

# Loving One Another

## 1 John 4:7-21

Online Sermon: [http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page\\_id=3567](http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567)

Remember when you confessed your sins and invited Jesus Christ into your heart to rule your life? On that day you experienced a radical transformation in which you were born again not of flesh and blood but of the Spirit of God! One of the most important marks and expectations of your transformation is the new found ability to experience and show agape love. While “love” as a religious term is often perceived as being “essentially the love of man for God – that is to say, the insatiable craving of the limited, conditional, and temporal beings for the Infinite, the Absolute, the Eternal,”<sup>1</sup> in 1 John 4:7-12 the standard of love we as Christians are to strive towards is agape or “supernatural love”<sup>2</sup> which only comes from God!<sup>3</sup> Agape love is radically different than romantic, familial or friendship love because it is grounded in God’s nature who loved us so much that even though we would reject Him and become His enemies, even before we were born<sup>4</sup> He chose to send His Son Jesus to die and pay the price for our sins!<sup>5</sup> This is the kind of love that always forgives upon confession and keeps no records of wrongs! This is the kind of love that chooses to see the image of God in one’s brothers and sisters in Christ rather than their deficiencies and in turn love them with the same love one has received from one’s Creator!<sup>6</sup> The following sermon is going to review the reasons why God commanded us to love and one another, how love is a litmus of one’s salvation and how to perfect God’s love within our lives.

### Love one Another (7-12)

When asked what the greatest commandment in the Law is, Jesus answered to love God and to love one another (Matthew 22:34-40).<sup>7</sup> In today’s passage John outlines three reasons why we are to love one another. First, we are to love one another because love is part of God’s nature (verse 7). God is spirit (John 4:24), light (1 John 1:5), faithful and just (1 John 1:9) and

---

<sup>1</sup> Glenn W. Barker, “1 John,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelien, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 343.

<sup>2</sup> John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> Thomas F. Johnson, *1, 2, and 3 John*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 104.

<sup>4</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, “Love’s Logic,” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 17 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1871), 492.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas F. Johnson, *1, 2, and 3 John*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 105.

<sup>6</sup> Douglas J. Moo, “The Letters and Revelation,” in *NIV Zondervan Study Bible: Built on the Truth of Scripture and Centered on the Gospel Message*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 2568.

<sup>7</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *The Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 122.

good;<sup>8</sup> but above all God is love itself.<sup>9</sup> From all eternity God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit by nature are perfect love.<sup>10</sup> When a



person is born of God<sup>11</sup> their knowledge, faith and conviction of God's love is not only established but through the regular feeding of His word<sup>12</sup> and subsequent faithful obedience their love in time will grow and thrive.<sup>13</sup> Since God's love is poured into the hearts of believers (Romans 5:5),<sup>14</sup> John warned that if you are not a loving person<sup>15</sup> both towards God and one another then this is evidence that you are not born again and do not know God.<sup>16</sup> Since "love to God is a mark which is always set upon Christ's sheep, and never set upon any others,"<sup>17</sup>

it is not possible for an unbeliever to love others with God's love.<sup>18</sup> Those who are born again however not only have the capacity but the command to share the love they have received from God with one another!<sup>19</sup>

The second reason that we are to love one another is because of God's gift of salvation through His Son Jesus Christ. He who was in the beginning and the Word (John 1:1), eternally begotten by the Father,<sup>20</sup> chose to atone for humanity's sins and in doing so paved our way to be reconciled with a holy God (2 Corinthians 5:20-21).<sup>21</sup> Reconciliation is not only granted the moment a person believes in Jesus and makes Him the Lord of their life (Romans 10:9),<sup>22</sup> but an

---

<sup>8</sup> Douglas J. Moo, ["The Letters and Revelation."](#) in *NIV Zondervan Study Bible: Built on the Truth of Scripture and Centered on the Gospel Message*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 2567.

<sup>9</sup> C. Haas, Marinus de Jonge, and J. L. Swellengrebel, [A Handbook on the Letters of John](#), UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 121.

<sup>10</sup> John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> James Montgomery Boice, [The Epistles of John: An Expositional Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 114.

<sup>12</sup> John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

<sup>13</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, ["Love's Logic,"](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 17 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1871), 482.

