

1 John 4:7 Commentary

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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 4:7 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 (3SPA1) kai pas o agapon (PAPMSN) ek tou theou gegennetai (3SRPI) kai ginoskei (3SPA1) ton theon.

KJV 1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

BGT 1 John 4:7 αγαπητο , γαπ μεν αλλους, τι γπη κ το θεο σπιν, κα πς γαπ ν κ το θεο γεγνηται κα γιν σκει τ ν θε ν.

NET 1 John 4:7 Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been fathered by God and knows God.

CSB 1 John 4:7 Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has

been born of God and knows God.

ESV 1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

NIV 1 John 4:7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

NLT 1 John 4:7 Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God.

NRS 1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

NJB 1 John 4:7 My dear friends, let us love one another, since love is from God and everyone who loves is a child of God and knows God.

NAB 1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God.

YLT 1 John 4:7 Beloved, may we love one another, because the love is of God, and every one who is loving, of God he hath been begotten, and doth know God;

MIT 1 John 4:7 Loved ones, let us love one another, because love derives from God. Moreover, all who love have been fathered by God and know God.

GWN 1 John 4:7 Dear friends, we must love each other because love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born from God and knows God.

BBE 1 John 4:7 My loved ones, let us have love for one another: because love is of God, and everyone who has love is a child of God and has knowledge of God.

RSV 1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God.

NKJ 1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

ASV 1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God.

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.

- **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

John Hannah's Outline The test of love (1Jn 4:7-21)

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)

Related Passages:

John 13:34-35+ "A new commandment I give to you, that you **love one another**, even as I have loved you, that you also **love one another**. 35 By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have **love** (agape) for **one another**."

Mark 12:30-31+ AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' 31 "The second is this, 'YOU SHALL **LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF**.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

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

1 John 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.

1 John 2:29+ 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**."

John 3:3-6+ Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is **born again** he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicodemus *said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" 5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

John 14:7+ "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you **know** ([ginosko](#) - present tense - spiritually, experientially, habitually, personally, intimately) Him, and have seen Him."

1 Peter 1:22+ Since you have in obedience to the truth **purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren**, fervently **love** ([agapao](#) [aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) one another from ([ek](#) = out of, as the source) the heart (Pr 4:23+!!!),

THE EXHORTATION TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER

Matthew Henry - As the Spirit of truth (1Jn 4:6) is known by doctrine (thus spirits are to be tried), it is known by love likewise; and so here follows a strong fervent exhortation to holy Christian love.

John has three major sections on the subject of **love** - (1) 1Jn 2:7-11 (2) 1Jn 3:10-14 (3) 1Jn 4:7-21. John returns to the subject of is love, especially perfect love available to every saint. The ESV Study Bible entitles this section "The Assurance of God through the Love of God."

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

Beloved ([agapetos](#)), **let us love** ([agapao](#) - present tense - let us habitually love) **one another** - John literally writes (agapetoi agapomen) "those who are loved, let us love." John is addressing believers with a tender word of exhortation, even as he assures them of his 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?

And so John begins this section on love with the term of endearment, **beloved**, indicating they are loved not just by him, but far more amazing, they are **beloved** of God. They who were once helpless, ungodly, sinners and enemies of God (Ro 5:6, 8, 10), are now the focus of His perfect love (cf 1Th 1:4+). This amazing thought is worth pondering for a moment. And when we do grasp the significance of the greatness of God's love bestowed on us as His children (1Jn 3:1+), we should be motivated and led to obey John's exhortation to continually **love one another**, relying of course on His indwelling Spirit to give us the desire to love and the

power to love (Php 2:13NLT+), for only by the Spirit can we exhibit this supernatural, selfless, giving, God-like love. **Love one another** speaks of a mutual love, love flowing in both directions.

Love which God is in His nature, the love which is produced by the Holy Spirit in the heart of the yielded saint, the love which was seen in action at the Cross.

