

1 John 4:11 Commentary

PREVIOUS

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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			

STUDY GUIDE

1 JOHN 4

What is this? On the photograph of the Observation Worksheet for this chapter you will find handwritten 5W/H questions (Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?) on each verse to help you either personally study or lead a discussion on this chapter. The questions are generally very simple and are stated in such a way as to stimulate you to observe the text to discern the answer. As a reminder, given the truth that your ultimate Teacher is the Holy Spirit, begin your time with God with prayer such as Psalm 119:12+

"Blessed are You, O LORD; Teach me Your statutes." (you can vary it with similar prayers - Ps 119:18, 26, 33, 64, 66, 68, 108, 124, 135, 171, etc) The questions are generally highlighted in yellow and the answers in green. Some questions have no answers and are left to your observations and the illuminating/teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. Some qualifying thoughts - (1) Use "As is" - these are handwritten and will include mistakes I made, etc. (2) They may not be the best question for a given verse and my guess is that on some verses you will think of a far superior 5W/H question and/or many other questions.

Dr Howard Hendricks once gave an assignment to his seminary students to list as many observations as they could from Acts 1:8. He said "So far they've come up with more than 600 different ones! Imagine what fun you could have with 600 observations on this passage. Would you like to see Scripture with eyes like that?" (P. 63 [Living by the Book](#) - borrow) With practice you can! And needless to say, you will likely make many more observations and related questions than I recorded on the pages below and in fact I pray that the Spirit would indeed lead you to discover a veritable treasure chest of observations and questions! In Jesus' Name. Amen

Why am I doing this? **Mortimer Adler** among others helped me develop a questioning mindset as I read, seeking to read actively rather than passively. Over the years I have discovered that as I have practiced reading with a 5W/H questioning mindset, it has yielded more accurate interpretation and the good fruit of meditation. In other words, consciously interacting with the inspired Holy Word of God and the illuminating Holy Spirit has honed my ability to meditate on the Scripture, and my prayer is that this tool will have the same impact in your spiritual life. The benefits of meditation are literally priceless in regard to their value in this life and in the life to come (cf discipline yourself for godliness in 1Ti 4:8+.) For some of the benefits - see Joshua 1:8+ and Psalm 1:2-3+. It will take diligence and mental effort to develop an "inductive" ([especially an "observational"](#)), interrogative mindset as you read God's Word, but it bears repeating that the benefits in this life and the rewards in the next will make it more than worth the effort you invest! Dear Christian reader let me encourage you to strongly consider learning the skills of [inductive Bible study](#) and spending the rest of your life practicing them on the Scriptures and living them out in your daily walk with Christ.

Although Mortimer Adler's advice is from a secular perspective, his words are worth pondering...

Strictly, all reading is active. What we call passive is simply less active. Reading is better or worse according as it is more or less active. And one reader is better than another in proportion as he is capable of a greater range of activity in reading. (Adler's classic book [How to Read a Book is free online](#))

[John Piper](#) adds that "Insight or understanding is the product of intensive, headache-producing meditation on two or three verses and how they fit together. This kind of reflection and rumination is provoked by asking questions of the text. And you cannot do it if you hurry. Therefore, we must resist the deceptive urge to carve notches in our bibliographic gun. Take two hours to ask ten questions of Galatians 2:20+ and you will gain one hundred times the insight you would have attained by reading thirty pages of the New Testament or any other book. Slow down. Query. Ponder. Chew.... (John Dewey rightly said) "People only truly think when they are confronted with a problem. Without some kind of dilemma to stimulate thought, behavior becomes habitual rather than thoughtful."

"Asking questions is the key to understanding."

--Jonathan Edwards

That said, below are the [5W/H questions](#) for each verse in this chapter (click page to enlarge). This is not neatly typed but is handwritten and was used for leading a class discussion on this chapter, so you are welcome to use it in this "as is" condition...

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1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another:

Greek - Agaphetoi ei houtos ho theos egaphesen (3SAAI) hemas kai hemeis opheilomen (1PPAI) allelous agapan (PAN).

KJV 1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

BGT 1 John 4:11 αγαπητο , ε ο τω ς θε ς γ πησεν μ ς, κα με ς φε λομεν λ λους γαπ v.

NET 1 John 4:11 Dear friends, if God so loved us, then we also ought to love one another.

CSB 1 John 4:11 Dear friends, if God loved us in this way, we also must love one another.

ESV 1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

NIV 1 John 4:11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

NLT 1 John 4:11 Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other.

NRS 1 John 4:11 Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another.

NJB 1 John 4:11 My dear friends, if God loved us so much, we too should love one another.

NAB 1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also must love one another.

YLT 1 John 4:11 Beloved, if thus did God love us, we also ought one another to love;

MIT 1 John 4:11 Loved ones, because God loved us as he did, we likewise ought to love one another.

GWN 1 John 4:11 Dear friends, if this is the way God loved us, we must also love each other.

BBE 1 John 4:11 My loved ones, if God had such love for us, it is right for us to have love for one another.

RSV 1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

NKJ 1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

ASV 1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Amplified - Beloved, if God loved us so [very much], we also ought to love one another.

Wuest - Divinely-loved ones, since in that manner and to that extent did God love us, also, as for us, we are under moral obligation to be constantly loving one another. ([Erdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

- 1Jn 3:16,17,23 Mt 18:32,33 Lu 10:37 John 13:34 15:12,13 2Co 8:8,9 Eph 4:31,32 5:1,2 Col 3:13
- [1 John 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

OUR MORAL OBLIGATION TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER

Beloved ([agapetos](#)), if (1st class condition = since) **God so** (in such a manner - Jn 3:16+) **loved** ([apapao](#)) **us, we also ought** ([opheilo](#) - present tense - habitually) **to love** ([apapao](#) - present tense - habitually, continually) **one another** ([allelon](#)) - This is John's last use of the tender adjective **beloved** in this epistle (1Jn 2:7; 3:2, 21; 4:1, 7, 11). Also note that this is the last passage directly addressed to his readers until the very last verse of the letter where he calls them **little children** (1Jn 5:21+). John is addressing believers with a tender word of exhortation calling on us to fulfill our obligation to continually **love one another**.

THOUGHT - It's easy to call someone a tender name, but John clearly practiced what he preached. His life matched his lips. His behavior was in harmony with his words. Could we say the same, beloved?

If introduces a first class conditional statement, assumed to be true or to describe a fulfilled condition (God did so love us). One could translate it **In view of the fact that** or **since** God so loved us. The word **SO** draws our attention back to 1Jn 4:10 in which God sending His Son explains how He **so loved us**. Since He **loved us** by sacrificially giving His Son, His Best, we who have His nature (His Spirit) are morally obligated to do the same! His great love for us should **MOTIVATE** a grateful heart in us to dispense His love to others.

