

# 1 John 4:20 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+[a](#)

"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 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen ([NASB: Lockman](#))**

**Greek** - ean tis eipe (3SAAS) hoti Agapo (1SPA1) ton theon kai ton adelphon autou mise (3SPAS) pseustes estin (3SPA1) o gar me agapon (PAPMSN) ton adelphon autou on heoraken (3SRA1) ton theon on ouc heoraken (3SRA1) ou dunatai (3SPPI) agapan (PAN).

KJV 1 John 4:20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

BGT 1 John 4:20 ν τις ε π τι γαπ τ ν θε ν κα τ ν δελφ ν α το μισ , ψε σ της σ τ ν· γ ρ μ γαπ ν τ ν δελφ ν α το ν ρακεν, τ ν θε ν ν ο χ ρακεν ο δ ν α ται γαπ ν.

NET 1 John 4:20 If anyone says "I love God" and yet hates his fellow Christian, he is a liar, because the one

who does not love his fellow Christian whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

CSB 1 John 4:20 If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For the person who does not love his brother he has seen cannot love the God he has not seen.

ESV 1 John 4:20 If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

NIV 1 John 4:20 If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.

NLT 1 John 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," but hates a Christian brother or sister, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see?

NRS 1 John 4:20 Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen.

NJB 1 John 4:20 Anyone who says 'I love God' and hates his brother, is a liar, since whoever does not love the brother whom he can see cannot love God whom he has not seen.

NAB 1 John 4:20 If anyone says, "I love God," but hates his brother, he is a liar; for whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

YLT 1 John 4:20 if any one may say -- 'I love God,' and his brother he may hate, a liar he is; for he who is not loving his brother whom he hath seen, God -- whom he hath not seen -- how is he able to love?

MIT 1 John 4:20 If anyone says, "I love God" yet hates his brother, he is a deceiver. For the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

GWN 1 John 4:20 Whoever says, "I love God," but hates another believer is a liar. People who don't love other believers, whom they have seen, can't love God, whom they have not seen.

BBE 1 John 4:20 If a man says, I have love for God, and has hate for his brother, his words are false: for how is the man who has no love for his brother whom he has seen, able to have love for God whom he has not seen?

RSV 1 John 4:20 If any one says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

NKJ 1 John 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

ASV 1 John 4:20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen.

Amplified - If anyone says, I love God, and hates (detests, abominates) his brother in Christ], he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, Whom he has not seen.

Wuest - If anyone says: I am constantly loving God, and his brother is as constantly hating, he is a liar. For the one who is not constantly loving his brother whom he has seen with discernment and at present has within the range of his vision, God whom he has not seen with discernment and at present does not have within the range of his vision, he is not able to be loving. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

- **Someone:** 1Jn 2:4 3:17
- **not seen:** 1Jn 4:12
- [1 John 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 John 2:4+ The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is **aliar** ([pseustes](#)), and the truth is not in him;

1 John 2:22+ Who is the **liar** ([pseustes](#)) but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.

Hebrews 12:14+ **Pursue** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) peace with all men (CF TO LOVING YOUR BROTHER), and the sanctification without which **no one will see the Lord**. (THAT IS, THEY ARE NOT BELIEVERS - THEY PURSUE PEACE BECAUSE THEY ARE SAVED, AND

ENABLED BY THE SPIRIT TO PURSUE PEACE, THEIR PURSUIT OF PEACE IS NOT TO MERIT OR EARN SALVATION).

## A PROFESSION PROVEN TO BE A PREVARICATION!

A [prevarication](#) is a statement that deviates from or perverts the truth.

