

1 John 4:12-21 "We Love Him"

7 BELOVED, LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER, FOR LOVE IS OF GOD; AND EVERYONE WHO LOVES IS BORN OF GOD AND KNOWS GOD. In the Greek "those who are loved, let us love."

God is love! LOVE DOESN'T DEFINE GOD. GOD DEFINES LOVE.
Love is not just an attribute of God; it is part of his nature.



Agape love creates value in its object whether there is any intrinsic value there or not. The sun shines on the earth not because the earth is the earth but because the sun is the sun. God loves me because He is He, not because I am I. When John says, "God is love," he means to say more than just "God loves us," as marvelous as that truth is in and of itself.

No one has ever sinned himself or herself beyond the love of God. There is nothing you can do to make God love you any more than he loves you right now. There is nothing that you can do to make God love you any less than he loves you right now.

Verse 10 of chapter 4 **IN THIS IS LOVE, NOT THAT WE LOVED GOD, BUT THAT HE LOVED US AND SENT HIS SON TO BE THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS.**
PROPIIATION is a word that means "to appease someone's wrath."

Holiness: Wrath: Justice: Mercy... love...

grace God does something for us that we could never do for ourselves. He pays the price of our sin. When Jesus died on the cross, he became our substitute and took the wrath of God against our sin upon himself, thus satisfying God's justice in a payment for sin. In Jesus' death on the cross, God's holiness, justice, wrath, mercy, love and grace all converge.

When God “who is love” allows that love to travel from head to heart it changes you forever!... God did not send His Son so you could become lovable... He sent His Son because He loved... Yes Christ died while yet we were sinners **PRAY**

1 John 4:12 No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. **13** By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. **14** And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *as* Savior of the world. **15** Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. **16** And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. **17** Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. **18** There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. **19** We love Him because He first loved us. **20** If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? **21** And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.

1 John 4:12 No one has seen God at any time. In speaking of God the Father, Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 1:17: *Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible.* Jesus declared of God the Father, *God is Spirit*, (John 4:24) meaning that God the Father has no tangible body which may be seen.

But If we love one another, **God abides in us**, and His love has been **Perfected** in us.

God abides in us “Abide” – it is common in his Gospel as well as in this letter ... in verses 12-16 alone, John uses this word 6 times. When we abide in Christ, we are behaving according to his character.

Abide LOVE HAS BEEN Perfected THE GREEK WORD TELEIOO, WHICH DOESN'T MEAN "PERFECT" AS MUCH AS "mature" AND "complete." IF WE LOVE ONE ANOTHER, THEN THE LOVE OF GOD IS "MATURE" AND "COMPLETE" IN US.

SOME PEOPLE THINK THE GREATEST EVIDENCE OF GODS PRESENCE

OR WORK IS **POWER**. SOME PEOPLE THINK THE GREATEST EVIDENCE OF GODS PRESENCE OR WORK IS **POPULARITY**. SOME PEOPLE THINK THE GREATEST EVIDENCE OF GODS PRESENCE OR WORK IS **PASSIONATE FEELINGS**. BUT THE GREATEST EVIDENCE OF GODS PRESENCE AND WORK IS **LOVE**. WHERE GOD IS PRESENT AND WORKING THERE WILL BE LOVE.

John is saying that others' seeing you loving others is evidence to other people that God is real and that God lives in you. **The invisible God becomes visible through you.**

As a Spirit (John 4:24), God cannot be seen with our physical eyes. Since no one has seen God, how are we supposed to get people who don't know God to believe that he exists? When the world observes Christians loving unconditionally as Jesus loved, they will be open to the gospel. The only God and Jesus that most people will ever see is the one they see in you.

Edgar Guest has a poem entitled,
 "Sermons We See." It begins like this:

I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day;
 I'd rather one should walk with me than merely tell the way.
 The eye's a better pupil and more willing than the ear,
 Fine counsel is confusing, but example's always clear;
 And the best of all preachers are the men who live their creeds,
 For to see good put in action is what everybody needs.

We are never more like him than when we love others. John 13:35 – By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

13 By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *as* Savior of the world. "The world" means all sinful people, estranged, from God and under the dominion of the evil one.

15 Whoever confesses The idea behind the word *confess*

is "to be in agreement with." the idea of saying a hearty "amen!"

Confession of Jesus as Son of God means confession of the full deity of Christ. This is something the false teachers were not willing to confess. Right belief about who Jesus is and what he has done on the cross is essential to salvation. The phrase "God abides in him, and he in God" is John's way of speaking about someone's genuine salvation.