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

Wuest on if God so loved us - It was an act of infinite love and infinite sacrifice, not only on the part of the Son on the Cross, but on the part of the Father who sent the Son, for the heart of the Father was pierced when sin was laid on the Son at the Cross and His holiness demanded that He abandon the Son (Mt 27:46+, Zech. 12:10+). In the same manner, to the same extent, John says that the saints have a moral obligation ([opheilo](#) - present tense - habitually) to be constantly loving one another. The infinitive "to love" is present tense in Greek, speaking of continuous action. ([Erdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

John is insisting that loving God and loving others cannot be divorced, which is exactly what Jesus taught in Matt 22:37-40.

-- Danny Akin

H A Ironside reminds us that God "did not wait for us to love Him first; He did not wait for us to behave ourselves before loving us, but "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Ro 5:8+). God loved us when there was nothing lovable about us. God loved us when we were at enmity against Him, "alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds." (Colossians 1:21+). God loved us when our desires were contrary to His desires, when we were trampling His Word

beneath our feet, spurning His grace, and breaking His commandments."

John's point is that if God loved us with such a great love when we were by all human measures, quite unlovable, then we have a debt to love others with this divine, Spirit enabled love (even when they too might not be very "lovable" humanly speaking!)

*A Christian's love for others should be as obvious
as pink wool on a flock of Scottish sheep.*

— Dave Branon

David Guzik - If you had a pipe that was clogged - water kept going into it, but never came out, that pipe would be useless. You would replace it. Just so, God puts His love into our lives that it might flow out. We want the Lord to clear us and fill us so that His love can flow through us.

C H Spurgeon - If such was his great kindness toward us that he denied himself his own Son for our sake, ought we not to be kindly affectioned one toward another? Here we have a fact and an argument. We ought to love. We ought to love after God's fashion; not because men loved us. Nor because they deserve anything at our hands. We are too apt to look at the worthiness of those whom we help; but our God is gracious to the unthankful and to the evil. He makes his sun to rise and rain to fall for the unjust as well as for the righteous, therefore we ought to love the unlovely and the unloving. But just as God has a special love for his own people, we who believe in him ought to have a peculiar affection for all who are his. (Full Sermon [The Secret of Love to God](#))

NET Note - God's act of love in sending his Son into the world to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins (1Jn 4:10) ought to motivate us as believers to love one another in a similar sacrificial fashion. The author made the same point already in 1 John 3:16. But this failure to show love for fellow believers is just what the opponents are doing: In 1 John 3:17 the author charged them with refusing to love their brothers by withholding needed material assistance. By their failure to love the brothers sacrificially according to the example Jesus set for believers, the opponents have demonstrated again the falsity of their claims to love God and know God (see 1 John 2:9).

THE BELIEVER'S OBLIGATION

We also ought ([opheilo](#) - present tense - habitually) **to love** ([apapao](#) - present tense - habitually, continually) **one another** ([allelon](#)) - John now repeats the call with which he began this section "Beloved, let us love one another" (1Jn 4:7+) **Love one another** occurs 3 times in this "love" section (1Jn 4:7-21) - 1Jn 4:7+, 1Jn 4:11+, 1Jn 4:12+. It was also used in 1Jn 3:11+ and 1Jn 3:23+. **Ought** in the present tense signifies this is a believer's continual **moral obligation**. The implication is since this supernatural love is something we are obligated to show to one another, it is clearly a quality of love God enables in us to accomplish. How? By His Spirit. Are you continually filled with (controlled by) His Spirit (Eph 5:18+), walking in His Spirit (Gal 5:16+), being led by His Spirit (Gal 5:18+, Ro 8:14+)? If you are, then agape love should be a natural outflow (Gal 5:22+)! There is no other way except by the Spirit's power! In our power, IM-possible! In His Spirit's power, HIM-possible! Yield to Him today, that Christ's life and love might flow freely through you beloved child of God!

D Edmond Hiebert on **we also ought** ([opheilo](#) - present tense - habitually) - The verb **we ought** ([opheilo](#)) denotes not the "must" of external compulsion but the inner constraint of conscious obligation. (Cf. 1Jn 2:6+; 1Jn 3:16+.) **Jackman** remarks, *'This is not just an extra ingredient that we might add to our discipleship if we feel especially moved to do so. We owe it to the loving Father not to slander His name any further by denying His love in our human relations... If we have appreciated something of the infinite price paid for our redemption, then we shall see at once how vital it is that we do not continue to indulge ourselves in sin.'* (Borrow [The message of John's letters](#)) God's love for us is the example as well as the stimulus for our practice of mutual love. The reality of our love for God will be tested, strengthened, and purified by our practice of mutual love as believers. In keeping with the teaching of Jesus (Matt. 22:37-40), John insists that love for God and love for our brother cannot be separated." ([1 John 4:7-21](#))

John MacArthur - God's sending His Son gives Christians not only salvation privilege, but obligation to follow this pattern of sacrificial love. Christian love must be self-sacrificing like God's love. (See [MacArthur Study Bible](#))

Donald Burdick - The fact of God's matchless love lays upon us a continuing obligation (Greek present tense) to be loving one another. Not only is it true that we have received the nature of God by reason of our new birth and thus we should love, but we have the example of His love teaching us and persuading us to love each other. (Borrow [The Epistles of John](#))

David Guzik - When Jesus washed the feet of the disciples, and showed such great love and servanthood to them, we might have expected Him to conclude by gesturing to His own feet and asking who among them was going to do to Him what He had just done for them. Instead, Jesus said: If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet (John 13:14). The proper way to love God in response to His love for us is to go out and love one another.

F F Bruce - "If the children of God must be holy because He is holy (Lev 11:44f; 1 Pet 1:15f and merciful because He is merciful (Lk 6:36), so they **must** be loving because He is loving—not with the 'must' of external compulsion but with the 'must' of inward constraint: God's love is poured into their hearts by the Holy Spirit whom they have received (Ro 5:5) (Borrow [The Gospel and epistles of John](#))

Once one begins to understand the incredible price paid for sin and the magnitude of personal sin, he will understand the love of God and demonstrate it himself (John 13:31–35).

-- Danny Akin

John Piper "when he says, "**We ought** ([opheilo](#)) **to love each other,**" he means **ought** the way fish **ought** to swim in water and birds **ought** to fly in the air and living creatures **ought** to breathe and peaches **ought** to be sweet and lemons **ought** to be sour and hyenas **ought** to laugh. And born again people **ought** to love. It's who we are. This is not mere imitation (ED: ALTHOUGH IN ONE SENSE IT IS - SEE Eph 5:1-2+). For the children of God, imitation becomes realization. We are realizing who we are when we love. God's seed is in us (1Jn 3:9+). God's Spirit is in us (1Cor 6:19+). God's nature is in us (2Pe 1:4+). God's love is being perfected in us. God's Christ-Sending Love As Our Internal Impulse. Yes, there is the external impulse of seeing in history the Son of God laying down His life for us and constraining us in this way (2Co 5:14+). But what's unique about the Christian life is that there is also the internal impulse that comes from being born again and having the very love that sent the Son into the world pulsing through our souls by the life of God within. The new birth enables us to experience the manifestation of God's love in history as an internal reality of God's Spirit within us." ([1 John 4:7-21 The New Birth Produces Love](#))

The deeper we go into the meaning of the Cross, the greater will be our love for Christ and the greater our active concern for one another.

