

1 John 4:10 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 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins:

Greek - en touto estin (3SPA1) e agaphe ouch hoti hemeis egaphekamen (1PRA1) ton theon all hoti autos egaphesen (3SAAI) hemas kai apesteilen (3SAAI) ton huion autou hilasmon peri ton hamartion hemon

KJV 1 John 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

BGT 1 John 4:10 ν το τ στ ν γ πη, ο χ τι με ς γαπ καμεν τ ν θε ν λλ τι α τ ς γ πησεν μ ς κα π στειλεν τ ν υ ν α το λα σ μ ν περ τ ν μαρτι ν μ ν.

NET 1 John 4:10 In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

CSB 1 John 4:10 Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the

propitiation for our sins.

ESV 1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

NIV 1 John 4:10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

NLT 1 John 4:10 This is real love-- not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

NRS 1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

NJB 1 John 4:10 Love consists in this: it is not we who loved God, but God loved us and sent his Son to expiate our sins.

NAB 1 John 4:10 In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins.

YLT 1 John 4:10 in this is the love, not that we loved God, but that He did love us, and did send His Son a propitiation for our sins.

MIT 1 John 4:10 Love was expressed in this. It is not that we initiated love toward God, but that he loved us and sent his son as an atoning sacrifice to cover our sins.

GWN 1 John 4:10 This is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the payment for our sins.

BBE 1 John 4:10 And this is love, not that we had love for God, but that he had love for us, and sent his Son to be an offering for our sins.

RSV 1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins.

NKJ 1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

ASV 1 John 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

DBY 1 John 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son a propitiation for our sins.

NIRV 1 John 4:10 What is love? It is not that we loved God. It is that he loved us and sent his Son to give his life to pay for our sins.

RWB 1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Amplified - In this is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation (the atoning sacrifice) for our sins.

Wuest - In this is the love, not that we have loved God with the present result that we possess love (for Him), but that He Himself loved us, and sent off His Son, a satisfaction concerning our sins.

- **In this:** 1Jn 4:8,9 3:1
- **not:** 1Jn 4:19 Deut 7:7,8 John 15:16 Ro 5:8-10 Ro 8:29,30 2Co 5:19-21 Eph 2:4,5 Titus 3:3-5
- **sent:** 1Jn 2:2 Da 9:24 Ro 3:25-26 1Pe 2:24 3:18
- [1 John 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

1 John 2:2 and He Himself is the **propitiation** for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

Romans 3:25-26 Whom God displayed publicly as a **propitiation** in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously

committed; 26 for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Romans 5:8-10 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

REDEPTIVE LOVE: GOD IS THE INITIATOR

In this is (present tense) love ([agape](#)), not that we loved ([agapao](#)) God, but (term of contrast) that He loved ([agapao](#)) us and sent ([apostello](#) - aorist tense) His Son to be the propitiation ([hilasmos](#)) for our sins ([hamartia](#)) - Men are not the initiates of love for God. In this is love ("in this way is seen true love") looks forward in the passage. Literally it reads "in this is *the* love," the definite article ("*the*") appears before the word "love," (in the original Greek text) which defines this as not just any kind of love, but that particular love ([agape](#)) that flows from God as the Source. In not that we loved God John uses the negative "ou" signifying that before we were born again, we *absolutely* did not love God. In fact Ro 5:10+ says "we were (God's) enemies." "The self must look beyond itself in order to access divine love." (Derickson) "All our love is but a reflection of His and a response to it." (Akin) Fallen mankind does not "naturally" love God, contrary to popular opinion! It follows that natural men (those still dead in their trespasses and sins - Eph 2:1+) absolutely cannot express the quality of love (supernatural) about which John writes [See illustrations from Ray Stedman](#)).

*Initiating love is
greater than responding love.*
-- Grant Osborne

John Piper on the phrase **not that we loved God** - He is emphasizing that the nature and the origin of love does not lie in our response to God. That is not where love starts. That is not mainly what love is. Love is, and love starts with God (**ED: ESPECIALLY THAT HE SENT HIS SON**). And if anything we feel or do can be called love, it will be because we are connected with God by the new birth. ([The New Birth Produces Love](#))

[Agape](#) love can be given to God
only when it has first been received from God

Glenn Barker - For the author, [agape](#) love can be given to God only when it has first been received from God. It exists only as response to his initial love for us. Moreover, it is God's love for us that defines what true love requires, which is the commitment to sacrifice one's most beloved possession for another's gain. (Borrow [The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#) - Abridged)

*The superiority of God's love does not lie merely
in the fact of its being Divine. It is first in order of time
and therefore necessarily spontaneous"*
--John Stott -

Bob Utley - The NT is unique among the world religions. Typically religion is mankind seeking God, but Christianity is God seeking fallen mankind! The wonderful truth is not our love for God, but His love for us. He has sought us through our sin and self, our rebellion and pride. The glorious truth of Christianity is that God loves fallen mankind and has initiated and maintained a life-changing contact.

*Justice demanded the propitiation,
but love applied it.*

Charles Haddon Spurgeon - In us there was no love; there was a hatred of God and goodness. The enmity was not on God's side toward us; but on our side toward Him. "He loved us and sent His son." The gift of Christ; the needful propitiation for our sins, was all of love on God's part. Justice demanded the propitiation, but love applied it. God could not be just if he pardoned sin without atonement; but the greatness of the love is seen in the fact that it moved the Father to give His Son to an ignominious death, that He might pardon sinners and yet be just (Ro 3:26+). ([Spurgeon Expositions on 1 John](#))

*Love (agapē) is self-sacrifice, the seeking of another's positive good
at one's own cost, and a greater self-giving than
God's gift of his Son there has never been, nor could be.*
-- John Stott

But (term of contrast) **that He loved** ([agapao](#) - aorist tense) **us and sent** ([apostello](#) - aorist tense) **His Son to be the propitiation** ([hilasmos](#)) **for our sins** ([hamartia](#)) - **But** (alla = strong adversative) should prompt us to ask what is John contrasting? John makes a negative statement, then a positive statement, making a sharp contrast between man's love and God's love. **He loved** ([agapao](#)) us sacrificially (Jn 3:16+) even when we did not love Him (*enemies* - Ro 5:10+, *alienated and hostile* - Col 1:21+). [Wuest](#) explains that "**He loved** is [constative](#) aorist, giving a panoramic view of God's love for the human race. God has always loved sinners. **Sent** is also aorist, marking the Incarnation as an historic event. God took the initiative in this His great "operation rescue!" "Our act was to sin. God's was to love and send." (Akin)

*Not the incarnation but the atonement
is the pre-eminent manifestation of love (cf. 1Jn 3:16).*

-- John Stott

D Edmond Hiebert agrees that "The aorist-tense verb **loved** refers to the historical, redemptive work of Christ, regarded as a distinctive landmark." ([1 John 4:7-21](#))

*The purpose in sending the Son is
not the incarnation but the atonement.*

-- Danny Akin

John Stott - The coming of Christ is, therefore, a concrete, historical revelation of God's love, for love (agapē) is self-sacrifice, the seeking of another's positive good at one's own cost, and a greater self-giving than God's gift of his Son there has never been, nor could be....God loves sinners who are unworthy of his love, and indeed subject to his wrath. He loved us and sent his Son to rescue us, not because we are lovable, but because he is love. So the greatness of his love is seen in the costliness of his self-sacrifice for the wholly undeserving (cf. Ro 5:7–8). A clearer manifestation of God's love could not be imagined. (Borrow [The Letters of John](#))

Amazing love! Charles Wesley was right to ask "Amazing love how can it be that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?" Dear blood bought, heaven bound brother or sister in Christ, let us sing it out...

[And can it be that I should gain](#)
An int'rest in the Savior's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain?
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! how can it be
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?
Amazing love! how can it be
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

*Love is always demonstrated by actions.
It is not abstract; it is never complacent or static*
-- Danny Akin

And sent ([apostello](#) - aorist tense) **His Son to be the propitiation** ([hilasmos](#) - [see notes below](#) - a settling of the sin question) **for our sins** ([hamartia](#)) - The **AND** links the **fact** of God's love with **act** of God's love. Love is a dynamic verb. While we clearly cannot *duplicate* this act, we can *imitate* it by giving our best to those who do not deserve it (cf Eph 5:1-2+). **Sent** in this passage is in the aorist tense which speaks of God's sending as a historical event in the past, but recall that in 1Jn 4:9+ John had used the perfect tense signifying the permanent effect of this historical sending of the Son. The perfect tense shows that sending of the Son has lasting effect! In 1 John 1:7+ we learned that "the blood of Jesus His Son (present tense - keeps on, continually) cleanses us from all sin." Indeed, the results of the Father's sending the Son and His atoning sacrifice will abide and be efficacious throughout eternity for all who have received the Son as their propitiation and Savior.

There is no verb "**to be**" so this literally reads "*His Son propitiation*." In chapter 2 John said of Jesus "He Himself is the propitiation for our sins." (1Jn 2:2) In other words Jesus was not sent to be just the "*propitiator*," Who offered the sacrifice as did the OT priests, but that He Himself BE the actual *propitiation*. In sum, Christ Jesus is both the *propitiator* and the *propitiation* for our sin. **Propitiation for our sins** explains why God sent His Son and this sending was a manifestation of His love. It is fascinating (but not surprising) that hilasterion (same word family as [hilasmos](#) - [see note](#)) is used in the Septuagint of Ex 25:17+ for the golden lid (mercy seat, place of atonement) of the [Ark of the Covenant](#), clearly foreshadowing Jesus' propitiatory sacrifice on Calvary! Jesus was sent "to satisfy justice, to meet the demands of a broken Law, to pay the full debt, to satisfy the penalty. It all must be met; it cannot be ignored. God's love is also just -- love must be just -- and therefore, the only love that is worth talking about is a love that satisfies (**ED**: totally, fully placates or appeases) justice." ([Stedman](#)) **Our** (in **for our sins**) is genitive indicating a personal possessive pronoun, those sins we possessed! Jesus personally died for our personal sins, each and every one we personally committed! That

is love ["that will not let me go."](#) (Matheson)

Ray Stedman on **sent His Son...** - That is the sign of love. Stamped forever in human history, the greatest sign of love is a bloody cross. If you have ever been to that cross and seen the love of God manifested there, you never can go back to a life of selfish indulgence and quarreling behavior.

