

1 John 4:7 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

[INDEX FOR ALL VERSES ON 1 JOHN](#)

- [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 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God

Greek - Agapetoi agapomen (1PPAS) allelous hoti e agape ek tou theou estin (3SPAI) kai pas o agapon (PAPMSN) ek tou theou gegennetai (3SRPI) kai ginoskei (3SPAI) ton theon.

- **let**: 1 Jn 4:20,21 1Jn 2:10 1 Jn 3:10-23 1Jn 5:1
- **love is**: 1 Jn 4:8 De 30:6 Ga 5:22 1 Th 4:9,10 2Ti 1:7 1Pe 1:22

- **everyone:** 1 Jn 4:12 2:29 3:14 5:1
- **knows:** John 17:3 2Co 4:6 Ga 4:9
- See comments on Born Again in John 3
- [1 John 4:7-21 - Hiebert](#)
- [1 John 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

LOVE THE BADGE OF A BELIEVER

Amplified - Beloved, let us love one another, for love is (springs) from God; and he who loves [his fellowmen] is begotten (born) of God and is coming [progressively] to know and understand God [to perceive and recognize and get a better and clearer knowledge of Him].

Wuest - Divinely-loved ones, let us be habitually loving one another, because this aforementioned love is out of God as a source; and everyone who is habitually loving, out of God has been born with the present result that he is regenerated and knows God in an experiential way.

Barclay - Beloved, let us love one another, because love has its source in God, and everyone who loves has God as the source of his birth and knows God.

John Hannah's Outline of 1John 4:7-21

The test of love (1Jn 4:7-21)

1. The basis of love (1Jn 4:7-21)

- a) The origin of love (1Jn 4:7-8)
 - i) Positively (1Jn 4:7)
 - ii) Negatively (1Jn 4:8)
- b) The manifestation of love (1Jn 4:9-10)
- c) The fruit of love (1Jn 4:11-21)
 - i) Love and others (1Jn 4:11)
 - ii) Love and assurance (1Jn 4:12-13)
 - iii) Love and confidence (1Jn 4:14-19)
 - iv) Love and true profession (1Jn 4:20-21)

Here John returns to the theme of loving one another, the major theme of the second half of the letter with 1John 4:7-21 constituting a unit the subject of which is love, especially perfect love available to every saint. ESVSB entitles this section (vv7-21) "The Assurance of God through the Love of God."

John's three major sections on the subject of love in this epistle:

- (1) 1John 2:7-11
- (2) 1John 3:10-14
- (3) 1John 4:7-21

William Barclay writes that "This passage (1Jn 4:7-21) is so closely interwoven that we are better to read it as a whole and then bit by bit to draw out its teaching." ([1 John 4 Commentary](#))

John Butler summarizes this section - 1 John 4:7-5:3 – Charity. The words "love," "loved," or "loveth" appear over thirty times in this passage. •Source of love: God initiated it and inspires it •Salvation and love: salvation rooted in love. •Saints and love: they are to love one another. Sanctification and love: love obeys commandments. (Butler's Daily Bible Reading)

Steven Cole - As we come to (1Jn 4:7-21), we may identify with those early believers. John has already emphasized the importance of love in 1Jn 2:7-11-**note**. He hit it again in 1Jn 3:11-1 8. We may be prone to say, "Okay, brother, we've got that one down now. Let's move on to some-thing else." But John not only repeats the imperative to love one another in 1Jn 4:7-5:4, but also he hits it longer and harder than at any other point in the book. He wants to make sure that we understand that love is not an optional virtue for the believer. It is to be the distinguishing mark of the church in the world. John goes so far as to say that if you do not love

others, you do not know God (1Jn 4:8). So we all need to examine our own lives by this supreme standard. By way of introduction, note that while love is the inevitable result of being born of God, it is not the automatic result. John states (1Jn 4:7), "Everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." The implication is that the life of God imparted to us in the new birth manifests itself in love for others. If we are children of the One whose very nature is love, then we will be like our Father. But at the same time, John commands (1Jn 4:11), "Beloved, if God so loves us, we also ought to love one another." It is not automatic or effortless! There is always room for growth in love. Also, note that love is not opposed to truth... Love does not mean that we set aside the truth for the sake of unity... we must never compromise truth for the sake of love... The connection between what John says in 1Jn 4:1-6 and his abrupt change of subject in 1Jn 4:7ff. stems from 3:23: "This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us." In 1Jn 4:1-6, John explains the first part of that commandment, namely, believing in the name of His Son Jesus Christ. Now, he turns to the second part of the commandment, the need to love one another. He tells us why we must love one another: ([1 John 4:7-11 Why We Must Love](#))

