

How God Knows That We Love Him  
(1 John 4:20-21)

Introduction:

1. Last Sunday (the last Sunday of 2013) De'Angelo Brown spoke to us about "God's love."
  - a. His lesson was based on 1 John 4:19.
  - b. This verse states that God "*first loved us.*"
  - c. De'Angelo showed how God demonstrated His love toward us by:
    - 1) creating the earth as a place for us to live
    - 2) sending Jesus to die on our behalf
    - 3) promising an eternal inheritance.
  - d. God's love certainly deserves a response from us.
  - e. Because God first loved us, "*we love Him.*"
2. On this first Sunday of 2014 we are concentrating on the fact that God wants us to love Him.
3. According to Matthew 22:37-38, loving God is "*the first and great commandment.*"
4. Today we are showing from the Bible "how God knows that we love Him."
  - a. We know that God loves us because He has shown us that He loves us.
  - b. God wants us to love Him in return.
  - c. How does God know that we love Him?
  - d. Let us consider 2 ways.

Discussion:

- I. FIRST, GOD KNOWS THAT WE LOVE HIM WHEN WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS
  - A. John emphasized this principle in his letter.
    1. (1 John 2:3-5) Despite what a person might say, his response to God's commandments is a true indication of his love for God.
    2. (1 John 3:22-24) To have a right relationship with God, it is imperative that we keep His commandments.
    3. (1 John 5:2-3) A person who truly loves God will not consider His commandments to be burdensome.
  - B. Jesus said that we show our love for Him in the same way (John 14:15; 15:14).
  - C. Let us consider how 2 men responded to God's instructions.
    1. God knew something about Abraham when he prepared to offer Isaac (Genesis 22:12; James 2:23).
    2. God knew something about Saul when he did not completely destroy the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15:10-11, 22-23).
    3. God showed His love to both of these men -- which one truly loved God?
  - D. God has reserved a special blessing for those who keep His commandments (Revelation 22:14).
- II. SECOND, GOD KNOWS THAT WE LOVE HIM WHEN WE LOVE OUR BRETHREN
  - A. John emphasized this principle in his letter.
    1. (1 John 2:9-11) Despite what a person might say, his love/hatred for the brethren determines whether he is in the light where God is (1:5-6).
    2. (1 John 3:11-19) God knew something about Cain because of how he treated Abel -- the way we treat our brethren shows God something about us.
    3. (1 John 4:7-12, 16, 20-21) The message for us is very direct -- God knows whether we love Him by our love/hatred for our brethren.
  - B. John was present when Jesus spoke about love (John 13:34-35; 15:12, 17).

Conclusion:

1. As we go through 2014, let us remember the lessons we covered last Sunday and today.
2. Let us love God because He first loved us.
3. Let us show God that we love Him by:
  - a. keeping His commandments
  - b. loving our brethren.