Three times in this section on love John writes that the Father **sent** His Son - that we might live through Him (1Jn 4:9), as the propitiation for our sins (1Jn 4:10), and as the Savior of the world (1Jn 4:14). In horse racing a trifecta is when the bettor wins by selecting the first three finishers of the race in the correct order. That Jesus would achieve all three of the goals for which He was sent was never in doubt, as His cry underscored -- **"It is finished."** (Jn 19:30) (See discussion of [Tetelestai - It is Finished! Paid in Full!](#))

*Babies are born into the world,
but only Jesus was sent into the world!*

Dwight Pentecost said "The death of Jesus Christ did not change the heart of God, as if One who hated us now loves us, rather it opened the floodgate so that the love of God for sinners could be poured out to them through Jesus Christ." ([Quoted by Hiebert](#))

Spurgeon - "If there was to be reconciliation between God and man, man ought to have sent to God; the offender ought to be the first to apply for forgiveness; the weaker should apply to the greater for help; the poor man should ask of him who distributes alms; but 'Herein is love' that God 'sent.' He was first to send an embassy of peace." ([Sermon - Herein is Love](#))

David Guzik put it this way - His love for us initiates our relationship of love with Him, our love only responds to His love for us. We can't love God the way we should unless we are receiving and living in His love.

*Love means forgiving the sins of the beloved
and remembering them no more.*

-- I Howard Marshall

Steven Cole on **propitiation for our sins** - So that we don't get our focus on ourselves, or get puffed up with pride over how loving we are (**ED**: It is also possible that those with the spirit of anti-Christ were making the claim with their "lips" that they love God, but their "life" proved their words to be a lie), John directs us back to God's love as seen in His sending His Son to be the **propitiation for our sins**.**"Propitiation"** means to satisfy God's justice and wrath toward our sin. His love didn't just brush aside our sin, because His holiness and justice would have been compromised. Rather, His love moved God to send His own Son, who bore the penalty that we rightly deserved. The initiative was totally with God! He didn't wait until we showed some promise of changing or until we cried out for help. Rather, as Paul put it (Ro 5:8), "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." ([1 John 4:7-11 Why We Must Love](#))

Max Anders - Theologians argue whether Christ's sacrificial death on the cross should be described as expiation or propitiation. Expiation emphasizes payment of a penalty to remove guilt. Propitiation speaks of appeasing or averting God's wrath. (See [Holman New Testament Commentary - 1 & 2 Peter, 1 2 & 3 John](#))

*Divine love springs spontaneously from His heart.
His wrath against sin cannot be placated by good works.*
-- Kenneth Wuest

Warren Wiersbe explains that "We should remember that **propitiation** does not mean that men must do something to appease God or to placate His anger. **Propitiation** is something God does to make it possible for men to be forgiven" **"God is light,"** and therefore He must uphold His holy Law. **"God is love,"** and therefore He wants to forgive and save sinners. How can God forgive sinners and still be consistent with His holy nature? The answer is the cross. There Jesus Christ bore the punishment for sin and met the just demands of the holy Law. But there, also, God reveals His love and makes it possible for men to be saved by faith." ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

Spurgeon - By nature, **we had no love to God**; we were his enemies (Col 1:21+, Ro 5:10+, Ro 8:7-8+). We loved sin, and we had ruined ourselves by it; but God took out of his own bosom the only Son he had, that he might make reconciliation for us (Col 1:22+, Ro 5:10-11+), and put away our sin. "Herein is love," says the apostle, as though you could find it nowhere else as it is here. Here is the height and depth of love immeasurable (Eph 3:18+); here is love summed up (cf Eph 1:10+), here is love's climax: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." ([Spurgeon's Expositions on 1 John](#))

Compare Jesus' words in John 6:44-47 "(GREEK WORD FOR "NO" [oudeis](#) MEANS ABSOLUTELY) No one can come to Me **UNLESS** the Father Who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. 45 "It is written in the prophets, 'AND THEY

SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me. 46 "Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One Who is from God; He has seen the Father. 47 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life."

In his book [The Call \(borrow\)](#), author **Os Guinness** writes: We cannot find God without God. We cannot reach God without God. We cannot satisfy God without God—which is another way of saying that our seeking will always fall short unless God's grace initiates the search and unless God's call draws us to Him and completes the search. If the chasm is to be bridged, God must bridge it. If we are to desire the highest good, the highest good must come down and draw us so that it may become a reality we desire. From this perspective there is no merit in either seeking or finding. All is grace. The secret of seeking is not in our human ascent to God, but in God's descent to us. We start our searching, but we end up being discovered. We think we are looking for something; we realize we are found by Someone. As in Francis Thompson's famous picture, "the hound of heaven" has tracked us down. ([The Call borrow](#))

*I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.*
Excerpt from poem [The Hound of Heaven](#)

C. S. Lewis in describing how he came to faith in Christ said "God closed in on me....Amiable agnostics will talk cheerfully about 'man's search for God.' To me, as I then was, they might as well have talked about the mouse's search for the cat." (borrow [Surprised by joy](#))

James Denney comments: Note the resounding paradox of this verse, that God is at once loving and wrathful, and His love provides the propitiation which averts His wrath from us. So far from finding any kind of contrast between love and propitiation, the apostle can convey no idea of love to anyone except by pointing to the propitiation. (Borrow [The Death of Christ](#).)

Harry Ironside - On the Cross the Son of God took our place in judgment. It was not merely the sufferings that men heaped on Jesus that settled the sin-question, but there as he hung upon the cross and supernatural darkness covered the scene, we read that Jehovah made "his soul an offering (a guilt offering) for sin" (Isaiah 53:10). In those hours of darkness God was dealing with His Son in judgment. There He bore in His inmost soul the punishment that you and I would have to bear ourselves for all eternity if left without a Savior. There He became the **propitiation** and expiation for our sins. It is at the Cross that we see the fullest extent of God's **love**. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1John 4:10). This indeed is **love**. We hated Him, we loved our own way, we wanted to take our own course, and we did not want to be submissive to His will. But He loved us and looked upon us in grace. He yearned to have us with Him in glory, free from every stain of sin. And because there was no other way whereby we could be justified (declared righteous), He sent His Son to become the **propitiation** for our sins. **Don't talk about believing God is love if you won't accept the gift of His love, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is in Christ alone we have life and propitiation.** "There is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12), but the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ([1 John 4 Commentary](#))

Harry Ironside - It is God who came out to us. We did not seek after Him. We did not love God, and our hearts were filled with hatred for Him. But He met our every need. You see, because we were dead we needed life and God sent Christ that we might live through Him. Because we were lost and guilty sinners it was necessary that a propitiation be made for sin, and God sent His Son to effect that propitiation. ([1 John 4 Commentary](#))

The Son of God was sent to be the Son of Man that He might die for man. His death was not an accident but an appointment! (Acts 2:23, Acts 4:28, Messianic prophecy in Acts 3:18, 2Ti 1:9NIV-note) (See related resource: Messianic Prophecies)

John MacArthur - Hebrews 9:5+ translates a form (hilasterion or hilasterios) of this word (hilasmos) as "the mercy seat." Christ literally became our mercy seat like the one in the Most Holy Place, where the high priest splattered the blood of the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:15+). Christ did this when His blood, spilled on behalf of others, satisfied the demands of God's holy justice and wrath against sin. (See [The MacArthur Bible Commentary - Page 1964](#))

James Montgomery Boice - If God had merely sent Jesus to teach us about Himself, that would have been wonderful enough. It would have been far more than we deserved. If God had sent Jesus simply to be our example, that would have been good too and would have had some value ... But the wonderful thing is that God did not stop with these but rather sent His Son, not merely to teach or to be our example, but to die the death of a felon, that He might save us from sin. (Borrow [The Epistles of John](#))

Spurgeon - Who among us would think of giving up his son to die for his enemy, for one who never did him a service, but treated him ungratefully, repulsed a thousand overtures of tenderness, and went on perversely hardening his neck? No man could do it. ([Spurgeon's Expositions on 1 John](#))

THE GREAT INITIATOR - Couples often debate about who loved whom first, but John makes it clear that when it comes to a person's relationship with God, there's no question about who made the first move. God loved first. He initiated. Not in response to our overtures; not because we were lovable or deserving. In fact, the opposite is true. The apostle Paul observed, "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). This is the mystery of mercy, the miracle of grace: God chose to love a race of rebels and prodigals. And it is this kind of love that believers are called to share with the world. Imagine the impact that Christians could have by letting God fill us with his unconditional, redemptive love—a love that actually pursues evildoers until they stop running, then blesses them! (See [1, 2, & 3 John - Page 95](#))

Take a moment to praise the King and worship the Name above all names by playing the great hymn sung by Fernando Ortega [Here is Love](#)

Here is love, vast as the ocean,
Loving-kindness as the flood,
When the Prince of Life, our Ransom,
Shed for us His precious blood.
Who His love will not remember?
Who can cease to sing His praise?
He can never be forgotten,
Throughout heav'n's eternal days.

On the mount of crucifixion,
Fountains opened deep and wide;
Through the floodgates of God's mercy
Flowed a vast and gracious tide.
Grace and love, like mighty rivers,
Poured incessant from above,
And heav'n's peace and perfect justice
Kissed a guilty world in love.

Let me, all Thy love accepting,
Love Thee, ever all my days;
Let me seek Thy kingdom only,
And my life be to Thy praise;
Thou alone shalt be my glory,
Nothing in the world I see;
Thou hast cleansed and sanctified me,
Thou Thyself hast set me free.