W E Vine introduces this next section 1Jn 4:7-21 - The resumption of the subject of brotherly love is not by way of a sharp break from what has immediately preceded. On the contrary it is closely connected with it, inasmuch as the Spirit of Truth produces love, whereas the spirit of error is ever against it. Love proceeds from God. The anti-Christian spirit is selfish. In the first of the three parts of the epistle which deal with brotherly love, this was shown to be the characteristic, as well as the effect, of walking in the light (1Jn 2:7-11-note). Secondly, it was set forth as a characteristic of God's children and a mark of their righteous conduct (1Jn 3:10-18-note). Here it is shown to proceed from God as being essentially His attribute, and as having been manifested by Him in Christ. Connected with this is the fact that God sent His Son to be the Savior of the world.

Stott summarizes the thrust of 1Jn 4:7-21 - "In 1Jn 3:23-note John summarized God's commandment as being 'to believe in Christ and love one another'. He has unfolded in 1Jn 4:1-6 some of the implications of belief in Christ; he now turns abruptly to the subject of mutual love. This is the third time in the Epistle that he takes up and applies the supreme test of love... Each time the test is more searching. In this third treatment the author is concerned to relate the love which should be in us not to the true light which is already shining (1Jn 2:8,10), nor to the eternal life of which it is the evidence (1Jn 3:14,15-note), but to God's very nature of love and with His loving activity in Christ and in us" ([The Letters of John Tyndale New Testament Commentary](#))

Sam Storms - The Social Test (3) - 1Jn 4:7-12 - 1. Christians are obliged to love one another because of (1) the nature of God as love (1Jn 4:7-8), (2) the historical manifestation of that love in Christ (1Jn 4:9-11), and (3) the resulting perfection of God's love in those who do love one another (12) - 1Jn 4:7-12 ([Sam Storms- First John 4:7-21](#))

Spurgeon - From the abundance of love which was in John's heart, we might almost be startled at the very strong things that he writes against those who are in error, did we not remember that it is only a false charity which winks at error. He is the most loving man who has honesty enough to tell the truth, and to speak out boldly against falsehood. It is very easy to pass through this world believing and saying that everybody is right. That is the way to make a soft path for your own feet, and to show that you only have love to yourself; but sometimes to speak as John the Baptist spoke, or as Martin Luther spoke, is the way to prove that you have true love to others.

John literally writes (agapetoi agapomen) "those who are loved, let us love."

Beloved (27)(**agapetos** from **agapao** = to love, **agape** = unconditional love borne by Spirit - Gal 5:22-note) means beloved, dear, very much loved. **Agapetos** describes the 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. So here John is addressing believers with a tender word of exhortation, even as he assures them of his own love for them. 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?**

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. ([1 John 4 Commentary](#))

John Trapp - This beloved disciple breathes nothing but love; as if he had been born with love in his mouth, as they say.

Let us love one another - MacArthur says this is the key for this entire section (cp 1Jn 4:21-note).

Love one another - This phrase occurs 3 times in this "love" section (1Jn 4:7-21) - 1Jn 4:7-note, 1Jn 4:11-note, 1Jn 4:12-note. It was also used in 1Jn 3:11-note and 1Jn 3:23-note.

Love (verb) (25)(**agapao**) "expresses the purest, noblest form of love, which is volitionally driven, not motivated by superficial appearance, emotional attraction, or sentimental relationship." (John Macarthur)

The verb "**love**" is in the **present tense** which calls for this to be our habitual practice, something that is only possible as we rely on the enabling power of the Spirit.

