

# 1 John 4:16 Commentary

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FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND HIS CHILDREN  
Click chart to enlarge  
Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission  
Another Overview Chart - [1 John](#) - Charles Swindoll

BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP		BEHAVIOR OF FELLOWSHIP	
Conditions of Fellowship	Cautions of Fellowship	Fellowship Characteristics	Fellowship Consequences
Meaning of Fellowship 1 Jn 1:1-2:27		Manifestations of Fellowship 1 Jn 2:28-5:21	
Abiding in God's Light		Abiding in God's Love	
Written in Ephesus			
circa 90 AD			
From Talk Thru the Bible			

## STUDY GUIDE

### 1 JOHN 4

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*"Asking questions is the key to understanding."*

--Jonathan Edwards

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

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**1 John 4:16 We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him:**

**Greek** - kai hemeis egnokamen (1PRAI) kai pepisteukamen (1PRAI) ten agaphen en echei (3SPA1) ho theos en hemin O theos agaphe estin (3SPA1) kai o menon (PAPMSN) en te agaphe en to theo menei (3SPA1) kai o theos en auto menei (3SPA1)

KJV 1 John 4:16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

BGT 1 John 4:16 κα με ς γν καμεν κα πεπιστε καμεν τ ν γ πην ν χει θε ς ν μ ν. θε ς γ πη στ ν, κα μ νων ν τ γ π ν τ θε μ νει κα θε ς ν α τ μ νει.

NET 1 John 4:16 And we have come to know and to believe the love that God has in us. God is love, and the

one who resides in love resides in God, and God resides in him.

CSB 1 John 4:16 And we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and the one who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him.

ESV 1 John 4:16 So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

NIV 1 John 4:16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.

NLT 1 John 4:16 We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.

NRS 1 John 4:16 So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.

NJB 1 John 4:16 We have recognised for ourselves, and put our faith in, the love God has for us. God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him.

NAB 1 John 4:16 We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us. God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him.

YLT 1 John 4:16 and we -- we have known and believed the love, that God hath in us; God is love, and he who is remaining in the love, in God he doth remain, and God in him.

MIT 1 John 4:16 We know and believe in God's love that he has (placed) in us. God is love. One who continues in love remains in God, and God continues to be in him.

GWN 1 John 4:16 We have known and believed that God loves us. God is love. Those who live in God's love live in God, and God lives in them.

BBE 1 John 4:16 And we have seen and had faith in the love which God has for us. God is love, and everyone who has love is in God, and God is in him.

RSV 1 John 4:16 So we know and believe the love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

NKJ 1 John 4:16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

ASV 1 John 4:16 And we know and have believed the love which God hath in us. God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him.

**Amplified** - And we know (understand, recognize, are conscious of, by observation and by experience) and believe (adhere to and put faith in and rely on) the love God cherishes for us. God is love, and he who dwells and continues in love dwells and continues in God, and God dwells and continues in him.

**Wuest** - And as for us, we have known the love which God has in our case, and have that knowledge at present, and we have believed and at present maintain that attitude; God is as to His nature, love, and he who dwells in the aforementioned love, in God is dwelling, and God in him is dwelling. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

- **we:** 1Jn 4:9,10 3:1,16 Ps 18:1-3 31:19 36:7-9 Isa 64:4 1Co 2:9
- **God is love:** 1Jn 4:8,12,13
- **and he:** 1Jn 4:12, 3:24
- [1 John 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 John 4:8+ The one who does not love does not know God (NOT A BELIEVER, NOT SAVED), for **God is love**.

