

## Be the Hose: Love One Another

1 John 4:7-21 | Dave Geldart | August 8, 2021 | TG At The Well

I'm eager to dive into our passage today. Much of the core DNA for Tallgrass Church comes from this passage! Coming down the homestretch of our study through the book of 1<sup>st</sup> John – How God's love impacts and extends to our head, our heart, and our hands.

<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup> In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

<sup>13</sup> By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup> Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. <sup>16</sup> So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. <sup>17</sup> By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. <sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. <sup>19</sup> We love because he first loved us. <sup>20</sup> If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. <sup>21</sup> And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

### 1) Bible study time

- a. Let's make sure we understand what this is saying
- b. Lots here.
- c. Repeated themes here:
  - i. Christians are supposed to LOVE one another
  - ii. God loved us first, so we're supposed to love one another
- d. **TG's motto:** because God first loved us, we exist to love God and love our neighbors.

### 2) BUT HOW, exactly.... Lots of conflicting understanding of what love really is and looks like

### 3) A brief word study on a couple words here helps:

- a. 1) **LOVE** = Agape love
  - i. True goodwill, benevolence, esteem
  - ii. Strongly Related to PREFER
  - iii. BUT NOT what the PERSON prefers
  - iv. In this context, it means actively treating them the way GOD PREFERS

1. Choosing HIS choices
2. Since he IS love
3. Specifically, CHOOSING to let this kind of loving be CHRIST living his life through you to them
- v. Big elements of choice and God's defining of that loving action
  1. DIVINE love
  2. God's brand of love is SELF-GIVING, initiating, sacrificial love.... Bent on the good of the beloved
  3. The life of Jesus himself
- vi. In this context, as in most all usage in NT, LOVE referring to Christians loving other Christians
- b. 2) **brothers** = fellow believers (also brothers and sisters).
- c. 3) **Perfected** strongly related to MATURE
  - i. Not mathematical perfection
  - ii. Like I got a perfect score on my calc test
  - iii. More like that was a perfect day
  - iv. Or you're the perfect wife
    1. Extremely good
  - v. MATURING.... Full!
- 4) **The kind of love behind what Paul says in Col 1:28**
  - a. **Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature [perfect] in Christ.**
  - b. SAME word
- 5) **That is the GOAL** of the Christian life is to become more and more mature in your Christlikeness... and your ability to love others.
  - a. And its specifically those who confess Jesus as the Christ, who let his Agape love live and grow in them who mature in love!
  - b. At the end of the day, and the end of your days.... THIS is what really matters
- 6) You know, **it's possible to be a raving success** in the eyes of your friends and coworkers, and yet be a total failure at the real meaning of life: To know Christ's love and become like him.
  - a. It's not only possible, but COMMON, to climb the corporate ladder, achieve success and status, BE SOMEBODY
    - i. The perfect mom
    - ii. The perfect dad
    - iii. Boss
    - iv. Friend
    - v. Athlete
    - vi. Influencer
    - vii. Have that full emergency fund
    - viii. All the paperwork done
    - ix. Kids raised and off to college
    - x. Social Activist
  - b. **You can even reach the top RELIGIOUSLY, but totally miss it.**

- c. **1 Cor 13 If I speak** in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup> If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.
- d. Spend your whole life climbing the wrong mountain
  - i. But never to mature in your ability to love.
  - ii. Totally miss the point of life.
- e. This is the great tragedy of our world

## 7) God shows us his love through His Word → Jesus

- a. And his Word became Flesh and dwelt among us
- b. So that we could SEE LOVE himself -- Jesus acting this out
  - i. Living a sinless and perfectly loving life
  - ii. Choosing to die on your behalf on the cross, to pay for your sins
  - iii. AND offering you resurrected and eternal life reconnected with God and others, that starts NOW -- free and full, WHO YOU WERE MADE TO BE
- c. Jesus lived out this same brand of initiating, self-giving Agape love during his earthly life as he interacted with people.
- d. **He spent precious years of TIME with his disciples.** Building relationships. Such that they'd fall asleep on each other.
  - i. He invited all kinds of people to follow him and become his disciples
  - ii. Men and women
  - iii. Political right and left
  - iv. Blue and White collars
- e. **Shined especially as he related to messy people:**
- f. **Jesus with the Samaritan woman**
  - i. Accepted her, treated her directly, lovingly, with deep goodwill
  - ii. Yet didn't affirm her choices and preferences
  - iii. Pointed her clearly to TRUTH → himself as the messiah
  - iv. She felt LOVED by him – and wanted to tell everyone else she knew about him
- g. **Matthew the tax collector**
  - i. He initiated with him!
  - ii. Matthew felt LOVED and seen -- invited
  - iii. And chose to change HIS preferences to match Christ's
  - iv. And Jesus was comfortable being around him and his messy friends (Mark 2:15)
    - 1. Zacchaeus much the same
- h. **Jesus with the woman caught in adultery (John 8)**
  - i. Likely there half naked, ripped from her bed
    - 1. Almost certainly a SETUP by the religious leaders!
    - 2. Where's the guy??
  - ii. Jesus Protected her
  - iii. He looked at her in the eyes
  - iv. Humanized her
  - v. Gave her amazing grace --- and truth