-- Kenneth Wuest

Gary Burge writes that John's "exhortation to obedience does not come with a threat. Instead, obedience is encouraged through inspiration. God's inspiring love, his generous affection, compels us to obey. If he has done this much for us, how can we do less? Genuine love cannot be exhibited in any community unless it reflects God's love, unless it is empowered by an experience of being loved." (See [The Letters of John - Page 186](#))

Chris Benefield - As the children of God, we are expected to **love one another**. (I have met some who claimed Christ as their Savior who apparently didn't get the memo.) John doesn't say love when we feel like it, or when we think it is deserved. He doesn't say love those who agree with our position always. He doesn't ask us to love only those within our circle of influence. We are to love one another. I am convinced this applies to our love for all people, especially those within the body of Christ. Jesus revealed this was the second great command: love our neighbor as we love ourselves (Mk 12:31+, Ro 13:8-10+, Gal 5:14+). Surely you would agree we need to show love to one another! ([1 John 4:7-10 Defined and Delivered in Love](#))

Love one another is a key phrase occurring 3 times in 1Jn 4:7-21 - 1Jn 4:7+, 1Jn 4:11+, 1Jn 4:12+ (cf 1Jn 4:21+). It was also used in 1Jn 3:11+ and 1Jn 3:23+. All Biblical uses of **Love one another** - 13x/12v - Jn 13:34; 15:12, 17; Ro 13:8; 1Th 4:9; 1Pe 1:22; 1Jn 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11-12; 2Jn 1:5) Study "one anothers" - most positive, some negative. [See note on love one another.](#)

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."

*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

For (hoti) love (agape) is from (ek = out of, as the Source, the Fountainhead) God; and everyone who loves (supernaturally - **agapao** - present tense) **is born** (fathered by - **gennao** - perfect tense) **of (ek = out of, the Source) God and knows (ginosko** - present tense - spiritually, experientially, habitually, personally, intimately) **God** - Always pause and interrogate **For (hoti)** when it is a term of explanation as in the present context, asking at least "*What is John explaining?*" John is explaining why the believers ought to love one another and it is possible because love comes from God. God is the Source of this supernatural love and when we manifest this love as the habit of our lives we demonstrate that we have been born again and that we have an intimate personal relationship with the Almighty God. One thinks of the saying "like Father, like son" for as children of God we are partakers of His nature (2Pe 1:4+). In this passage, John states positively what characterizes a true child of God and in 1Jn 4:8 he states it negatively speaking of the unbeliever.

Love for fellow Christians provides proof of spiritual birth and relationship with God.

--Bruce Barton

Note that **born (gennao)** is in the perfect tense which speaks of that past moment we confessed Christ as Lord and Savior (Ro 10:9-10+) and we entered into God's family (Jn 1:12-13+) and forever will abide in His family. So even this tense (perfect tense) underscores the believer's **eternal security** and gives him/her **assurance** that their salvation is abiding and cannot be lost (cf Jn 10:27-29+, Heb 7:25+, 2Ti 1:12+, Jude 1:24+, Ro 8:38-39+). "The relationship between God and the believer as Father and child is a permanent one." (Wuest) As those who have genuinely been **born of God**, they can affirm "[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 in contrast to a **false doctrine** that has begun to pervade evangelicalism! Do not be deceived, dear reader! The expression **knows (ginosko) God** speaks of the intimacy and personal relationship that believers now can experience continually (present tense) with the Holy God. And as we practice exhibiting His love (cf Eph 5:1-2+), we grow in the knowledge of God (cf Col 1:10+, 2Pe 3:18+). Amazing grace indeed!

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 (1Jn 4:7-8).

Love comes from God, and love leads to God.

-- William Barclay

John is not speaking of natural human "love" (which can be sacrificial to a degree) but of divine love, a selfless love, a love that seeks the best for the recipient, and a quality of love that believers can demonstrate only when they are filled with, controlled by and walking in the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18+, Gal 5:16+). The Holy Spirit Alone can produce this supernatural love in our hearts (Gal 5:22+). **Gill** adds this love "comes from Him, is a gift of His grace, and a fruit of His Spirit, and which He teaches regenerate ones to exercise."

*Love flows from or out of (ek) God
and has God as its spring or source.*

-- Danny Akin

Love is 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).

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

NET Note says "**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."

Plummer notes, "The love of Christians to unbelievers is not expressly excluded, but it is not definitely before the Apostle's mind."

Born ([gennao](#) - perfect tense) **of** ([ek](#) = out of) **God** (See also [born of God](#)) - [Born again](#). [Regenerate](#). While unbelievers can love others, it is a natural love and not a supernatural love enabled by the indwelling Holy Spirit. In other words, John is referring to a kind of love that is found only in those who have been born again. 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.

