

1 John 4:19 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

[1 John 4:1](#)
[1 John 4:2](#)
[1 John 4:3](#)
[1 John 4:4](#)
[1 John 4:5](#)
[1 John 4:6](#)
[1 John 4:7](#)
[1 John 4:8](#)
[1 John 4:9](#)
[1 John 4:10](#)
[1 John 4:11](#)
[1 John 4:12](#)
[1 John 4:13](#)
[1 John 4:14](#)
[1 John 4:15](#)
[1 John 4:16](#)
[1 John 4:17](#)
[1 John 4:18](#)
[1 John 4:19](#)
[1 John 4:20](#)
[1 John 4:21](#)

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND HIS CHILDREN
Click chart to enlarge
Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
Another Overview Chart - [1 John](#) - Charles Swindoll

BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP		BEHAVIOR OF FELLOWSHIP	
Conditions of Fellowship	Cautions of Fellowship	Fellowship Characteristics	Fellowship Consequences
Meaning of Fellowship 1 Jn 1:1-2:27		Manifestations of Fellowship 1 Jn 2:28-5:21	
Abiding in God's Light		Abiding in God's Love	
Written in Ephesus			
circa 90 AD			

From Talk Thru the Bible

1 John 4:19 We love, because He first loved us([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek - hemeis agapomen (1PPAI) hoti autos protos egapesen (3SAAI) hemas .

Amplified - We love Him, because He first loved us.

Wuest - As for us, let us be constantly loving, because He Himself first loved us.

NLT - We love each other because he loved us first.

- 1Jn 4:10 Lu 7:47 John 3:16 15:16 2Co 5:14,15 Ga 5:22 Eph 2:3-5 Tit 3:3-5
- [1 John 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

WHY DO WE LOVE? HOW IS IT EVEN POSSIBLE?

We - Refers to **we** believers as in 1Jn 4:17.

We Love - KJV has "We love *Him*" but *Him* is not present in the best Greek manuscripts.

David Smith - The thought is that the amazing love of God in Christ is the inspiration of all the love that stirs in our hearts. It awakens within us an answering love—a grateful love for Him manifesting itself in love for our brethren (cf. 1Jn 4:11-note). ([1 John 4 Commentary](#))

Steven Cole - Lest we become proud in thinking that we can love others on our own, John goes on to show (1Jn 4:19) that God is the source of all love. Love that gives us **confidence in the day of judgment** (1Jn 4:17-note) comes from God. Spurgeon has five different sermons on verse 19 alone (**Ed**: see resources above where there are actually 6 messages!), so I must be very incomplete here! The original almost certainly reads, "We love, because He first loved us." (The KJV, "We love *Him*," is based on later manuscripts that copyists altered.) John's point in the context is that if we love God or others to any extent with genuine biblical love, we need to remember that such love did not originate with us. It came from God, who loved us while we were yet sinners. It is evidence that we have experienced His love in a saving way. **One practical application of 1Jn 4:19 is, if you are struggling to love someone, especially someone who has wronged you, meditate on God's love as it was shown to you at the cross.** You did not deserve it in any way. On the contrary, you deserved His wrath and judgment. But in spite of all of your sins, Jesus willingly suffered the penalty that you should have received. Now He wants you to be the channel for His love to other sinners. ([1 John 4:17-21 Facing the Judgment with Confidence](#))

William Barclay - Human love is a response to divine love. We love because God loved us. It is the sight of His love which awakens in us the desire to love Him as He first loved us and to love our fellow-men as He loves them. ([1 John 4 Commentary](#))

Vincent on **we love** - The statement is general, relating to the entire operation of the principle of love. All human love is preceded and generated by the love of God.

Stott - John makes a general affirmation about God's people. Our great characteristic, he says, is not that we fear, but that we love. ([The Letters of John - Tyndale New Testament Commentary](#))

We love... He... loved ([25](#))(**agapao**) describes an active, dynamic love (not an emotional feeling) and here is in the **present tense** (first use of **agapao** in this verse) speaks of our lifestyle. Agape love is divine love and implies, indeed must have, a supernatural source, the indwelling Spirit (Gal 5:22-23-note). So if a man loves with this quality of love, it is clear indication he has the Spirit of Christ.

Because is a **term of explanation**, - in explaining that believers love (rather than fear) is that God first loved us. As Stott says "God's love was primary; all true love is a response to his initiative."

He first loved us - As John has already explained how He loved us writing "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that **He loved us** and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 1Jn 4:10-note

God's love is: spontaneous in its **source**; universal in **scope**; long-suffering in **intensity**; self-sacrificing in **character**, aggressive in **action**; and constant in **duration**. (W Griffith-Thomas)

Paul describes how God **first loved us** - For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. 4But when the kindness of God our Savior and [His] love for mankind appeared, 5He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:3-5-note)

Spurgeon - The reason for our love is found in free grace. God first loved us, and now we must love him; we cannot help it. It sometimes seems too much for a poor sinner to talk about loving God. If an emmet or a snail were to say that it loved a queen, you would think it strange, that it should look so high for an object of affection; but there is no distance between an insect and a man compared with the distance between man and God. Yet love doth fling a flying bridge from our manhood up to his Godhead. "We love him, because he first loved us." If he could come down to us, we can go up to him. If his love could come down to such unworthy creatures as we are, then our poor love can find wings with which to mount up to him.