*If you don't love your visible brother,  
then you can't be loving the invisible God.*

-- John Piper

**If someone says** (cf the other six false statements = 1Jn 1:6, 8, 10; 2:4, 6, 9), "I love ([agapao](#) - present tense) God," and hates ([miseo](#) - present tense - continually, habitually, as his lifestyle) his brother ([adelphos](#)), he is (present tense) a liar ([pseustes](#)); for ([gar](#)) the one who does not love ([agapao](#) - present tense) his brother ([adelphos](#)) whom he has seen, cannot (ou - absolutely + [dunamai](#) - can, able = cannot) love ([agapao](#) - present tense) God Whom he has not seen - John again introduces someone who continually professes love of God but continually fails to practice that love to others. Beloved, John is not speaking of falling out of fellowship with God, but of failing to ever enter into fellowship with God. Clearly, John is giving another test of the authenticity of one's faith and salvation and in this case, the individual is deemed a liar ([pseustes](#)) and fails to pass the test and remains in danger of eternal separation from God.

**Bob Utley** on **if someone says** - This is a THIRD CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE which meant potential action. This is another example of John quoting the statements of the false teachers in order to make a point (cf. 1Jn 1:6, 8, 10; 2:4, 6). This literary technique is called diatribe

**John MacArthur** - The apostle repeats his warning (cf. 1Jn 2:4, 9; 3:10, 17; 4:8) that anyone who claims to love God but does not love others is a deceiver (See [1-3 John - Volume 5 - Page 171](#))

*However loudly we may affirm ourselves to be Christian,  
our habitual sin, denial of Christ and selfish hatred  
expose us as the liars we are.*

-- John Stott

**Steven Cole** - It's easy to deceive ourselves into thinking that we love God, when in fact we do not. Love that gives us confidence in the day of judgment is validated by our love for one another (1Jn 4:20). As usual, John doesn't mince words: "If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar..." As **John Stott** (Borrow [The Letters of John](#)) points out (p. 170), the apostle uses the word liar ([pseustes](#)) with reference to each of the three tests. With regard to the moral test, he said (1Jn 2:4), "The one who says, 'I have come to know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar ([pseustes](#)), and the truth is not in him." With regard to the doctrinal test, he said (1Jn 2:22+), "Who is the liar ([pseustes](#)) but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ?" Here, he applies it to the social test of love. **Stott** concludes, "However loudly we may affirm ourselves to be Christian, our habitual sin, denial of Christ and selfish hatred expose us as the liars we are." John's argument is that we cannot separate the two great commandments. It is easier to say, "I love God," because God is invisible and love for Him may be difficult to observe. But Jesus said (John 14:15+), "If you love Me, you will keep ([tereo](#)) My commandments." His main commandment is that we love one another (John 13:34+; Jn 15:12+).

*If you don't practice sacrificial, committed love for others,  
you are revealing that you do not really love God.*

So John is saying that genuine love for God necessarily will show itself in observable love for others. If you don't practice sacrificial, committed love for others, you are revealing that you do not really love God. ([1 John 4:17-21 Facing the Judgment with Confidence](#))

*John calls for our life to match our lips,  
our practice to match our profession!*

In short, John calls for our **life** to match our **lips**, our **practice** (demonstration of love to our brother) to match our **profession** ("I love God.") The hypocrite says "I love God," but fails to demonstrate it as evidenced by the fact that he hates his brother, thus proving his **profession** to be a [prevarication](#) (lie). John explains that if we do not love those we can see, we absolutely cannot love the God we cannot see! Upshot - Don't just **SAY** you love God. Enabled by His Spirit, **SHOW** you love God by loving your brother!

*Our lifestyle love clearly reveals whether we are Christians.  
Conflict is possible, but settled hatred is not.*

-- Bob Utley

**William MacDonald** - John emphasizes the futility of professing to love God while at the same time hating one's brother. As spokes get nearer to the center of the wheel, so they get nearer to one another. Thus, as we get closer to the Lord, the more we will love our fellow believers. Actually, we do not love the Lord a bit more than we love the humblest of His followers. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

*The perfect love that drives out fear,  
drives out hatred also*

**John Stott** - Love for God expresses itself not only in a confident attitude towards Him, devoid of fear, but in a loving concern for our brothers and sisters (cf. 1Jn 3:14+). The perfect love that drives out fear, drives out hatred also. If God's love for us is made complete when we love one another (1Jn 4:12), so is our love for God. John does not mince his words. If how a person behaves contradicts what he says, he is a liar.