*It is not the person's ability to love that causes the new birth,
but his ability to love flows from his regeneration in Christ.*

-- Danny Akin

Kenneth Wuest as noted earlier says that the perfect tense signifies that "The relationship between God and the believer as Father and child is a permanent one." ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission) So even the truth about the tense of the verb undergirds the doctrine of eternal security! Once saved, always saved!

*Our love for one another
is a genuine mark of salvation.*

John MacArthur on **born** in 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. (See [The MacArthur Commentary](#))

*To know the love of God
is to manifest His love.*

-- Danny Akin

W E Vine on [born of God](#) - 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. ([Collected Writings](#))

*Faith is the flower that receives the dew & the sun,
while **love** is that flower reflecting beauty & fragrance.*

- Anonymous

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+. He hit it again in 1Jn 3:11-18. We may be prone to say, "Okay, brother, we've got that one down now. Let's move on to something 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 1Jn 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 ties the preceding section with this section on love (1Jn 4:7-21) noting that "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** (1Jn 4:6) 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+). Secondly, it was set forth as a characteristic of God's children and a mark of their righteous conduct (1Jn 3:10-18+). 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. ([Collected Writings](#))

John Stott adds that "In 1Jn 3:23+ 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... 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+), but to God's very nature of love and with His loving activity in Christ and in us" (borrow [The Letters of John](#))

Sam Storms - calls 1Jn 4:7-12 *The Social Test* explaining that "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 (1Jn 4:12) ([1 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. ([Spurgeon's Expositions on 1 John](#))

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+).

David 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.

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.

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). ([1 John 4:7-11 Why We Must Love](#))

Chris Benfield - Why is there so much turmoil and division in so many church congregations today? The answer remains the same: a lack of genuine love. We cannot love as God would have us too and carry bitterness or anger toward our brother. We cannot love as God does and have a self-consumed, self-righteous attitude. Genuine love would solve the majority of problems we encounter today!

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. ([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.

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.

"Everyone 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.)

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)

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)

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 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." ([Eerdmans 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+)

Love (26)(agape) is unconditional, sacrificial love and Biblically refers to a love that God is (1Jn 4:8,16), that God shows (Jn 3:16, 1Jn 4:9) and that God enables in His children (fruit of the Spirit - Gal 5:22±). Agape love 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 writes that "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."

Agape love does not depend on the world's criteria for love, such as attractiveness, emotions, or sentimentality. Believers can easily fall into the trap of blindly following the world's demand that a lover **feel** positive toward the beloved. This is not **agape** love, but is a love based on impulse. **Impulsive love** characterizes the spouse who announces to the other spouse that they are planning to divorce their mate. Why? They reason "I can't help it. I fell in love with another person!" Christians must understand that this type of impulsive love is completely contrary to God's **decisive love**, which is decisive because He is in control and has a purpose in mind. There are many reasons a proper understanding of the truth of God's word (and of the world's lie) is critical and one of the foremost is Jesus' declaration that "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have **love** (agape) for one another." (John 13:35).

Agape in 1 John - 1 John 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)

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!

From (1537) (ek) a primary preposition denoting origin (the point whence action or motion proceeds), from, out (of place, time, or cause, literal or figurative. Out of, from, by," suggesting "the source from which something is done," is sometimes rendered "by

means of," e.g., Luke 16:9, RV, "by means of (the mammon of unrighteousness);" AV, "of;" 2 Cor. 1:11, "by (the) means of (many)."

1 John 4 has 8 phrases that begin with "from" (ek) - 1 John 4:1, 1 John 4:2, 1 John 4:3, 1 John 4:4, 1 John 4:5, 1 John 4:6

GINGRICH [Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#) - EK before vowels ex prep. with genitive (possessive) = **from, out of, away from**—

1. to denote separation Mt 2:15; 26:27; Mk 16:3; Jn 12:27; 17:15 ; Ac 17:33; Gal 3:13; Rev 14:13; **from among** Lk 20:35; Acts 3:23.

2. to denote the direction from which something comes from, out from Mt 17:9; Mk 11:20; Lk 5:3; in answer to the question where? at, on Mt 20:21, 23; Ac 2:25, 34.