Warren Wiersbe - We should remember our Lord's death in a spiritual way, not merely sentimentally. Someone has defined sentiment as "feeling without responsibility." It is easy to experience solemn emotions at a church service and yet go out to live the same defeated life. True spiritual experience involves the whole man. The mind must understand spiritual truth; the heart must love and appreciate it; and the will must act on it. The deeper we go into the meaning of the Cross, the greater will be our love for Christ and the greater our active concern for one another. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

C H Spurgeon emphasizes that love for one another is practical - Has anybody offended you? Seek reconciliation. 'Oh, but I am the offended party.' So was God, and he went straight away and sought reconciliation. Brother, do the same. 'Oh, but I have been insulted.' Just so: so was God: all the wrong was towards him, yet he sent. 'Oh, but the party is so unworthy.' So are you; but 'God loved you and sent his Son.' Go write according to that copy. (SEE FULL SERMON [Herein is Love](#))

Steven Cole - If everyone were easy to love, we wouldn't need this powerful example of God's love or this strong exhortation to love one another. The world loves those that love them (ED: ALBEIT NOT WITH "AGAPE" LOVE LIKE WE CAN LOVE OTHERS). But Jesus commands us to love even our enemies (Mt. 5:43-47+) (ED: TRY THAT IN RELIANCE ON YOUR OWN STRENGTH! WE MUST RELY ON GOD'S SPIRIT - THERE IS SIMPLY NO OTHER WAY TO OBEY THIS COMMAND!). Implicit in what John is saying here is that we must love those who may not be especially lovable or easy to love. If I may speak hypothetically (I'm sure that no one can relate to this!), you may have a mate that is self-centered and difficult to live with. John says, "*Beloved, if God so loved you, you also ought to love that difficult mate.*" There may be people in this church whom you do not like. John says, "*Beloved, if God so loved you, you also ought to love that difficult person.*" It is in these difficult situations that God's amazing love in Christ shines forth in us. If you're having trouble loving someone, remember that God loved you while you were yet a sinner (ED: Also we were helpless, ungodly, enemies - Ro 5:6, 8, 10+, alienated, hostile in mind Col 1:21+). He sent His Son to a world that is filled with sin. If you are His child through the new birth, then you **must** ([opheilo](#) - present tense - habitually, continually) be the channel for His love to flow to those who may not be very lovable. ([1 John 4:7-11 Why We Must Love](#))

This is not natural love. No one loves like this naturally. This is divine, spiritual love, and is possible only by walking in the power of the new nature (Gal 5:16+, Eph 5:18+), which God gives to those who believe.

H A Ironside reminds us - We remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, "*if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax-gatherers do the same?*" (Mt 5:46+) Even the most corrupt people in the world love those who seem to give them some return for their affection. But the great principle laid down here is that after we have been born of God and are partakers of the divine nature (2Pe 1:4+), we will not wait for people to love us, but will love them no matter how they behave. That is divine love demonstrated through the new nature. This kind of love is a challenge even to Christians, because we still have the old

nature in us. Though born of God (1Jn 4:7, 5:1, 4, 18), the Christian has a nature that came from fallen Adam (**ED**: flesh), and that nature is selfish and is looking for satisfaction in others and in the things of this world. It is only through the power of the new, divine nature inherited at the second birth, that the Christian can rise to the standard set before him (**ED**: cf God the Spirit continually "energizing" us - see Php 2:13NLT+). "Beloved, if God so loved us, we **ought** ([opheilo](#) - present tense - habitually, continually) also to love one another." I like that word, **ought**. It suggests duty. Sometimes Christians do not like to be reminded of duty, for they have an idea that **duty** is not consistent with **grace**. But the grace of God, when it is active in the life, leads (and empowers) men and women to do the things they **ought**. Here is one thing we **ought** to do - we **ought** to love one another. We **ought** to love those who do not love us, who mistreat us, who speak evil of us, who harm us, and who would ruin us if they could. That is the way God loves us. Nothing that men did to our blessed Lord Jesus, nothing that they said about Him, could change the attitude of His heart toward them. As He was hanging on the Cross and the angry rabble cried out for His life, He prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34+). This is not natural love. No one loves like this naturally. This is divine, spiritual love, and is possible only by walking in the power of the new nature (Gal 5:16+, Eph 5:18+), which God gives to those who believe.

Beloved ([27](#)) (**agapetos** from **agapao** = to love, **agape** = unconditional love borne by Spirit - Gal 5:22+) means beloved, dear, very much loved. **Agapetos** describes the God-like love of another, this love being called out of the "giver's" heart by preciousness of the recipient of the love (the "beloved"). **Agapetos** is used only of Christians as united with God or with each other in love. God the Father uses **agapetos** of Jesus at the transfiguration (Mt 17:5) and the first 7 uses in the NT are of God the Father speaking of Christ, His **beloved** Son (Mt. 3:17; 12:18; 17:5; Mk. 1:11; 9:7; 12:6; Lk. 3:22)

Agapetos describes "one who is in a very special relationship with another" (BDAG) and in secular Greek is used mostly of a child, especially an only child to whom all the love of his parents is given (cf use by the Father describing His only Son and Abraham describing his "only son" in Ge 22:2). BDAG adds that **agapetos** "pertains to one who is dearly loved, dear, beloved, prized, valued (papyri, LXX; pseudepigraphia) indicating a close relationship, especially that between parent and child."

Beloved is a term of endearment and is someone that you love, and someone you are deeply devoted to. In the context of the New Testament **agape** love speaks of God's divine and infinite love, a love that seeks the ultimate spiritual welfare of the one loved. **Agapetos** could be translated "divinely loved ones."

Brooke observes that **agapetos** "One of the writer's favorite words. It occurs ten times in the Epistles, though not in the Gospel. It is his usual method of address when he wishes to appeal to the better thoughts and feelings of his readers, or, to use Paul's phrase, to "open the eyes of their hearts." It emphasizes the natural grounds of appeal for mutual love, which can most readily be called out among those who are loved or lovable.