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 is a self-sacrificing, caring commitment that shows itself in seeking the highest good of the one loved. While agape is not primarily a feeling, it is certainly not without feeling. It might be called "caring commitment." While it is a command to love one another, and it is thus a "duty," it is also and predominantly a delight. Agape is an attitude manifest by actions, caring, committed actions. **Agape** often involves sacrifice, and is supremely exemplified by Jesus' sacrifice of Himself on the Cross. 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+).

Bob Utley - Love as an action, not just a feeling. Believers must emulate it in their daily lives. To know God is to love as He loves.

Bruce Barton - The world thinks that love is what makes a person feel good and that it is all right to sacrifice moral principles and others' rights in order to obtain such "love." But that is the opposite of real love—selfishness. Real love is holy, just, and perfect, like God. Those who truly know God will love as he does. (See [1, 2, and 3 John](#))

R C H Lenski - ἀγάπη is defined as the love of intelligence, of comprehension and understanding. It always has that meaning in the New Testament, most completely so here where it speaks of God's love. Combined with this is purpose, a purpose that corresponds to the comprehension of the object, whether this is the Son, the Father, the child of God, the filthy world, the enemy, the things in the world (2:15). Saving ἀγάπη thus accompanies χάρις, ἔλεος, compassion, benevolence. "Love" is the widest term because of what it includes, the other terms have narrower connotations.

Dodd (Johannine Epistles, p. 111) points out, love in the Hellenistic world became a "cosmic principle, and the mystical craving for union with the eternal is given a metaphysical basis."

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)

Loved (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)

In the ancient Greek language there were four words for love that generally focused on four different aspects of love: (1) eros for fervent longings, sexual passion; (2) phileō for friendship; (3) storge for family devotion; and (4) agapaō for loving kindness. The fourth word is the term used by John to characterize God's love.

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+)

Sent ([649](#)) [apostello](#) from **apo** = off, away from, speaks of separation + **stello** = appoint to a position this sense in the derivative word apostolos = emissary) literally means to send forth. "To dispatch someone for the achievement of some objective, send away/out." (BDAG)

Vine on apostello - lit., "to send forth" (apo, "from"), akin to apostolos, "an apostle," denotes (a) "to send on service, or with a commission." (1) of persons; Christ, sent by the Father, Matthew 10:40; 15:24; 21:37; Mark 9:37; 12:6; Luke 4:18,43; 9:48; 10:16; John 3:17; 5:36,38; 6:29,57; 7:29; 8:42; 10:36; 11:42; 17:3,8,18 (1st part), Jn 17:21,23,25; 20:21; Acts 3:20 (future); 3:26; 1 John 4:9,10,14; the Holy Spirit, Luke 24:49 (in some texts; see No. 3); 1 Peter 1:12; Revelation 5:6; Moses, Acts 7:35; John the Baptist, John 1:6; 3:28; disciples and apostles, e.g., Matthew 10:16; Mark 11:1; Luke 22:8; John 4:38; 17:18 (2nd part); Acts 26:17; servants, e.g., Matthew 21:34; Luke 20:10; officers and officials, Mark 6:27; John 7:32; Acts 16:35; messengers, e.g., Acts 10:8,17,20; 15:27; evangelists, Romans 10:15; angels, e.g., Matthew 24:31; Mark 13:27; Luke 1:19,26; Hebrews 1:14; Revelation 1:1; 22:6; demons, Mark 5:10; (2) of things, e.g., Matthew 21:3; Mark 4:29 , RV, marg., "sendeth forth," text, "putteth forth" (AV, "... in"); Acts 10:36; 11:30; 28:28; (b) "to send away, dismiss," e.g., Mark 8:26; 12:3; Luke 4:18 , "to set (at liberty)."

APOSTELLO USES BY JOHN - Jn. 1:6; Jn. 1:19; Jn. 1:24; Jn. 3:17; Jn. 3:28; Jn. 3:34; Jn. 4:38; Jn. 5:33; Jn. 5:36; Jn. 5:38; Jn. 6:29; Jn. 6:57; Jn. 7:29; Jn. 7:32; Jn. 8:42; Jn. 9:7; Jn. 10:36; Jn. 11:3; Jn. 11:42; Jn. 17:3; Jn. 17:8; Jn. 17:18; Jn. 17:21; Jn. 17:23; Jn. 17:25; Jn. 18:24; Jn. 20:21; 1 Jn. 4:9; 1 Jn. 4:10; 1 Jn. 4:14; Rev. 1:1; Rev. 5:6; Rev. 22:6

The propitiation ("Satisfaction") ([2434](#)) (**hilasmos** akin to **hileōs** = merciful, propitious) in the NT (only here and 1Jn 2:2+) refers to a sacrifice that turns away the wrath of God and thereby makes God propitious (favorably inclined or disposed, disposed to be gracious and/or merciful, ready to forgive) toward us. **Hilasmos** means 'propitiation' and refers to the effect that Christ's atonement had on the anger of God, fulfilling the requirements of His justice It is important to make the distinction that propitiation does not mean we must do something to appease God or to placate His anger, but that it refers to something He does to make it possible for men to be forgiven! Glory, Hallelujah!

Wuest - The English word "**propitiate**" means "to appease and render favorable." That was the pagan

meaning of the Greek word. The pagan worshipper brought gifts to his god to *appease* the god's wrath and make him *favorable* in his attitude towards him. But the God of Christianity needs no gifts to appease His wrath and make Him favorable towards the human race. Divine love springs spontaneously from His heart. His wrath against sin cannot be placated by good works. Only the infliction of the penalty of sin, death, will satisfy the just demands of His holy law which the human race violated, maintain His government, and provide the proper basis for His bestowal of mercy, namely, divine justice satisfied. **Hilasmos** is that sacrifice which fully satisfies the demands of the broken law. It was our Lord's death on Calvary's Cross. Thus does this pagan word accrue to itself a new meaning as it enters the doctrinal atmosphere of the New Testament. ([Wuest Word Studies](#)- used [by permission](#))

NET Note on **hilasmos** says "inherent in the meaning of the word translated atoning sacrifice (hilasmos) is the idea of turning away the divine wrath, so that "propitiation" is the closest English equivalent. God's love for us is expressed in his sending his Son to be the propitiation (the propitiatory sacrifice) for our sins on the cross... The contemporary English "atoning sacrifice" communicates this idea more effectively."

ESV Study Bible (borrow) says **Hilasmos** "means 'a sacrifice that bears God's wrath and turns it to favor' which is 'also the meaning of the English word propitiation.'"

Barclay on **propitiation** - Jesus is the Restorer of the lost relationship with God. God sent Him to be the atoning sacrifice for sin (1Jn 4:10). We do not move in a world of thought in which animal sacrifice is a reality. But we can fully understand what sacrifice meant. When a man sinned, his relationship with God was broken; and sacrifice was an expression of penitence, designed to restore the lost relationship (**Ed**: But see caveat - Heb 9:22+, Heb 10:4+). Jesus, by His life and death, made it possible for man to enter into a new relationship of peace and friendship with God. He bridged the awful gulf between man and God. ([1 John 4 Commentary](#))

The **Septuagint (Lxx)**, the Greek text of the Hebrew OT, uses hilasmos in Leviticus 25:9+ of the [Day of Atonement - Yom Kippur](#) -

'You shall then sound a ram's horn abroad on the tenth day of the seventh month (Tishri); on the **day** (yom) **of atonement** (kippur; Lxx = hilasmos) you shall sound a horn all through your land."

Propitiation ([2435](#)) hilasterion

Make propitiation (be merciful) ([2433](#)) hilaskomai

Sins ([266](#)) (**hamartia**) literally conveys the idea of missing the mark as when hunting with a bow and arrow (in Homer some hundred times of a warrior hurling his spear but missing his foe). Later hamartia came to mean missing or falling short of any goal, standard, or purpose. Hamartia in the Bible signifies a departure from God's holy, perfect standard of what is right in word or deed (righteous). It pictures the idea of missing His appointed goal (His will) which results in a deviation from what is pleasing to Him. In short, sin is conceived as a missing the true end and scope of our lives, which is the Triune God Himself. As **Martin Luther** put it "Sin is essentially a departure from God."

HAMARTIA USAGES BY JOHN - Jn. 1:29; Jn. 8:21; Jn. 8:24; Jn. 8:34; Jn. 8:46; Jn. 9:34; Jn. 9:41; Jn. 15:22; Jn. 15:24; Jn. 16:8; Jn. 16:9; Jn. 19:11; Jn. 20:23; 1 Jn. 1:7; 1 Jn. 1:8; 1 Jn. 1:9; 1 Jn. 2:2; 1 Jn. 2:12; 1 Jn. 3:4; 1 Jn. 3:5; 1 Jn. 3:8; 1 Jn. 3:9; 1 Jn. 4:10; 1 Jn. 5:16; 1 Jn. 5:17; Rev. 1:5; Rev. 18:4; Rev. 18:5

ILLUSTRATION - Our responsibility and ministry as Christians is to share the gospel with the lost, so that they too, might know Christ and receive His gift of salvation. We are to show the love of Christ to them. A lady Salvation Army worker found a homeless woman alone on the street and invited her to come into the chapel for help, but the woman refused to move. The worker assured her, "We love you and want to help you. God loves you. Jesus died for you." But the woman did not budge. As if on divine impulse, the lady Christian worker leaned over and kissed the woman on the cheek, taking her into her arms. The woman began to sob, and like a child, was led into the chapel service, where she ultimately trusted Jesus Christ as her Savior. She said later that evening, "You told me that God loved me, but it wasn't till you showed me that God loved me that I wanted to be saved." May Christ be seen in us.

Moravian Daily Texts - 1 John 4:10

Yes, Amen! Let all adore you
high on your eternal throne;
crowns and empires fall before you,
claim the kingdom for your own;

come, Lord Jesus, come Lord Jesus,
everlasting Christ come down!

James Smith - LOVE SUPERLATIVE. 1 John 4:10.