Faith is the flower that receives the dew & the sun, while **love** is that flower reflecting beauty & fragrance. - Anonymous quoted by W Griffith-Thomas

Faith only - I just take in (belief), I don't give out (love; beauty/fragrance) (i.e. Dead Sea)

No love, no fragrance or beauty.

Love only - "I just give out (love), I don't take in (faith/belief; reading/study/the word)".

No faith, no dew or sunshine. Flowers don't grow in caves.

So, faith & love must go together!

W E Vine adds that "Vine writes that "Love can be known only from the actions it prompts. God's love is seen in the gift of His Son, 1John 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 (note). 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."

John is not speaking of natural human "love" (which can be sacrificial) but of divine love, a self-less love, a love that seeks the best for the recipient, and a quality of life that believers can demonstrate only when they are filled with, controlled by and walking in the Holy Spirit. He alone can produce this supernatural love in our hearts.

Love one another - 13x in 12v - John 13:34; 15:12, 17; Ro 13:8; 1Th 4:9; 1Pet 1:22; 1John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11-12; 2John 1:5

1John 3:11 For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should **love one another**;

1John 3:23 And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and **love one another**, just as He commanded us.

F F Bruce - "The love which the New Testament enjoins involves a consuming passion for the well-being of others, and this love has its wellspring in God." [

Related Resources -

- Study the "one anothers" - most positive, some negative
- [What does it mean to love one another?](#)

For (hoti) is a **term of explanation**. What is John explaining? John is telling us why we as believers need to love one another. This love has its source in God.

Love (26)(agape) is a love that impels one to sacrifice one's self for the benefit of the object loved... (it) speaks of a love which is awakened by a sense of value in the object loved, an apprehension of its preciousness.

MacArthur - agapē (love) is the love of self-sacrificing service (Phil. 2:2–5; Col. 3:12–14; cf. Rom. 14:19; 1 Cor. 10:23–24; 13:4–7), the love granted to someone who needs to be loved (Heb. 6:10; 1 Peter 2:17; cf. Rom. 12:15), not necessarily to someone who is attractive or lovable.

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)

Agape in 1John - 1John 2:5, 15; 3:1, 16-17; 1Jn 4:7-10, 12, 16 (3x), 1Jn 4:17, 1Jn 4:18 (3x) 1Jn 5:3 (Also in 2John 1:3, 6; 3John 1:6)

From God (ek = marker denoting origin, cause, motive, reason = from, of) - "Flows from God." (Vincent) "God is the source and origin." (Stott) Agape love has its origin from God. It follows that we can demonstrate this quality of love only if we are from God (born of God). He is only source of this quality of love.

A T Robertson - love comes **from God**, "a reflection of something in the Divine nature itself" (Brooke). John repeats the old commandment of 1Jn 2:7f-**note**. Persistence in loving (present tense agapōmen indicative and agapōn participle) is proof that one "has been begotten of God" (ek tou theou gegennētai as in 1Jn 2:29-**note**) and is acquainted with God. Otherwise mere claim to loving God accompanied by hating one's brother is a lie (1Jn 2:9–11).

Everyone who loves - Children of God display His nature (2Pe 1:4). Here John states positively what characterizes a true child of

God. In 1Jn 4:8 he states it negatively.

Jamieson - Love, the sum of righteousness, is the test of our being born of God. Love flows from a sense of God's love to us: compare 1 John 4:9 with 1 John 3:16... All love is from God as its fountain: especially that embodiment of love, God manifest in the flesh. The Father also is love (1John 4:8). The Holy Ghost sheds love as its first fruit abroad in the heart (Ro 5:5-**note**).

Guzik - John insists that there is something that is given to the believer when they are born of God; a love is imparted to their life that they did not have before. Christians are not "just forgiven" - they are born anew by God's Spirit. Of course, this love is not perfected in the life of a Christian on this side of eternity. Though it may not be *perfected*, it must be *present* - and it should be *growing*. You can't truly grow in your experience of God without also growing love for one another.

Loves (verb) (25)(**agapao**) "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." (**Wuest**)

Agapao is in the **present tense** speaks of our habitual practice, of the general direction of our life.