AGAPETOS USES BY JOHN - 1 Jn. 2:7; 1 Jn. 3:2; 1 Jn. 3:21; 1 Jn. 4:1; 1 Jn. 4:7; 1 Jn. 4:11; 3 Jn. 1:1; 3 Jn. 1:2; 3 Jn. 1:5; 3 Jn. 1:11

Love (verb) ([25](#)) (**agapao**) means to love unconditionally and sacrificially as God Himself loves sinful men (John 3:16), the way He loves the Son (John 3:35, 15:9, 17:23, 24). Note that **agapao** is a verb and by its verbal nature calls for action. This quality of love is not an emotion but is an action initiated by a volitional choice. "expresses the purest, noblest form of love, which is volitionally driven, not motivated by superficial appearance, emotional attraction, or sentimental relationship." (John Macarthur)

Vine writes that "Love can be known only from the actions it prompts. God's love is seen in the gift of His Son, 1 John 4:9, 10. But obviously this is not the love of complacency, or affection, that is, it was not drawn out by any excellency in its objects, Ro 5:8. It was an exercise of the divine will in deliberate choice, made without assignable cause save that which lies in the nature of God Himself." ([Collected Writings](#))

Wuest says **agape** "speaks of a love which is awakened by a sense of value in an object which causes one to prize it. It springs from an apprehension of the preciousness of an object. It is a love of esteem and approbation. The quality of this love is determined by the character of the one who loves, and that of the object loved." ([Erdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

AGAPAO USES BY JOHN - Jn. 3:16; Jn. 3:19; Jn. 3:35; Jn. 8:42; Jn. 10:17; Jn. 11:5; Jn. 12:43; Jn. 13:1; Jn. 13:23; Jn. 13:34; Jn. 14:15; Jn. 14:21; Jn. 14:23; Jn. 14:24; Jn. 14:28; Jn. 14:31; Jn. 15:9; Jn. 15:12; Jn. 15:17; Jn. 17:23; Jn. 17:24; Jn. 17:26; Jn. 19:26; Jn. 21:7; Jn. 21:15; Jn. 21:16; Jn. 21:20; 1 Jn. 2:10; 1 Jn. 2:15; 1 Jn. 3:10; 1 Jn. 3:11; 1 Jn. 3:14; 1 Jn. 3:18; 1 Jn. 3:23; 1 Jn. 4:7; 1 Jn. 4:8; 1 Jn. 4:10; 1 Jn. 4:11; 1 Jn. 4:12; 1 Jn. 4:19; 1 Jn. 4:20; 1 Jn. 4:21; 1 Jn. 5:1; 1 Jn. 5:2; 2 Jn. 1:1; 2 Jn. 1:5; 3 Jn. 1:1; Jude 1:1; Rev. 1:5; Rev. 3:9; Rev. 12:11; Rev. 20:9

Agapao is love that is...

... empowered by the Holy Spirit in the heart of the surrendered saint (Gal 5:22+, cf Ro 5:5)

... commanded of Spirit filled husbands for their wives even as Jesus demonstrated for His bride, the church, giving Himself up for her (Ep 5:25+)

... to be given in the same way Spirit filled husbands love their own bodies (Ep 5:28+)

... the love with which the Father loved the Son and which may be in believers (Jn 17:26+)

... a debt we are to always seek to repay but can never fully discharge (Ro 13:8+)

... taught by God (1Th 4:9+)

... manifested by specific actions and attitudes (1Cor 13:4, 5, 6, 7, 8+)

... shown not just by words but by deeds (1Jn 3:17+, cf such love in action as a manifestation of genuine faith in James 2:15, 16+)

... manifested by keeping God's commandments (Jn 14:15, 21, 23, 24+)

... the response Jesus called for one to demonstrate to his or her enemies (Mt 5:44+)

... love calls for one to love one's neighbor as one's self (Mt 19:19)

... love that seeks the recipient's highest good, not activated by virtue in the recipient (undeserved) (Jn 3:16+)

... love that finds its perfect expression in Jesus Christ and the Cross (Jn 3:16+, cp 1Jn 3:16+)

... the love of the overcomers in Revelation who did not love their life even to death (Re 12:10+)

... not based on affection, sentiment or emotion but upon a decision of the will

... given or offered even if the love is not received or reciprocated

... love differs from [phileo](#) which is based on affection

... love that cannot be manifested by unregenerate individuals in its true Biblical sense of being Spirit enabled. Agapao when used in the context of the unregenerate means generally to have a high esteem for or to take pleasure in something. This type of agapao love is based on one showing a high regard for the object's perceived value or importance

The first use of **agapao** in the LXX corresponds to the first mention of love in the Bible in the context of Abraham's call to sacrifice Isaac...

And He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you **love** (LXX = agapao) , Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you." (Genesis 22:2+)

We... ought (3784) (**opheilo** from **ophéilo** = heap up) means we are bound by a moral obligation to love. This verb means to owe something to someone and literally speaks of financial indebtedness = to owe money, be in debt, describing that which is due (Mt 18:28, Lk 7:41, 16:5, 7, Philemon 1:18). The verb **opheilo** was sometimes used to describe "the debt" itself. Figuratively, **opheilo** describes a sense of indebtedness to someone for something - while we "owe" God, our loving is never to be viewed as an attempt to "pay Him" back, for just as we could never earn our salvation and with it our ability to love, we can never pay Him back because the cost to Him was of infinite value - His precious Son! The costliness of the Father's love should motivate a Spirit enabled love in us for others! **Opheilo** was used to describe owing good will (1Co 7:3), love (Ro 13:8+ = we can never love enough and will always "owe" this debt).

Opheilo is used 3x in First John, each time identifying our **moral obligation to submit to the Spirit** for some supernatural endeavor...

1 John 2:6 the one who says he abides in Him ought (present tense continually) himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

1 John 3:16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

OPHEILO - 34V - had(1), have(1), indebted(2), must(1), obligated(3), ought(15), owe(4), owed(4), owes(1), responsible(1), should(2) Matt. 18:28; Matt. 18:30; Matt. 18:34; Matt. 23:16; Matt. 23:18; Lk. 7:41; Lk. 11:4; Lk. 16:5; Lk. 16:7; Lk. 17:10; Jn. 13:14; Jn. 19:7; Acts 17:29; Rom. 13:8; Rom. 15:1; Rom. 15:27; 1 Co. 5:10; 1 Co. 7:36; 1 Co. 9:10; 1 Co. 11:7; 1 Co. 11:10; 2 Co. 12:11; 2 Co. 12:14; Eph. 5:28; 2 Thess. 1:3; 2 Thess. 2:13; Philemon 1:18; Heb. 2:17; Heb. 5:3; Heb. 5:12; 1 Jn. 2:6; 1 Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 4:11; 3 Jn. 1:8

The Quality of Love	
The Source of Love	The Effect of Love
God personifies love (1Jn 4:8, 16)	We reflect God's love in the world (1Jn 4:7)
God loved us (1Jn 4:19)	We love God; our fear is gone; we keep His commands (1Jn 4:18, 19; 5:3)
God gave His Son for us (1Jn 4:9, 10)	We give our substance for others (1Jn 3:17; 4:11)
Christ laid down His life for us (1Jn 3:16)	We lay down our lives for others (1Jn 3:16)

Illustration of self-less love - During the Korean War a young Communist officer ordered the execution of a Christian civilian. When he learned that his prisoner was in charge of an orphanage and was doing much good in caring for small children, he decided to spare his life, but kill his son instead. The 19-year-old boy was shot in the presence of his father. Later, when the tide of events changed, this same officer was captured, tried, and condemned to death for war crimes. But before the sentence could be carried out, the Christian father pleaded for the life of this Communist who had killed his son. He admitted that if justice were followed, this man should be executed. But since he was so young and blindly idealistic, he probably thought that his actions were right. "Give him to me," he said, "and I'll teach him about the Savior." They granted the request. That father took the murderer of his son into his own home. As a result of his self-sacrificing love, that Communist became a Christian pastor ("Our Daily Bread," April, 1980).