*These are the three black lies of the letter:  
moral, doctrinal and social.*

To claim to know God and have fellowship with God while we walk in the darkness of disobedience **is to lie** (1Jn 1:6+; 1Jn 2:4+). To claim to possess the Father while denying the deity of the Son **is to lie** (1Jn 2:22-23+). To claim to love God while hating our brothers **is also to lie**. These are the three black lies of the letter: moral, doctrinal and social. We may insist that we are Christian, but habitual sin, denial of Christ or selfish hatred would expose us as liars. Only holiness (**ED**: cf Heb 12:14+), faith and love can prove the truth of our claim to know, possess and love God. (Borrow [The Letters of John](#))

**Marvin Vincent** - Note the striking inversion of the clauses: He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, God whom he hath not seen cannot love.

**Colin Kruse** points out that "This is an a fortiori statement, arguing from the lesser to the greater. If people cannot carry out the lesser requirement (to love their fellow believers whom they have seen), they cannot carry out the greater requirement (to love God whom they have not seen)." (See [The Letters of John - Page 170](#))

**W A Criswell** observes that "This is the seventh erroneous statement which the author refutes directly (cf. 1Jn 1:6, 8, 10; 1Jn 2:4, 6, 9)" all of which begin with either "if we say" or "the one who says." (Believer's Bible Commentary)

*It is a false boast when anyone says that he loves God  
but neglects His image which is before his eyes'*

-- John Calvin

**Warren Wiersbe** adds "Here it is for the seventh time: "If a man say ...!" We have met this important phrase several times, and each time we knew what was coming: a warning against pretending." ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**C H Spurgeon** on **I love God** - Not, "if a man love God," but if a man say, "I love God." It is a blessed thing to be able to say, "I love God," when God himself can bear witness to the truth of our statement; but the apostle says, If a man say, I love God, (Exposition on 1 John 4)

*Every claim to love God is a delusion if it is not accompanied  
by unselfish and practical love for our brothers and sisters (1Jn 3:17-18+).*

-- John Stott

**William Barclay** - Love of God and love of man are indissolubly connected (1John 4:7+; 1John 4:11+; 1John 4:20-21). As C. H. Dodd finely puts it: "*The energy of love discharges itself along lines which form a triangle, whose points are God, self, and neighbor.*" If God loves us, we are bound to love each other, because it is our destiny to reproduce the life of God in humanity and the life of eternity in time. John says, with almost crude bluntness, that a man who claims to love God and hates his brother is nothing other than a liar. The only way to prove that we love God is to love the men whom God loves. The only way to prove that God is within our hearts is constantly to show the love of men within our lives.

**Spurgeon** gives a good explanation of **brother** and specifically emphasizes this does not identify a brother in Christ (as some evangelical commentators attest in order to support a false interpretation of what John is saying!) - And the word "**brother**" is to be understood in the widest possible sense. We are all brothers, springing from the same common parent; and therefore we ought to be philanthropists, lovers of man, loving even the guilty and the worthless, having an earnest desire to do good even to those who do us ill. If we have not yet reached that spirit, we had need begin our true Christian life, at the foot of the cross, by trusting and loving him who there died out of love for sinners; for there only can we learn, in the person of Christ Jesus our Lord, this divine philosophy

of love to God and men. (Exposition on 1 John 4)

**John Stott** notes that "It is obviously easier to love and serve a visible human being than an invisible God, and if we fail in the easier task, it is absurd to claim success in the harder. 'It is a false boast when anyone says that he loves God but neglects His image which is before his eyes' (Calvin). As Dodd points out, this 'cannot' expresses not so much the person's incapacity to love God, as the proof that he does not. It is easy to deceive ourselves. The truth, however, is plain. Every claim to love God is a delusion if it is not accompanied by unselfish and practical love for our brothers and sisters (1Jn 3:17-18)." (Borrow [The Letters of John](#))

