

Fulfilling Your Longing For Belonging ***1 John 4:7-21***

Tomorrow is Valentine's Day...

How did this tradition begin?

This is the day when lovers express their love to one another.

Statically, over 1 BILLION Valentine cards are given on this day.

Valentine's Day ranks second, only to Christmas for the number of cards sent.

Every human has a longing for belonging...

ONE THING

The WORLD'S love is a FAKING TAKING love, but GOD'S love is a LIVING GIVING love.

1. SEE yourself in God's LIGHT.

1 John 4:7–11 (ESV) — Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his

Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

FIRST... “God IS love”

God, in His nature IS love...

SECOND... The word, “BELOVED”

Used twice here in reference to the believers...

➤ Key Word - BELOVED

ἀγαπητός^a, ἢ, ὄν: (derivative of ἀγαπάω^a ‘to love,’ 25.43) pertaining to one who or that which is loved—‘object of one’s affection, one who is loved, beloved, dear.

Beloved means...

“The object of someone’s affection”

Since “God is love” and believers are called “beloved” the conclusion is quite clear, ...

Believers are the object of God’s love!

But this speaks to something MUCH DEEPER...

Humans are hard-wired for love

➔ FREDERICK'S EXPERIMENT

- Back in the thirteenth century, the German king, Frederick II, conducted a diabolical experiment intended to discover what language children would naturally grow up to speak if never spoken to.*

- **He thought it would be German. Some things are just obvious, right?**
- **So King Frederick took babies from their mothers at birth and placed them in the care of nurses who were forbidden to speak in their hearing.**
- **But a second rule was imposed, as well: the nurses were not allowed to touch the infants.**
- **To his great dismay, Frederick's experiment was cut short, but not before something tragically significant regarding human nature was revealed.**
- **As you may have guessed, the babies grew up to speak no language at all because they died.**
- **In the year 1248, an Italian historian named Salimbene di Adam recorded, with an air of scientific observation, "They could not live without petting."**
- **The babies literally died for want of touch. Astounding!**
- **Modern medicine calls this phenomenon, "failure to thrive."**
- **For some reason, we humans flourish under the influence of love and we gradually die without it.**

→ **BOOK – 'LOVE AND SURVIVAL'**

- **Consider the research of Dr. Dean Ornish. In his national best seller, Love and Survival, Ornish presents study after study demonstrating that love is a chief influence for mental, emotional, and even physical health.**

"Anything that promotes feelings of love and intimacy is healing; anything that promotes isolation, separation, loneliness, loss, hostility, anger, cynicism, depression, alienation, and related feelings often leads to suffering, disease, and premature death from all causes"

— Love & Survival, p29

- **Modern science is now proving through controlled studies that human beings are literally engineered for love. We are made for love, as if our DNA contains the message, "You must love and be loved in order to survive."**
- **But this presents Dr. Ornish, and the mainstream of modern science, with a serious problem. He explains: episode 11 www.digma.com**
- **For some reason, we humans flourish under the influence of love and we gradually die without it.**

"The scientific evidence . . . leaves little doubt that love and intimacy are powerful determinants of our health and survival. Why they have such an impact remains somewhat a mystery"

— Love & Survival, p22

- **So to solve the mystery, Dr. Ornish posed a question to a wide range of scientists.**
- **The basic gist of the question was this: Why are human beings so vitally dependent on love?**
- **The bottom line answer was along the lines of, Well, it is strange, isn't it? We don't know why.**

"Mystery remains. No one can fully explain . . . why love and intimacy matter so much"

— Love & Survival, p171

- **Scientists are baffled by the existence of love and the fact that we need it. But why are they baffled?**
- **Well, quite simply, because love creates a break, actually a contradiction, in the train of logic in the evolutionary worldview.**

- **The problem for many scientists is that they are trying to understand the human need for love within a paradigm of reality that does not allow for the existence of love!**
- **Because Darwinian evolution begins with a survival-of-the-fittest premise, it dictates that self-preservation must be the highest law and the main factor in our survival.**
- **Love, by contrast, is essentially self-giving rather than self-preserving, and, therefore, makes no sense in the evolutionary context.**
- **If materialistic evolution is the truth of human origins, then human beings are merely biological animals and there is no such thing as love.**
- **And yet, here we are, creatures who thrive on love and are utterly dependent on it.**

Reality – A tenacious desire to love and be loved pervades every human heart.