1. A Woeful Possession. "Our sins."
 2. A Shameless Confession. "Not that we loved God."
 3. A Blessed Revelation. "He loved us."
 4. A Wonderful Condescension. "Sent His Son."
 5. A Gracious Provision. "Propitiation for our sins."
 6. A Joyful Acclamation. "Herein is love."
-

[Ray Stedman](#) gives some illustrations of the truth **not that we loved God** as shown by our failure to love one another - Some time ago a mother said to me, "I've come to the place where I almost hate my son." Why? The evil in her own son had turned her against him. The evil in him had so offended her, that which was ugly and wrong in him had loomed as such a frightful thing, that she had found her love almost turned to hate. Some time ago a husband and wife who were in my study for counseling became so angry that the husband in rage stood up, and, right in my presence, spat in his wife's face. Yet he had promised to love, honor and cherish her until death shall them part. Why would he do such a thing? Well, because the evil and ugliness of sin in his wife (though he was not seeing the same in his own life) so enraged him that he struck out against it. It offended him. It was repulsive, revolting to him.

How angry we get sometimes at the stubbornness and insolence of others, the rudeness and hate that is manifested toward us. It makes our blood boil and our tempers rise, we burn and writhe within. Why? Well, that is what evil does, that is how ugly it is. Yet that evil is in every single heart of those born of Adam. It is constantly revealing itself to the eyes of God. It may be hidden away from others, and even from our own eyes, but God, who sees all things, sees the whole world of men in all their blatant ugliness and evil. And what is his response? Is it anger? Is it rejection? Is it judgment? Did he pour out the fires of wrath upon a world so repulsively ugly as that? Oh, no. He responded with the most costly of all loves: He gave himself, he sent his Son. In the Person of his Son, God himself came and lived among us and died upon a cross of shame in the very world his hands had made.

QUESTION -[What is propitiation?](#)

ANSWER - The word *propitiation* carries the basic idea of appeasement or satisfaction, specifically toward God. Propitiation is a two-part act that involves appeasing the wrath of an offended person and being reconciled to him.

The necessity of appeasing God is something many religions have in common. In ancient pagan religions, as well as in many religions today, the idea is taught that man appeases God by offering various gifts or sacrifices. However, the Bible teaches that God Himself has provided the only means through which His wrath can be appeased and sinful man can be reconciled to Him. In the New Testament, the act of propitiation always refers to the work of God and not the sacrifices or gifts offered by man. The reason for this is that man is totally incapable of satisfying God's justice except by spending eternity in hell. There is no service, sacrifice, or gift that man can offer that will appease the holy wrath of God or satisfy His perfect justice. The only satisfaction, or propitiation, that could be acceptable to God and that could reconcile man to Him had to be made by God. For this reason God the Son, Jesus Christ, came into the world in human flesh to be the perfect sacrifice for sin and make atonement or "propitiation for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2:17).

The word *propitiation* is used in several verses to explain what Jesus accomplished through His death on the cross. For example, in Romans 3:24-25 believers in Christ have been "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed." These verses are a key point in Paul's argument in the book of Romans and are really at the heart of the gospel message.

In the first three chapters of Romans, Paul makes the argument that everyone, Jew and Gentile alike, is under the condemnation of God and deserving of His wrath (Romans 1:18). Everyone has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). All of us deserve His wrath and punishment. God in His infinite grace and mercy has provided a way that His wrath can be appeased and we can be reconciled to Him. That way is through the sacrificial death of His Son, Jesus Christ, as the payment for sins. It is through faith in Jesus Christ as God's perfect sacrifice that we can be reconciled to God. It is only because of Christ's death on the cross and His resurrection on the third day that a lost sinner deserving of hell can be reconciled to a holy God. The wonderful truth of the gospel is that Christians are saved from God's wrath and reconciled to God not because "we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). The only way for

God's wrath against sinful man to be appeased and for us to be reconciled to God is through Jesus Christ. There is no other way. This truth is also communicated in 1 John 2:2, "And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world." An important part of Christ's saving work is deliverance from God's wrath; Jesus' propitiation on the cross is the only thing that can turn away God's divine condemnation of sin. Those who reject Christ as their Savior and refuse to believe in Him have no hope of salvation. They can only look forward to facing the wrath of God that they have stored up for the coming day of judgment (Romans 2:5). There is no other propitiation or sacrifice that can be made for their sins. GotQuestions.org

Related Articles:

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 - [What is the substitutionary atonement?](#)
 - [If the penalty for our sins is eternity in Hell, how did Jesus' death pay our penalty if He did not spend eternity in Hell?](#)
-

Alan Carr - 1Jn 4:10 THIS LOVE WAS DEMONSTRATED AT CALVARY

- God's love can never be fully understood, but it can be seen! It is best seen at the cross!
 - He Stood In The Gap—2 Cor. 5:21
 - He Saved Us From Hell—It is His death on the cross, the death that released His precious blood, that opened the door of salvation for every sinner who will come to God. 1 Pet. 1:18–19; Rev. 1:5; Heb. 9:22; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:12–14. Thank God for the Blood of the Lord Jesus!!!!
-

God—the Aggressive Lover - Selwyn Hughes

Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that He loved us.—1 JOHN 4:10

When we perceive how much God loves us, an amazing effect is produced in our personalities—we begin to love like Him. We cannot help it. Love—agape love—is not the fruit of labor; it is a response. When we stand at the foot of Calvary, the place where the love of God is fully focused and caught up, the scales drop from our eyes, and our own love flames in response. We love Him because He first loved us.

Teresa of Avila tells how one day, going into her private room, she noticed a picture of our Lord being scourged before His crucifixion. She must have seen it hundreds of times, but in that moment of revelation she saw it as she had never seen it before. She saw God suffering—suffering for love and suffering for her. The revelation sent her to her knees sobbing in pain and wonder, and when she arose, she was a changed woman. The revelation of Calvary's love was the great divide in her life. She said that she arose with a sense of "unpayable debt" and went out to share God's realized love with others.

Don't try to manufacture love. Linger in the shadow of the Cross. The love of God finds its most burning expression there. Meditate on it. Contemplate it. Remember that heaven knows no higher strategy for begetting love in mortal hearts than by granting us a vision of how much we are loved, a vision strong enough to evoke a response in our hearts—and by that answering love begotten in us by the Holy Spirit, we are freed and purged and saved.

Prayer

Gracious Father, I see that before I can love, I must comprehend how much I am loved. Help me be aware that in my heart I have

James Smith - THE LOVE OF GOD.

"The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us" (Rom. 5 5).

I. The Character of this Love.

1. IT IS GOD'S LOVE. It is the nature of love to seek out the helpless and the needy, and to pour into the lap of poverty all the wealth of its possession. Love cannot remain inactive.
2. IT MANIFESTS ITSELF. "God commended His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). Love will not hide; it overleaps every barrier and shows itself. "Herein is love; not that we loved God" (1 John 4:10).

II. The Sphere of its Operation. It is not enough to see the evidences of God's love; His love is not satisfied with that. It is to be—

1. IN OUR HEARTS. In the citadel of the soul, watering the roots of our affections and purifying the springs of the life.
2. "SHED ABROAD." The love of God is to fill and flood our being, as the light of the sun is shed abroad on the earth, scattering darkness and turning barrenness into fruitfulness. If the love of God possesses us we shall take pleasure, like Him, in loving sinners and making sacrifice for their salvation. Love is the most practical thing on earth (see 1 Cor. 13).

III. The Divine Operator. This great work is done by—

1. THE HOLY GHOST. It is the Spirit's work to unveil the love of God to us in Christ Jesus, and to create that love within us. He sheds it abroad in our hearts by taking the things of Christ and showing them unto us.
2. THE HOLY GHOST GIVEN UNTO US. If our hearts are to be filled with the love of God, the Holy Spirit must have His abode within the heart. The fruit of the Spirit is love. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts" (Gal. 4:6). Beloved, if God so loved us, then, in the power and after the manner of that love we ought also to love one another (1 John 4:11).

TGIF (Read: Romans 5:6-21) In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. —1 John 4:10 - We hear it often: "**TGIF**" (Thank God it's Friday!). Although many people use this phrase carelessly, without reverence for their Creator, they're grateful because Friday marks the end of the workweek. It opens the door to 2 days when they can relax and just do their own thing.

On this Good Friday, millions of Christians around the world are especially thankful because it reminds them of what God accomplished through His Son nearly 2,000 years ago.

But why do we call this day good? Was not this one of the blackest days in history? God's sinless Son, who went about doing good, healing the sick, and bringing hope to sin-ruined lives, was nailed to a shameful cross by self-righteous religious leaders. That's evil at its worst. That sounds more like God's day of defeat. Where is the good in that?

Paul gave us the answer. On this day centuries ago, God demonstrated "His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Ro 5:8). Such love is too profound for a genius to fully grasp, yet so simple that a child can accept it. And this love is experienced by all who repent of their sins and receive Christ by faith.

TGIGF—Thank God it's Good Friday! - D J De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

See, from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

—Watts

Christ endured the darkness so that we can enjoy the light.

What's Love? (Read: Psalm 103:1-14) - When asked "What's love?" children have some great answers. Noelle, age 7, said, "Love is when you tell a guy you like his shirt, then he wears it every day." Rebecca, who is 8, answered, "Since my grandmother got arthritis, she can't bend over and polish her toenails anymore. So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even after his hands got arthritis too. That's love." Jessica, also 8, concluded, "You really shouldn't say 'I love you' unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget."

Sometimes we need reminding that God loves us. We focus on the difficulties of life and wonder, Where's the love? But if we pause and consider all that God has done for us, we remember how much we are loved by God, who is love (1 John 4:8-10).

Psalm 103 lists the "benefits" God showers on us in love: He forgives our sin (Ps 103:3), satisfies us with good things (Ps 103:5), and executes righteousness and justice (Ps 103:6). He is slow to anger and abounds in mercy (Ps 103:8). He doesn't deal with us as our sins deserve (Ps 103:10) and has removed our sin as far as the east is from the west (Ps 103:12). He has not forgotten us!