John 17:2+ (1Jn 4:16 FULFILLS JESUS' PRAYER) and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

John 6:69+ (SAME COMBINATION OF KNOWING AND BELIEVING IN REVERSE ORDER) "We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God." (Seems to say faith might lead to

knowledge and here in 1Jn 4:16 knowledge leads to faith - cf Ro 10:17)

## ABIDING IN LOVE AND IN GOD

John has just described the amazing relationship of all who confess Jesus as the Son of God, that now "God abides in him and he in God." (1Jn 4:15+)

**We have come to know** ([ginosko](#) - perfect tense) **and have believed** ([pisteuo](#) - perfect tense) **the love** ([agape](#)) **which God** ([theos](#)) **has** (present tense - the love God continually has) **for us. God** ([theos](#)) **is** (present tense) **love** ([agape](#)), **and the one who abides** ([meno](#) - present tense) **in love** ([agape](#)) **abides** ([meno](#) - present tense) **in God, and God abides** ([meno](#) - present tense) **in him** - NAS leaves out the **and** (kai) so it is literally "**and we.**" **We** here refers to the apostle and his readers (contrast '**we** [apostles only] have beheld... the Son' 1Jn 4:14+), all who have made the confess in 1Jn 4:15. **Know** and **believed** are intimately linked (you can't know God unless you believe) are in the perfect tense, emphasizing a past completed act with abiding results in present time. They believed at a point in time and continue to believe as an abiding reality.

**D Edmond Hiebert** writes that "God's love for us has evoked a response on our part: '**we have known and believed**' God's love. The two verbs "**have known** and **believed**", both in the perfect tense, indicate the resultant experience flowing from our initial faith and confession." ([1 John 4:7-21](#))

**Danny Akin** on **have known** and **believed** - There is a definite order and emphasis in the verbs. Knowledge is prior to and explained by faith. Faith must have content. "Keep the faith" is nonsensical. "Faith in what?" is always the crucial question. When one abides in the love of God, his knowledge of God grows, and his faith in God grows. The more we love him, the more we understand him, and in turn we trust him more and our faith increases. ([1, 2, 3 John - Page 184](#))

**Bob Utley** on **know** and...**believed** in perfect tense - Believers' confident assurance of God's love in Christ, not existential circumstances, is the basis of their relationship.

**Alfred Plummer** says of **know** and **believe** that "each completes the other. Sound faith is intelligent; sound knowledge is believing."

*To know God means to be in a deep relationship to Him  
—to share His life and enjoy His love.*

As **Wiersbe** says "**know** ([ginosko](#)) has a much deeper meaning than simply intellectual acquaintance or understanding. For example, the verb **know** is used to describe the intimate union of husband and wife (Ge 4:1 -**Ed**: Lxx translates the Hebrew yada with [ginosko](#)). To **know** ([ginosko](#)) God means to be in a deep relationship to Him—to share His life and enjoy His love. This knowing is not simply a matter of understanding facts; it is a matter of perceiving truth (cf. 1Jn 2:3–5). ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**THOUGHT** - How far is this true of all of you? How many here can join with the beloved apostle, and say, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us"? We know it; we have felt it; we are under its power. We know it still, it remains a matter of faith to us; we believe it. We have a double hold of it. "**We know**," we are not agnostics. "**We believe**," we are not unbelievers. Let Christ be God to you ([C H Spurgeon - 1 John 4](#))

*The more we love God, the more we understand the love of God.  
And the more we understand His love, the easier it is for us to trust Him.*

**Warren Wiersbe** - Abiding in God's love produces two wonderful spiritual benefits in the life of a believer: 1. He grows in knowledge, and 2. He grows in faith (1 John 4:16). The more we love God, the more we understand the love of God. And the more we understand His love, the easier it is for us to trust Him. After all, when you know someone intimately and love him sincerely, you have no problem putting your confidence in him. (**ILLUSTRATION**) A man standing in the greeting card section of a store was having trouble picking out a card. The clerk asked if she could help, and he said: "Well, it's our fortieth wedding anniversary, but I can't find a card that says what I want to say. You know, forty years ago it wouldn't have been any problem picking out a card, because back then I thought I knew what love was. But we love each other so much more today, I just can't find a card that says it!" This is a growing Christian's experience with God. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

*"The growth of knowledge and the growth of faith  
act and react on each other."*