3. to denote origin, cause, motive reason from, of, by Mt 1:3, 5, 18; Jn 1:13, 46; 1 Cor 7:7; 2 Cor 5:1; Gal 2:15; 4:4; Phil 3:5. **Because of,** by Mk 7:11; 2 Cor 2:2; Rev 8:11. **By reason of, as a result of, because of** Lk 12:15; Ac 19:25; Ro 4:2; **with** Lk 16:9. **Of, from of source or material** Mt 12:34; J 19:2; 1 Cor 9:13; Rv 18:12. **According to, in accordance with** Mt 12:37; 2 Cor 8:11, 13. ek toutou **for this reason, therefore** Jn 6:66. oi` ek nomou partisans of the law Ro 4:14.

4. in periphrasis for the partitive gen. Mt 10:29; 25:2; Lk 11:15, which may even function as subject of a sentence ek t matheton some of the disciples Jn 16:17; used with einai = belong to someone or something Mt 26:73; Ac 21:8; 1 Cor 12:15f. After verbs of filling with Lk 15:16; J n12:3; Rev 8:5. For the gen. of price or value for Mt 20:2; 27:7; Ac 1:18.

5. of time from, from this or that time on Mt 19:12; Mk 10:20; J 9:1, 32; for Lk 23:8; **after** 2 Pt 2:8.

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

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. And the greatest use of ginosko in the Bible (IMO) is John 17:3+ "This is eternal life, that they may **know** (ginosko) You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom You have sent." To **know** God and Jesus Christ is salvation, eternal life. On the other hand if Jesus does not **know** you, that means you are dead in your trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1-3+) and will spend eternity away from His glorious present (2Th 1:9+). Jesus was crystal clear when He declared "I never (never ever - **oude pote**) **knew** (ginosko) you; **DEPART** (**present imperative**) FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS." (Mt 7:23+) Dear reader, I pray for your soul, that you never hear these words, thinking that you have made a profession of Jesus, but never truly experienced possession of Jesus. In His Name. Amen.

GINOSKO IN JOHN'S WRITINGS - Jn. 1:10 ; Jn. 1:48; Jn. 2:24; Jn. 2:25; Jn. 3:10; Jn. 4:1; Jn. 4:53; Jn. 5:6; Jn. 5:42; Jn. 6:15; Jn. 6:69; Jn. 7:17; Jn. 7:26; Jn. 7:27; Jn. 7:49; Jn. 7:51; Jn. 8:27; Jn. 8:28; Jn. 8:32; Jn. 8:43; Jn. 8:52; Jn. 8:55; Jn. 10:6; Jn. 10:14; Jn. 10:15; Jn. 10:27; Jn. 10:38; Jn. 11:57; Jn. 12:9; Jn. 12:16; Jn. 13:7; Jn. 13:12; Jn. 13:28; Jn. 13:35; Jn. 14:7; Jn. 14:9; Jn. 14:17; Jn. 14:20; Jn. 14:31; Jn. 15:18; Jn. 16:3; Jn. 16:19; Jn. 17:3; Jn. 17:7; Jn. 17:8; Jn. 17:23; Jn. 17:25; Jn. 19:4; Jn. 21:17; 1 Jn. 2:3; 1 Jn. 2:4; 1 Jn. 2:5; 1 Jn. 2:13; 1 Jn. 2:14; 1 Jn. 2:18; 1 Jn. 2:29; 1 Jn. 3:1; 1 Jn. 3:6; 1 Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 3:19; 1 Jn. 3:20; 1 Jn. 3:24; 1 Jn. 4:2; 1 Jn. 4:6; 1 Jn. 4:7; 1 Jn. 4:8; 1 Jn. 4:13; 1 Jn. 4:16; 1 Jn. 5:2; 1 Jn. 5:20; 2 Jn. 1:1; Rev. 2:23; Rev. 2:24; Rev. 3:3; Rev. 3:9

QUESTION - [What does it mean to love one another?](#) | [GotQuestions.org](#)

ANSWER - In John 13:34 Jesus taught, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." Then He added, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (verse 35). How do we do this? What does it mean to love one another?