*Love for God and hatred for a brother  
cannot coexist in the same heart*

-- Danny Akin

**He is** (present tense) **a liar** ([pseustes](#)); **for** ([gar](#)) **the one who does not love** ([agapao](#) - present tense) **his brother** ([adelphos](#)) **whom he has seen, cannot** (ou - absolutely + [dunamai](#) - can, able = cannot) **love** ([agapao](#) - present tense) **God Whom he has not seen** - The verb "**is**" (estin) is present tense signifying this man as a habitual liar. Truth be told (pun intended) we all lie from time to time (remember "*little white lies*" are black as night before a God Who is perfect light!), but because believers possess the **Spirit of truth** (Jn 14:17, Jn 15:26, Jn 16:13), they cannot habitually lie. A lying Christian is a conscience smitten Christian, and cannot continue in the state ad infinitum. Either he confesses and repents or he is sorely disciplined by the Lord. And as John makes clear, if he persists indefinitely in lying, then he is living a lie and is forever lost. **For** ([gar](#)) is a term of explanation should always prompt the question "What is the author explaining?" In context, John is explaining how the professor of "**I love God**" is a **liar** and does not truly love God Who is invisible. Why? Because he **does not love his brother** who is visible! The verb **has seen** in the perfect tense signifying that this **liar** has seen his brother at some point in time and "continues to feel the influence of that sight." ([Alford](#)) In other words, this was not a passing glance like a fleeting shadow, thus the verdict failure to love was fully justified.

*If we refuse to love the tangible (brethren),  
we cannot claim to love the intangible (God)!*

John describes eternal punishment as the fate of all habitual **liars**....

"But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and **all** (ALL WHO MAKE LYING A LIFESTYLE) **liars**, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (Revelation 21:8+)

*Like father,  
like son.*

Jesus explains who is the father of habitual liars (addressing Jews who actually professed faith in Jn 8:30-31+ but clearly did not possess faith Jn 8:45-47+)

You are of [your] father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because **there is no truth in him**. Whenever **he speaks a lie**, he speaks from his own [nature;] for he is a **liar**, and the **father of lies**." (Jn 8:44+)

*You can never judge a man's  
character by his books.*

**Spurgeon** - It is very rude of you, John, to call people liars. But it is not John's rough nature that uses such strong language; it is his gentle nature. When a loving disposition turns its face against evil, it turns against it with great vehemence of holy indignation. You can never judge a man's character by his books. Curiously enough, Mr. Romaine. Of St. Anne's Church, Blackfriars, wrote the most loving books that could be; yet he was a man of very strong temper indeed. Mr. Toplady wrote some of the sharpest things that were ever said about [Arminians](#); but he was the most loving and gentle young man that ever breathed. St. John, full of love and tenderness, hits terribly hard when he comes across a lie. He was so fond of love, that he cannot have it played with, or mocked or mimicked. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar." (Exposition on 1 John 4)

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**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

**Hates** (3404) [miseo](#) from **misos** = hatred) means to dislike strongly, to have a strong aversion to or to detest, all of these representing expressions of hostility of one person (or group) toward another (Mt 5:43, Lk 6:27, et al). Specifically the hatred can be directed toward God (Lk 1:71). Good hatred in Heb 1:9 (cf use of [miseo](#) in Lxx of Ps 101:3, Ps 119:104, 113, 128, 163, Ps 139:21-22). The majority of the NT uses of [miseo](#) convey the literal meaning of animosity towards God, people or particular attitudes. It is notable that except for Lk 1:71, **miseo** is always used by Jesus in the Gospels. **Miseo** is the opposite of **agapao (to love)**. The essence of **to love** is to care more about others than about self, caring even to the point of sacrifice of one's life (Jn 15:13, Eph 5:25). To hate is to care little or nothing about the other person and even wish them harm and/or death (Eph 5:29, Mt 24:9).

