

If we love one another,
God dwelleth in us, and his
love is perfected in us.

—I John 4:12



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Bible Lens

Love

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Love

from the Golden Text

I John 4:7

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God.

Readers of this letter faced not only hostility from outsiders but also conflict within the Christian community over differing views on doctrinal issues. Love for God and each other, the writer counsels, is the Christly response to animosity and contention. Repeating the phrase “of God” multiple times, he clearly emphasizes God as the exclusive source of love.

One scholar writes, “Our love is not self-generated, but manifests our parentage and kinship with God.” He describes First John 4:7–12 as “the most profound analysis of Christian love” in the New Testament.

from Section 1

3 | Ephesians 3:14, 15

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

“This cause” alludes to the writer’s dear hope that his listeners will be “grounded” (v. 17) in a love that’s universal.

The Greek words translated Father (*patēr*) and family or race (*patria*) are related terms, highlighting the close relationship between everyone in God’s creation.

from Section 2

4 | Proverbs 10:12

Love covereth all sins.

Although the Hebrew verb rendered *covereth* (*kasah*) usually implies hiding or concealment, some translations see this statement as a declaration about forgiveness. One has, “Love overlooks the wrongs that others do.” Another says, “Love makes up for all offenses.” And a third interprets, “Love calms all rebellions.”

6 | I Samuel 26:2

Then Saul arose, and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph.

Ziph, a town in Judah, was located in hilly terrain that provided David natural places to hide from Saul. But the citizens passed information about David’s location to Saul, focusing the king’s deadly intent on this area (see v. 1). Psalm 54, attributed to David, describes deliverance from this danger: “Strangers are risen up against me” (v. 3) and “God is mine helper:... He hath delivered me out of all trouble” (vv. 4, 7).

6 | I Samuel 26:8, 9

Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord’s anointed, and be guiltless?

An exploration of Bible citations from the *Christian Science Quarterly*® Bible Lessons

“...a lesson on which the prosperity of Christian Science largely depends.” —Mary Baker Eddy

Abishai was the son of David’s sister Zeruiah. He and his brothers, Joab and Asahel, were part of David’s warrior band, an elite force that conducted daring missions with and for David (see II Samuel 23:8–39).

In spite of David’s example, Abishai continued to be violent and vengeful. He later led part of David’s army into a battle that wiped out 18,000 Edomites and, with Joab, murdered Abner in revenge for Abner’s killing of Asahel (see I Chronicles 18:12, II Samuel 3:30). Grieving for Abner, David renounced their brutality, saying, “These men the sons of Zeruiah be too hard for me” (II Samuel 3:39).

from Section 4

13 | John 13:34

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

The commandment to love each other was not new—it would have been recognized as a charge from Leviticus 19:18. What made Jesus’ commandment new was the directive to love as *he* loved.

This instruction was given at the Master’s last gathering with his disciples, after he had washed their feet. They—and subsequently all of his followers—were to enter into the same loving, self-sacrificing service to each other that he exemplified.

To learn more about the *Christian Science Quarterly* Bible Lessons, go to biblelesson.com.

Saul, Israel’s first king

After the death of Moses, Israel was ruled by judges and guided by prophets. Foremost among these early Hebrew leaders was Samuel. When the people requested that a king be anointed to govern them, Samuel was divinely directed to choose Saul (see I Samuel 8:4, 5, 22; 9:15–17). King Saul is believed to have reigned about twenty years, bringing some degree of unity to Israel and defeating enemy armies several times.

Ultimately, Saul’s lack of faithfulness to God brought about a break with Samuel and the end of his reign. Well before the king’s downfall, God told Samuel, “I have rejected [Saul] from reigning over Israel,” and instructed the prophet to secretly anoint young David of Bethlehem as future king (see I Samuel 16:1–13).

Saul’s relationship with David began with the younger man’s defeat of the Philistine champion Goliath. But it became fraught with strife when Saul grew jealous of David’s popularity. Saul repeatedly tried to kill David, even though David was married to Saul’s daughter Michal and was a close friend of the king’s son Jonathan.

Saul and his three sons died when the Philistines defeated Israel circa 1000 BC. David lamented over Saul and Jonathan: “The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen!” (II Samuel 1:19).

Resources quoted in this issue

GT: Keck, Leander E., et al., eds. *The New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary*. Vol. 10, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2 & 3 John, Jude, Revelation. Nashville: Abingdon, 2015.

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Peacemaking 101

By Christine Irby Williams

From a *Christian Science Journal* Web Original, April 2012

My first week of student teaching, I sat down with my class to discuss a play we were about to rehearse. But what erupted that day was much more dramatic than any play. Eight or nine young men burst through the classroom door and began throwing books, overturning desks, and shouting obscenities.

For the weeks before my teaching assignment, I prayed about the classes I'd be instructing—asking God to help me see everyone I'd meet as He sees them. We are *all* His children, I heard angel messages tell me again and again. Each of His children is loving and lovable, blessing and blessed. I saw the one Father-Mother guiding each of us, and filling us with joy, integrity, goodness, and inspiration.

These angelic thoughts filled me with a sense of joyful peace. The first few days went swimmingly, with students who were eager to learn and respect each other.

But this day, I was confronted by a disturbing picture—one depicting God's children gone haywire.

I was at my desk when the door opened, and found myself bowing my head in silent prayer as the drama played itself out. I asked God, "How do You see these children, Your children?" An answer came back immediately: "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9).

I'd never thought about it before, but this beatitude of Christ Jesus included all of the children of God as "peacemakers"—not "troublemakers"! Therefore, the nature and job of these students was to express and promote peace.

There was a tap on my shoulder. As I looked up, everyone was stuffed into a seat

at a desk, and the boy who'd tapped my shoulder spoke for the class: "We want to know what you're thinking."

I said I had a vision of them as mature peacemakers, with the ability to communicate and use the tools God gave them. I expressed an interest in their concerns and knew we could find solutions. I invited the boys to join the class. All anger dissolved and they responded with a desire to help with the play.

Several weeks later, the play was performed for an audience, and every student had a part in its production. Each student made good and honest grades for our term together, and my fellow staff members were impressed with the progress made.

In the intervening decades, I've applied the lesson of that morning again and again in my prayers.

Blessed are the peacemakers! They shall be called the children of God. No matter what we appear to be, the innate identity of each and every child of God involves the talent of making peace. And that ability can be loved and encouraged into expression.

The peace we make comes with the discovery that outward circumstances cannot dictate our experience of prosperity and spiritual wholeness.

Whether we're in an out-of-control classroom or a world where things seem unsettled, we can let the angels remind us that we are the very children of God, able to see and make peace right where we are. The ripples of that peacemaking extend out and bless the world.

To read the entire article, which has been shortened to fit this page, go to jsh.christianscience.com/peacemaking-101.