God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in him" (1Jn 2:5). "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments -and his commandments are not a burden" (1Jn 5:3).

By simply following God's commands, which he has not made too hard for us, we can assure ourselves that we have nothing to fear on judgment day -because we have forgiveness through Christ and there is no punishment awaiting us. Therefore we have nothing to dread.

Two kinds of Fear

The Bible certainly tells us to fear God. Solomon said, "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man, for God will bring every work into judgment..." (Ecc 12:13-14). Peter said, "In every nation, the person who fears God is accepted with him" (Act 10:34-35, 1Pe 1:17, 2:17). Paul said, "Beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2Co 7:1).

Yet the Bible also tells that we need not fear God! John says, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear" (1Jn 4:18). Paul says, "You have not received a spirit of bondage again to fear" (Rom 8:15). "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and of a sound mind" (2Tm 1:7).

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LOVE

Lesson 5 in First John

By Ron Graham

We begin now to look at what John says about love. Before we study this in detail, let’s overview the topic by noting that. John's understanding of love has two main foundations:

(1) Jesus Christ is the origin and example of true godly love. Without that love in us, we cannot be saved by him.

(2) Love is, among other things, obedience to God's commands. Love is not a sweet and benign attitude that smiles at "a sin unto death". Rather, love is a commitment to keeping God's word.

1. A new standard of love

Jesus gave us a new standard of love. Love is "an old commandment yet a new commandment" (1 Jn 2:7-8). The old commandment was to "love your neighbour as yourself". Self was the standard. Jesus changed that. He says, "Love one another as I have loved you". Christ is the new standard. (Mtt 22:39-40; Jhn 13:34).