The "one another" in these verses is a reference to fellow believers. A distinguishing mark of being a follower of Christ is a deep, sincere love for brothers and sisters in Christ. The apostle John reminds us of this fact elsewhere: "He has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister" (1 John 4:21).

In giving this command, Jesus did something the world had never seen before—He created a group identified by one thing: love. There are many groups in the world, and they identify themselves in any number of ways: by skin color, by uniform, by shared interest, by alma mater, etc. One group has tattoos and piercings; another group abstains from meat; yet another group wears fezzes—the ways people categorize themselves are endless. But the church is unique. For the first and only time in history, Jesus created a group whose identifying factor is love. Skin color doesn't matter. Native language doesn't matter. There are no rules about diet or uniforms or wearing funny hats. Followers of Christ are identified by their love for each other.

The early church demonstrated the type of love Jesus was talking about. There were people in Jerusalem from all over the known world (Acts 2:9–11). Those who were saved got together and immediately began meeting each other's needs: "All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need" (Acts 2:44–45). This was love in action, and you can be sure it made an impression on the people of that city.

Jesus' statements in John 13:34–35 raise a couple of other questions that may be good to answer. First, how does Jesus love? He loves unconditionally (Romans 5:8), sacrificially (2 Corinthians 5:21), with forgiveness (Ephesians 4:32), and eternally (Romans 8:38–39). At the same time, Jesus' love is holy—characterized by transcendent moral purity—because He is holy (Hebrews 7:26). The culmination of Christ's amazing love for us is His death on the cross, burial, and bodily resurrection (1 John 4:9–10). Believers are to love each other like that.

Second, how then can the believer in Christ love as Christ loved? The believer in Christ has the Holy Spirit living within him (1 Corinthians 6:19–20). By obeying the Spirit, through the Word of God, the believer can love like Christ does. He shows that unconditional, sacrificial, forgiving love to fellow believers, but it doesn't stop there. He also shows the love of Christ to friends, to family members, to coworkers, etc. (Ephesians 5:18–6:4; Galatians 5:16, 22–23). Even enemies are the recipients of Christ's love (see Matthew 5:43–48).

Christ's love displayed through the believer is unlike the "love" generated by the flesh, which can be selfish, egotistical, unforgiving, and insincere. 1 Corinthians 13:4–8 gives a wonderful description of what Christ's love will be like in and through the believer who walks in the Spirit.

People don't naturally love with a 1 Corinthians 13-type love. To love like that, there must be a change of heart. A person must realize that he is a sinner before God and understand that Christ died on the cross and rose again to provide him forgiveness; then he must make the decision to accept Christ as his personal Savior. At that point he is forgiven by Christ and receives God's gift of eternal life—in fact, he becomes a participant in the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). In Christ he knows that he is genuinely loved by God. The new life the believer receives includes a new capacity to love like Christ loves, for the believer now has living within him the unconditional, sacrificial, forgiving, eternal, and holy love of God (Romans 5:5).

To love one another is to love fellow believers as Christ loves us. Those who love like Christ in the Holy Spirit's power will give evidence that they are disciples, or learners, of Jesus Christ.

QUESTION - [What can we learn from 1 John 4:7, "Beloved, let us love one another"?](#)

ANSWER - In 1 John 4:7–8, the apostle John instructs believers, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is [born of God](#) and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (NKJV). God is love ([1 John 4:8](#)), and those who have been forgiven and saved by Him reflect His love. Believers will impact the world by showing others God's love, and this must begin with the beloved heeding the instruction to love one another.

John addresses believers as the "beloved." Calling believers "beloved" brings to mind God's sacrificial love ([John 3:16](#)). A believer acknowledges he is a sinner, realizes that Jesus took the penalty for his sins on the cross and then rose again, and puts his trust in Jesus alone for salvation ([Acts 4:12](#)). He knows he is genuinely loved by God, and his life is transformed ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)). A believer receives the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation along with a new capacity to love like Christ loves ([Romans 5:5](#)).

Jesus taught His disciples, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." Then He added, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" ([John 13:34–35](#)). People don't naturally love with a godly, [1 Corinthians 13](#)-type of love. To love like that, there must be a change of heart. A distinguishing mark of a follower of Christ is a deep, sincere love for brothers and sisters in Christ. True believers love not only "with words or speech but with actions and in truth" ([1 John 3:18](#)).