- **We try to explain it with no reference point beyond ourselves, and we seek its satisfaction in countless material pursuits, but it remains, larger than anything this world can offer, more persistent than our most determined resistance, and insistently fixed on something MORE than ourselves.**

We are all wired for love... Woven within our DNA is the longing to be loved unconditionally and to love.

Your need for love was hard wired within you by God! “God is love” and He created you to encounter, experience, and enjoy His unconditional, unfading, never changing love.

When Satan learned that the Lord was going to create a being that would have the ability to enter into intimate relationship with God, he became envious...

1. SEE yourself in God’s LIGHT.

2. FREE yourself in God’s LOVE.

1 John 4:12–16 (ESV) — No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

It is obvious that the KEY WORD in this passage is “ABIDE”...

➤ **Key Word - ABIDE**

To abide means...

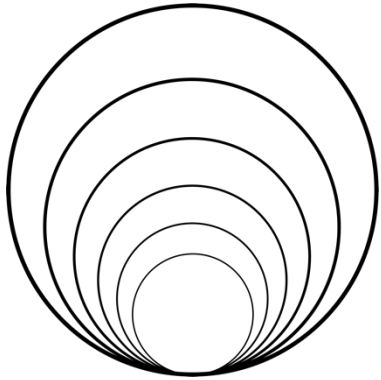
“To remain in vital connection”

As we noted earlier, we are hard-wired for love...

This love is not simply emotional, but deeply spiritual...

However, in the FALL OF HUMANITY, in Genesis 3, we lost that vital connection...

→ Pic Belonging Barrel – OUTLINE



→ ***Pic Belonging Barrel – Acceptance 1***



“Pick Me!”

→ ***Pic Belonging Barrel – Appreciation 1***



“Praise Me!”

→ ***Pic Belonging Barrel – Approval 1***



“Pleased with Me!”

→ ***Pic Belonging Barrel – Adoration 1***



“Proud of Me”

→ ***Pic Belonging Barrel – Affection 1***



“Passionately Pursuing Me!”

→ **Pic Our Longings – Others**



So, we spend our lives attempting to fill our “Love Longing” from others...

→ **Pic Our Longings – FEAR**



Reality – A tenacious desire to love and be loved pervades every human heart.

When we give our life to Jesus, we receive the LOVE we have been longing for!

1 John 4:14–16 (ESV) — And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

→ **Pic Belonging Barrel – God Filled**



When we give our lives to Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in us...

1 John 4:13 (ESV) — By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

However, sadly, most believers think this is the end...

The “know” they are loved by God, but spend most of their lives still living in fear and still wanting to have their longings filled by others...

They are still dwelling in SELFISH love...

→ **Pic Our Longings – God**



So, what do we do now?

1. **SEE** yourself in God's **LIGHT**.

2. **FREE** yourself in God's **LOVE**.

3. **BE** yourself through God's **LIBERATION**.

1 John 4:17–21 (ESV) — By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for 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. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he 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: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

I want you to see the NEXT KEY to "Fulfilling Your Longing for Belonging"

Our **FIRST KEY WORD** was "BELOVED"

- We are the object of God's Love

The **SECOND KEY WORD** was "ABIDE"

- We must remain in vital connection with God through the Spirit

The **THIRD KEY WORD** is "PERFECTED"

➤ **Key Word - PERFECTED**

1 John 4:17–19 (ESV) — By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for 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. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us.

τέλειος^b, α, ον: pertaining to being truly and completely genuine— 'genuine, true.' ἀλλ' ἡ τελεία ἀγάπη ἔξω βάλλει τὸν φόβον 'but genuine love casts out fear' or '... eliminates fear' or 'one who truly loves no longer fears' 1 Jn 4:18.

Perfected here means...

