

### **1 John 4: 12- 21**

12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

17 Herein is our love made perfect, 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 casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

19 We love him, because he first loved us.

20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

### **The nature of a love relationship with God.**

#### **Seeing God through the evidence of love.**

### **1 John 4:12**

12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

No one has actually seen God at any time.

- In speaking of God the Father, Paul wrote in **1 Timothy 1:17**: 17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen. Jesus declared of God the Father, God is Spirit, [John 4:24](#)

[God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.](#) meaning that God the Father has no tangible body which may be seen.

- Knowing God the Father is invisible should make us more humble in our relationship with Him. God the Father is not completely knowable by us; we can't completely figure out God, or know all His secrets. He is far beyond us.
- Of course, no one has seen God the Holy Spirit at any time either, though He has represented Himself in various ways. And just as certainly, God the Son, Jesus Christ, has been seen — John himself testified to this in 1 John 1:1-3. But of God the Father, it can truly be said, no one has seen God at any time.

### **If we love one another, God abides in us**

- What do people think of when they describe the greatest evidence of God's presence or work?
  - Some people think the greatest evidence of God's presence or work is power. Some people think the greatest evidence of God's presence or work is popularity. Some people think the greatest evidence of God's presence or work is passionate feelings. But the greatest evidence of God's presence and work is love. Where God is present and working, there will be love.
  - Sometimes Jesus seemed weak and lacking in power, but He was always full of love. Sometimes Jesus wasn't popular at all, but He was always full of love. Sometimes Jesus didn't inspire passionate feelings in people at all, but He was always full of love. Love was the constant, greatest evidence of the presence and work of God in Jesus Christ.

This is the greatest evidence of God's presence and work among us — love. Since no one has seen God at any time, this provides evidence for the presence of God.

### **His love is perfected in us**

Perfected in the Greek is "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.

- John comes back to the familiar idea: if we really walk in God's love towards us, it will be evident in our love for one another.
- The mature Christian will be marked by love. We need to remember, the true measure of maturity is not the image of power, or popularity, or passionate feelings — but the abiding presence of God's love in our lives, given out to others.

## **Assurance of the work of the Triune God in us.**

### **1 John 4:13-15**

13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us,

- We can know by experience that we live in God, if His love has been perfected in us. And we know that His love has been perfected in us **if we love one another**.
- Plainly as born again believers we can say, **“We know.”** We don't have to merely “hope” we are saved, and “hope” we will make it to heaven, thus having no assurance of salvation before we pass from this world to the next. We can know, and we can know now, on this side of eternity.

## **We abide in Him, and He in us**

Our abiding in Jesus is not a one-sided affair, with us struggling to abide in Him, and Jesus trying to escape us. Just as true as it is that we should abide in Him, it is true that He does abide in us.

Jesus said in John 15:4, Abide in Me, and I in you. And in John 15:7, He said, If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you. One of the ways Jesus abides in us — lives in us — is through His word.

## **He has given us of His Spirit**

John brings up the work of the Holy Spirit in us at this point for two important reasons.

First, it is the Spirit of God in us that is the abiding presence of Jesus — the presence of His Spirit is how He abides in us.

Secondly, it is the testimony of the Holy Spirit within us that makes it possible for us to know that we abide in Him. As Paul puts it in Roman 8:16: The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. The Holy Spirit gives us this assurance.

**We have seen and testify:** The “**we**” who give testimony in this verse are those who saw Jesus originally, the eyewitnesses to His presence. They *knew* **the Father sent the Son as Savior of the world.**

**We have seen and testify:** Speaking as one who has the Spirit of God (**He has given us of His Spirit**), John declares three essential truths about who God is and how He saves us.

- **That the Father has sent the Son.**
- That He (Jesus) was sent **as Savior of the world.**
- Knowing and understanding Jesus is the foundation for abiding in Him (**Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God**).

**Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God:** It isn’t enough to *know* the facts about who Jesus is; we must *confess* the truth. The idea behind the word *confess* is “to be in agreement with.” We must agree with God about who Jesus is, and we find out what God says about Jesus through the Word of God. You may *know* something without being in *agreement* with it; God demands our true *agreement*.

- 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 his life if he does not **confess that Jesus is the Son of God**. It isn’t a matter of deciding between love or truth; we must have both.

**The Christian’s response to God and His love.**

1 John 4:16

16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

This is the Christian's proper response to who God is, and how He loves us. We are called to take the love and grace God gives, to know it by experience and to believe it. This is what fellowship with God is all about.

People respond to the love of God differently.

- Some respond with a sense of self-superiority ("I'm so great, even God loves me!").
- Some respond with doubt ("Can God really love even me?").
- Some respond with wickedness ("God loves me, so I can do what I want").
- God wants us to respond by knowing (by experience) and believing the love God has for us.

The Christian who has this kind of relationship with God will be virtually "immersed" in God's love; it becomes his environment, his place of abiding.

### **The perfecting of love, both now and in eternity.**

#### **1 John 4 17- 18**

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

19 We love him, because he first loved us.

What is perfect love?: For the phrase "made perfect", John doesn't just use the Greek word *teleioo* (which has the idea of "maturity" and "completeness"); he writes *teleioo teleioo* — speaking of love that is "perfectly perfected" or "completely complete."

The reason for our love to Jesus.

#### **1 John 4:19**

19 We love him, because he first loved us.

John begins by declaring the heart of every true follower of Jesus Christ. Simply and boldly put, we love Him.

**He first loved us:** This verse not only declares our love for Jesus, it also tells us when He loved us. Some people imagine that Jesus loved us because He knew we would love Him and come to faith in Him. But He loved us before that, and even before the worlds were created, when our only existence was in the mind and heart of God, Jesus loved us.

We love Him because He first loved us: This verse tells us where our love for Jesus comes from. It comes from Him. Our love for God is always in response to His love for us; He initiates, and we respond.

## **The commandment to love.**

### **1 John 4: 20-21**

20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

Being born of God and abiding with Him give us the ability to love; but it is a choice of our will to draw upon that resource and give it out to others. Therefore we are given a command to love.

If we are born of Him and are abiding in Him then the resources for love are there. It is up to us to respond to His command with our will and whole being.

One might say, "I want to love God more; I want to grow in my love for Him. But how can I love a God who is invisible?" God would say to us, "Learn to love Me, Whom you cannot see, by loving My children, whom you can see."