There are several "one another" commands in Scripture revealing what it looks like to love one another. Believers are called to be at peace with one another ([Mark 9:50](#)), be of the same mind as one another ([Romans 12:6](#); [15:5](#)), have patience with one another and forgive one another ([Ephesians 4:32](#)), bear one another's burdens ([Galatians 6:2](#)), speak the truth to one another ([Ephesians 4:25](#)), pray for one another ([James 5:16](#)), and exhibit other qualities of the Spirit. Indeed, believers are called to love one another several

times ([John 13:34](#); [15:12](#), [17](#); [Romans 13:8](#); [1 Thessalonians 3:12](#); [4:9](#); [1 Peter 1:22](#); [1 John 3:11](#); [4:7](#), [11](#); [2 John 5](#)) and are practically instructed on what that love looks like. It is this kind of sacrificial love that shows the world who God is in hopes that others will repent and experience God's love and forgiveness.

Believers can obey God's Word and love one another by the power of the Holy Spirit. A believer shows Christ's unconditional, sacrificial, and forgiving love to fellow believers, but he does not stop there. He also shows the love of Christ to friends, family members, co-workers, and even enemies ([Leviticus 19:18](#); [Matthew 5:43–48](#); [Romans 13:10](#)). God's love compels believers to [love one another](#).

Related Resources:

- [What does it mean to have love for one another \(John 13:35\)?](#)
- [Why is loving others often so difficult? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why should we owe no man anything except to love one another? \(Ro 13:8\)](#)
- [What does it mean to bear with one another \(Colossians 3:13\)?](#)
- [What does it mean to be kind to one another \(Ephesians 4:32\)?](#)
- [What does it mean to submit to one another \(Ephesians 5:21\)?](#)
- [How are we to exhort one another daily \(Hebrews 3:13\)?](#)
- [How can we encourage one another to love and good works? \(Heb 10:24\)](#)
- [What does it mean that we should be bearing with one another \(Eph 4:2\)?](#)

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](#))

Chris Benfield - Someone has asked “What is love” and then gave the following answer:

It is silence—when your words would hurt.

It is patience—when your neighbor’s curt.

It is deafness—when a scandal flows.

It is thoughtfulness—for other’s woes.

It is promptness—when stern duty calls.

It is courage—when misfortune falls.

Alan Carr - 1 John 4:7–11 THIS LOVE IS DESCRIBED IN THE CONTEXT

- A. It Is Unspeakable—I can’t understand it, or why, but I know I have experienced it and I can never be separated from it—Rom. 8:38–39
 - B. It Is Unending—Jer. 31:3. There is a difference between infatuation and love! God’s love is eternal!
 - C. It Is Unselfish—III. It asks for nothing in return! However, it leads man to repent and turn to God in love—Rom. 2:4; 1 John 4:19.
 - C. It Is Unmerited—Cannot be earned or deserved! God loved us because He desired a people to love. (III. His love is based in His grace!) (III. Jesus and Jerusalem—Matt. 23:37.)
 - E. It Is Unconditional—It is not based on what we can or cannot produce, it is a product of the heart of God. Man can never reach a place when he will not be loved by God! God loved us first, He loved us anyway and He loves us eternally!
 - F. His love is Supernatural, it is Sacrificing, it is Satisfying!
-

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 (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

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.

ILLUSTRATION OF NOT LOVING ONE ANOTHER AND THE FRUIT THEREOF - I heard a story on time about a church in Kansas. It seems that in this church the piano was situated on the eastern side of the sanctuary. For some unknown reason, a group of church members were convinced that the piano would be more strategically placed if it were on the western side of the sanctuary.

After several months of debate within the church, the western party decided to take matters into it's own hands. So late one Saturday night, several of them entered the church and moved the piano. The next morning those who wanted the piano on the eastern side were understandably upset, but could not do anything without making a scene.

The next week several members showed up early Saturday evening to move the piano back to the east. Each week after that the piano was moved several times on Saturday and early Sunday morning. Eventually, the stress of wondering who was going to move it and when became too great and the church split. Still to this day, it is told, the members of the east and west sides refuse to even speak to each other.