--**WE ALL WANT THIS** – to be in a community where we’re loved by others LIKE THIS – like JESUS DID

--**And as we mature, grow, eventually we desire to GIVE THIS LOVE TO OTHERS**

- To offer healing presence to people in the midst of their brokenness and mess
- Help them find their worth and satisfaction IN CHRIST

### 1. **HOSE analogy – HOSE**

- a. We’re designed to both receive and give the living water of God’s love
- b. **Problem, ever since the Fall**, we’re all born bent and broken, warped!
  - i. Disconnected
    1. From the Source of Life and love
  - ii. **But through Jesus, we can be reconnected to the SOURCE**
    1. God’s love has been literally poured out into our hearts (Rom 5:5)
  - iii. So that we can channel the overflow of that great love to others
- c. **BE THE HOSE!**
  - i. Maybe you’ve never gotten your hose reconnected to the Source of life in Christ
    1. decided to accept that Gift from him
    2. Never understood how much Jesus loves YOU – just as you are now
    3. And has made a way for you to come back to him if you’d choose to
  - ii. If that’s you, I encourage you to take the opportunity RIGHT NOW to accept his love and his gift of salvation for you
    1. Ask him to forgive your sins and reconnect you with your Maker through Jesus
  - iii. When you put your trust in Him, He promises us in his Word that God’s own Spirit will come and live within you.
    1. And begin to help you know and experience his love for you
    2. And your new and secure status as his beloved child
- d. **BE THE HOSE**

2. But when you hook up a garden hose, especially after a while of disuse, and turn on the spigot, frequently, you still get very little water flowing through!

- a. **It seems so simple – whats the problem?** If Jesus loves us this way, and we WANT this kind of love, and it compels us to GIVE THIS LOVE TO one another? WHATS THE PROBLEM? Why doesn’t this just HAPPEN?
- b. Kinks in the line

What hinders God’s love flowing through us: KINKS:

### **COMMON KINKS**

- **Deficient People Skills**
  - Sure, we may be experiencing God’s love, and you’re wanting to pour it into others but its your social skills – or some lack therein – that keep others from experiencing the flow of God’s Love through our life
  - Depending on our story, personality, what kind of interactions have been modeled to us, what issues and habits we’ve developed as adults, its entirely NORMAL to be deficient in this area

- Social awkwardness.
- That's where connection to the Body of Christ can be of especially help. Lovingly graciously, helping others get reparented. And mature in their ability to effectively pass on God's love to others!
- **Busyness**
  - Busyness (or perceived)
    - If I'm in emergency mode, tanks dangerously low,
      - Everything seems like a threat
    - This can be a self-reinforcing trap
  - A self focus crowds out desire and availability for others
  - Often includes a passive demand that "THEY" initiate
    - Quite the opposite of the kind of initiating self-giving love God's shown us
- **Apathy (selfishness)**
  - We don't care.
  - Numbed into apathy by isolation and amusement
  - Its all about ME
  - I have NO RESPONSIBILITY to others beyond what I must give TO GET MINE
- **Sense of inadequacy**
  - I suck
  - Im nobody
  - I have nothing to offer
  - IMPOSTOR syndrome
  - Negative self talk – AND Self identity
  - Depression and anxiety
- **Psuedotolerance culture**
  - Tolerance & Love=Give me what I WANT ONLY (otherwise its hate, abuse)
    - Affirm me AND MY PREFERENCES = love
  - So I just need to be NICE ... its mean to make others uncomfortable
    - It's a straightjacket that's extremely unbiblical
  - Especially difficult when this functions in the church
    - Removes all ability to love in some of the foundational capacities described in scripture that risks the other person's discomfort or offense
    - Like admonition – a part of Christian LOVE
- **Hyper-polarized, divisive culture**
  - Love = you think, believe, act, look, vote, JUST LIKE ME
  - Otherwise = HATE, enemy, THE OTHER
  - And brazenly declare that unless you agree with me, you're branded as a hater
  - We draw extreme lines in the sand
    - And vilify anyone not on your side
  - This is painfully, publicly, obviously infected our churches.
    - People breaking relationships and abandoning churches over political preferences and ideologies.
  - This goes against Christian love
    - Love your enemies

