

Matthew 7 provides a number of warnings from Jesus for those who are hearing His sermon. V7, is an invitation to beseech God by asking, seeking, and knocking. V11 provides an aspect of God's nature that He gives good things. V11 also speaks of an expectation of answered prayer, see also 1 Jn. 3:22, 5:14, Jam. 4:3, which speak to the heart when praying. V12 provides us the golden rule. What is the logical connection between V12 and V7-11?

4 Perspectives that Build our Understanding of Genuine Christian Love:

1. The Theology of Genuine Christian Love:

- 1) Love is rooted in God's electing love: 1 John 4:7-8, those who know God love others. 4:10, God loved us first. 4:8, God is love. 4:16, God is love, He who abides in love abides in God. 4:19, God initiates love.
- 2) Loving one another is an involuntary response to God's electing love: 1 Jn. 4:7-8. V12, if we love one another, God abides in us. 1 Jn. 3:10, not loving your brother manifests the actions of the children of the devil. 3:14, if you don't love your brother you abide in death.
- 3) Love is caused by the indwelling Holy Spirit: 1 Jn. 4:12-13, if we love one another, God abides in us. V13, He has given us His Spirit. Results in fruit, Gal. 5:22-26.

2. The Nature of Christian Love:

- 1) Love expresses loyalty to God: 1 Jn. 5:1, if you love God, you love those God has saved.
- 2) Love prioritizes the church: "especially the household of faith," Gal. 6:9-10. Jn. 13:35, the world will know we are Jesus' disciples by our love for one another.
- 3) Love is comprised of actions: 1 Jn. 3:18, love in deed and in truth with actions that are genuine. This word "love," "agapao" means: love, esteem, affection, and regard for others.

3. The Practice of Genuine Love:

- 1) Loves serves one another: Rom. 12:1-8, preach, teach, give, lead, with ministry that spreads the Gospel.
- 2) Love suffers for one another: Col. 1:24, Paul's suffering for the church. Smyrna's suffering for God's glory, Rev. 2:8-11.
- 3) Love defers to one another: Phil. 2:2-4, genuinely obeying this passage and esteeming others. Not like Diotrephes, 3 John 9.

4. The Test of Genuine Christian Love: The logical conclusion of Christ's Words in V12:

- 1) True believers love God by obeying Him: V12, Jesus states the that loving others IS "the Law and the Prophets." 1 Jn. 5:3, Jn. 15:14, "keep Jesus' commandments."
- 2) Obeying God is expressed by loving one another: 1 Jn. 5:2, love God's children and keep His commandments. We love those God has saved, 1 Jn. 5:1.
- 3) Loving one another is done the way God's loves: loving generously.
- 4) Therefore, only the one who loves his brother as God loves is a true believer: it becomes a second nature to love a believer and display the fruit of the Spirit.
>> There are warnings in Matthew 7 for us: if we are not following God's way of love, you are not His.

Further Discussion and Application

Steve gave us ten tests of genuine salvation, consider them:

- 1) **Humility Test**: Do you share your sin struggles with close friends?
- 2) **Listening Test**: Who do I listen to? Who can speak to me? Who can correct me?
- 3) **Bonding Test**: Who have I bonded with? Who do I fellowship with? Do I begin new friendships/relationships?
- 4) **Service Test**: Who do I serve sacrificially? 1 Jn. 3:17, Do I help the lives of believers?
- 5) **Gospel Test**: How am I perpetuating the Gospel and giving others the Gospel?
- 6) **Delight Test**: Who brings me joy? Who is a part of my life that would miss me if I were gone?
- 7) **Submission Test**: Do I submit to my elders, 1 Thess. 5:12-13, Heb. 13:17? Do I submit to other leaders? To others, Eph. 5:21? To my employer and those God has put above me, 1 Pet. 2:18-25?
- 8) **Forgiveness Test**: Is my life full of bitterness towards others, seeing them as unworthy to be saved, Eph. 4:29-32? Luke 17: 1-4, do we offend others or withhold forgiveness?
- 9) **Repentance Test**: Am I grateful for help in my sanctification or does confrontation lead bring a prideful response?
- 10) **Thinking Test**: 1 Cor. 13:7, do I bear all things, believe the best of others, hope and endure with a heart of love towards others? What do I think about others? Do they frustrate me or irritate me? Am I close enough to have a deep relationship with them so I can understand them?

As you examine these tests, answer the questions for yourself. Share with others the areas that you need to work on. How can you increase your love and service towards others?

2 Peter 1: 5-11 gives a similar test and results for those who are focused on growing. Discuss and meditate on the characteristics of the believer who is adding to their faith and abounding in the grace of God. What are the blessings of abounding in these attributes? What happens to our confidence in the Lord and our faith when we are obedient to grow?

Who might we be able to mentor or disciple in these truths in 2 Peter 1: 5-11? What does abounding look like for you? Once you build that level of abounding in your life, what will the next layer or level of abounding look like? Being diligent to make our calling and election sure, if these things are ours, we won't stumble. We won't be barren nor unfruitful. How long should we be bearing fruit in our lives? What are some examples of saints we know that abounded up to their last days?