A church in the southern United States no longer exists, due in part to an incident that took place in the church kitchen one Sunday afternoon.

A new family had arrived to take part in their first pot-luck luncheon. The aroma of tuna casseroles, baked beans, and Tater-Tot dishes wafted through the building. The unsuspecting wife cheerfully brought her red gelatin salad to the kitchen, then headed back to the fellowship hall to join her family.

The moment the pastor said "Amen," hungry parishioners politely charged for the serving line. There were dozens of dishes to sample. "Where's our salad?" The woman's husband asked innocently.

"There must be some mistake," She said. "I'll find out what happened." She reached the kitchen door in time to witness the queen of the kitchen ladling the last of her salad into the disposal.

"What are you doing?" The newcomer shrieked. "That's my salad!"

Without batting an eye, the woman looked up and said, "You're new to this church. You'll soon learn we use only real whipped cream around here, not Cool Whip." She hit the switch. The garbage disposal rumbled and gurgled and sucked the salad down the drain.

That one incident started a significant church battle that escalated into all-out war.

LEARNING TO LOVE BY THEODORE EPP

In Strength for the Journey

Ephesians 5: 1-5

Does the standard of God's love seem too high to attain? Having received Jesus Christ as Saviour, we have been born of the Holy Spirit and have become members of God's family. We have become partakers in, or sharers of, the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4), and the essence of the divine nature is love. It is the kind of love that loves even when there is no response, always seeking the highest good for the other person. That God loved us when there was no response is evident from Romans 5:8: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." But it can be said that because of our having received Jesus Christ as Saviour, "the love of God is [now] shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (v. 5). Since it is His love that is in our hearts, we are able to attain God's standard of love by letting Christ live His life in us as He desires. The expression of this love in us is one of the strongest proofs that we really are the children of God (1 John 4:7-16).

When Paul urged believers to "walk in love" (Eph. 5:2), he was emphasizing that our life is lived one step at a time. As we rely on the Lord for the step we are now taking, we need not worry about the steps that are ahead. Of course, Paul was referring to a person's way of life. First John 3:18 says, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." It is easy to talk, but it is costly to walk.

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13:34).

Learning to Love - Love does more than make "the world go round," as an old song says. It also makes us immensely vulnerable. From time to time, we may say to ourselves: "Why love when others do not show appreciation?" or "Why love and open myself up to hurt?" But the apostle Paul gives a clear and simple reason to pursue love: "These three remain: faith, hope and love. But the

greatest of these is love. Follow the way of love" (1 Cor. 13:13–14:1).

"Love is an activity, the essential activity of God himself," writes Bible commentator C. K. Barrett, "and when men love either Him or their fellow-men, they are doing (however imperfectly) what God does." And God is pleased when we act like Him.

To begin following the way of love, think about how you might live out the characteristics listed in 1 Corinthians 13:4–7. For example, how can I show my child the same patience God shows me? How can I show kindness and respect for my parents? What does it mean to look out for the interests of others when I am at work? When something good happens to my friend, do I rejoice with her or am I envious?

As we "follow the way of love," we'll find ourselves often turning to God, the source of love, and to Jesus, the greatest example of love. Only then will we gain a deeper knowledge of what true love is and find the strength to love others like God loves us.

God, thank You that You are love and that You love me so much. Help me to love others the way Jesus showed us so that the whole world will know I am Your child.

Love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 1 John 4:7

INSIGHT: Love has been defined as sacrificial giving of one's time, money, or energy while expecting nothing in return. Certainly this definition is a good starting point. But today's inspired reading explores a deeper love, one that is demonstrated through a heart yielded to God. By Poh Fang Chia (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

J. C. Philpot. Daily Words for Zion's Wayfarers.

Love is of God. 1 John 4:7

Love is a gift which the risen Mediator has received that he may freely communicate it out of his fullness to his people. And we must be brought to feel that it is a gift. Could we produce or keep it alive in our own hearts, we would burn incense to our own skill or our own care. Some perhaps will scarcely believe that a child of God can feel enmity against Christ; but his carnal mind is unmitigated enmity against him. And oh, what a cutting feeling it is for a follower of the Lamb to have a principle in him which hates Christ; hates, bitterly hates his Person, hates his holiness and purity; which could join in the cry, "Crucify him, crucify him," and push and strike him with the Roman soldiers and the Jewish rabble. Unless painful experience convinced us that there was such a dreadful principle within, we could not believe that there was this devilish enmity in our heart against him whom our souls desire to love and adore.