William MacDonald - The only reason we love at all is because He first loved us. The Ten Commandments require that a man

should love his God and neighbor, but the law could not produce this love. How then could God obtain this love which His righteousness required? He solved the problem by sending His Son to die for us. Such wonderful love draws out our hearts to Him in return. We say, "You have bled and died for me; from now on I will live for You."

Wiersbe - A large quantity of radioactive material was stolen from a hospital. When the hospital administrator notified the police, he said: "Please warn the thief that he is carrying death with him, and that the radioactive material cannot be successfully hidden. As long as he has it in his possession, it is affecting him disastrously!" A person who claims he knows God and is in union with Him must be personally affected by this relationship. A Christian ought to become what God is, and "God is love." To argue otherwise is to prove that one does not really know God! ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

Well-Loved - A friend described his grandmother as one of the greatest influences in his life. Throughout his adult years, he has kept her portrait next to his desk to remind himself of her unconditional love. "I really do believe," he said, "that she helped me learn how to love."

Not everyone has had a similar taste of human love, but through Christ each of us can experience being well-loved by God. In 1 John 4, the word love occurs 27 times, and God's love through Christ is cited as the source of our love for God and for others. "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1Jn 4:10-note). "We have known and believed the love that God has for us" (1Jn 4:16-note). "We love Him because He first loved us" (1Jn 4:19).

God's love is not a slowly dripping faucet or a well we must dig for ourselves. It is a rushing stream that flows from His heart into ours. Whatever our family background or experiences in life—whether we feel well-loved by others or not—we can know love. We can draw from the Lord's inexhaustible source to know His loving care for us, and we can pass it on to others.

In Christ our Savior, we are well-loved. By David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Loved with everlasting love,
Led by grace that love to know—
Spirit, breathing from above,
Thou hast taught me it is so!

—Robinson

Nothing is more powerful than God's love.

The Miracle Of Restraint - We love Him because He first loved us. —1 John 4:19 - In Dostoevsky's novel The Brothers Karamazov, Ivan Karamazov refers to "the miracle of restraint"—God's choice to curb His own power. The more I get to know Jesus, the more that observation impresses me.

The miracles Satan suggested to Jesus (Luke 4:3,9-11), the signs the Pharisees demanded (Matt. 12:38; 16:1), the final proofs I yearn for offer no obstacle to an omnipotent God. More amazing is His refusal to perform, to overwhelm. God's terrible insistence on human freedom is so absolute that He granted us the power to live as though He does not exist. Jesus must have known this as He faced the tempter in the desert, focusing His power on the energy of restraint.

I believe God insists on such restraint because no pyrotechnic displays of omnipotence will achieve the response He desires. Only love can summon a response of love. "I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself," Jesus said (John 12:32). He said this to show the kind of death He would die. God's nature is self-giving.

Why does God content Himself with the slow, mysterious way of making righteousness grow rather than avenging it? That's how love is. Love has its own power—the only power capable of conquering the human heart. By Philip Yancey ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

That leaden night on which He was betrayed,
The One by whom the universe was made
Reclined with friends, took bread and stretched a hand
Of love to him who His demise had planned.

—Gustafson

Revenge restrained is a victory gained.

Does God Love Me? (Read: Romans 5:6-11-**note**) We love Him because He first loved us. —1 John 4:19 - It's not easy to understand the depth of God's love for us. Because of our pride and fear, we fail to grasp how undeserving we are and how free His love is.

At times I struggle with pride, so I tend to believe that I have earned any love I receive. Pride tells me that I am loved only when I am lovable, respectable, and worthy.

At other times I feel the tug of fear. Deep down inside, I know that I don't deserve the love I get. My motives are never pure, and I fear I will be rejected if they are exposed. So even while I am basking in acceptance, I live with the fear of being unmasked, revealing that I am much less than what others think me to be.

When I consider my relationship with God, therefore, I tend to feel that His affection for me is based on my performance. When I do well, He loves me; but if I foul up, then I expect only His scorn.

Yet God does not love us because we deserve it. He loves us in spite of what we are. In 1 John 4:10 we read, "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son." Because of what Jesus Christ has done for us, we know we are always loved by God. That simple truth shatters our pride and dispels our fear. By Haddon W. Robinson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Oh, such love, my soul, still ponder—
Love so great, so rich, so free!
Say, while lost in holy wonder,
"Why, O Lord, such love to me?"
—Kent

No one is beyond the reach of God's love.