<sup>14</sup> Glenn W. Barker, ["1 John,"](#) in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelien, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 343.

<sup>15</sup> John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

<sup>16</sup> John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

<sup>17</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, ["Love's Logic,"](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 17 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1871), 482.

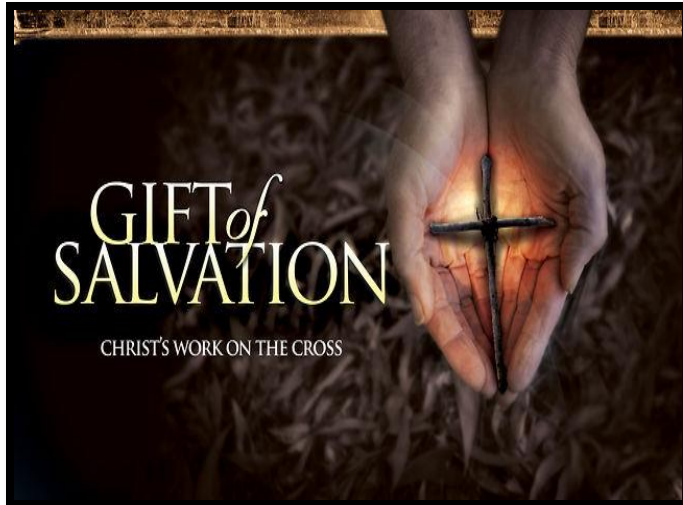
<sup>18</sup> John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

<sup>19</sup> John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

<sup>20</sup> John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

<sup>21</sup> Thomas F. Johnson, [1, 2, and 3 John](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 104.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas F. Johnson, [1, 2, and 3 John](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 103.



intimate fellowship the Father, Son and Spirit is established (John 3:16-17).<sup>23</sup> This indescribable gift (2 Corinthians 9:15)<sup>24</sup> however comes with the obligation to love one another as Christ first loved us. Those who share in the fellowship of the Trinity<sup>25</sup> do not see the command to love their brothers and sisters in Christ as a burden (1 John 5:3-5), but something owed as a debt (Romans 13:8).<sup>26</sup> It truly is an honor to the best of one's abilities to share the love one has received from God with other

believers! Even though it is tempting to "demonize" believers who have wronged us, this will not lead to our vindication but merely suggest the possibility that we lack appreciation that God saved a nobody like me who deserved hell<sup>27</sup> and that we ourselves may not have been "ravished by the beauty of the Son"<sup>28</sup> and therefore remain lost in our sins.<sup>29</sup>

The third reason we are to love one another is that God continues to show His love towards us! Agape love is not just "to be seen as that which constitutes God's eternal nature or even that which is revealed definitively in the past history at the cross,"<sup>30</sup> but is to be celebrated as an ongoing, gracious gift from our Creator!<sup>31</sup> God's love is not present one day and gone the next but is profoundly impacting this world today!<sup>32</sup> Is not faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ still the only way to be a child and know God the Father in heaven (John 14:6)? Are not the prayers of those born of God still powerful and effective (James 5:16)?<sup>33</sup> Do not God's own still

---

<sup>23</sup> Glenn W. Barker, "1 John," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelien, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 342.

<sup>24</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *The Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 115.

<sup>25</sup> John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980-1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

<sup>26</sup> Thomas F. Johnson, *1, 2, and 3 John*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 105.

<sup>27</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, "Love's Logic," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 17 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1871), 492.

<sup>28</sup> John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980-1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

<sup>29</sup> Thomas F. Johnson, *1, 2, and 3 John*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 102.

<sup>30</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *The Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 116.

<sup>31</sup> Thomas F. Johnson, *1, 2, and 3 John*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 103.

<sup>32</sup> Thomas F. Johnson, *1, 2, and 3 John*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 111.

<sup>33</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, "Love's Logic," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 17 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1871), 481-482.