But what know we about love, if we have not all this enmity, carnality, and coldness to try it? When we have been exercised with all these wretched feelings, and the Lord begins to drop into our hearts a little mercy and grace, and to draw forth our affections unto him, we then begin to feel what a sweet thing love is. Love is the sweetest balm man can taste in this life. It is so naturally. There is a sweetness in love. When we love our wives, our children, our friends, there is a sweetness and tenderness in the very feeling, that is--as moralists say of virtue--its own reward. Coldness, dislike, envy, prejudice, jealousy, suspicion, peevishness, quarreling--these sparks of hell burn and torture every spot on which they fall. And so, if ever there is a hell in a man's bosom, it is when full of hatred against God and his people. But if ever we feel a foretaste of heaven, it is when the Lord kindles some meltings of love, some drawings of affection toward Jesus and to those who are his. Then enmity and prejudice flee away; and we feel as if we could take all the people of God into our bosom, and say, "Your people shall be my people, and your God my God." - J. C. Philpot. Daily Words for Zion's Wayfarers.

Matthew Henry - Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 1 John 4:7

The Spirit of God is the Spirit of love. He that does not love the image of God in his people has no saving knowledge of God. For it is God's nature to be kind, and to give happiness. The law of God is love; and all would have been perfectly happy, had all obeyed it. The provision of the gospel, for the forgiveness of sin, and the salvation of sinners, consistently with God's glory and justice, shows that God is love. Mystery and darkness rest upon many things yet. God has so shown himself to be love, that we cannot come short of eternal happiness, unless through unbelief and impenitence, although strict justice would condemn us to hopeless misery, because we break our Creator's laws. None of our words or thoughts can do justice to the free, astonishing love of a holy God towards sinners, who could not profit or harm him, whom he might justly crush in a moment, and whose deserving of his vengeance was shown in the method by which they were saved, though he could by his almighty Word have created other worlds, with more perfect beings, if he had seen fit. Should we search the whole universe for love in its most glorious displays? It is to be found in the person and the cross of Christ. Does love exist between God and sinners? Here was the origin, not that we loved God, but that he

freely loved us. His love could not be designed to be fruitless upon us, and when its proper end and issue are gained and produced, it may be said to be perfected.

Adrian Rogers - There are those among us who do not want to face some very serious issues. They would prefer to ladle honey over all of our problems with the hope that, perhaps, they can be made to disappear. These well-meaning people have the gospel of saccharin sweetness, but it is not the Bible Gospel. There is the honey gospel that tells us over and over again that God is love. This is indeed true. God is love - infinite love, inexpressable love and holy love.

While it is true that God is love, that is not all of the truth. When part of the truth is taken for all of the truth, then that part of the truth becomes an untruth. God is also a holy god, who "will not at all acquit the wicked," He said, "Speak the truth in love." Let us beware of loveless truth and truthless love.

A Church That Cares

By Bill Crowder

While traveling together, my wife and I started talking with a delightful young woman we met. The time passed quickly as we chatted about lighthearted topics.

But when she heard that I was a minister, the conversation took a heart-wrenching turn. She began to share with us that when her husband left her only a few months earlier, she had struggled with the pain of that abandonment.

Then she smiled and said, "I can't tell you how much my church has meant to me these past months." Her mood and countenance changed dramatically as she recounted the ways her church family had wrapped their loving arms around her in her season of heartache. It was refreshing to hear how that local assembly had surrounded her with the love of Christ.

Far too often, it seems, we limit the significance of church to what happens on Sunday. But the church is to be so much more. It is to be a safe haven, a rescue station, a training center for spiritual service. It is particularly to be an expression of the concerned heart of the Lord for hurting, broken people, such as our young friend.

We are to "love one another," John the disciple reminded us, "for love is of God" (1 John 4:7). (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

It was only a brief little note,
Or a word that was prayerfully spoken,
Yet not in vain, for it soothed the pain
Of a heart that was nearly broken. —Anon.

Hope can be ignited by a spark of encouragement.

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 (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

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 (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.

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 (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

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