James Smith - 1 John 4:7-9, 11.

I. Love's Home.

1. "Love is of God" (4:7).
2. Love is God, or better: "God is Love" (4:8).

II. Love's Apprehension. "We have known and believed the love" (4:16). Knowledge following faith.

III. Love's Manifestation. The proof of God's love was the sending of His Son (4:9).

IV. Love's Overflowing. Leads us to love one another (4:7, 11). Surely 4:7 teaches that there is no Divine love in the heart of any unregenerate person. Divine love is a far higher thing than mere natural affection.

Rod Mattoon -If you're having a hard time forgiving someone, ask the Lord to give you a glimpse of your own sin, a peek at how much He has forgiven you.

Allen Ross - The contrast between Cain and Christ can be seen in a number of ways, but one that is fascinating is through the repetition of the image of "blood crying out" as a witness. In Cain's experience the blood of his brother cried out from the ground (Gen. 4:10). And what did it cry? That a murder had been committed. That Cain and all subsequent mankind was guilty of bloodshed. But in the New Testament the blood of Jesus was shed for us, and it is a witness to the provision of forgiveness (Heb. 9:4). Jesus, like Abel, was killed by people like Cain; but his death was overcome through the resurrection. And the Gospel reminds us that while the blood of our brothers is a witness against us to condemn us for our sins, the blood of Christ brings us forgiveness and cleanses our consciences. Only by receiving Christ and accepting His death for our sins can we hope to silence the cries of guilt that well up inside us as we look at our world and see how predominant the way of Cain has become, and how little we have done to counter it (**see 1 John 4:11,12**).

John Henry Jowett - THE LOVE OF GOD 1 John 4:7-14

LET me more assiduously think of God's love. Let me sit down to it. In the National Gallery can be seen two sorts of people. There are the mere vagrants, who are always "on the move," passing from picture to picture, without seeing any. And there are the students, who sit down, and contemplate, and meditate, and appropriate, and saturate. And there are vagrants in respect to the love of the Lord. They have a passing glimpse, but the impression is not vital and vitalizing, and there are the students, who are always gazing, and who are continually crying, "O the depth of the riches of the love of God in Christ!" "His riches are unsearchable!"

And God's love is the creator of my love. "While I muse the fire burns." I am kindled into the same holy passion. That is to say, contemplation determines character. We acquire the hues of the things to which we cling. To hold fellowship with love is to become loveful and lovely. "We love because He first loved us."

And then, in the third place, it is through my love that I know my Lord. "Everyone that loveth knoweth God." Love is the lens through which I discern the secret things of God.

William MacDonald - Truths to Live By

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." (1 John 4:11).

We must not think of love as an uncontrollable, unpredictable emotion. We are commanded to love, and this would be quite impossible if love were some elusive, sporadic sensation, coming as unaccountably as a common cold. Love does involve the emotions but it is more a matter of the will than of the emotions.

We must also guard against the notion that love is confined to a world of dream castles with little relation to the nitty-gritty of everyday life. For every hour of moonlight and roses, there are weeks of mops and dirty dishes.

In other words, love is intensely practical. For instance, when a plate of bananas is passed at the table and one has black spots, love takes that one. Love cleans the washbasin and bathtub after using them. Love replaces paper towels when the supply is gone so that the next person will not be inconvenienced. Love puts out the lights when they are not in use. It picks up the crumpled Kleenex instead of walking over it. It replaces the gas and oil after using a borrowed car. Love empties the garbage without being asked. It doesn't keep people waiting. It serves others before self. It takes a squalling baby out so as not to disturb the meeting. Love speaks loudly so that the deaf can hear. And love works in order to have the means to share with others.

Love has a hem to its garment
That reaches right down to the dust—
It can reach the stains of the streets and lanes,
And because it can, it must.

It dare not rest on the mountain;
It must go down to the vale;
For it cannot find its fulness of mind
Till it kindles the lives that fail.

What Type Are You?

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. —1 John 4:11

There are two types of people in the world," someone once said, "those who come into a room and say, 'Here I am!' and those who come in and say, 'Ah, there you are!'"

How different are those two approaches! One says, "Look at me! I need attention"; the other says, "Tell me about yourself." One says, "I'm important"; the other says, "You are important." One says, "The world revolves around me"; the other says, "I'm here to serve you."

Wouldn't it be great to be known as that second kind of person—someone others love to have around? Someone who displays the love of Christ openly and unashamedly?

The New Testament gives us some practical suggestions about becoming the kind of person who demonstrates Christ's love. We are told to give preference to one another (Romans 12:10), edify one another (Romans 14:19), care for one another (1 Corinthians 12:25), serve one another (Galatians 5:13), bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2), forgive one another (Colossians 3:13), comfort one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11), and pray for one another (James 5:16).

There should be only one kind of Christian: the “love one another” kind. What type are you? (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Lord, teach us the secret of loving,
The love You are asking today;
Then help us to love one another;
For this we most earnestly pray.

—Anon.

People with a heart for God have a heart for people.

Charles Swindoll - I have never met a person who didn't have a reason to blame someone else. Every one of us can blame somebody for something that has happened in our lives. But don't waste your time. What we need most is a steady stream of love flowing among us. Love that quickly forgives and willingly overlooks and refuses to take offense. (1 John 4:11)

THE GREAT COVER-UP - See [NIV, Once-A-Day: Worship and Praise Devotional: 365 Days](#)

Whoever would foster love covers over an offense, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.
PROVERBS 17:9

Close your eyes for a moment and remember the first secret you shared that someone didn't keep. Was it a whisper in third grade of a love unrequited? An embarrassing revelation made to a parent that was then broadcast to the family? Perhaps as an adult you bared your soul to your best friend, only to have your kindred spirit involve others in your most intimate struggle.

Chances are you remember a moment of betrayal from your past; and even now, there's a tender spot in your heart that's strangely sore from the memory. Knowing this, it's even harder to admit that we ourselves have inflicted such pain on others.

That is why Solomon took time to remind us that “cover[ing] over an offense” is a way to show love. We should be willing to overlook the faults of another because, after all, isn't that what our God does for us? “He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever ... for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust” (Psalm 103:9,14). How thankful we are that this all-powerful Savior, full of tenderness and compassion, doesn't do to us what we deserve!

Because we are made in his image, we are called to offer the ultimate form of worship: To be and act like him. “Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:11). As an act of worship today, look for opportunities where you can disregard another person's offense and preserve love.

PRAYER Lord, help me to revel in your mercy and love

Daily Light on the Daily Path - Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.—For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.—Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself.

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 him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.—So that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

1 John 4:7; Rom. 5:5; Rom. 8:15–16; 1 John 5:10; 1 John 4:9; Eph. 1:7; Eph. 2:7; 1 John 4:11

A BREATHING SPACE - [The Christian History Devotional: 365 Readings](#)

Since God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.1 JOHN 4:11

1555: Consider this rule: wherever you live, you have to adhere to the religion of the head of your government. That is exactly the principle that was worked out on this day in history.