"To be completely genuine"

When a person **ABIDES** in God's **PERFECT** love that person is brought back to their original intention

It's hard for us to actually enter into genuine relationships because of our fears...

→ **Pic Our Longings – FEAR**



One of the fascinating side effects of isolation is not a greater craving for relationship, but a greater fear of relationship...

In our fallen world, where we are alienated from the One we were created to love, our sinful nature's isolation has triggered a fear of intimacy...

We long for connection, but fear the vulnerability those very connections bring

However, when we grasp the reality and experience the intimacy of God's love we become liberated to give love to others...

1 John 4:18 (ESV) — There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

→ *Pic Our Longings – God*



As we ABIDE in God's PERFECT love look what happens...

→ *Pic Our Longings – No Fear*



God's perfect love ELIMINATES FEAR!

But there is also a second, by-product of ABIDING in God's PERFECT love...

1 John 4:21 (ESV) — And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

I know what some of you are thinking... "Oh, OK, I need to love other believers..."

But that is ONLY PARTIAL LOVE! God's love IN YOU wants to love ALL PEOPLE THROUGH YOU!

1 John 4:14 (ESV) — And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.

→ *Pic Our Longings – Flowing Out*



We enter relationship, not to get love out of our lacking, but to give and receive love out of our abundance

No one is certain how the celebration of Valentine's Day began, but the following is the best we know.

Valentine and the Emperor's edict

- *Valentine was a priest who lived in Rome in 270 AD.*
- *At that time, Rome had spread its empire across much of the known world.*
- *As a result, it was very difficult to keep a clear handle on all the empire.*
- *When Claudius II became emperor, he realized his need for dedicated soldiers.*
- *Claudius II felt that married men were more emotionally attached to their families, and thus, would not make good soldiers.*
- *He believed that marriage made the men weak.*
- *So Claudius II issued an edict forbidding marriage to assure quality soldiers.*
- *The ban on marriage was a great shock for the Romans, but none dared to voice their protests.*
- *Bishop Valentine realized the injustice of the decree.*
- *He saw the trauma of young lovers who gave up all hopes of being united in marriage.*

- *So Valentine countered the Emperor's edict by secretly joining couples in marriage.*
- *Valentine soon became known as the "friend of lovers".*
- *Claudius II soon found out about Valentine's secret marriages and ordered him arrested.*

Valentine and the jailor's daughter

- *God had healed many people through Bishop Valentine*
- *While awaiting his sentence in prison, Valentine was approached by his jailor, ASTERIUS.*
- *Asterius had a blind daughter and requested Valentine to restore her sight.*
- *Bishop Valentine did pray for her and God miraculously restored her sight.*

Valentine sentenced to death

- *When Claudius II met Valentine, he was said to have been impressed by the dignity and conviction of him.*
- *Valentine refused to agree with the emperor regarding the ban on marriage.*
- *The emperor tried to convert Valentine to the Roman gods, but Valentine flatly refused.*
- *In fact, Valentine attempted to convert Claudius to Christ.*
- *This angered Claudius who gave the order of execution of bishop Valentine.*

Valentine's note

- *A deep friendship had been formed between Valentine and the jailor's daughter.*
- *She was deeply grieved to hear that bishop Valentine was to be executed.*
- *It is said that just before his execution, Valentine asked for a pen and paper from his jailor.*

- ***Valentine wrote a farewell message to the jailor's daughter and signed it, "From Your Valentine".***
- ***Bishop Valentine was executed on February 14, 270 AD.***

Valentine's Day begins

- ***In 496 AD, Pope Gelasius turned the Roman pagan holiday, LUPERCALIA, into a Christian feast day.***
- ***The pagan holiday, Lupercalia, was observed annually on February 15.***
- ***Pope Gelasius proclaimed February 14 to be celebrated in honor of St. Valentine.***

Fulfilling Your Longing for Belonging **1 John 4:7-21**

The _____ love is a _____ love, but
_____ love is a _____ love.

1. _____ yourself in God's _____.

➤ Key Word - _____

2. _____ yourself in God's _____.

➤ Key Word - _____

3. _____ yourself through God's _____.

➤ Key Word - _____

Our Longing for Belonging

