*“With the Master Before the Mirror of God’s Word”* by Susan Heck

A Ladies Bible Study on First John

Tuesday, February 11th, 2020

*Having been in pastoral ministry with my husband for more than 23 years now, I can concur with Susan that some of the most unpleasant and extremely painful experiences in ministry is when “believers in Jesus Christ” refuse to forgive, refuse to reconcile, and refuse to love others with Christ’s kind of love.” Susan, once again asks some very heart-probing questions as we end our study of chapter four of 1 John. Her questions are these: “Is it possible to have those types of attitudes toward other Christians and love God at the same time? Can people with those attitudes truly be born of God?” (pg.249)*

**Susan’s Summary** of Chapter 18– “Loving Others by Loving God” – 1 John 4:19-21 (pg.255-260)

The Apostle John has shown us:

1) *Why We Love God (v 19)*

We love God because He first loved us. “Not one of us sought God first; He sought us and He loved us first. We were all depraved souls seeking our own agenda and rebelling against God. He reached down and drew us to Himself.” (Romans 3:10-12) (pg. 250)

2) *How We Love God (vv 20,21)*

We love God by showing love to our brethren. “We show our love to God not by working ourselves up in some emotional frenzy, or having a warm fuzzy feeling up and down our spine, but by our obedience to God.” (pg. 251) “God made it clear in the beginning that we are not to hate our brother in our heart.” (Leviticus 19:17-18)

Perhaps by now some of you are tired of John’s repeated commandment to love one another. Maybe some of you feel like his fellow believers, who in his day said to him, “Give us something new, John.” Evidently, they needed to improve on loving one another, just as we do. Or, some of you may be saying, “You know this lesson does not really apply to me because I do love God and I do love my brother. First of all, I am thrilled that you love God and that you love others. But every believer can improve in the area of loving others. I know I can.

Remember what Paul says to the church at Thessalonica, a church known for loving the brethren? He states in **1 Thessalonians 4:9-10, “But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But I urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more.”** Paul says, hey, you guys already love, but do it more and more.

I would like to close this chapter by challenging you with ***8 ways in which you can improve your love***. So let’s think through this command just a little more.

1) Pursue love. (1 Corinthians 14:1)

2) Be sincere in your love. (2 Corinthians 8:7-8)

3) Abound in love. (Philippians 1:9; Acts 10:38; Matthew 6:3)

4) Be consistent in love. (Philippians 2:2)

5) Increase in love. (1 Thessalonians 3:12)

6) Provoke each other to love. (Hebrews 10:24)

7) Continue in love. (Hebrews 13:1-5; 1 Corinthians 7:5)

8) Be fervent in love. (1 Peter 4:8)

So, do you think you have room for improving your love? We all do, don’t we? We all need to follow after love, be sincere in our love, abound in love, be consistent in our love, increase our love, provoke one another to love and good deeds, continue in our love, and be fervent in our love.

As the Apostle John has told us, he who loves God loves his brother also.