Agapao in 1John -

1John 2:10, 15 (2x); 1Jn 3:10-11, 14 (2x), 1Jn 3:18, 23; 4:7 (2x), 1Jn 4:8, 10(2x), 1Jn 4:11 (2x), 1Jn 4:12, 19 (2x), 1Jn 4:20 (3x), 1Jn 4:21 (2x); 1Jn 5:1 (2x), 1Jn 5:2 (2x).

EVIDENCE OF REGENERATION

NET Note on everyone - everyone who loves refers to all true Christians, who give evidence by their love for one another that they have indeed been begotten by God and are thus God's children. The opposite situation is described in the following verse, 1Jn 4:8, where it is clear that a contrast is intended.

Is born of God - Regenerate, a new creature in Christ (2Cor 5:17-**note**). As Gill says "it comes from him, is a gift of his grace, and a fruit of his Spirit, and which he teaches regenerate ones to exercise."

While unbelievers can love others, it is a natural love and not a supernatural love enabled by the indwelling Holy Spirit. As **Marshall** explains " "It is because men are created in the image of God, an image that has been defaced but not destroyed by the Fall, that they still have the capacity to love ... Human love, however noble and however highly motivated, falls short if it refuses to include the Father and Son as the supreme objects of its affection."

Vine - since love has God as its source, those who show the love that is here spoken of give evidence thereby that they are the children of God. Their spiritual life is derived from Him. The verb rendered "is begotten" is in the perfect tense, and is better translated "has been begotten," suggesting the abiding effects of the new relationship.

John's Gospel mentions many metaphors Jesus used to teach spiritual truth (e.g., light - John 1:4-5, 7-9; 3:19-21; 8:12; 9:5; 11:9-10; 12:35-36, 46; Temple at Jerusalem ~ His physical body - Jn 2:19-22; Wind ~ Holy Spirit = Jn 3:8; Water ~ Spirit within believers = Jn 4:7-15, 7:37-39, cp 1Jn 5:6,8; Food ~ doing the will of God = Jn 4:31-34; Bread ~ Jesus himself = Jn 6:32-51, 58, et al) and here the apostle uses the metaphor of physical birth as Jesus did with Nicodemus (John 1:13; 3:3-8; cf. Jn 6:63) (See comments on John 1, John 2 and John 3)

When we are Born Again "old things passed away, behold, new things have come" (2Cor 5:17+) and one of those "new things" is that we have become "**partakers of the divine nature** having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust." (2 Pe 1:4+) And since one of the chief aspects of God's nature is love, God's children will reflect His love.

Born (begotten) (1080)(**gennao** from **genos** = offspring, in turn from ginomai = to become) means to beget, to bring forth, to give birth, to procreate a descendant, to produce offspring, to generate. To beget is spoken of men (Mt 1:2-16), whereas to bear is spoken of women. The passive voice means to be begotten or to be born. See comments on Born Again in John 3

Note that **born** is in the **perfect tense** signifying the permanent effect of the (new) birth. In other words, everyone God has saved in the past continues to give evidence of that fact in the present and will continue to do so in the future. **Wuest** adds that the **perfect tense** signifies that "The relationship between God and the believer as Father and child is a permanent one." So even the truth about the tense of the verb undergirds the doctrine of eternal security! Once saved, always saved! The caveat is one must be genuinely saved! Asking Jesus into one's heart and living the rest of your life like the devil is absolutely not evidence of genuine salvation! Do not be deceived, dear reader!

MacArthur on the perfect tense - Everyone God has saved in the past continues to give evidence of that fact in the present. Those

who possess the life of God have the capacity and the experience of loving. In contrast, the one who does not love does not know God. Those whose lives are not characterized by love for others are not Christians, no matter what they claim. The Jewish religionists (scribes, Pharisees, and other leaders) of Jesus' day, as well as the false teachers in the church of John's day, knew a lot about God, but they did not really know Him (cf. 1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 3:7). The absence of God's love in their lives revealed their unregenerate condition as conclusively as did their aberrant theology.