**Hate** (Webster's Dictionary) - To feel strong aversion or intense dislike for. To dislike greatly; to have a great aversion to. It expresses less than abhor, detest, and abominate, unless pronounced with a peculiar emphasis. In Scripture, it signifies to love less. Hate implies an emotional aversion often coupled with enmity or malice

**Hates** ([miseo](#)) conveys the meaning of animosity towards another. To **hate** is to possess and/or express a strong negative reaction, a feeling toward someone considered an enemy as well as loving someone less than another. In 1Jn 4:19 **miseo** is in the present tense which signifies their hatred is habitual. Their lifestyle is one of hating others! What a miserable way to live!!! It is the polar opposite of agape love. Note that all five uses of [miseo](#) are in the present tense which describes a lifestyle of hatred.

John has used [miseo](#) four times already in his epistle...

1John 2:9+ The one who says he is in the Light and yet **hates** (present tense = continually) his brother is in the darkness until now...

1Jn 2:11+ But the one who **hates** (present tense = continually) his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

1John 3:13+ Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world **hates** (present tense = continually) you.

1 John 3:15+ Everyone who **hates** (present tense = continually) his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

**John** describes this hatred in his Gospel

John 3:20+ "For everyone who does evil **hates** (present tense = continually) the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. (Ultimately "the Light" is the Lord - Jn 8:12).

John 7:7+ "The world cannot **hate** (present tense = continually) you, but it **hates** (present tense = continually) Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil.

John 12:25+ "He who loves his life loses it, and he who **hates** (present tense = continually) his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.

John 15:18-19+ "If the world **hates** (present tense = continually) you, you know that it has **hated** (perfect tense) Me. 19 "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world **hates** (present tense = continually) you.

John 15:23+ "He who **hates** (present tense = continually) Me **hates** (present tense = continually) My Father also. 24 "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and **hated** (perfect tense) Me and My Father as well. 25 "But they have done this to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, 'THEY **HATED** (aorist tense) ME WITHOUT A CAUSE.'

John 17:14+ (Jesus praying to His Father says) "I have given them Your word; and the world has **hated** (aorist

tense) them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

**Liar** (5583) **pseustes** from **pseudomai** = to lie) is one who speaks falsehood, untruth, and so attempts to deceive. **Thayer** adds that **pseustes** describes "one who breaks faith, a false or faithless man."

**Webster's 1828 Dictionary** - A person who knowingly utters falsehood; one who declares to another as a fact what he knows to be not true, and with an intention to deceive him. The uttering of falsehood by mistake, and without an intention to deceive, does not constitute one a **liar**.

This is the fourth of five times in this short letter that John describes **aliar** three times referring to men and twice to God...

1Jn 1:10+ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him **aliar**, and His word is not in us.

1Jn 2:4+ The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is **aliar**, and the truth is not in him

1Jn 2:22+ Who is the **liar** but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.

1Jn 5:10+ The one who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a **liar**, because he has not believed in the witness that God has borne concerning His Son.

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### Octavius Winslow Daily Walking with God

If a man say, I love God, and hates his brother, he is liar: for he that loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? 1 John 4:20.

HERE is a test of relationship to the family of God which never fails. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." From this the weakest believer may extract the greatest consolation. Other evidences, beloved, may be beclouded. Divine knowledge may be deficient, Christian experience may be limited, and the question, "Am I a child of God?" may long have been one of painful doubt; but here is an evidence which cannot deceive. You may doubt your love to God, but your love to His people, as such, proves the existence and the reality of your love to Him. Your attachment to them, because they are holy, is an evidence of your own holiness, which no power can invalidate or set aside. Since the Holy Spirit has constituted it as evidence, and since God admits it as such, we press its comfort, with all the energy which we possess, upon the heart of the doubting, trembling child of God.

