

God is Love – Part 2

Anyone who does not love does not know God, because **God is love**. (1 John 4:8)

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

Introduction

- “Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” (1 Cor. 13:4–7)

Love Is at the Heart of God’s Character

- “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.” (1 Jn. 4:8–9).
- Those words are a clear echo of a familiar passage, John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”
- Divine love in no way minimizes or nullifies God’s other attributes—His omniscience, His omnipotence, His omnipresence, His immutability, His lordship, His righteousness, His wrath against sin, or any of His glorious perfections.
- Augustine suggested that this love must have existed between the Persons of the Trinity, with the Father loving the Son, and so on.
- So according to Augustine, the very fact that God is love corroborates the doctrine of the Trinity.

Everyone Who Loves Is Born of God and Knows God

- “Love is from God” (1 Jn. 4:7).
- Love is therefore the best evidence that a person truly knows God: “whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God” (vv. 7–8).
- Only true Christians are capable of genuine love.
- God is the sole source of love.
- It is that pure, holy, godly love which can be known only by those who are born of Him.
- It is the same unfathomable love that moved God to send “God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.” (1 Jn. 4:9).
- “We love, because He first loved us” (1 Jn. 4:19).
- Love for God and love for fellow believers is an inevitable result of the new birth, by which we “become partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4).
- Just as it is God’s nature to love, love is characteristic of His true children. “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” (Rom. 5:5)
- Godly love, therefore, is one of the most important tests of the reality of one’s faith.

The One Who Does Not Love Does Not Know God

- John is writing to help struggling believers gain assurance.
- He says so in 1 John 5:13: "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life."
- But along the way he has a secondary purpose, and that is to destroy the false assurance of those who may profess faith in Christ without really knowing Him.
- Therefore, he writes such things as, "If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth." (1:6).
- And, "Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (2:4).
- And, "Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness." (v. 9).
- Here he makes godly love a kind of litmus test for the true Christian: "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love." (4:8)
- They are outside the life of God; and I repeat, there is no hope for such people unless they repent and turn to Him.
- Genuine faith will inevitably be shown by love.
- After all, real faith works through love (Gal. 5:6)
- This sort of God-given love is not easily counterfeited.
- Look at all that is involved: love for God Himself (1 Cor. 16:22); love for the brethren (1 Jn. 3:14); love of truth and righteousness (Rom. 6:17–18); love for the Word of God (Psa. 1:2); and even love for one's enemies! (Matt. 5:44).
- Such love is contrary to human nature.
- "God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him." (1 John 4:16) again making the godly kind of love the mark of genuine faith.

The Cross Is the Consummate Proof of Divine Love

- The love of God is not merely a subjective thing-in-itself.
- God has "manifested" His love, or displayed it in a particular act that can be examined objectively.
- "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world." (1 Jn. 4:1).
- "Anyone who does not love does not know God." (1 John 4:8)
- "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." (1 Jn. 4:10).
- This is the very heart of the gospel.
- The "good news" is not that God is willing to overlook sin and forgive sinners.
- The **real good news** is that God Himself, through the sacrifice of His Son, paid the price of sin.
- As Paul wrote, "Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:6–8)
- Because God is righteous, He must punish sin; He cannot simply absolve guilt and leave justice unsatisfied.
- But the death of Christ totally satisfied God's justice, His righteousness, and His holy hatred of sin.
- The cross of Christ also gives the most complete and accurate perspective on the balance between God's love and His wrath.
- "God is love"—God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him (Rom. 5:8; 1 Jn. 4:9).
- "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31).

Ten Simple, Practical Ways Of Knowing Whether We Abide In Love

- Is there a loss of the sense that God is against me? (Rom. 5:1; 8:31).
- Is there a loss of craven fear of God, and a corresponding increase in godly fear? (cf. 1 Jn. 4:18; Heb. 12:28).
- Do I sense the love of God for me? (1 Jn. 4:16).
- Do I know that my sins are forgiven? (Rom. 4:7-8).
- Do I have a sense of gratitude to God? (Col. 2:6-7).
- Do I have an increasing hatred for sin? (Rom. 7:15-16).
- Do I desire to please God and live a holy life? (Jn. 14:21; 1 Jn. 2:5-6).
- Is there a desire to know God better and draw near to Him? (Phil. 3:10).
- Is there a conscious regret that my love for Him is less than what it ought to be? (Phil. 1:9-10).
- Is there a sense of delight in hearing about God and the things of God? (Ps. 1:1-2).