Earlier John had written "If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices **present tense** = their general direction, not perfection!) righteousness is born (**gennao** in the **perfect tense**) of Him." (1Jn 2:29-note)

Jamieson on knows God - spiritually, experimentally, and habitually.

Barclay draws an interesting conclusion - Love has a double relationship to God. It is only by knowing God that we learn to love and it is only by loving that we learn to know God (1 John 4:7-8). Love comes from God, and love leads to God. ([1 John 4 Commentary](#))

Knows ([1097](#))(**ginosko**) refers to knowledge gained by experience, a knowing intimately and not just intellectually. For example, John uses **ginosko** to describe those who refused to believe in Jesus writing "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not **know** Him." (Jn 1:10, see context Jn 1:11-13) After most of the followers departed from Jesus in Jn 6:66, Jesus confronted the twelve disciples asking "You do not want to go away also, do you?" (Jn 6:67) to which Peter replied "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. And we have believed and **have come to know** (ginosko) that You are the Holy One of God." (Jn 6:68-69) Notice that here John links believing in Jesus with knowing Him. Ginosko is in the **present tense** which signifies that we continually know God.

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)

W E Vine - To exhibit divine love is an evidence of more than the existence of the divine relationship; it is a proof of the experience of a constant increase in the knowledge of God

Albert Barnes - A man may have a great deal of natural affection toward his kindred; a great deal of benevolence in his character toward the poor and needy, and still he may have none of the love to which John refers. He may have no real love to God, to the Saviour, or to the children of God as such; and it would be absurd for such a one to argue because he loves his wife and children that therefore he loves God, or is born again. ([1 John 4 Commentary](#))

Steven Cole - The church father, Jerome, said that when the apostle John was in his extreme old age, he was so weak that he had to be carried into the church meetings. At the end of the meeting he would be helped to his feet to give a word of exhortation to the church. Invariably, he would repeat, "Little children, let us love one another." The disciples began to grow weary of the same words every time, and they finally asked him why he always said the same thing over and over. He replied, "Because it is the Lord's commandment, and if this only is done, it is enough" (cited by John Stott - [The Letters of John Tyndale New Testament Commentary](#)). ([1 John 4:7-11 Why We Must Love](#))

David Smith - Love is the divine nature, and those who love have been made partakers of the divine nature (2Peter 1:4); and by the practice of love they "get to know God" more and more. (Expositor's Greek)

A E Brooke - (Agape love) has its origin in God. Human love (agape) is a reflection of something in the Divine nature itself. Its presence in men shows that they have experienced the new birth from God and share in that higher life which consists in gradually becoming acquainted with God. Where love is absent there has not been even the beginning of the knowledge of God, for love is the very nature and being of God... He who loves shows thereby that he has experienced the new birth from God which is the beginning of Christian life, and that its effects are permanent and abiding. He also shows that he has entered upon that life which consists in the gradual acquiring of the knowledge of God. (Critical and Exegetical Commentary- [1 John 4 Commentary](#))

D L Moody - THE first impulse of a young convert is to love. Do you remember the day you were converted? Was not your heart full of sweet peace and love? I remember the morning I came out of my room after I had first trusted Christ. I thought the old sun shone a good deal brighter than it ever had before. I thought that the sun was just smiling upon me. I walked out upon Boston Common, and heard the birds in the trees, and I thought that they were all singing a song for me. Do you know I fell in love with the birds? I never cared for them before, but now it seemed to me that I was in love with all creation. I had not a bitter-feeling against any man, and I was ready to take all men to my heart. If a man has not the love of God shed abroad in his heart, he has never been regenerated. (D L Moody Yearbook)

Paul Apple makes an interesting statement in his introduction to this section on loving our brethren - "Problems with assurance are not solved so much by introspection (e.g. Am I one of God's elect?) as by Faith (trusting in the promises of God) + Love (practical loving actions towards one another)" Apple has an interesting outline of 1Jn 4:7-12 - Big Idea: Three Arguments for Loving the Brethren (Based on the Trinity) - 1Jn 4:7-8 = Argument Based on God the Father - Based on God's Eternal Nature. 1Jn 4:9-11 = Argument Based on God the Son - Based on God's Historical Gift. 1Jn 4:12 - Argument Based on God the Holy Spirit.