You may often have questioned the reality of your love to God, scarcely daring to claim an affection so great as this. Your attachment to Jesus, so inconstant, so wavering, and so cold, may often have raised the anxious fear and the perplexing doubt. But your love to the people of God has been like a sheet-anchor to your soul. This you have not questioned, and you could not doubt. You have loved them because they were the people of God; you have felt an attachment to them because they were the disciples of Christ. What does this prove, but your love to God, your affection to Jesus, and your own participation in the same Divine nature? It were a thing impossible for you to love that which is holy, without a corresponding principle of holiness in yourself. Speaking of the enmity of the ungodly against His people, our Lord employs this language; "If you were of the world, the world would love his own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." Now, if there is the opposite feeling to this glowing in your hearts, be sure that, as the hatred of the world to the saints proves that it loves only its own, so your love to the saints places the fact of your union with them beyond all doubt. Try your heart, beloved, by this test. Do you not love the people of God, because they are His people? Is not Christ's image in those who upon which you so delight to gaze, and gazing upon which, often enkindles your soul with love to Christ Himself? Do you not love to cull the choicest flowers of grace in the Lord's garden—growing in what bed they may—as those in whom your soul has the greatest delight—their different tints, their varied beauties and odors, rather increasing, than diminishing, the pleasure which they afford you? Then, let every Christian professor test his religion by this grace. Let him who has been used to retire within his own narrow enclosure ask himself the question, "If I love not my brother whom I have seen, how can I love God whom I have not seen?"

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### Henry Mahan - Love to God and Others

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? 1 John 4:20

John is saying here that all who truly love the living God also love those who are in the image of God, and that which is identified with God here and now on the earth. How foolish it would then be to claim to love God while holding in contempt those things which are God's—the very people he has made for himself and by whom he is pleased to reveal and glorify himself.



You have never seen God and this leaves you free to imagine whatever you will about God. This allows you to form and make a character which pleases you and then call it "god." "Thou thoughtest I was altogether such an one as thyself," said the Lord in Psalm 50:21.

But the living God is revealed in his own dear Son who walked on this earth. He is revealed in his Word, his providence, his creation, and yes, in his church! The people of God (frail and weak though they may be) are a part of God himself.

He loves them, redeems them, indwells them, and uses them to accomplish his purpose and glory. So to not love them and to refuse to be identified with them in their fellowship and worship is to declare loud and clear that we really do not know and love God. "He that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit." (I Thess. 4:8).

Therefore, the religious recluse who can find no one who agrees with him, no one who pleases him, no one and nothing to enjoy, and no fellowship in which to delight, is not really in love with God at all

- he's just in love with himself. He is settled in self-righteousness and in under a false concept of God. That which he sees and hates is that which God made. That church which he shuns is God's church. That providence in which he finds no delight is God's providence by which God works his divine will.

Christ said, "In as much as ye did it not unto the least of these my brethren, ye did it not unto me" (Mt. 25:45). Christ and his church are one! John is simply telling us, in no uncertain terms, that it is impossible to love one and not love the other.

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### Warren Wiersbe - Pleasing Priorities [Pause for Power: A 365-Day Journey through the Scriptures - Page 242](#)

Read 1 John 4:20–21

Anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. 1 John 4:20

When our hearts are confident toward God, there is no need for us to pretend, either to God or to other people. If we lack confidence with God, we will also lack confidence with God's people. Part of the torment that fear generates is constant worry.

"How many members do you have in your church?" a visitor asked the pastor.

"Somewhere near a thousand," the pastor replied.

"That certainly is a lot of people to try to please!" the visitor exclaimed.

"Let me assure you, my friend, that I have never tried to please all my members or even some of them," the pastor said with a smile. "I aim to please one person—the Lord Jesus Christ. If I am right with Him, then everything should be right between me and my people."

Immature Christians who are not growing in their love for God may think they have to impress others with their "spirituality." This mistake turns them into liars! They are professing something that they are not really practicing; they are playing a role instead of living a life.

Something to Ponder - What is one act of love you could do for a person as an expression of your love for God?

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If someone says, "I love God" and hates his brother, he is a liar. 1 JOHN 4:20

Don't you just hate hypocrisy in the church? For many of you it's a major reason why you don't come to church. In the movie *The Apostle*, starring Robert Duvall, we see a preacher who gets in trouble. He even kills a man, but he runs to a new town and continues to preach.