What's love? God is love, and He's pouring out that love on you and me. - Anne Cetas ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Our God is God—
His truth, His love remains each day the same,
He's faithful to His matchless name,
For God is God—He does not change.
—D. DeHaan

The death of Christ is the measure of God's love for you.

Love Undeserved - Years ago in North Carolina, Judge Clara Warren served in the juvenile court system. She was known for her strict interpretation of the law, but also for her love and compassion.

One day Judge Warren took reporter Phyllis Hobe on a tour of a correctional facility. Hobe was surprised by the judge's sincere concern for many of the inmates. She was helping them to get into schools and find jobs when they were released. She even continued to care for them if they were readmitted. "How can you keep on loving them?" the reporter asked. "They don't seem to appreciate all you've done for them." The judge explained that she didn't love them because she wanted to receive their thanks. She simply loved them, expecting nothing in return.

Isn't that how God loves us? The Bible tells us that He loved the world so much that He gave His Son to die for us (John 3:16; Ro 5:8). Though sinful and ungrateful, every man, woman, and child is the object of His love. Yes, He longs for our loving obedience. But when that doesn't happen, He continues to love us no matter how unlovable we are.

Dear Father, enable us to love others the way that You love us. —Vernon Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.
—Matheson

Nothing is more powerful than God's love.

No Greater Love —1 John 4:10 - On our family-room wall, in a small shadowbox, hangs a "treasure" that belongs to my wife Carolyn. Oh, we have things more intrinsically valuable on the walls of our home—a handmade quilt from the Blue Ridge Mountains of Kentucky, antique mirrors, oil paintings, and a magnificent dulcimer from an artisan in the back-country of Idaho.

Carolyn's treasure, though, is far more valuable to her than any other possession, for it contains a gift from our granddaughter Julia. It was a present to her "Nana" on Valentine's Day several years ago when Julia was only 6 years old—a small, red, clay heart. Inscribed on it in childish scrawl are the words "I Luv U."

The little heart is crudely made, ragged on the edges, and bears a number of thumbprints and smudges, but Carolyn has enshrined it in a frame made especially for that heart. Each day it reminds her of Julia's love.

Is God's love more valuable to you than silver or gold or any other possession? He "sent His only begotten Son into the world, that [you] might live through Him" (1 John 4:9). He did that because He loves you, not because you loved Him. And because of His love, one day you will be with Him in heaven. There is no greater love! By David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Love sent my Savior to die in my stead,
Why should He love me so?
Meekly to Calvary's cross He was led,
Why should He love me so?

—Harkness

God's eternal love is the source of our eternal life.

The Power Of Love

Read: 1 John 4:7-10

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the [atoning sacrifice] for our sins. — 1 John 4:10

Books on leadership often appear on best-seller lists. Most of them tell how to become a powerful and effective leader. But Henri Nouwen's book *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership* is written from a different perspective. The former university professor who spent many years serving in a community of developmentally disabled adults says: "The question is not: How many people take you seriously? How much are you going to

accomplish? Can you show some results? But: Are you in love with Jesus? . . . In our world of loneliness and despair, there is an enormous need for men and women who know the heart of God, a heart that forgives, that cares, that reaches out and wants to heal."

John wrote, "In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the [atoning sacrifice] for our sins" (1 John 4:9-10).

"The Christian leader of the future," writes Nouwen, "is the one who truly knows the heart of God as it has become flesh . . . in Jesus." In Him, we discover and experience God's unconditional, unlimited love. — David McCasland (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Father, please show the wonder of Your great love through me to others today so that they might know they need not walk through life alone. Let my heart personally experience and display Your care.

God's love in our heart gives us a heart for others.

Ray Stedman - God Is Love READ THE SCRIPTURE: 1 JOHN 4:7-10

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 1 John 4:8

Here we come face to face with that tremendous declaration of the Scriptures: God is love. It means that at the root all God does is love. No matter how difficult it may appear to us, the fountain from which all God's activity stems is this kind of self-giving love. Even His judgments, His condemnations, arrive from love. Judgment is not something separate from love. If you convince me that a holy, loving God cannot judge a sinful person, then you will also convince me that He cannot love a sinful person. Inherent in the quality of love is an antagonism toward anything that opposes the object of love. Also, inherent in it is the quality of judgment. God is a purifying fire, consuming and burning away the dross in order that He might preserve the gold. That, incidentally, is how the book of Hebrews describes Him. Our God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29). Love is not always easy to live with because of that very quality, yet it is the most wonderful thing in the world because of its warmth and its all-embracing inclusiveness that takes in all kinds and all conditions, without looking for merit on the part of the object loved. That is the love of God.

Dr. H. A. Ironside used to tell of a woman who came to him and said, I don't have any use for the Bible and for all this Christian superstition. It's enough for me to know that God is love.

He said to her, Well, do you know that?

She said, Of course I know that, I've known it all my life.

Well, he said, do you think that everyone knows that?

Oh, yes, she said, everyone knows God is love.

Well, he said, do you think that woman over in India, who is persuaded by her religion to take her little child and throw it into the river as an offering to the crocodiles, has any concept or idea that God is love?

She said, Well, no, but that's mere superstition.

Do you think that the person in Africa, bowing down to his idols of wood and stone, trembling with fear lest they should strike back at him and destroy his crops and take away his children and even injure his own person, do you think he has any idea that God is love? he asked.

She said, No, but in every civilized country we know that God is love.

Well, he said, how do we know that? How do we know that God is love? Do the ancients teach this? Do the other religions of earth teach and show that God is love? Do you know that the only reason we know that God is love is because He sent His Son and manifested Himself as love? The book that tells about the Lord Jesus Christ is the only book in the world that contains the idea that the God behind all created matter is a God of love. Creation reveals His power, His greatness, and His might, but there is nothing in nature that says, 'God is love.' The only way we know this is that God manifested His love in the giving of His Son.

Father, You alone are the source of this love, the only kind that meets the claimant hunger of the heart. I pray that I may recognize myself as called to this great task of being a demonstration of this kind of love.

Life Application

God showed His love by sending His Son that we might live through Him. Have we learned to recognize the true nature of Love as evidenced in all of God's actions?

1 JOHN 4:10 READ: Romans 5:1-8

LOVE'S highest expression is found in giving. This was most perfectly displayed when God gave His Son to save the world (John 3:16). Even as love prompted the Father to give His Son for us, our love for Him should motivate us to prove the reality of our love through giving (2 Corinthians 8:8-9). We do this by first presenting our bodies "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God," which is our "reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).

In his book *Man Alive*, John Whittle told about a widow whose only son said he was obeying the call of God to go to the mission field. Although the woman had been a Christian for many years, her son's decision was upsetting to her because she had assumed that as she grew older he would be there when she needed him. Fear and anxiety clouded her thinking. Then one day something happened that changed her outlook. Reading John 3, she saw the familiar words of verse 16 in a new way. The thought came to her that "God was giving her the privilege of doing in her small way what He had done" for her. Her entire perspective was changed. She was willing to give up her son to go to the mission field because of God's love for her. Together they were able to see themselves as partners in the Lord's service.

The apostle Paul said that the love of Christ constrains us (2 Corinthians 5:14). That means we will love by giving our-selves to Him and to others. —RWD (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

TODAY IN THE WORD

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. - 1 John 4:10

In *The Heart of the Cross*, Philip Graham Ryken reflects on the meaning of the Crucifixion:

"When Jesus said, 'It is finished,' He was announcing that He had done His job, that He had completed His task and finished His project. What He had finished was suffering for sin. The suffering of Jesus Christ was not tragic suffering. It was saving suffering. Before Jesus died on the cross, humanity was in bondage to sin. We were sold as slaves to sin, and we deserved to die in captivity. A price needed to be paid to redeem us, to buy

us back from sin and death. But the price of redemption was a perfect sacrifice, a price we could not pay... Christ died for us, offering Himself as a sinless sacrifice, buying back our freedom by paying sin's price."

Jesus Christ was God's perfect sacrifice of atonement. As you read the Crucifixion account again on this Good Friday, we hope, in light of this month's focus on sacrifice, that it speaks to you with renewed power and depth.

We see in Matthew's narrative exactly the same scene as was prophesied in yesterday's reading from Isaiah. A Lamb is led to the slaughter. He's an innocent victim, misunderstood by those witnessing the event. Yet He goes willingly, knowing that His punishment brings peace between God and man.

Jesus' public execution was humiliating and painful in the extreme. The insults heaped on Him struck even at His relationship with His Father (Mt. 27:43). Thieves dying with Him felt themselves superior. Although all this suffering was intense, the most painful moment Jesus experienced was surely His separation from His Father (v. 46). Yet in the end, He gave up His spirit willingly (v. 50; cf. Jn. 10:17-18).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY Is there a Good Friday service at your church ? We know that Friday is the end of a busy week of work or study for you, and that "going to church" may not be high on your list of relaxing activities. But don't think of this as a duty--think of it as love. Your Savior, out of love for you, suffered and died. Your whole life, everything you are and do, is based on that. This time of worship can increase your love for your Savior.

GOD Is LOVE - Paul Enns (BORROW [Approaching God](#))

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:10)

A seminary student in Chicago drove a transit route on which a group of thugs boarded the bus, refused to pay their fares, and intimidated the passengers. The seminarian called a policeman aboard, who made the thugs pay their fares. When the policeman and the rest of the passengers had disembarked, the thugs beat up the seminary student, leaving him unconscious. The seminarian pursued them, finally found them, and brought them to trial. When the judge sentenced the thugs to prison, the student stood up, told them about the love of Christ, and said he wanted to serve their sentence. His demonstration of God's love resulted in the conversion of at least one of the thugs.

That remarkable story beautifully illustrates the love of God. God's love is not a Hollywood-type emotion; it is a rational love that loves man-kind though mankind is entirely unlovely. Love is basic to God's nature since "God is love" (1 John 4:8). Agape, a Greek word for love, does not emphasize a love based on emotion but rather a reasoned love that loves the object regardless of the worth of the object or whether the love is re-turned. That love is a primary attribute of God.

