

3 DIRECTIONS OF GOD'S LOVE

UP. IN. OUT.

1 John 4:7- "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸The one who does not love does not know God, **for God is love.**

LOVE: (484 times in the Bible 250 in the OT 234 times in the NT)

1. Dt. 10:12- "Now, **Israel**, what does the Lord your **God** require from you, but to fear the Lord your **God**, to walk in all His ways and **love** Him, and to serve the Lord your **God** with all your heart and with all your soul
2. Matt. 22:37- And He said to him, "'You shall **love** the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' (Mark adds strength) **UP**
3. John 13:34-35 "A new commandment I give to you, that you **love** one another, even as I have **loved** you, that you also **love** one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have **love** for one another." John 15:12-"This is My commandment, that you **love** one another, just as I have **loved** you. **IN**
4. Matt. 22:8- The second is like it, 'You shall **love** your neighbor as yourself.' Rom. 13:10-" **Love** does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore **love** is the fulfillment of *the* law." Gal. 5:14-" For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the *statement*, "You shall **love** your neighbor as yourself." **OUT**
5. Luke 6:27- "But I say to you who hear, **love** your enemies, do good to those who hate you,
6. John 3:16-"For God so **loved** the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." Rom. 5:8- "But God demonstrates His own **love** toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
7. John 14:15- "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." / 1 John 5:2-"By this we know that we **love** the children of God, when we **love** God and observe His commandments."
8. John 14:21, 23,24 -"He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who **loves** Me; and he who **loves** Me will be **loved** by My Father, and I will **love** him and will disclose Myself to him." 23-" Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone **loves** Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will **love** him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. 24 "He who does not **love** Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me."
9. Rom. 5:5-"and hope does not disappoint, because the **love** of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. / Gal 5:22-"But the fruit of the Spirit is **love**, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
10. 1 Cor. 8:3- "but if anyone **loves** God, he is known by Him."
11. 1 Cor. 13:13-"But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love."
12. Eph. 4:15-"but speaking the truth in **love**, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ,"
13. 1 Tim. 1:5- "But the goal of our instruction is **love** from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith." / Heb. 10:24-"and let us consider how to stimulate one another to **love** and good deeds,"

Challenges:

1. Christendom is no longer the dominant worldview in the West.

- a. nearly half of non-church attenders *never* think about the afterlife;
 - b. almost 75% would *not* attend a seeker small group;
 - c. more than 60% would *not* attend a worship service.
 - d. But, 61% *would* attend a church sponsored event on neighborhood safety.
 - e. This signals what for many churches would be a significant shift in how we spread the gospel. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2016/june/issues-in-future-of-evangelicalism.html>
2. Secular Pluralism is the dominant worldview.
 3. As a result our starting point is not “come to my church” (“come and see”)... our starting point is “I love God and I love you... and I will seek opportunities to enter your world to show and share the love of Christ.” Relational/ incarnational/ missional living.
 - a. “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”
 - b. “Our main apologetic can no longer be just language or worldview, though it must include that, but the gospel lived out and told by transformed lives.”
 4. The controlling metaphor for “church” in the New Testament is the idea that the church is His body. Eph. 1:23
 5. The body of Christ must become the visible hands and feet of Jesus in a community.

How do we meet these challenges?

1. Research the historical record for how the church has met these challenges in the past:
 - a. Early church 33- 313 Rodney Stark
 - b. Martin Luther: The Reformation- 1517 (95 Theses- and 3 main emphasis)
 - c. Philip Jacob Spener: The Pietists- 1670 (6 Principles)
 - d. John Wesley: The Methodists: 1750 (Simple Model- Bands/ Class/ Society and 21 questions)
2. Re-examination of the primary passages (the prime directives): Passages = Principles
 - a. The Great Commandment (2 commands) UP/ IN
 - b. The New Commandment (1 new command) OUT
 - c. The Great Commission (1 command/ 3 participles/ 1 promise) SUMMARY
 - d. Paul’s interpretation/ application... Eph. 1-4 (The church is His body and should function like a body to be healthy)
3. Recover the incarnational expression of the body of Christ (John 20:21)
 - a. Neil Cole
 - b. Growth Group
 - c. Missional Communities- Tampa Underground- Discuss (Think/ Feel/ Do)
4. Rediscover the right priorities (Not bodies/ bucks/ buildings/ big shots) WHAT IF we measured success by thinking in terms of a healthy body... connections UP/IN/OUT:
 - a. Percentage of people connected to Christ
 - b. Percentage of people connected to community confessing sing and using their gifts
 - c. Percentage of people in missional communities through their love for God, love for one another engaging and serving the community