Certainly, over the last 30 years, Hollywood has done a number on preachers and priests. And time after time they are painted in a very unflattering way, usually as hypocrites or a bunch of out-of-touch airheads, or mean, cruel sickos. If you combine all of that with the charlatan TV evangelists, well, it's not a pretty picture.

But the truth is, all of us preachers struggle with hypocrisy and not always practicing what we preach. I sure do. But I have good news. I've only known one preacher in my life who had no trace of hypocrisy. And He's alive today—His name is Jesus. All the rest of us fall short, but Jesus never does. So put your focus and your faith in Him. —BRYANT WRIGHT

Right from the Heart Is there any hypocrisy in your life? Write out a prayer asking God to help you "practice what you preach" or live your life more like Jesus every day [God's Promises Devotional Journal: 365 Days](#)

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David Jeremiah - Whom having not seen you love.

I walk by faith, not by sight. I love You, God, because You first loved me. I have known and believed the love that You have for me. You are love, and I who abide in love abide in You, and You in me. In You I also trusted, after I heard the word of truth, the gospel of my salvation; in whom also, having believed, I was sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. To me You willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in me, the hope of glory.

If I say, "I love God," and hate my brother, I am a liar; for I who do not love my brother whom I have seen, how can I love God whom I have not seen?

Jesus said, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." Blessed am I who put my trust in You, Lord God.

Enable me, Lord, to abide in You more fully ...  
to love my brother more wholeheartedly ...  
and to trust You more completely  
so that I may know Your blessings.

1 PETER 1:8; 2 CORINTHIANS 5:7; 1 JOHN 4:19; 1 JOHN 4:16; EPHESIANS 1:13; COLOSSIANS 1:27; 1 JOHN 4:20; JOHN 20:29; PSALM 2:12 [Life-Changing Moments with God: Praying Scripture Every Day](#)

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1 John 4:20 Part of the Package There is a natural, logical kind of loving that loves lovely things and lovely people. That's logical. But there is another kind of loving that doesn't look for value in what it loves, but that CREATES value in what it loves. Like Rosemary's rag doll. When Rosemary, my youngest child, was three, she was given a little rag doll, which quickly became an inseparable companion. She had other toys that were intrinsically far more valuable, but none that she loved like she loved the rag doll. Soon the rag doll became more and more rag and less and less doll. It also became more and more dirty. If you tried to clean the rag doll, it became more ragged still. And if you didn't try to clean the rag doll, it became dirtier still. The sensible thing to do was to trash the rag doll. But that was unthinkable for anyone who loved my child. If you loved Rosemary, you loved the rag doll—it was part of the package. "If anyone says 'I love God' yet hates his brother or sister, he is a liar," (1 John 4:20) "love me, love my rag dolls," says God, "including the one you see when you look in the mirror. This is the first and greatest commandment." Ian Pitt-Watson

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### **The Unseen God (1 John 4:20)**

1. DECLARATION To MOSES Exodus 33:23
  2. STATEMENT Of ELIPHAZ Job 5:8, 9
  3. FOOTSTEPS Are UNKNOWN Psalm 77:19
  4. GREATNESS Is UNSEARCHABLE Psalms 145:3
  5. NEVER Seen by ANY MAN John 6:46
  6. INVISIBLE To the FAITHFUL Hebrews 11:27 7. IMPORTANT QUESTION 1 John 4:20
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**H A Ironside** - A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. John 13:34–35

The new commandment, "That you love one another," is all-embracing. "Love," we are told, "is the fulfillment of the law" (Romans 13:10). No one who truly loves his neighbor will ever be guilty of willfully breaking any of the commandments that set forth man's duty to his fellow. We do not disobey parents when love is in exercise. We will not steal from those we love, nor will we lie about or defame them. To kill or corrupt by uncleanness would be unthinkable, and covetousness too is ruled out, for if I love my brother I do not want his goods, but rather rejoice in his possessions. But such love is not human. It is divine, and is only imparted by the Holy Spirit; so it is as we love God, the unseen, that we love our brothers also (1 John 4:20). Therefore where love rules, we are not under the law. We do not love in order to obtain merit, or to win the divine favor, but because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the indwelling Spirit, after we are justified by faith (Romans 5:1–5) and regenerated by the word of the Gospel (1 Peter 1:23–25). God is love. It is His very nature, and the man who is born again has become a partaker of that nature (2 Peter 1:4). So love is as characteristic of the real Christian as apples are characteristic of an apple tree.