“abide under a shadow of love”<sup>34</sup> and is not His very words still active and sharper than any two edged sword (Hebrews 4:12)? Above all when we cry out Abba Father, do we not still receive answers to prayer and comfort from the Father of all compassion (2 Corinthians 1:3-5)? The answer to all these questions is a provocative YES for God has and will always take care of us, His children! Those who have received every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus their Lord (Ephesians 1:3) though they have not seen God<sup>35</sup> by loving each

another they not only experience the presence of God but also leave a profound, unshakeable testimony to this world: hungry sinners can still buy the bread of life without money or cost!<sup>36</sup>

### Love’s Assurance: Living in God and Living in Love (13-16)



Before one can fully understand these three verses one must first understand the historical context which John was trying to address. A group of “super spiritual” elitists,<sup>37</sup> who had severed ties from their fellowship (2:19), were claiming: to have received Spirit-inspired teaching that went beyond what they had originally received,<sup>38</sup> “visions” of God that they alone saw,<sup>39</sup> and the ability to live as they pleased and yet be sinless.<sup>40</sup> These falsehoods led to the Johannine

<sup>34</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, “[Love’s Logic](#),” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 17 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1871), 490–491.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas F. Johnson, [1, 2, and 3 John](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 106.

<sup>36</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, “[Love’s Logic](#),” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 17 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1871), 486.

<sup>37</sup> Thomas F. Johnson, [1, 2, and 3 John](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 109.

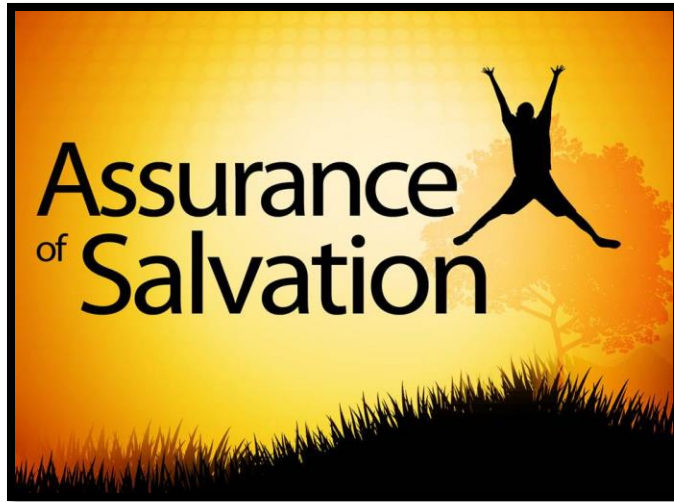
<sup>38</sup> Colin G. Kruse, [The Letters of John](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans Pub.; Apollos, 2000), 27.

<sup>39</sup> Glenn W. Barker, “[1 John](#),” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 343.

<sup>40</sup> Colin G. Kruse, [The Letters of John](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans Pub.; Apollos, 2000), 17.

community questioning the authenticity of their own relationship with God!<sup>41</sup> In response to these false claims elsewhere John stated that their visions were false for no one has ever seen God,<sup>42</sup> their lack of love for other brothers and sisters in Christ was ample proof God's love was not in their hearts<sup>43</sup> and their lack of desire to obey God's commands was proof that they were liars and still walked in darkness rather than light.<sup>44</sup> Verses 13 to 16 were not written to refute the secessionists claims but to answer the question: how does one know if one is saved?

Ever since the master deceiver has been allowed to seek whom he may devour the seeds of doubt have made many a believer question their position before a holy God (John 8:44; 1



Peter 5:8)! Even though no one has ever physically seen God one can see Him through the eyes of faith in the atoning sacrifice of His Son.<sup>45</sup> The way to assurance is through confession that Jesus is the Son of God,<sup>46</sup> the evidence of which is to be found in one's ability to love with the Father's love.<sup>47</sup> "Love to God is a mark which is always set upon Christ's sheep, and never upon any others!"<sup>48</sup> Though speaking in tongues, prophesying, and doing miracles in Jesus' name appears to be evidence of the fruits of the Spirit, without love they are nothing (Matthew

7:22-23)!<sup>49</sup> Evidence one has God's love in one's heart can be externally found in one's ability to obey His commands to love Him and one another (1 John 5:2-5; John 13:35)! The most profound evidence of one's salvation however can be found internally. While everyone is to have confidence that they are eternally loved by God,<sup>50</sup> it is only through the commune of the

---

<sup>41</sup> Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans Pub.; Apollos, 2000), 27.

<sup>42</sup> C. Haas, Marinus de Jonge, and J. L. Swellengrebel, *A Handbook on the Letters of John*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 124.