William Barclay - As A. E. Brooke puts it: "Human love is a reflection of something in the divine nature itself." We are never nearer to God than when we love. Clement of Alexandria said in a startling phrase that the real Christian "practises being God." He who dwells in love dwells in God (1 John 4:16). Man is made in the image and the likeness of God (Genesis 1:26). God is love and, therefore, to be like God and be what he was meant to be, man must also love. ([1 John 4 Commentary](#))

H A Ironside - If you remember from our study in chapter 3, there are two words for love used in the New Testament- phileo and agapao. Phileo refers to a mere human affection, although it is used once when God is spoken of as being a friend to man. Agapao speaks of a more utterly unselfish affection, a love which is seen in all its fullness in God Himself, and which was displayed in our Lord Jesus Christ here on earth. When the apostle said, "Beloved, let us love one another," he does not merely seek to encourage a natural affection, but has in mind a divine affection. As believers, the love of God is poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Being possessed of a new and divine nature, having been regenerated, the natural thing for the believer in the Lord Jesus is to love. "Let us love one another: for love is of God" (1 John 4:7). This love is simply the manifestation of the divine nature He has implanted within us. If you find a person who is not characterized by divine love, bearing the name of Christian, you can be reasonably sure that person has not yet been Born Again. On the other hand, be careful about snap judgments lest you yourself fail to exhibit divine love.

"Every one that loves is born of God, and knows God." Not merely everyone who has natural affection for a father or mother or children or sister or brother, but everyone who loves in this divine unselfish way, demonstrates that he is born of God. Have you been born of God? I'm afraid too many people get in the habit of attending services and listening to Bible expositions, and to a certain degree even enjoying them, yet the power of God's Word never grips their souls. Let us never forget the solemn words of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Ye must be Born Again." We are told that John Wesley used to preach on this text over and over again, until some people grew weary of hearing it and wished that he would use another theme. Once after having preached on it in a place where he had done so many times before, someone said, "Mr. Wesley why do you preach so often on that one text, 'Ye must be born again?'" "Why?" exclaimed Mr. Wesley. "Because 'ye must be born again!'" Many people think they must join the church, be benevolent, turn over a new leaf, be good citizens, or be one hundred percent American in order to be a Christian. But you can do and be all these things and yet be lost for all eternity. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The proof that someone has been born again is that he exhibits this divine love. "Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (1 John 4:7). On the other hand, "He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 John 4:8). Twice in this chapter we have that wonderful statement, "God is love." Nowhere else in the world will you find this wonderful truth than in the Bible.

Years ago a lady who prided herself on belonging to the intelligentsia said to me, "I have no use for the Bible, Christian superstition, and religious dogma. It is enough for me to know that **God is love.**" "Well," I said, "do you know it?" "Why, of course I do," she said; "we all know it, and that is religion enough for me. I do not need the dogmas of the Bible." "How did you find out that God is love?" I asked. "Why," she said, "everybody knows it." "Do they know it in India?" I asked. "That poor mother in her distress throwing her little baby into the Ganges to be eaten by filthy and repulsive crocodiles as a sacrifice for her sins-does she know that **God is love?**" "Oh, well, she is ignorant and superstitious," she replied. "Those poor natives in the jungles of Africa, bowing down to gods of wood and stone, and in constant fear of their fetishes, the poor heathen in other countries-do they know that **God is love?**" "Perhaps not," she said, "but in a civilized country we all know it." "But how is it that we know it? Who told us that God is love? Where did we discover it?" "I don't understand what you mean," she said. "I've always known it." "Let me tell you this," I answered. "**No one in the world ever knew it until it was revealed from Heaven and recorded in the Word of God. It is here and nowhere else. It is not found in all the literature of the ancients.**" ([1 John 4 Commentary - Ironside's Notes](#))

B F Westcott - The consideration of Antichrists and of the spirit of Antichrist and error is now over, and St John lays open the fulness of the Christian life. In doing this he takes up in a new connexion thoughts which he has before touched upon, and groups them in relation to the final revelation God is love (1Jn 4:8, 4:16). The whole division of the Epistle seems to fall most naturally into

three sections:

1. THE SPIRIT OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE: GOD AND LOVE. (1Jn 4:7–21.) This section deals in succession with
 - a. The ground of love (1Jn 4:7–10). -

The Christian Society has been shewn to be clearly distinguished from the world, even when the world obtains the support of spiritual powers. St John therefore passes on to consider the spirit of the Christian life as seen in the Christian Body. This spirit is love, the presence of which is the proof of divine sonship, seeing that God is love (1Jn 4:7, 8); and in the Incarnation we have set before us the manifestation (1Jn 4:9) and the essence of love (1Jn 4:10).
 - b. The inspiration of love (1Jn 4:11–16a).
 - c. The activity of love (1Jn 4:16b–21)
 2. THE POWER OF THE CHRISTIANS LIFE: THE VICTORY AND WITNESS OF FAITH. (1Jn 5:1–12.)
 3. THE ACTIVITY AND CONFIDENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE: EPILOGUE. (1Jn 5:13–21.)
-

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD: HE IS LOVE

Love is not a definition of God—God is infinitely more—but God is the definition of love. Without Him, love does not exist (John 3:16; 1 John 4:8–10).

Biblical love (Gk. *agapē*) is active, yet selfless. Though most graphically and fully illustrated in God's love for us, *agapē* love is also God's pattern for our love for Him (1 John 4:19) and for our love for one another (Eph. 5:25; 1 Pet. 1:22). Its basis is God's deliberate, active, sacrificial giving of His Son for our redemption. To be loved by God means that He has set His sights on us and is actively wooing us toward Himself at all times.

God's love is self-starting (1 John 4:10), indestructible (Rom. 8:38, 39), undeserved (Rom. 3:23), compassionate (Is. 49:15), constant (Jer. 31:3), immeasurable (Eph. 3:18, 19), voluntary (Rom. 5:8), and a gift (John 3:16). He did not begin loving at the Cross, nor will He love us more tomorrow than He does today. There is nothing we can do, think, or say that will change His love because there are no surprises for God—He knows us totally and loves us anyway (Ps. 139:1–5).

The goal of God's love is to have us with Him throughout eternity (1 John 4:16). He presented and made possible the accomplishment of this goal through Jesus and His sacrifice on the Cross (John 1:14–18).

See also Lam. 3:22, note; Eph. 2:4; notes on Attributes of God (Ex. 33; Deut. 4; 32; 2 Chr. 19; Job 23; 42; Ps. 25; 90; 102; 119; Is. 6; 65; Jer. 23; Rom. 2; Eph. 1); Forgiveness (Ps. 51; Luke 17); Fruit of the Spirit (1 Cor. 13); Promises of God (2 Pet. 1); Salvation (Eph. 2) (BORROW [The woman's study Bible](#))

THE NEW BIRTH: ITS EVIDENCES AND RESULTS 1 JOHN

The Apostle John does not point out in this Epistle how regeneration can take place, because that he had already done in his Gospel, particularly John 1:12, 13+, and the whole of chapter 3. Here in his Epistle he points out the proofs whereby we may know we are born from above.

I. **Faith** is both the condition and the proof of regeneration. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John 5:1+).

II. **Love**. "Every one that loveth is born of God" (1 John 4:7+).

III. **Life**. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit (margin, "practice") sin; or as W., "No one who is a child of God is habitually guilty of sin" (1 John 3:9+). This is to say, one of the clearest proofs of the new birth is to be found in the fact that a new life is begun. Not a life of sin as before, but a life of victory—there may be, there usually is, especially in the early days, lapses into sin, but not a life of sin. By and by we learn the secret of full victory.

IV. **Overcomes**. "For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world" (1 John 5:4+).

V. **Kept**. "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not, but He that was begotten of God (i.e., the Lord Jesus) keepeth him" (1 John 5:18+, R.V.). The begotten one is kept by the only Begotten of the Father. And

the result?

VI. **Holiness.** Personal holiness. "Every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him" (1 John 2:29).

([James Smith - Handfuls on Purpose](#))

It's All About The Love

Read: 1 John 4:7-19

We have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love. —1 John 4:16

I saw a sign in front of a church that seems to me to be a great motto for relationships: Receive love. Give love. Repeat.