Some background is helpful: in the 1500s the Protestant Reformation split Europe into warring camps. In the middle of Europe was the sprawling Holy Roman Empire, made up of several nations ruled by kings, dukes, or bishops. Over them all ruled Emperor

Charles V, a staunch Catholic who regarded the Protestants as heretics. In theory, Charles controlled the whole empire—but in practice, the various rulers under him had a lot of independence, and some of those rulers turned Protestant and at times made war against the Catholic emperor. The king of France who was Catholic was happy to aid the Protestants in order to hurt Charles, his great rival. Adding to the muddle was the threat of a Muslim invasion on the empire's eastern border. Charles wore himself out fighting off enemies on his borders and "heretics" in his empire.

On September 25, 1555, a truce was reached, called the Peace of Augsburg after the German city where it was signed. The various rulers in the empire agreed to the principle of *cujus regio, ejus religio*—Latin that roughly translates as "the ruler's religion is the religion of his nation." So since the ruler of Saxony was a Lutheran, the people of Saxony had to be Lutheran—or sell their property and move to another country. The ruler of Bavaria was Catholic, so Bavarians had to be Catholic—or move. A few large cities allowed both Catholics and Lutherans to worship. Except for Lutherans, no Protestants were to be tolerated in the empire. It sounds like a bizarre agreement, and certainly it was not good news to Protestants who were not Lutheran. But it did end a long period of pointless bloodshed, and for a spell there were fewer Christians killing Christians.

Prayer: Lord, give us peace inside and the will to work for peace outside. Amen.

Warren Wiersbe - Tell and Show (See [Pause for Power: A 365-Day Journey through the Scriptures - Page 122](#))

Read 1 John 4:9–11

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 1 John 4:11

A Salvation Army worker found a derelict woman alone on the street and invited her to come into the chapel for help, but the woman refused to move. The female worker assured her: "We love you and want to help you. God loves you. Jesus died for you." But the woman did not budge.

As if on divine impulse, the worker leaned over and kissed the woman on the cheek, taking her into her arms. The woman began to sob and, like a child, was led into the chapel, where she ultimately trusted Christ.

"You told me that God loved me," she said later, "but it wasn't until you showed me that God loved me that I wanted to be saved."

Jesus did not simply preach the love of God; He proved it by giving His life on the cross. He expects His followers to do likewise. If we abide in Christ, we will abide in His love. If we abide in His love, we must share this love with others. In other words, as Christians there is no separation between our inner life and our outer life.

Something to Ponder - Whom have you told about the love of God recently? To whom have you shown it?

God's Love

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

When we were at our worst, God gave us His best. That is comforting to know when we face trial or fall into temptation. God loved us while we were still sinners, and He is not going to give up on us now. "He who has begun a good work in you will complete it" (Phil. 1:6)

The Apostle Paul further reminds us that "God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ" (Eph. 2:4, 5). God not only loves us, but He gives us a whole new life! He does not give up on us because He sees all of our potential.

He also calls us to extend that life to those around us. First John 4:11 reminds us that, "If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." As we rejoice in God's love today, let us extend it to those in need. (See [Living the Spirit Filled Life - Page 25](#))

1Jn 4:11 If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another

What gives us the power to love as Christ loved? Only the indwelling Holy Spirit can motivate us to Christlike deeds of compassion, forgiveness, and self-sacrifice.

The apostle John wrote, "If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us His Spirit" (1John 4:12-13).

A mother asked her young son to clean her shoes. He worked on them diligently until they were spotless and shiny. To show her appreciation, his mother gave him a dollar. When she went to put the shoes on, she found something wadded up in the toe of one of

them. It was her dollar wrapped in a note that read: "Here's yer dallar, Mom. I dun it fer luv."

Fueled by the Holy Spirit, we too can serve others, motivated by Christ's love.—D. C. Egner. (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

WE DO NOT FUNCTION WELL ON ANYTHING BUT LOVE.

The Murder Of Love

Read: 1 John 4:7-21

If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. --1 John 4:11

Our modern world has committed murder. By trying to live without God, it has killed love.

Millions today no longer look for satisfaction through a loving relationship with God and other people. Life revolves around themselves, and they are busy seeking their own fulfillment.

This fascination with self-interests has even invaded our Christian world, as a look at current bestselling books will show. An analysis by author James Hunter of the eight most prolific conservative religious publishers revealed that "87.8 percent of the titles dealt with subjects related to the self, its discovery and nurture, and the resolution of its problems and tensions. The remaining 12.2 percent of the titles had to carry the rest of the cargo."

We who believe on Jesus Christ must beware lest we fall into the preoccupation with self that marks our culture. Our calling is to love with all our being the God who first loved us, and to love others as ourselves. This is the pathway to a joy-filled, satisfying life.

The New Testament letter of 1 John states, "He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. . . . Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (4:8,11). Do our lives show that we know God? --H V Lugt (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

How sad when flames of love burn low
In hearts that once their warmth did know!
Yet Christ will freely grace bestow
And cause that love again to glow.
--DJD

Love for God will cause you to live for God.

What Fuels You?

*Here's your dollar, Mom.
I don it for luv*

If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 1 John 4:11

Space shuttles are propelled out of the earth's atmosphere by a solid fuel mixture producing millions of pounds of thrust.

Indianapolis race cars travel at speeds averaging more than 200 mph, powered by a highly volatile fuel mixture.

What fuels us as followers of Jesus Christ? What gives us the power to love as He loved? Only the indwelling Holy Spirit can motivate us to Christlike deeds of compassion, forgiveness, and self-sacrifice.

The apostle John wrote, "If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him, and he in us, because He has given us His Spirit" (1 John 4:12-13).

A mother asked her young son to clean her shoes. He worked on them diligently until they were spotless and shiny. To show her appreciation, his mother gave him a dollar. When she went to put the shoes on, she found something wadded up in the toe of one of them. It was her dollar wrapped in a note that read: "*Here's your dollar, Mom. I don it for luv.*"

Fueled by the Holy Spirit, we too can serve others motivated by Christ's love.-- David C.Egner (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Help me the slow of heart to move
By some clear, winning word of love;

Teach me the wayward feet to stay
And guide them in the homeward way.
- Gladden

We do not function well on anything but love

Pink Sheep

Read: John 10:7-18

By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. — John 13:35

While traveling on a road from Glasgow to Edinburgh, Scotland, I was enjoying the beautiful, pastoral countryside when a rather humorous sight captured my attention. There, on a small hilltop, was a rather large flock of pink sheep. I know that sheep owners mark their animals with dots of spray paint to identify them—but these sheep really stood out. The owner had fully covered every animal with pink coloring. Everyone knew who those sheep belonged to.

Scripture calls followers of Christ sheep, and they too have a unique identifying mark. What is the “pink coloring” in a Christ-follower’s life? How can someone be identified as Jesus’ own? In the gospel of John, Jesus, the Good Shepherd, told us what that identifier is: love. “Love one another; as I have loved you By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35).

