

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED UPON JOHN'S FIRST EPISTLE

GOD'S INSTRUCTION

1 John 3:23 "And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as He has commanded us."

When you think of the word commandment, normally the Ten Commandments quickly come to mind. The vast majority of times this word makes you think of laws, rules and regulations. In 1 John 2:23 this word points John's beloved children and you to believe in Jesus and all that means.

Believing in the "name. . .of Jesus Christ" is not just believing in Jesus as a person but includes His character and authority, His preaching and teaching, His saving work and all He is, has done, does and will do for you. Jesus' instruction guides and directs you to receive it from Him as your Lord and Savior; to His shed blood for your redemption; and, to His heavenly Father as your only true God. Many Bible scholars see this brief sentence as a "mini" creed confessing who Jesus is and the saving work He has done.

As John in these words directs your attention to Jesus, he also directs you to another instruction of Jesus. Jesus, John says, teaches that not only are you to believe in Him as the true Son of God and Savior of all but are also to love one another. These words are truly the words of Jesus such as recorded in John 15:12, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."

The object of your love, Jesus says, is to love Him and your Christian brothers and sisters. Faith in Jesus and love for one another go together like a hand and glove. Your love for others is a natural extension of your faith in Jesus and love for Him. They are inseparable.

Because of God's love for you, your Christian life begins with His action of sending His Son Jesus to save you. As His love for you fills your heart, it moves you to love Him and love your fellow redeemed. It is to this goal Jesus gives His instruction to you to believe in Him and to love one another.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, I love You and pray that You will send Your Spirit to lead me to love my fellow redeemed. In Your holy name. Amen.

Jesus, Thy boundless love to me No thought can reach, no tongue declare;
Unite my thankful heart to Thee, And reign without a rival there!
Thine wholly, Thine alone I am; Be Thou alone my constant flame.

O grant that nothing in my soul May dwell, but Thy pure love alone;
Oh, may Thy love possess me whole, My joy, my treasure, and my crown!
All coldness from my heart remove; My ev'ry act, word, thought be love.

This love unwearied I pursue And dauntlessly to Thee aspire.
Oh, may Thy love my hope renew, Burn in my soul like heav'nly fire!
And day and night, be all my care To guard this sacred treasure there.

In suff'ring be Thy love my peace, In weakness be Thy love my pow'r;
And when the storms of life shall cease, O Jesus, in that final hour,
Be Thou my rod and staff and guide, And draw me safely to Thy side!
(LSB 683)