- Outdo one another in showing HONOR
- Unity of the faith in the bond of peace – ACROSS DIVIDES of race, gender, status, political preferences
- **Pornography**
  - Under discussed in the church
  - **Stats about sexual brokenness in the church**
    - **Of young Christian adults 18-24 years olds, 76% actively search for porn.**
    - **68% of church-going men are viewing porn regularly**
    - **87% of Christian women have watched porn.**
    - **25% of all Christian women struggle with sexual dependency issues**
    - **and over 50% of pastors view porn on a regular basis!**
    - There's lots more stats but you get the picture
    - The church has a problem with pornography
      - **\*\*stats:** <https://conquerseries.com/15-mind-blowing-statistics-about-pornography-and-the-church/>
  - **Men and women**
    - Both those using and addicted to porn
    - **Patrick Carnes, in his book *Out of the Shadows*, list 4 key beliefs for the person who becomes addicted to porn and sex.**
      - Regarding self-image: I am basically a bad, unworthy person.
      - Regarding relationships: No one would love me as I am.
      - Regarding needs: My needs are never going to be met if I have to depend on others.
      - Regarding sex: Sex is my most important need (not relationships, growing with God, etc)
- Leads to ISOLATION and avoidance
  - AND the general culture surrounding it
  - INCLUDING the suspicion that others are struggling with this
    - Particularly powerful is women thinking most ALL MEN STRUGGLE WITH THIS
    - Culture of threat and shame
      - I'm not safe
      - Others are viewing me as an object
      - Who I am is dangerous – a threat to others
      - I'm not safe
    - Which Leads to avoidance and Isolation
      - From others, SHAME – if you really knew the real me, you'd reject me
      - Hypersensitivity – hypersexualization of others leads to a practical FEAR of engaging brothers and sisters in Christ.
  - One of the biggest reasons Christians struggle to love one another like this is the rampant impact of pornography
    - Kills your ability to know yourself. Be present with others.
      - See and love others with sacrificial branded love.

- Caught in the addictive noose of selfishness and shame
- Kills our ability to love one another like brothers and sisters
- The silent killer
  - It's killing us as adults
  - It's killing our kids
  - We're bringing up a generation reared on weaponized instant-access pornography
  - Younger and Younger
  - Men and women
- What would these core beliefs do to a Christian's ability to relate to and love others with Jesus' brand of self-giving love?
  - ZILCH!
- We are wounded in relationships, and we must be healed in relationships – Ted Roberts
  - The church is both the greatest fear AND THE GREATEST HOPE for those in sexual bondage
  - All of us are broken sexually – part of the unavoidable impact of living in a fallen world – none of us are insulated.
- SOLUTION: Next Steps
  - Practice HUMANIZING others
    - Men, especially those of you trying agonizingly hard to live with purity and integrity, **learn the difference between looking and lust**
      - Seeing someone, seeing beauty that's attractive IS NOT LUST
      - Any more than noticing that your sister looks beautiful today.
    - **Instead of viewing women as threats, humanize them as sisters**
      - Don't bounce your eyes .....Look them in the eye
      - Say hello and ask them about their week
      - Ask them about their family and their hobbies
      - This is one of the reasons why I often refer to other women in the church as sister.... Creates a culture of healthy relating between the sexes and a culture of safety and respect.
    - **Same goes for women to men**
      - Rather than objectifying OR AVOIDING men as threats, look them in the eyes
      - Treat them like brothers
      - Say hello and ask them about their week
      - Ask them about their family and hobbies
    - When brothers and sisters begin actually relating to one another in grace and dignity, **something magical happens**
    - Healing is unleashed

