things that go together. An old secular song says, "Love and marriage go together like a horse and carriage." A marriage without love is not really a marriage. A carriage without a horse to pull it is useless.

In today's devotional verse John addresses the fact that your being filled with God's love, showing love, having a heart filled with love is a result of God loving you. John's words address a spiritual truth. Agape (love) from God enables you to love Him. Without love from God, you cannot have a faith relationship with Him.

"Love is of God!" (1 John 4:7) The life that God gives you is a life that loves both God and your fellow human beings. God is the only source of love that bonds and binds you to Him and to those around you. Everyone who has been born of God, (the power of Baptism in you,) is filled with His love, knows Him intimately and will show love to Him and all people.

Using a negative, John states that "anyone who does not love does not know God." If the Triune God is not the Supreme object of Your love, then John says you are not a Christian. Because God is a God of love, He pours out Himself and His love upon His creation. For anyone to refuse to love Him in return is testimony to the fact that they do not believe in Him as their Father nor His Son as their Savior.

All of this revolves around the fact that "God is love!" (1 John 4:8) He is generous, compassionate and gives freely to you because of His love. That God is love is not some trite, inconsequential saying. It is the truth! His love is critical! It is the driving force within Him to provide you with the saving work of His Son Jesus, to forgive you your sins and give you the gift of everlasting life with Him. Yes, God sending His Son to save you from Hell is how you know that God is love. His love is personal, alive and active given to you through the work of the Holy Spirit through the power of the Gospel.

Prayer: Thank You Father, for the love You give me each and every day of my life.
In Jesus' name. Amen.

God loved the world so that He gave His only Son the lost to save,
That all who would in Him believe Should everlasting life receive.

Christ Jesus is the ground of faith, Who was made flesh and suffered death;
All then who trust in Him alone Are built on this chief cornerstone.

God would not have the sinner die; His Son with saving graced is nigh;
His Spirit in the Word declares How we in Christ are heaven's heirs.

Be of good cheer, for God's own Son Forgives all sins which you have done;
And, justified by Jesus' blood, Your Baptism grants the highest good.

If you are sick, if death is near, This truth your troubled heart can cheer:
Christ Jesus saves your soul from death; That is the firmest ground of faith.

Glory to God the Father, Son, And holy Spirit, Three in One!
To You, O blessed Trinity, Be praise now and eternally!
(LSB 571)