

## The Proof

- There is a big argument on voter registration. The question is should we require a system that provides proof that we are a citizen of this nation and have the right to vote for our leaders.
- I'm not here to discuss political beliefs. I can tell you who I am. I am the son of Alfred and Patricia Smith. I am the third child of seven. I am the husband of Joni and the father of Katelyn and Stefanie. I am the grandfather of Timothy. I am the pastor of this church.
- All these things I can provide the necessary proof that would show you that I am these things. Birth certificates, marriage license and a driver's license with my picture on it.
- All of us can prove who we are. It's fairly simple in today's society.
- A piece of paper can prove who we are but it can't prove whose we are.
- According to a 2012 Gallup poll," *The large majority of Americans -- 77% of the adult population -- identify with a Christian religion, including 52% who are Protestants or some other non-Catholic Christian religion, 23% who are Catholic, and 2% who affiliate with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.*"
- I am a Christian! Some may say prove it.
- If we look at some of the Christian groups in my time that say they are followers of Jesus.
- The KKK, Aryan Nation, Christian Identity, Westboro Baptist church of Topeka Kansas.
- These groups of "Christians" spout hate and some even violence. Some are racists. They judge people because of their looks and they even condemn them.
- The way these groups act we can come to the conclusion that they are not following the teachings of Jesus.
- Jesus taught us in **Matthew 5:43–44 (NLT)**
- **43 "You have heard the law that says, 'Love your neighbor' and hate your enemy. 44 But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!**
- Jesus telling us to love our enemies and to pray for our persecutors.
- I don't know about you but I don't see anything about hating someone.
- Love seems to be a recurring theme in Christianity.
- **John 13:34–35 (NLT)**
- **34 So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. 35 Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."**
- Jesus tells His disciples that they need to love each other unconditionally and this love would prove to the world who they follow.

- What does it look like to have this unconditional love?
- Earlier in this scripture we see Jesus washing the disciple's feet at the last supper.
- Jesus showed His love by taking the role of servant.
- Being willing to put ourselves aside to serve each other is proof of our love.
- Another sign of love is in our forgiveness.
- We all do things that others may not approve of or we may unintentionally hurt someone.
- Forgiveness is very important because if don't forgive then our relationships won't be whole.
- **Matthew 18:21–22 (NLT)**
- **21 Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?" 22 "No, not seven times," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven!**
- After Jesus answered Peter's question He told them a parable about a king that forgave a large debt.
- Another scripture that talks about forgiveness is in the Lord's prayer.
- **Matthew 6:12 (NLT)**
- **12 and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.**
- I don't know about you but when I've done something wrong and was forgiven for that wrong it lifts my spirit and even draws me closer to the one that has forgiven me.
- Remember the time that you accepted Jesus and were forgiven of your sins? Remember the weight that was lifted from you. Remember the joy that filled your heart.
- I think that is why we need to forgive each other.
- Have you ever held a grudge against someone? How did it make you feel?
- Remember when you forgave them? How did that make you feel?
- Not forgiving someone just hurts us not them.
- A life of love is a command. It is not an option!
- In John's epistles (1,2,3 John) there are 17 verses that talk about loving each other.
- **1 John 3:11 This is the message you have heard from the beginning: We should love one another.**
- **1 John 3:23 And this is his commandment: We must believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he commanded us.**
- **1 John 4:7 Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. 8 But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.**
- Love is shown through action.

- **1 John 3:16 We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. 17 If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister\* in need but shows no compassion—how can God’s love be in that person?**
- The proof of our love is not just saying I love you but it is in showing people that you love them.
- See how John talks about what real love is. Real love was shown by Jesus and His sacrifice for us.
- We are loved and our lives need to show that same love to others. Willing to sacrifice for others.
- Can you imagine a place where the people forgive each other, help others that are in need and are obedient to God?
- We have the unique opportunity, the privilege to love.
- As we are obedient to God, His love abounds in us.
- As we love we show the world that we are His.
- As Paul writes in
- **1 Corinthians 13:1–3 (NLT)**
- **If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn’t love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God’s secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn’t love others, I would be nothing. 3 If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn’t love others, I would have gained nothing.**
- The mighty things we can do are nothing without love.
- Is there proof that we are children of God?
- Is God’s love seen in our lives?