Blest be the tie that binds  
Our hearts in Christian love,  
The fellowship of kindred minds  
Is like to that above.  
—J. Fawcett

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### **Charles Stanley - IN NEED OF GRACE**

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 JOHN 4:17–21

KEY VERSE: 1 JOHN 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

In your life there will always be someone you know who will irritate you in the most frustrating manner. He will know how to effectively push the buttons that lead to aggravation, fear, and anger.

You will be tempted to hate him and, perhaps, even seek revenge. However, the Bible has a strong warning for you in 1 John 4:20: If you say you love God, but hate your brother, do you really love God?

This person in your life is not a foe, for you have no human adversaries. Rather, this person has been placed in your life so that God can grow godliness within you and exercise your faith.

Wayne W. Dyer explains, "The only thing blame does is to keep the focus off you when you are looking for external reasons to explain your unhappiness or frustration. You may succeed in making another feel guilty of something by blaming him, but you won't succeed in changing whatever it is about you that is making you unhappy."

Whoever is tempting you to anger is a person in need of grace. It will take all of your trust in God to deal with that person in a godly manner, but you are called to no less. Trust God to give you the power to forgive.

Oh Father, I am unable on my own to love those who irritate me. You alone can give me the strength to love them as I ought.

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### **Adrian Rogers - 1 John 4:20**

One of the marks of the twice born is that we love one another—the members of His church. This doesn't mean, however, that all of us are lovable by nature. In fact, we are all sinners. A church is comprised of people who have finally realized that they are sinners and have banded themselves together to do something about it.

This makes the church the only organization I know of, besides Hell's Angels, in which you have to profess to be bad before you can join. And yet we Christians are called to love the church—to love those who, like us, are sinners who have turned our lives over to Jesus

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### **James Smith - LOVE OF THE BRETHREN.**

1 Peter 1:22.

There are eleven Commandments—the ten given by God through Moses, and the eleventh, the New Commandment given by the Lord Jesus: "That ye love one another as I have loved you." We love the Lord Whom we have not seen (1:8); we must love our brethren whom we have seen and do see. The latter is indeed the test of the former (1 John 4:20).

I. Its Nature. Now love is more than courtesy, attachment, or affability. It means self-denial, self-giving; it means that we shall check the hasty word, the unkind speech, the damaging criticism. It is a fair and exquisite flower. The flower of love Peter has in mind is a tender exotic. There is a coarser kind more easily grown, common to all, irrespective of creed or belief. But this is a tender plant, yet, oh, so much needed in this weary world!

II. Its Reason. "Being born again." Love possessed, enjoyed, and lived out, is an evidence of the New Birth and a result of the New Birth.

III. Its Soul and Atmosphere. Purity of heart and life is here pointed out as the soul and atmosphere of true love. There is such a thing as impure love. Moffatt renders it "purified your souls for a brotherly love." "From a pure heart fervently" is R.V. and W. "For cherishing sincere brotherly love."

IV. Its Cultivation. "See to it that ye love one another," etc. The mode of its growth is the Word of God loved and indwelling. Love is knowledge of the Word set on fire. The cause of its growth—the maintenance of purity within.

V. Its Guardianship. "See that ye love," etc. We are in charge of that tender exotic. We are its guardians.

VI. Its Quality.

1. BROTHERLY LOVE. "Love of the brethren" (22).
2. UNFEIGNED LOVE. That is to say, no mere pretence at loving. Often we are tempted to profess more than we feel.
3. STEADY LOVE. Moffatt's rendering: "Love one another heartily and steadily." A love that is steady, whatever its testing or trial.
4. FERVENT LOVE. Not a cold love. "Heartily and fervently" is the W. version.