What are we confessing... verse 15 continues... that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. Though John has been writing much about love, he does not ignore the issue of **TRUTH**. John does not think it is "enough" if a person has some kind of love in their life if they do not confess that Jesus is the Son of God. It **isn't** a matter of deciding between truth or love; we must have both... **again TRUTH IN LOVE!**

16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. **Calvin rightly noted, "This means we have come to know by believing."**

His past faithfulness and his present faithfulness guarantee his future faithfulness to us. *God is with us moment by moment in the present.*

Verse 16 continues... God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

Romans 8:35-39 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? **36** As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." **37** Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. **38** For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, **39** nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Spurgeon "To feel God's love is very precious, but to believe it when you do not feel it, is the noblest."

Love is ACTION not EMOTION

I loved this... it was so true and so ME... “I’m not a big fan of art galleries. I appreciate art, at least most of it, but my eyes begin to glaze over, and my adult ADD kicks in pretty fast when I move slowly through room after room of pictures. I have noticed, however, that I much prefer looking at pictures that convey some kind of action as opposed to an endless array of portraits. Portraits have their place, but give me the large scenes of conflict involving two or more people. Looking at Washington cross the Delaware is much more interesting to me than looking at a portrait of Washington himself. Why is that? We are stirred by action. So it is with love. People are stirred not by a static depiction of our still-life portraits of love. They are drawn into large action renditions where love is being demonstrated. John can tell us in this letter that “God is love” because God demonstrated that love for us when Jesus died on the cross for our sins. People are little moved by our static affirmation, “we love you.” Rather, they are moved when they see us go to work on their behalf and put our love into action. That’s when we are most like our heavenly Father. John says we are to “abide” in love. This is the foundation for our loving action that John commands all of us to engage in (vv. 20,21).

17 Love has been **perfected** among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment;

perfected Here John doesn't just use the Greek word *teleioo* like in verse 12 (which has the idea of "maturity" and "completeness"); he writes *teleioo teleioo* - speaking of love that is "perfectly perfected" or "completely complete."

YOU MAY KNOW THE GREATNESS OF JESUS' SALVATION NOW; YOU WILL REALLY KNOW IT IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

This verse is a reminder that every person, Christian or not, will one day give an account of his or her life in the day of judgment. A person who is not a Christian ought to be afraid of future judgment. But we Christians have no fear of future judgment because our judgment is already past. **In John 5:24 Jesus said, “Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment.”**

WE ALL WILL GIVE AN ACCOUNT... Two judgments for eternity...

Great White Throne... separation of believers and non-believers. Matthew 25:31-46. Sheep and the goats...

GOATS... Never received the free gift of God. Never surrendered their life for Jesus to cover their sins with His blood. Goats will be eternally separated from the loving God that made them.

SHEEP... The redeemed... forgiven and free. No judgment of sin but the things they did here will be.

Revelation 20:11-15 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

Unbelievers will be judged at the Great White Throne Judgment. What is the standard of judgment? It is the revealed will of God through the Word of God. Unsaved people will be judged according to their works and the fact that their name is not written in the Lamb's Book of Life. The unsaved will experience eternal separation from God in a literal place called Hell.

There is one fear that all who are without Christ should have and all who know Christ should never have: fear of judgment.

2 Cor. 5 10 For we must all appear before the judgment (Bema) seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Bema seat 1 Cor. 3 tells us that our works will be “revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work” Wood, hay, stubble... Gold, silver or precious stones. **The issue at**

this judgment is not one's eternal destiny.

because as He is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸There is no fear in love;

There is no fear in love: The completeness of love means we do not cower in fear before God, dreading His judgment, either now or **in the day of judgment**. We know all the judgment we ever deserved - past, present, and future - was poured out on Jesus Christ on the cross.

Look at the end of verse 18... but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment.

What about the many passages of Scripture, Old and New Testament (such as Ecclesiastes 12:13 and 1 Peter 2:17), which tell us we should *fear God*? The **fear** John writes of here is not the appropriate reverence we should all have of God, but the kind of fear which **involves torment** - that agonizing kind of fear which robs our soul of all joy and confidence before God. It is the **fear** that is the opposite of **boldness in the day of judgment**.

Courson nailed it... Perfect love casts out fear. How so? If I understand that God really, truly loves me, I can have absolute confidence that whatever happens at any given moment is the best for me. Regardless of what the doctor may say, what the IRS may declare, or who wins the election—when you are sure of God's love for you, you don't have fear. The answer to anxiety and fear is not to face your fears or to figure out your phobias. The answer to fear is to become saturated in God's love because His perfect love casts out fear. Grumpiness and cynicism, doubt and despair wash over me whenever I take my mind off God's perfect love—so undeniably demonstrated at Calvary.