- Because we NEED one another
- And God has GIVEN US a family with men and women in it FOR A REASON
- **This morning, if you're like many who are struggling with sexual addictions,**
  - **NO SHAME**
    - Who you ARE is secure – you're a BELOVED son and daughter of Jesus
    - He sees you fully. EVEN THAT
    - And loves you completely.
  - **So, admit you have a problem**
    - Not for shame, but out of a desire to move forward and heal
    - Share with someone you trust
  - You can't heal from this one on your own
  - We are wounded in relationships, and we must be healed in relationships – Ted Roberts
    - **The root of shame CAN'T BE HEALED except by being exposed to others who can respond with love and grace**
    - **Seek out help from a group or counselor**
  - **At Tallgrass we're thrilled to partner with Pure Desire Ministries for our sexual healing and recovery groups and materials**
    - We want to create a church culture where it's OK to be real about your struggles and pursue healing.
      - We've gone through a couple all-church courses: The Conquer Series and Sexual Integrity 101
    - **Current offerings**
      - On our 2<sup>nd</sup> round of 7 Pillars of Freedom for men (an intensive, high commitment 9 month small group)
      - It's been incredible
      - Men finding healing and hope AND FREEDOM they NEVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE
    - **If you're interested, let me know – I'll get you more information**
      - Talk to me in person or
      - [davegeldart@tallgrass.church](mailto:davegeldart@tallgrass.church)
      - Or 913-484-6084
      - Get on the list for the next group
      - Or we could start another group sooner if we have enough interest
    - Sexual Brokenness is a HUMAN problem
    - **SO We need women's group leaders**
    - Pure Desire has incredible material for similar recovery groups for women – both those who struggle with sexual issues AND the trauma of betrayal



- **If you're interested, please talk to Elisha Hillegeist**, our one of our elders (and our childrens minister)
- to get more info and get on the list
  - [ekats88@gmail.com](mailto:ekats88@gmail.com)
  - 785-236-0322
- And if you might be willing to lead a group, let us know that too. It's something I've been praying for. Maybe the Lord is nudging you to serve others AND YOURSELF by taking this scary next step of faith.
- We'd LOVE to equip and walk with you.
- Podcast – Pure Desire Podcast

**Overcoming these hurdles to Loving One Another God's Way is totally possible – God's special brand of power!**

- But it takes us too. Us willing to go there WITH God and others.
- **He doesn't ZAP us with perfection** when we start the journey of faith with him
  - Sometimes I wish he would
  - But he has purpose – these are TRAINING days.
  - **And eventually, not just to get the kinks out, but to grow and stretch so that your entire capacity increases.** Like the hose can get bigger and bigger..... so more and more water can flow through. → pro tip: this process nearly always involves pain
  - **It's PAIN that increases our capacity for love and joy**
    - Just like it was for Jesus, the pain is worth it....
    - For the JOY set before him, he loved us all the way to the cross.
  - **The great secret – THIS is the life you've always wanted.** THIS is the full, joyful, exciting, meaningful life FOR YOU. → you'll never regret it.
    - And you'll become TRULY great

1. **THAT'S THE APPLICATION OF THIS TEACHING: BE THE HOSE!**
2. **This fall, as TG and The Well keep meeting and working together.** As our churches keep mixing and ministering together, We're going to have lots of opportunities to love one another!
3. **To move outside our comfort zones** and initiate with folks we don't know. Who are different from us.
4. **Its going to be a GREAT NEED!** We desperately need to love another like Christ if we're going to make this work. If we're going to be truly better together. Not just for ourselves. Our preferences. Our needs. But for OTHERS. ONE ANOTHER. And beyond.
5. **As I have loved you, love one another.... This is how the world will know that you're my disciples (if you have LOVE for one another) – Jn 13:34-35**
6. **Are you willing to let God GROW you this fall?**
7. **Are you going to let God point out and work out a kink in your line?**
8. **Are you willing to MATURE in your ability to love in this**
  - a. Maybe it's as simple (yet terrifying) as **initiating conversation** with someone else on Sunday morning, or at your small group. Looking them in the eyes, and asking them about their week.

- b. Maybe it's as simple as stopping **to pray before you meet with other believers**, and briefly asking God to show you ONE PERSON you can encourage.
  - c. Maybe you are sensing that nudge inside, **God telling you he wants you change the way you talk** to others who think or vote differently from you .... Especially online.
  - d. Maybe you need to take that brave next step, and make **a counseling appointment to help you work through some personal issues** that are holding you back from being able to love other well.
  - e. Maybe you need to **admit you have a problem with porn, and get into a group.**
9. **Take a moment RIGHT NOW**, and identify a next step for you in being the hose..... A conduit of receiving and giving God's love.
10. **PRAY**