Love demands communication. Love does not reveal itself in isolation, does not live in a vacuum; hence, God demonstrated His love in sending "His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life" (John 3:16). God also loves the Son (Matthew 3:17), Israel (Deuteronomy 7:8), and believers (John 14:33). Further, God's love is not simply sentimental but based in His truth and holiness. God has expressed His love because He seeks to redeem man from his sinful estate.

God has especially exhibited His love for believers, loving them while they were sinners (Romans 5:8) and lavishing His love on them to name them His children (1 John 3:1). But love is unfulfilled if it does not receive response. Have you responded to God's love?

LESSON: God is love and portrays that love by communicating to man through sending His Son, Jesus Christ.

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

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

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

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

THE CLEAN FLAME OF LOVE

1 John 4:1-14.

THIS aged apostle cannot get away from the counsels of love. All his mental movements circle about this “greatest thing in the world.” Once he would “call down fire upon men”; now the only fire he knows is the pure and genial flame of love. Beautiful is it when our fires become cleaner as we get older, when temper changes to compassion, when malice becomes goodwill, when an ill-controlled conflagration becomes a homely fireside.

And all the love we acquire we must get from the altars of God. “We love because He first loved us.” We can find it nowhere else. “Love is of God.” Why, then, not seek it in the right place? Why seek for palms in arctic regions, or for icebergs in the tropics? God is the country of love, and in His deep mines there are riches “unsearchable.”

And the gracious law of life is this, that every acquisition of love increases our powers of discernment. “He that loveth knoweth...!” It is as though every jewel we find gives us an extra lens for the discovery of finer jewels still. And thus the love-life is a continual surprise, and the surprise will be eternal, for the object of the wonder is the infinite love of God.

1 JOHN 4:10

Please note: Salvation is God-given, God-driven, God empowered, and God-originated. The gift is not from man to God. It is from God to man....

Grace is created by God and given to man.

Charles Stanley - TOTALLY ACCEPTED

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 JOHN 4:1–10

KEY VERSE: 1 JOHN 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

While we would like to think that we can avoid rejection from the world, we cannot. However, it is not the world that will save us from ourselves—it is our heavenly Father. And His acceptance is eternal.

Perhaps we feel rejected because someone strongly dislikes what we thought was a good idea. Or maybe rejection comes from our kids or our parents. We struggle to understand why they refuse to accept us.

Whenever those feelings persist, we must recognize and refute them. Jesus understands our feelings of rejection. However, it was His death and resurrection that led to our eternal acceptance. Once we refute those feelings of rejection, it is important to affirm what God speaks over us. In His unfailing love for us, God says this:

- We are unconditionally loved. He never leaves or forsakes His children. He will forever stand by us.
- We are completely forgiven. God does not hold our sins over our heads. “This is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10 NASB).
- We are totally accepted. Gaining God’s acceptance is simple: accept His love and forgiveness for our lives. We are complete in Christ. Our searching ends once we enter into relationship with the Lord. Nothing else will ever satisfy us like He does.

Lord, I sometimes feel rejected by people in my life. But I know that in You I have received unconditional love and acceptance. (See [Pathways to His Presence: A Daily Devotional - Page 7](#))

Charles Stanley - The Initiator of Love

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 18:1–6

KEY VERSE: 1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

From the beginning of time, God has been the Initiator of love (1 John 4:10). In his book Lectures in Systematic Theology, Henry Thiessen writes, “He is unlike the gods of the heathen, who hate and are angry, and the god of the philosopher, who is cold and indifferent.” God loves us with a personal and intimate love.

Those who have yet to discover the intimacy of God often view Him as being cool and demanding toward His creation. But nothing is farther from the truth. Even in the Old Testament, we find God constantly moving toward mankind in an effort to reveal more of Himself on an intimate basis. Love motivates Him to do this.

In fact, love is the motivating factor of every true relationship. It motivated the heart of God not to destroy man in the Garden of Eden. And it was the one thing that motivated Him to deliver Israel from the Egyptians.

Love brought down the walls of Jericho, and love was the motivation behind the coming of Christ. Love took our place on Calvary's cross and later rose from the grave. And love reaches out to us each day with freshness and hope.

You were created by love to live within its embrace. Many wonder how God could love them so deeply. But He does. He is love, and He loves you and me.

Heavenly Father, I thank You that You are not a cold, indifferent God. Thank You for reaching out to me in love. (See [A Gift of Love: Reflections for the Tender Heart](#))

Charles Stanley - The Sovereignty of God

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 John 4:4–10

KEY VERSE: 1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

If you have felt that God has abandoned you when things go wrong, you are not the first believer to wrestle with such thoughts. Don't be afraid to ask God the hardest questions. He longs to answer you with His power and grace.

In her book, [Lord, where are you when bad things happen?](#) (borrow), Kay Arthur shares her emotions as she discovered the truth of God's sovereignty:

After I came to know Jesus Christ, God sent a godly man to tutor me in the faith. I was like a dry sponge being softened by the Word, absorbing all that I could get.

One night as Dave and I sat in my living room, he took off his signet ring and put it into his hand, clinching his fingers around it until his knuckles were white. Then he said, "Kay, now that you belong to Jesus Christ, you are just like this ring, and my hand is just like the hand of God. God has you in His hand. No one can touch you, look at you, or speak to you without God's permission."

I didn't recognize it then, but Dave was teaching me the sovereignty of God. Later, as I came to understand that God is sovereign and in control of everything so that nothing can happen without his knowledge and permission, I understood more fully what Dave was saying.

I also understood that the God who held me in His sovereign hand is a God of love (1 John 4:10). Everything that came into my life would have to be filtered through His fingers of love.

God, I am thankful that everything in my life is filtered through Your fingers of love. You hold me in Your sovereign hand. (See [Seeking His Face - Page 24](#))

Kay Arthur - 1 John 4:10 - Have you begun to grasp the breadth, length, height, and depth of God's love for you? (Eph 3:18) When you were a sinner, ungodly, and without hope, God loved you, pursued you, and wooed you. And He did not let go until you gave in to His desire to be your Father, your Lord, your Redeemer. That is what you are worth to Him.

Love - David Jeremiah

Those of you who remember the turbulent 1960s will recall seeing the word love spelled L-U-V. That spelling stood for the "groovy kind of love" that was supposed to reshape the world. Fortunately, luv is now relegated to texters.

Another spelling of love has stood the test of time: G-I-V-E. The Bible says that God so loved the world that He gave. . . . Love, in its purest form, is an action. When we give to others what is most valuable to ourselves, we prove our love.

Looking for a great love story? Read the Gospel of John in the New Testament and discover God's love language.

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 1 JOHN 4:10 [One Minute a Day: Instant Devotions for the Busy Life](#)

C H Spurgeon - excerpt from full sermon - [Love's Climax](#)

To find love, you had need send a lover; one whose soul is full of love is the most likely to discover it. John, with love in his heart, soars aloft, and using his eagle eye, looks over all history, and all space, and at last he poises himself over one spot, for he has found that for which he was looking, and he says, "Herein is love." There is love in a thousand places, like the scattered drops of

spray on the leaves of the forest; but as for the ocean, that is in one place, and when we reach it, we say, "Herein is water." There is love in many places, like wandering beams of light; but as for the sun, it is in one part of the heavens, and as we look at it, we say, "Herein is light." So, "Herein," said the apostle, as he looked toward the Lord Jehovah himself, "Herein is love." He did not point to his own heart, and say, "Herein is love," for that was but a little pool filled from the great sea of love. He did not look at the Church of God, and say of all the myriads who counted not their lives dear unto them, "Herein is love," for their love was only the reflected brightness of the great sun of love; but he looked to God the Father, in the splendour of his condescension in giving his only Son to die for us, and he said "Herein is love," as if all love were here, love at its utmost height, love at its climax, love out-doing itself: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

C H Spurgeon -'Herein is love' (Full sermon [Herein is Love](#))

'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.' 1 John 4:10–11

Our love to God, even when it does exist, and even when it influences our lives, is not worthy to be mentioned as a fountain of supply for love. The apostle points us away from it to something far more vast, and then he cries, 'Herein is love'. I am looking for 'the springs of the sea', and you point me to a little pool amid the rocks which has been filled by the flowing tide. I am glad to see that pool: how bright! how blue! how like the sea from whence it came! But do not point to this as the source of the great water-floods; for if you do I shall smile at your childish ignorance, and point you to that great rolling ocean which tosses its waves on high. What is your little pool to the vast Atlantic? Do you point me to the love in the believer's heart, and say, 'Herein is love'? You make me smile. I know that there is love in that true heart; but who can mention it in the presence of the great rolling ocean of the love of God, without bottom and without shore? The word not is not only upon my lip but in my heart as I think of the two things, 'not that we loved God, but that he loved us'. What poor love ours is at its very best when compared with the 'love wherewith he loved us'! Let me use another figure. If we had to enlighten the world, a child might point us to a bright mirror reflecting the sun, and he might cry, 'Herein is light!' You and I would say, 'Poor child, that is but borrowed brightness; the light is not there, but yonder, in the sun.' The love of saints is nothing more than the reflection of the love of God. We have love, but God is love.

Donald Cantrell - "He Loves Me"

1 Jo 4:10—Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son [to be] the propitiation for our sins

The greatest illustration of love is this fact; we are saved not because we loved God, but the fact that he loves us. I will never get over that fact, he loves me even though he knows me, and he loves you even though he knows you. He loved me when I deserved to be sentenced to a sinner's hell; he loved me when I had nothing to offer him in return. I have noticed in life that many people will accept certain people in their life knowing that they could reap benefits from this relationship. This was not the case for God; he loved me knowing that I was going to get all of the benefits of this relationship. I could never earn this love; I could not even adequately express my gratitude for this wonderful love. The thing that separates Christianity from all other religions is the thing called love; its whole foundation is built on love. The God of our faith expressed his love in sending his son, the son expressed his love in dying upon the cross for us, the Spirit expresses his love in drawing each of us to the son.

