



“Perfect and Confident Love”

1 John 4:17-21

Perfect Love: The Book of First John

1 John 4:17-21 - “By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. We love, because He first loved us. If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.”

I. THE DEFINITION of Perfect Love

perfect love = Greek: *teleios agape* = fully mature, self-sacrificial love and unselfish value

Our ability to place God’s worth on others was perfected in Christ, is now being perfected in us daily, until we experience the fullness of agape love in heaven.

II. THE SOURCE of Perfect Love

1 John 4:17 “By this, love is perfected with us...” (cf. 1 John 4:13-16)

The indwelling Holy Spirit of God abiding in us makes it possible for the love of God to be perfected in us

Romans 5:5 “...the love of God has been poured out (i.e., gushing and overflowing) within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

“When you have more than you need, build a longer table, not a higher fence.”

III. THE RESULT of Perfect Love

1 John 4:17 “By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.”

confidence = Greek: *parrēsia* = the freedom to speak openly, without ambiguity and with boldness and assurance (cf. 1 John (2:28; 3:21; 4:17; 5:14)

2 Corinthians 5:14 “For the love of Christ controls (i.e., compels, motivates, stirs) us...”

Result #1 - Perfect and confident love allows us to draw near to God.

1 John 4:17 “...so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment...”

1 John 2:28 “Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.”

1 John 3:21 “Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God...”

1 John 5:14 “This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”

Hebrew 4:16 “Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need (cf. Ephesians 3:12)

Result #2 - Perfect and confident love compels us to present the truth to men.

1 John 4:17 “By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.”

1 John 4:14 “We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.”

Acts 4:13 “Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.”

Are the people around us amazed at our confidence in Christ?

2 Corinthians 3:12 “Therefore having such a hope (i.e., another form of confidence), we use great boldness in our speech...”

1 John 4:17 “...because as He is, so also are we in this world.”

- Jesus Christ is the way...therefore we show the way
- Jesus Christ is the truth...therefore we proclaim the truth
- Jesus Christ is the life...therefore we live the life
- Jesus Christ is the light...therefore we are the light-bearers

Result #3 - Perfect and confident love drives out fear in our lives.

1 John 4:18 “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.” fear = Greek: *phobeo* = put to flight/run.

a. Perfect and confident love keeps us from running from God.

1 John 4:18 “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears (i.e., who runs away from God) is not perfected in love.”

Romans 8:1-2 “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.”

When we succumb to fear (and run from God), we struggle with the evidence God truly loves us and our love for Him and others is a long way from being perfected and filled with confidence.

b. Perfect and confident love keeps us from running from men.

Psalm 56:4 “In God, whose word I praise, in God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me?”

Psalm 118:6 “The Lord is for me; I will not fear; what can man do to me?”

IV. THE MOTIVATION for Perfect Love

1 John 4:19 “We love, because He first loved us.” • Our perfect love is because of His perfect love.

John 15:12 “Love one another as I have loved you.”

Mark 12:28-31 One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, “What commandment is the foremost of all?” Jesus answered, “The foremost is, ‘Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

V. THE EVIDENCE of Perfect Love

1 John 4:20 If someone says, “I love God,” and hates (i.e., who is repulsed by or refuses to draw near to) his brother, he is a liar...” (cf. 1 John 1:10; 2:4; 2:22; 4:20; 5:10)

“It is no chore for me to love the whole world. My only real problem is my neighbor next door.”

1 John 4:20 “...for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen...”

God loves the people we hate!

Matthew 5:43-48 - “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

VI. THE COMMAND regarding Perfect Love

1 John 4:21 “And this commandment we have from Him that the one who loves God should love his brother also.”

“Practice does not make perfect. Perfect practice makes perfect.” (Vince Lombardi)

CONCLUSION: Lamentations 3:40 “Let us examine and probe our ways . . .”

probe = Hebrew: *chaqar* =examine, search out, investigate, ponder....taste.

2 Corinthians 2:14 “...thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.”

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS:

1. Besides God and the Bible, what do you think is the closest thing to perfection?
2. What is the source of perfect love in your life?
3. What is the impact of perfect love in your life?
4. What motivates you to love the unlovely?
5. In what ways can you extend the love of God to those you dislike or with whom you disagree?
6. What did you get most out of this message?