In words and deeds, a believer should show love to all those around. “Beloved,” John writes, “if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:11).

A Christian’s love for others should be as obvious as pink wool on a flock of Scottish sheep. — Dave Branon (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Dear Lord, remind me that this life is not about me and my needs, but about others and how Your love can shine through me to them. May Christlike love be my distinguishing characteristic.

As followers of Christ, our love should make us stand out in a crowd.

O Love That Will Not Let Me Go

1 John 4:7-21

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. —1 John 4:11

Love is the centerpiece of thriving relationships. Scripture makes it clear that we need to be people who love—love God with all our hearts, love our neighbor as ourselves, and love our enemies. But it’s hard to love when we don’t feel loved. Neglected children, spouses who feel ignored by their mates, and parents who are alienated from their children all know the heartache of a life that lacks love.

So, for everyone who longs to be loved, welcome to the pleasure of knowing that you are richly loved by God. Think of the profound impact of His love that was poured out for you at the cross. Meditate on the fact that if you’ve trusted in Him, His love covers your faults and failures and that you are clothed with His spotless righteousness (Rom. 3:22-24). Revel in the fact that nothing can separate you from His love (8:39). Embrace His loving provision of a future secured for you where you will be eternally loved (John 3:16).

When John tells us that we “ought to love one another,” he calls us the “beloved” (1 John 4:11; see also 3:1-2). Once you embrace how wonderfully loved you are by God, it will be much easier to be the loving person God calls you to be—even toward those who don’t show you love. by Joe Stowell (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small:
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.
—Watts

Embracing God’s love for us is the key to loving others.

The King's Colors -

By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. —John 13:35 -

In Thailand, the people greatly love and admire King Bhumibol (Rama IX), who has led them for over 60 years. To display their respect for the king, the Thai people wear bright yellow shirts every Monday, because yellow is the official color of the king.

As we seek to live for our King, the Lord Jesus Christ, we should also show our colors of allegiance and appreciation for all He has done for us. But how? What are the “colors” that declare to the world that we serve the King of kings and Lord of lords?

The night before His crucifixion, King Jesus told us what our “colors” should be when He said, “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). His disciple John echoed this when he wrote, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:11).

When we display Christ’s love for our fellow believers, it is more than just kindness or care. It is one of the most tangible ways we can show our love and devotion for the Savior.

As we interact with fellow Christ-followers, let’s be sure to show our colors. That will honor our King before a watching world. By Bill Crowder (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Teach me to love as Thou dost love,
And let the whole world know
That Jesus Christ lives in my heart,
His glorious light to show.

—Brandt

Our love for God shows in our love for others.

Precious To God

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 1 John 4:11

His name was David, but most just called him “the street fiddler.” David was a disheveled, older man who was a regular fixture in popular places in our city, serenading passers-by with unusual skill at his violin. In exchange for his music, listeners would sometimes place a dollar in the open instrument case before them on the sidewalk. David would smile and nod his head in thanks as he continued to play.

When David died recently and his obituary appeared in a local paper, it was revealed that he spoke several languages, was the graduate of a prestigious university, and had even run for the state senate years ago. Some expressed surprise at the extent of his accomplishments, having assessed him on the basis of appearance alone.

Scripture tells us that “God created mankind in his own image” (Genesis 1:27). This reveals an inherent worth within each of us, regardless of how we look, what we have achieved, or what others may think of us. Even when we chose to turn from God in our sinfulness, God valued us so much that He sent His only Son to show us the way to salvation and eternity with Him.

We are loved by God, and all around us are those who are precious to Him. May we express our love for Him in return by sharing His love with others.

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your wonderful love for me. I pray that others may see Your love in my words and actions today. By James Banks (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

God’s love is meant to be shared.

ONLY LOVE - David Jeremiah - (See [David Jeremiah Morning and Evening Devotions](#))

1 JOHN 4:11 If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

A famous psychiatrist once said, “Love, true love, is the medicine for our sick old world. If people can learn to give and receive love, they will usually recover from their physical and mental illnesses.”

Before Christ, the concept of love was a love for the best. If something was deemed worthy of love, it was loved. Christ dying on the cross changed all that, for He offered a love for which we are completely unworthy. Christ revealed God’s love. He lavished that holy

love on people with no thought of whether they were worthy or not. Now when a Christian wants to know what real love is, he looks to the cross. Having experienced God's love while yet a sinner, and having been transformed by that great love, the Christian recognizes the people around him as the objects of God's love. They are love-starved, in need of the transforming power that only Christ's love can bring.

Jesus set an example by giving Himself totally in love, with no thought of receiving anything in return. We, as Christians, are called by God to reflect that love to our spouses, our families, and our world. And the more we reflect it, the more we give it away to others, the more we experience it in our own lives.

Love Extravagantly - Dan Wilt - [A Well-Worn Path: Thirty-One Daily Reflections](#)

Today, the body of Christ will experience extravagant love flowing from me.

1 John 4:11–12 calls us—unabashedly and without reserve—to love one another. In fact, it suggests that the invisible God is revealed to the world when people see us generously, deeply acting in love toward the family of God.

In his famous sermon "[The Weight of Glory](#)," C. S. Lewis suggested that, one day, the person in the faith whom we find most difficult to love will become a creature so glorious in the presence of God that we will be strongly tempted to fall down and worship them.

In other words dignify your brothers and sisters in Christ today, despite their flaws, by extravagantly expressing unconditional favor toward them. Call Christ forward in them. Give them the gifts of your time, energy, and encouragement. If you can take that step toward them, God will show Himself to everyone who meets you.

Prayer: Father, I have been so loved and graciously forgiven by You, how can I harbor bitterness against those You also love? Forgive me for missing the mark, and, today, empower me to love beyond my own capacity—extravagantly.

Linked Hearts

Each new day, it seems, brings new ways our family sees the body of Christ at work. One demonstration of the fellowship of Christians sits on my desk as I write.

It's a basket overflowing with letters from people I have never met. Since the time Our Daily Bread readers first learned of the car accident that ushered our daughter Melissa into heaven 6 years ago, we've received hundreds of messages from our brothers and sisters in the faith.

They've said things such as: "I grieve with you, my brother, and I will keep you and your family in my prayers." "I weep at your loss." "I hurt with you." Many recommended books to read. Others sent poems or articles of comfort and hope. Some shared their own stories of bereavement as we discovered new partners on the path of pain. They demonstrate the principle of love among the family of God that's commanded in 1 John 4:11.

Each of those gracious notes is different from the others, but they contain a common thread: Because of our shared faith in Christ, I find my heart joined to the hearts of the writers of these messages.

Hearts linked by Jesus create a chain of love that can encourage even the most grieving heart. By Dave Branon (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Bearing people's heavy burdens,
Shouldering their pain and grief,
Shows the love of Christ to others,
Bringing them His sure relief.
—Sper

Our hearts are linked through the love of Christ.

The Murder Of Love - Our modern world has committed murder. By trying to live without God, it has killed love.