This love is an amazing thing to understand, nothing can separate us from this love, it is utterly impossible for God to stop loving us, why you may ask, God is love!!! He loves us daily, he loves us freely, and he loves us personally. I have noticed that sometimes our love is fleeting, it only last as long as things go good. The very moment someone lets us down, watch out there goes our love. The love of man is a very fickle trait; it can be so high today and so low tomorrow. The same is not true with the love of God, he is the same today as he was yesterday, and he will be the same thousands of years down the road.

I am glad that my salvation did not hinge on my goodness, but completely upon his goodness and his awesome, alluring, almighty love. That my dear friend is love, it's a godly love, it is something man can only consider, and man can only contemplate this great love. The souls of man hinged upon the love of God, many say that they have a willing love, but do they? When it came time to redeem man, God had the option of turning away; he could have withheld his son, who could have condemned him for doing so? As the time for action was near God said so be it, I love them more than they will ever know. he let his precious son hang upon Calvary for every sinner to have the chance for salvation. That is love, unquestionable love, unselfish love, unequalled love, and unapproachable love, a love that is royal and real.

1. The Mystery of This great Love
 2. The Mention of This Great Love
 3. The Manifestation of This Great Love
-

I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.

But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.—[God] saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began.—Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Jer. 31:3; 2 Thess. 2:13–14; 2 Tim. 1:9; Ps. 139:16; John 3:16; 1 John 4:10

A W Tozer - GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. —1 John 4:10

God is love, so His loving is not something He may do nor not do at His will. Loving us is not an intermittent act or series of acts which God does in between other acts. His love flows steadily out upon the whole human race in an unbroken and continuous fullness. There is not a time, not a fraction of time, when God's love is not active toward us. It is as constant as the being of God, for it is the being of God in unforced, normal expression....

We are often tempted to wonder how God could love us, but honest as this feeling is, it is nevertheless the result of a wrong way of looking at things. God does not love us because we are hard or easy to love; He loves us because He is God, not because we are good or bad or more attractive or less so. God's love is not drawn out of Him by its object; it flows out from God in a steady stream because He is love.

“God so loved the world,” not because the world was lovable but because God is love. Christ did not die for us that God might love us; He died for us because God already loved us from everlasting. Love is not the result of redemption; it is the cause of it. (See [Tozer on the Almighty God: A 365-Day Devotional - Page 23](#))

Love Unfathomable

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 1 JOHN 4:10 KJV

Are there not scenes and circumstances that now and then transpire before us and prompt an exclamation like that of the apostle, “Herein is love”? When we have seen the devotedness of a mother to her children, when we have marked the affection of friend for friend and caught a glimpse in different human relationships of the kindness that exists in human hearts, we have said, “Herein is love!” I shall ask you to look at and consider the wonder that the apostle discovered and that made him, with uplifted hands, exclaim, “Herein is love!”

When God loves those who love him, it seems to be according to the law of nature; but when he loves those who do not love him, this must be above even all laws—it is according, certainly, to the extraordinary rule of grace, and grace alone. There was not a man on earth who loved God. There was none who did good—no, not one; and yet the Lord fixed the eye of his electing love upon sinners in whom there was no thought of loving him. No more love to God is there in an unrenowned heart than there is life within a piece of granite. No more love to God is there within the soul who is unsaved than there is fire within the depths of the ocean's waves; and here forsooth is the wonder, that when we had no love to God, he should have loved us. (See [At the Master's Feet: A Daily Devotional](#))

David Jeremiah - 1 JOHN 4:10

There is something in the character of God and the culture of heaven that resulted in Jesus Christ coming to earth to die for the human race. Was it kindness? Compassion? Empathy? Sympathy? As Godlike as those and other traits are, the Bible seems to focus on one trait as the defining characteristic of God: love. First John 4, verses 8 and 16 say that God is love, and the world's favorite Bible verse, John 3:16, says that it was because God “loved the world” that He sent Jesus to save us. Heaven is, and will be, brimming with love.

But the love of God is not for heaven alone; it is freely available for us to experience while on earth. Indeed, the “love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us” (Romans 5:5). Nothing can “separate us from the love of God”

(Romans 8:39). And our hearts are continually being directed “into the love of God” (2 Thessalonians 3:5).

If you are feeling unloved, you do not have to wait for heaven to experience the reality of God’s love. You can experience it now by believing in the gift of His love, Jesus Christ. (See [Journey: Moments of Guidance in the Presence of God - Page 12](#))

No less a person than God is needful to assure us of God’s love. RICHARD SIBBES

Horatius Bonar - The Love of God

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”—1 JOHN 4:10

HOW am I to measure the love of God? By the distance between “the throne of the Majesty in the heavens” and the grave in which the Son of God was laid. It was an infinite descent, and it is the measure of an infinite love.

How am I to estimate the love of God? By the gift which is so freely sent down to us—the infinite, the unspeakable gift. Nothing can equal that gift in value, and nothing can equal that love in greatness.

How am I to understand the love of God? It cannot be understood; it passeth knowledge; it is beyond the stretch of our thought.

How am I to deserve this love of God? Deserve it! It is love to the undeserving. This is its essence, its characteristic. It is absolutely free.

How am I to obtain this love of God? By receiving Him who is the embodiment, the incarnation of it. In giving credit to the divine record concerning Him, I let this holy love of God pour itself into my soul, as light streams in upon the body the moment I open my eye to the sun. I look, and live; I look, and am healed; I look, and am blest for ever.

How am I to keep this love of God? By “holding the beginning of my confidence steadfast unto the end.” (Heb. 3:14.) I am to keep hold of it, just as I first took hold of it.

GEORGE MACDONALD. 1 John 4:10 - If I felt my heart as hard as a stone; if I did not love God, or man, or woman, or little child, I would yet say to God in my heart, “O God, see how I trust Thee, because Thou art perfect, and not changeable like me. I do not love Thee. I love nobody. I am not even sorry for it. Thou seest how much I need Thee to come close to me, to put Thy arm round me, to say to me, my child; for the worse my state, the greater my need of my Father who loves me. Come to me, and my day will dawn; my love will come back, and, oh! how I shall love Thee, my God! and know that my love is Thy love, my blessedness Thy being.”

A W Tozer - In the Image of God

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. —1 John 4:10

Every person who is born into the world begins to see God in some ways as soon as he or she is old enough to comprehend. If that person does not repent and experience the renewal of regeneration through the working of the Holy Spirit, he or she is lost and will be lost forever. I believe that with all my heart.

But I also believe that human beings, made in the image of God, continue to keep upon themselves something of that image of deity. It is that residual image that permits God to incarnate Himself in us without incongruity or inconsistency.

So it was that the eternal Son, Himself God, could become flesh in Jesus Christ without inconsistency.

“You matter to the living and loving God of all creation. Above everyone else in the whole universe, He cares for you and calls to you and has gracious plans for you!...” What a message for the sinner! (See [Tozer on the Holy Spirit: A 365-Day Devotional - Page 30](#))

That He should leave His place on high
And come for sinful man to die,
You count it strange?
So once did I Before I knew my Saviour.

Love Demonstrated

He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 1 JOHN 4:10

The word love is used to mean many different things. We say that we “love” the house that we have just bought or that we “love” a

particular vacation spot or that we “love” a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. We also “love” a certain television program, and we “love” our husband or wife. Hopefully we don’t love our spouse the same way we love a peanut butter and jelly sandwich!

The greatest love of all, however, is God’s love for us—a love that showed itself in action. A friend once observed, “Love talked about is easily ignored, but love demonstrated is irresistible.” The Bible says, “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). Now that is real love! How will you respond to His love today? (See [Unto the Hills: A Daily Devotional - Page 26](#))

PROPIATION

The publican cried out, “God be propitiated toward me, the sinner” (Luke 18:13b, Greek text). Sinful man has no plea but the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ. Paul referred to Christ Jesus, “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God” (Rom. 3:25). “And he [Jesus] is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2). “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10).

GOD’S WRATH, GOD’S LOVE - Henry Blackaby

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.¹
JOHN 4 : 10

David Brainerd was a missionary to the Indians of North America during the eighteenth century. In his early preaching, he focused on God’s righteous wrath—and the peoples’ response to his message was disappointing.

By God’s grace, though, Brainerd discovered that when he spoke of God’s love, the people were overcome with emotion and conviction. Once when he spoke on 1 John 4:10, the entire village was seized with sorrow over their previous indifference to such love. The people feared that they would somehow miss out on the divine compassion God was offering them.

Brainerd noted: “It was surprising to see how their hearts seemed to be pierced with the tender and melting invitations of the gospel, when there was not a word of terror spoken to them.”

Before you were a believer, which topic did you hear more about—God’s wrath or His love? Why is it important to hear about both? Which of those two topics most touched your heart?

What will you do today to respond to share with others God’s amazing love? (See [Being Still With God Every Day: Discovering God's Plan for ... - Page 163](#))

Henry Mahan - Here is Love

To find love you need to find one whose heart and soul is full of love. John, the beloved, looks over all space, time, history, and men, and finally, his eye comes to rest in one place; and he says, “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 Jn. 4:10).

There is water in a thousand places, like the drops of dew on a flower; but, when one discovers the ocean, he says, “Here is water.” There is light here and light there; but, when one looks at the sun, he says, “Here is light.”

So the Apostle does not point to his own heart, nor to the church, nor even to a devoted mother and say, “Here is love”: for that love is but a little pool filled from the great sea and reflected light from the sun of love. He looks to our heavenly Father and the unspeakable gift of his affection; and he says, “herein is love.”

William MacDonald - Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (1 John 4:10)

Love is that quality in God which causes Him to lavish unbounded affection on others. His love is manifest in giving good and perfect gifts to the beloved.