<sup>43</sup> Douglas J. Moo, "[The Letters and Revelation](#)," in *NIV Zondervan Study Bible: Built on the Truth of Scripture and Centered on the Gospel Message*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 2568.

<sup>44</sup> Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans Pub.; Apollos, 2000), 16.

<sup>45</sup> Glenn W. Barker, "[1 John](#)," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 345.

<sup>46</sup> Thomas F. Johnson, *1, 2, and 3 John*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 111.

<sup>47</sup> John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

<sup>48</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, "[Love's Logic](#)," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 17 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1871), 482.

<sup>49</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *The Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 118.

<sup>50</sup> Thomas F. Johnson, *1, 2, and 3 John*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 111.

Holy Spirit with our spirit (1 Corinthians 2:11-16) that we are ultimately and irrevocably reassured that we are His children.<sup>51</sup>

## Love's Perfection (17-21)

John finishes this passage by giving two areas that the love of God is to be perfected in our lives. First, "love must co-operate with faith and cast out fear, so that the soul may have boldness before God."<sup>52</sup> Love and fear cannot coexist in a believers heart<sup>53</sup> for those who taste



the soul changing, deep penetrating love of the Father will no longer fear judgment because through His Son they have assurance of their destination (Romans 8:15).<sup>54</sup> The fear that John is talking about in this passage is not to be confused with reverence of God<sup>55</sup> which is the foundation of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10), but the fear that upon Christ's return one will be punished and condemned (John 3:18; Romans 8:1).<sup>56</sup> Since we live in Christ and He in us<sup>57</sup> the Spirit is our seal of acceptance before a holy God. Being justified by faith

(Ephesians 2:8)<sup>58</sup> we are to confidently approach the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16) with the assurance that though our hearts be vile and sinful through the atoning sacrifice of Christ they will be seen as a sweet fragrance before our Creator! For John evidence that perfect love has been attained is found in the absence of fear!

In conclusion lets finish with John's final point: our love for God is to be perfected in our love for one another! While it is in our "human" nature to merely love those who love us,

<sup>51</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *The Epistles of John: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 117.

<sup>52</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, "Love's Logic," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 17 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1871), 483.

<sup>53</sup> Glenn W. Barker, "1 John," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelien, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 346.

<sup>54</sup> Douglas J. Moo, "The Letters and Revelation," in *NIV Zondervan Study Bible: Built on the Truth of Scripture and Centered on the Gospel Message*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 2568.

<sup>55</sup> Glenn W. Barker, "1 John," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelien, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 346.

<sup>56</sup> Thomas F. Johnson, *1, 2, and 3 John*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 113.

<sup>57</sup> Thomas F. Johnson, *1, 2, and 3 John*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 112.

<sup>58</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, "Love's Logic," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 17 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1871), 483.

the mark of a true believer is their ability to unconditionally love one another. To those believers who feel justified in their “demonizing” another or having an attitude of indifference towards them John questions their salvation!<sup>59</sup> “Love for God and neighbor are inseparable”<sup>60</sup> for if one cannot love one who can be seen and visually demonstrated<sup>61</sup> then how could one ever love God who is unseen?<sup>62</sup> “A person cannot practice *agapē*-love unless he can first practice *philia*-love for without the love of men, the love of God is impossible.”<sup>63</sup> For John hatred or indifference towards another is evidence that God’s unconditional love has not entered into one’s own heart and therefore one is not a Christian.<sup>64</sup> This passage is not saying that disagreements with others means one is not saved but merely that choosing to “demonize” another is a warning that God’s love may have never entered one’s own heart. So, let us pray that God will teach us how to rightly love Him and each other!

---

<sup>59</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, “[Love’s Logic](#),” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 17 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1871), 483.

<sup>60</sup> Glenn W. Barker, “[1 John](#),” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 346.

<sup>61</sup> Glenn W. Barker, “[1 John](#),” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 346.

<sup>62</sup> James Montgomery Boice, [The Epistles of John: An Expositional Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 120.

<sup>63</sup> James Montgomery Boice, [The Epistles of John: An Expositional Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 121.

<sup>64</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, “[Love’s Logic](#),” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 17 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1871), 483.