Millions today no longer look for satisfaction through a loving relationship with God and other people. Life revolves around

themselves, and they are busy seeking their own fulfillment.

This fascination with self-interests has even invaded our Christian world, as a look at current bestselling books will show. An analysis by author James Hunter of the eight most prolific conservative religious publishers revealed that “87.8 percent of the titles dealt with subjects related to the self, its discovery and nurture, and the resolution of its problems and tensions. The remaining 12.2 percent of the titles had to carry the rest of the cargo.”

We who believe on Jesus Christ must beware lest we fall into the preoccupation with self that marks our culture. Our calling is to love with all our being the God who first loved us, and to love others as ourselves. This is the pathway to a joy-filled, satisfying life.

The New Testament letter of 1 John states, “He who does not love does not know God, for God is love... Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1Jn 4:8,11). Do our lives show that we know God? - By Herbert Vander Lugt (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

How sad when flames of love burn low
In hearts that once their warmth did know!
Yet Christ will freely grace bestow
And cause that love again to glow.
—DJD

Love for God will cause you to live for God.

A Fragrance

Katie nervously walked into the church youth group party that Linda had invited her to attend. She hadn't been to a church since she was a little girl and didn't know what to expect at a Valentine dinner with mostly strangers. But her heart started to calm when she found valentines at her plate that had been written for her from everyone there. They had cards for each other too, but it touched Katie's heart that they would think to do that for her, a visitor to their group.

Katie felt so welcomed that she accepted Linda's invitation to a church service. There she heard about God's love for her in spite of her sinfulness, and she embraced Jesus' forgiveness. The youth group had given her a fragrance of God's love, and God opened her heart to trust Him.

“If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another,” the apostle John said (1John 4:11). That's a love for our brothers and sisters in Christ as well as for those who don't yet know Him. Ray Stedman wrote, “As God's love shines into our hearts, we become more open to others, allowing the fragrance of love to drift out and attract those around us.” The youth group did that for Katie.

God can spread the fragrance of His love through us today. By Anne Cetas (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Lord, I'm so thankful that because You first loved me,
I am able to love others. Please spread the sweet
fragrance of Your love through me to everyone
I interact with today. Amen.

A godly life is a fragrance that draws others to Christ.
(2Cor 2:14-16)

A Good Neighbor

Read: Luke 10:29-37

In June 2011, when disastrous flood-waters chased residents of Minot, North Dakota, from their homes, the people of that community did what seemed to come naturally to them—they helped others who were in need. People from more than an hour away, without being asked, showed up to help. Some loaned their campers to those who lost their homes and others allowed their garages to be used for temporary storage. The people of North Dakota were showing what it means to be good neighbors.

As followers of Christ, being good neighbors—showing love to others—should come naturally to us as well (Matt. 22:39; John 13:35;

1John 4:7-11). Even though we may not have the opportunity to respond in a dramatic way to a natural disaster, we can all look for ways to love those around us. To be good neighbors, we can show others mercy (Luke 10:29-37), treat others fairly (Lev. 19:13-18; James 2:1-8), speak to others truthfully (Eph. 4:25+), and forgive others completely (Eph. 4:32+; Col. 3:13+).

Christians can be the best neighbors around because our love for others flows out of the life of the ultimate neighbor—Jesus Christ—who loved and sacrificed His life for us. By Marvin Williams (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Oh, to be like Him, tender and kind,
Gentle in spirit, lowly in mind;
More like to Jesus, day after day,
Filled with His Spirit now and always.

—Ellsworth

Our love for Christ is only as real as our love for our neighbor.

Cherished Connections - We, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. —Romans 12:5+ - When I heard that David was in the office for a board meeting, I was excited. He and I had a mutual friend, Sharon, who had died several years earlier. We had a few minutes to reminisce about her and her love for life and God. What a delight to connect with someone who has loved someone you have loved! There's a special bond because you love to talk about that cherished person.

Those who know Jesus Christ as their Savior have even stronger ties. We are forever connected to Him and to one another. "We, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another," Paul says in Romans 12:5. We've been "born of God," and we love those who are "begotten of Him" (1John 5:1+).

When we get together with fellow believers, we have the opportunity to talk about the one we love—Christ—and of the love, forgiveness, and grace we have experienced in Him because of His death and resurrection (1Jn 4:9-10-**note**). At such times, we can encourage each other to continue to trust Him and spur one another on to be faithful in our walk with Him.

This coming Sunday and throughout the week, let's remind fellow believers of all that Jesus has done and of how truly wonderful He is. By Anne Cetas (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

We Christians have a kinship with
All others who believe,
And from that bond of faith and love
A mutual strength receive.
—Hess

The more you love Jesus, the more you'll talk about Him.

Loving God -

Early in our marriage, I thought I knew the ultimate shortcut to my wife's heart. I arrived home one night with a bouquet of a dozen red roses behind my back. When I presented the flowers to Martie, she thanked me graciously, sniffed the flowers, and then took them into the kitchen. Not quite the response I had expected.

It was an introductory lesson in the reality that flowers are not my wife's primary language of love. While she appreciated the gesture, she was mentally calculating the cost of an expensive bouquet of flowers—a budget breaker for a young couple in seminary! And as I've discovered through the years, she is far more interested in my time and attention. When I devote myself to her in an uninterrupted and attentive way, that's when she really feels loved.

Did you ever wonder how God wants us to show that we love Him? We get a clue when we read, "He who loves God must love his brother also" (1John 4:21-**note**). It's that simple. One of the primary ways we show our love for God is by loving our brothers and sisters in Christ. When we genuinely love each other, it brings pleasure to our heavenly Father.

So watch for opportunities to tell Jesus that you love Him. He's infinitely worth whatever it costs. By Joe Stowell (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

All those who say they love the Lord
But don't love one another,
Should question the relationship
They have with God the Father.
—Sper

To **show** your love for God, **share** your love with others.

Love One Another - Brandon Moody was attending his uncle D. L. Moody's church on Easter morning. The final scene in the impressive pageant was a depiction of Jesus' ascension into heaven. The actor who was playing Jesus was being hoisted by stagehands through an opening in the ceiling. But when he was halfway up, they lost their grip and down came the actor—thankfully uninjured. With amazing presence of mind, the actor said to the shocked congregation, "And one more thing. Love one another."

Love was so important to Jesus that He told His disciples shortly before His arrest and crucifixion, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another ... By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35). John, known as the disciple whom Jesus loved (and the man who recorded these words of Jesus), wrote much about love in his first letter. Several times in chapter 4, the apostle urged his fellow believers to "love one another" (1 John 4:7,11-12). No matter what is happening in our lives, let's make Jesus' commandment and John's exhortation our mission statement: "**Love one another.**" By Vernon C. Grounds (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Lord, when I learn that someone is hurting,
Help me know what to do and to say;
Speak to my heart and give me compassion,
Let Your great love flow through me today.
—K. De Haan

A little love can make a big difference.

1 John 4:10 Commentary <> 1 John 4:12 Commentary