We can give only a few of the myriad of verses that speak of that love! “I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee” (Jer. 31:3). “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us...” (Eph. 2:4). And, of course, the best known of all, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

When John says “God is love” (1 John 4:8), he is not defining God, but insisting that love is a key element in the divine nature. We do not worship love, but the God of love.

His love had no beginning and can have no end. It is limitless in its dimensions. It is absolutely pure, without taint of selfishness or any other sin. It is sacrificial, never minding the cost. It seeks only the welfare of others, and nothing in return. It goes out to the unlovely as well as to the lovely, to enemies as well as to friends. It is not drawn out by any virtues in its objects, but only by the goodness of the Giver.

The practical implications of this sublime truth are obvious. “Therefore be imitators of God,” said Paul, “as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us” (Eph. 5:1,2a, NASB). Our love should ascend to the Lord, should flow out to our brethren, and should extend to the unsaved world.

Contemplation of His love should also inspire deepest worship. As we fall at His feet, we must say repeatedly:

How Thou canst love me as Thou dost
And be the God Thou art
Is darkness to my intellect
But sunshine to my heart.

1 JOHN 4:10

READ: 1 John 4:7-19

FOR me to understand the depth of God's love is impossible. Either pride or fear always gets in the way.

At times when pride has attained a position of power in my life, I think that I have earned the love I receive. Pride tells me that I am loved because I am lovable, respectable, and worthy.

But at other times fear sets in and reminds me that I don't deserve any of the love I get. My motives are never pure, and I fear rejection if they are exposed. So even while I am enjoying acceptance, I live with the fear of being unmasked, of having others find out that I am much less than they think I am.

In my relationship with God, I often think that His affection for me is based on my performance. When I do well, He loves me; but if I foul up, I have reason to expect His scorn.

Yet God does not love me because I deserve it. He loves me in spite of the fact that I don't deserve it. And the greatest proof of God's love is not what He does for me every day; it's what Christ already did for me two thousand years ago. His death was the greatest act of love ever displayed. And that truth alone shatters my pride and dispels my fear. —H W Robinson (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Thank You, Lord, for setting the example of love. Your willingness to love me even though You know the full extent of my depraved nature is both reassuring and inspiring. It is reassuring because I can never surprise You with my sin; it is inspiring because I can learn from You how to love people like me who are not perfect. May I learn to love in a way that shows the world Your idea of the way things ought to be.

Love: The Heart of God Revealed (AI Generated Sermon Outline)

Bible Passage: 1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Summary: 1 John 4:10 reveals the nature of God's love, emphasizing that true love is rooted in God's initiative and sacrificial offering. It highlights that we love because He first loved us, showcasing the defining moment of our relationship with Him.

Application: This passage encourages Christians to reflect on the depth of God's love and how it should transform their own lives and relationships. It challenges them to love others sacrificially, fostering unity and compassion in their communities even amidst struggles.

Teaching: This sermon can teach that God's love is not just a feeling but an action, demonstrated supremely through Jesus Christ. It emphasizes that understanding God's love leads to a radical redefinition of how we interact with others, pushing us towards selfless love.

How this passage could point to Christ: The passage points to Christ as the ultimate embodiment of God's love; His sacrifice on

the cross serves as the highest expression of love that believers are called to emulate. It integrates into the overarching biblical narrative of redemption through love.

Big Idea: The big idea is that the understanding of God's unconditional love calls us to live out that love in practical ways, transforming our hearts and communities in the process.

Recommended Study: As you prepare this sermon, consider utilizing your Logos library to explore the historical context of 1 John and its themes of love and fellowship. Look into commentaries that discuss the Greek terms used in this passage, particularly 'agape', to deepen your understanding of its depth. Examine other Scriptural cross-references that illustrate God's love, such as Romans 5:8 and John 3:16

.1. Initiating Love's Journey

1 John 4:10a

You could focus on the initiative of God's love—He loved us first, demonstrating that love starts with God. By highlighting that true love begins with God's initiative, you can encourage believers to reflect on their relationships, understanding that loving others selflessly begins with recognizing and accepting God's love for us.

2. Sacrificial Sending

1 John 4:10b

Perhaps discuss the sacrificial nature of God's love demonstrated by sending His Son as an atoning sacrifice. This point can lead to a reflection on how our love should also be sacrificial and self-giving, pointing to Jesus' ultimate sacrifice as our example in all relationships and actions.

3. Responding with Reciprocity

1 John 4:10c

Maybe explore how God's love calls us to a response, emphasizing that His love propels us to love others. This can transform how we view love—beyond feelings to active responses that mirror Jesus' life. Encourage the community to let this love flow through them to others, especially in times of conflict or hardship.

The Ultimate Expression of Love (AI Generated Sermon Outline)

Bible Passage: 1 John 4:10

Summary: 1 John 4:10 fundamentally states that God's love is not just a sentiment but a powerful decision and action—He showed His love by sending Jesus as a sacrifice for our sins. This encapsulates the Christian understanding of love as a choice that leads to action, rather than mere emotion, thus redefining what it means to love others in a godly way.

Application: Believers can apply this understanding of God's love in their daily interactions, promoting love that is sacrificial and unconditional. It challenges individuals to actively demonstrate love, especially when it is difficult, fostering a culture of grace and truth in their communities.

Teaching: The sermon could teach that Christian love must be rooted in the comprehension of God's initiative and sacrificial action. This understanding moves the audience from a passive reception of love to an active expression of love, shaping their relationships and conduct in profound ways.

How this passage could point to Christ: God's love revealed in Christ through this passage serves as the fulfillment of prophetic love throughout the Bible. It reflects the culmination of God's redemptive story and the essence of Christ's mission—demonstrating love through sacrifice and redemption, which are recurring themes within the biblical narrative.

Big Idea: The big idea presented is that true love, modeled after God's love, requires active engagement and sacrifice, compelling us to live out our faith by loving others radically, reflecting the heart of God within a world desperate for authentic love and connection.

Recommended Study: As you prepare, consider using your Logos library to examine the theological implications of God's love described in 1 John 4:10, particularly focusing on the concept of propitiation and its significance in the life of a believer. Look into relevant Greek texts discussing love in the New Testament to understand how John differentiates between divine love and human expressions of love. Furthermore, consider comparative studies with Old Testament love expressions to broaden the understanding

of God's continuity in love throughout scripture.

1. Divine Love Demonstrated

1 John 4:10

You could begin by exploring 1 John 4:10, emphasizing how this passage reveals the ultimate expression of God's love through the sending of His Son as a propitiation for our sins. This act demonstrates a love that is both intentional and sacrificial, serving as the model and motivation for our love towards others. By internalizing this truth, your audience might be inspired to practice love that reflects God's grace and willingness to go beyond mere sentiment to actual deeds. This sermon point challenges listeners to view love as an active response to God's love.

The Depth of Divine Love (AI Generated Sermon Outline)

Bible Passage: 1 John 4:10

Summary: 1 John 4:10 presents a profound theological truth that God's love is not only a feeling but a deliberate action, as evidenced by the sending of His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. This illustrates that love involves sacrifice and is foundational to our understanding of how we relate to God and others, signifying a transformative power in our lives.

Application: This passage offers practical encouragement for believers to embody God's love in their daily lives, particularly in how they forgive and show grace to others. It challenges them to move beyond superficial interactions and to engage in deep, sacrificial relationships that reflect Christ's love.

Teaching: The sermon can teach that God's love is actionable and sacrificial, serving as a model for how Christians are called to love one another and the world. This challenges the audience to evaluate their own expressions of love and align them more closely with Christ's example.

How this passage could point to Christ: This passage highlights Christ's role as the perfect demonstration of God's love, linking to themes throughout the Bible where sacrifice and redemption are central. His atoning death on the cross stands as the fulfillment of God's love towards humanity, illustrating a consistent biblical narrative of love's redemptive power.

Big Idea: The big idea communicated is that understanding and embracing God's sacrificial love compels Christians to reflect that love in their interactions, fostering a community that embodies grace, forgiveness, and service to others.

Recommended Study: For a deeper grasp on this passage, I suggest exploring commentaries within your Logos library that unpack the concept of propitiation in the New Testament, especially as it contrasts with Old Testament sacrificial systems. Investigate the various terms used for love in Greek to understand the nuances that John is presenting. Additionally, consider the implications of God's love in the wider narrative of scripture, particularly in relation to how it motivates Christian ethics and community living.

1. Profound Action of Love

1 John 4:10

You could explore the profound action of God's love sending His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Perhaps emphasize that this love is not merely an emotion but a costly act of grace. Encourage the congregation to consider the depth of such love and its implications for our lives. Highlight the transformative power of embodying Christlike love, and remind them that through Christ, love moves beyond words into sacrificial, redemptive action. As recipients of this love, we are called to extend it to others, forgiving and serving as Christ did.

Where Love Comes From - I have loved you with an everlasting love; ... with lovingkindness I have drawn you. —Jeremiah 31:3 - What happened between my husband and a dog named Maggie was not love at first sight. In fact, their first meeting was more like a war dance. When Jay came home from work, Maggie stopped him at the back door and growled at him as if he were an intruder. Then Jay growled, wanting to know why a strange dog was in his home. I explained why I rescued her from the kennel, but he was unmoved.

But soon Maggie began welcoming Jay home in the evening with a wildly excited dance routine. With all 20 toenails tapping on the tile she would wag her tail and wiggle to tell him that his arrival was the highlight of her day. Within a week, her enthusiastic welcome had won his heart.

Maggie's method of winning Jay's affection reminded me of what the prophet Jeremiah and the apostle John wrote. God's love for us, they said, draws us into a loving relationship with Him (Jeremiah 31:3; 1John 4:7-8,19).

When I think about God enjoying my presence as much as Maggie enjoys Jay's, I am eager to spend time with Him. I realize that God loves me far more than Maggie loves Jay, and my heart fills up with love for Him. And then my heart overflows with love for others, for the power of God's love empowers me to love even those who don't love me. — By Julie Ackerman Link ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

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

We love because God first loved us.