When we live within the security of God's love for us and practice love for others, we will experience freedom from all fear.

But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. ¹⁹**We love Him** because He first loved us.

We love Him In this great statement, John begins by declaring the

heart of every true follower of Jesus Christ. Simply and boldly put, **we love Him.**

Spurgeon "This is a fact for every true follower of Jesus. "There is no exception to this rule; if a man loves not God, neither is he born of God. Show me a fire without heat, then show me regeneration that does not produce love to God."

It is something that every Christian should be unafraid to proclaim: *I love Him; I love Jesus.* Can you say that? Are you embarrassed to say it? Can you say, "I love Jesus"?

"Look through all the pages of history, and put to the noblest men and women, who seem to still live, this question, 'Who loves Christ?' and, at once, up from dark dungeons and cruel racks there rises the confessors' cry, 'We love him; and from the fiery stake, where they clapped their hands as they were being burned to death, the same answer comes, 'We love him.' If you could walk through the miles of catacombs at Rome, and if the holy dead, whose dust lies there, could suddenly wake up, they would all shout, 'We love him.' The best and the bravest of men, the noblest and purest of women, have all been in this glorious company; so, surely, you are not ashamed to come forward and say, 'Put my name down among them.'" (Spurgeon)

19 **We love Him** because He first loved us.

One commentator said "Jesus loved you when you lived carelessly, when you neglected his Word, when the knee was unbent in prayer. Ah! He loved some of you when you were in the dancing saloon, when you were in the playhouse, ay, even when you were in the brothel. He loved you when you were at hell's gate, and drank damnation at every draught. He loved you when you could not have been worse or further from him than you were. Marvellous, O Christ, is thy strange love!"

He first loved us: This means that it is true that He loves us now. Do you believe it? "Oh, if you do really believe that he has loved you so, sit down, and turn the subject over in your mind, and say to yourself, 'Jesus loves

me; Jesus chose me; Jesus redeemed me; Jesus called me; Jesus has pardoned me; Jesus has taken me into union with himself.' " (Spurgeon)

The only reason you have the capacity to love is because you have been a recipient of God's love and have been born again. You could never love God apart from God's loving you first.

20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? 21 And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.

If you don't love people, then you are not loving God because God has declared that one of the ways you show your love for him is by visibly showing your love for others. Do you want to grow in your love for God? You must grow in your love for people. Do you want to grow in your love for people... obey what God has called you to do...

Both a supernatural work and a work of discipline... Do the motion and the emotion will follow.

I asked God to show me His love for the lost... I am not embellishing. I cried for a week.

Communion... Spurgeon captures something of what it is like for God's amazing love to sink in for us as believers:

What it is we have been talking about? It is God's love for us. Get the thought into your head a minute: "God loves me" – not merely bears with me, thinks of me, feeds me, but love me. Oh it is a very sweet thing to feel that we have the love of a dear wife, or a kind husband; and there is much sweetness in the love of a fond child, or a tender mother; but to think that God love me, this is infinitely better! Who is it that loves you? God, the Maker of heaven and earth, the almighty, All in all, does He love me? Even He? If all men, and all angels, and all the living creatures that are before the throne loved me, it were nothing to this – the Infinite love me! and who is that He loves? Me. The test saith, "us." "We love Him because He first loved us." But this is the personal point – He love me, an insignificant nobody, full of sin – who deserved to be in hell; who loves Him so little in return – God loves ME.

The Boat in the Window

A young boy spent many hours building a little sailboat, crafting it down to the finest detail. He then took it to a nearby river to sail it. When he put it in the water, however, it moved away from him very quickly. Though he chased it along the bank, he couldn't keep up with it. The strong wind and current carried the boat away. The heartbroken boy knew how hard he would have to work to build another boat. Farther down the river, a man found the little boat, took it to town, and sold it to a shopkeeper. Later that day, as the boy was walking through town, he noticed the boat in a store window. Entering the store, he told the owner that the boat belonged to him. It had his own little marks on it, but he couldn't prove to the shopkeeper that the boat was his. The man told him the only way he could get the boat was to buy it. The boy wanted it back so badly that he did exactly that. As he took the boat from the hand of the shopkeeper, he looked at it and said, "Little boat, you're twice mine. I made you and I bought you."

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