The greatest love that we receive is the love of God. He loved us so much that He gave His Son Jesus to live, die, and rise again to redeem us (1 John 4:9). We receive His love when we receive Jesus as our Savior and Lord. "As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12).

After we've experienced God's love, we then can learn to give love. "Let us love one another, for love is of God" (1 John 4:7).

God's love enables us to love our brothers and sisters in Christ. We teach, encourage, and rebuke. We weep and rejoice. The love we give is tender and tough and supportive. We are taught by Jesus even to love our enemies: "Do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you" (Matt. 5:44). Giving love to others can be challenging in some situations, but it's possible because of the love God has first given to us.

A good plan for our lives today: Receive love. Give love. Repeat. By Anne Cetas

For Further Study

How do we experience the love of Christ? (John 15:10).

What is the evidence of God's love in our lives? (1 John 4:16-21).

How can we show God's love today?

Receive love. Give love. Repeat.

Love the Brothers - In his book *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*, Richard Foster tells of an old sage who asked his disciples, "How can we know when the darkness is leaving and the dawn is coming?" "When we can see a tree in the distance and know that it is an elm and not a juniper," one student responded. "When we can see an animal and know it is a fox and not a wolf," replied another.

"No," said the teacher.

Puzzled, the students asked for the answer. The sage replied quietly, "We know the darkness is leaving and the dawn is coming when we can see another person and know that it is our brother or sister; otherwise no matter what time it is, it's still dark."

Do we take seriously John's words, "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren"? (1 Jn. 3:14). Or do we know of Christians whom we dislike intensely? Do we hold in contempt those who go to a different church and don't agree with us on every issue? What about Christians of another race? Do we like them not only from a distance but also when they are up close and personal?

If love is the mark of a believer, do people recognize that we belong to Christ? By Haddon W. Robinson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Every kindness done to others
Is a kindness done to Thee;
Christlike love for all my brothers
May the world observe in me.
—Brandt

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

The Cry of Love - A father sat at his desk poring over his monthly bills when his young son rushed in and announced, "Dad,

because this is your birthday and you're 55 years old, I'm going to give you 55 kisses, one for each year!" When the boy started making good on his word, the father exclaimed, "Oh, Andrew, don't do it now; I'm too busy!"

The youngster immediately fell silent as tears welled up in his big blue eyes. Apologetically the father said, "You can finish later." The boy said nothing but quietly walked away, disappointment written all over his face. That evening the father said, "Come and finish the kisses now, Andrew." But the boy didn't respond.

A short time after this incident the boy drowned. His heartbroken father wrote, "If only I could tell him how much I regret my thoughtless words, and could be assured that he knows how much my heart is aching."

Love is a two-way street. Any loving act must be warmly accepted or it will be taken as rejection and can leave a scar. If we are too busy to give and receive love, we are too busy. Nothing is more important than responding with love to the cry for love from those who are near and precious to us. By Henry G. Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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.

Nothing is more costly than loving—except not loving.

Family Trademarks - The Aran Islands, off the west coast of Ireland, are known for their beautiful sweaters. Patterns are woven into the fabric using sheep's wool to craft the garments. Many of them relate to the culture and folklore of these small islands, but some are more personal. Each family on the islands has its own trademark pattern, which is so distinctive that if a fisherman were to drown it is said that he could be identified simply by examining his sweater for the family trademark.

In John's first letter, the apostle describes things that are to be trademarks of those who are members of God's family. In 1 John 3:1, John affirms that we are indeed part of God's family by saying, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!" He then describes the trademarks of those who are the children of God, including, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God" (4:7).

Because "love is of God," the chief way to reflect the heart of the Father is by displaying the love that characterizes Him. May we allow His love to reach out to others through us—for love is one of our family trademarks.

Father, teach me to love with the love of Christ that others might see Your love reflected in my care and concern for them. May Your love drive and dominate my responses to life and to others. By Bill Crowder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Love is the family resemblance the world should see in followers of Christ.