--A. E. Brooke

**Steven Cole** sums up this verse - John comes back to the theme of God's love that he developed in 1Jn 4:7-8+: When we know and believe God's love for us and we abide in love, we abide in God and He in us (1Jn 4:16). It is important to know that John is not

saying in these verses that the way to abide in God and have Him abide in us is to confess that Jesus is the Christ and to abide in love. Rather, he is saying that if we do these things, it is evidence of God's abiding in us and us in Him. When John says, "We have come to know and have believed," he uses a verb tense (the Greek perfect) that means, "We have come to know and believe in the past with continuing results in the present and future." Faith is not a blind leap in the dark. It is based on knowledge. John and the apostles came to know and believe God's love for them in the person of Jesus Christ and His voluntary sacrifice on the cross. Then John repeats what he already said in 1Jn 4:8: "God is love." He is not only love. He also is holy and righteous. His love never negates any other of His attributes, nor do those attributes negate His love. The supreme demonstration of God's love is the cross, where He gave His only begotten Son to die in the place of sinners. There love and justice met and both were satisfied. God's love was demonstrated to us as sinners. God's justice was satisfied when Christ paid the penalty that we deserved. John then concludes, "The one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him." By "abides in love," I think that he means both, "abides in God's love" and "abides in love for others." As we saw in 1Jn 4:11+, you cannot separate the two: "If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." If you have come to know and believe God's love for you, then you are under obligation to be the channel of His love to others, including those who do not deserve it. Remember, you didn't deserve it either! It is crucial that each of us be able to apply personally God's love in Christ. The apostle Paul did. He wrote (Gal. 2:20+), "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me." That is John's confession, "I have faith in the Son of God." It also is John's love, which God has for us: He "loved me and gave Himself up for me." Can you say those things personally? "I believe in the Son of God. I have come to know and believe that He loved me and He gave Himself up for me." If so, John says that it is evidence that you abide in God and God abides in you.

*As we've seen throughout 1 John,  
the issue is not **perfection**, but rather, **direction**.*

**Some may still be thinking, "I do believe in Jesus as the Son of God and as my Savior, but I don't have strong faith. I often have doubts. I do abide in His love and seek to be the channel of His love to others, but I often fall short. How can I have assurance that I abide in Him and He abides in me?"** As we've seen throughout 1 John, the issue is not **perfection**, but rather, **direction**. The important questions are, "What do you do when your faith wavers? Do you come before the Lord in confession, asking Him to strengthen your faith? What do you do when selfishness dominates your life, rather than God's love? Do you grieve over your hardness of heart and ask God to fill you with His Spirit and to produce the fruit of His Spirit in you? Fruit is not an instant product. It takes time and cultivation. Faith and love take time to grow (Phil. 1:9+; 2Th 1:3+).

*John wants you to know that if these qualities are growing in you,  
you can be assured that God abides in you and you in Him.*

John wants you to know that if these qualities are growing in you, you can be assured that God abides in you and you in Him. If you do not see faith and love growing in your life, then do as Isaiah (Isa 55:6-7) directs: "Seek the Lord while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." ([1 John 4:12-16 Assurance of Abiding](#))

**John Piper** - So the main point of these verses (1Jn 4:13-16) so far is that there is an aroma about God that can't be concealed. It's the aroma of love. When he comes into your life, the aroma comes into your life. The aroma is the sign of God's saving presence, and if you smell it, you know he is there. You have assurance. If you don't smell it, then you lose assurance and you cry out to God to cause his love to abound in your heart. ([1 John 4:13-16: God Abides in the One Who Loves - This is an important sermon for evangelicals to read - click for the entire message](#))

## GOD IS LOVE

**God** ([theos](#)) is (present tense) **love** ([agape](#)), and the one who abides ([meno](#) - present tense) **in love** ([agape](#)) **abides** ([meno](#) - present tense) **in God, and God abides** ([meno](#) - present tense continually abides) **in him** - This is not just a "quality" of God, but is the essence of Who God is forever and ever. Amen. Notice that you cannot reverse the statement and say "Love is God," for that would border on pantheism. In 1Jn 4:7+ the apostle says "love is from God" but that is not saying that "love is God." It would be like saying "light is God" (reversing "God is light")! Light is not God. Neither is love God. (See God's Attribute of Love)

*Abiding in love is evidence of  
abiding in God and God abiding in us.*  
-- Gary Derickson

**D Edmond Hiebert** explains that "Although John has just said that "love is of God" (1Jn 4:7), one cannot say that "love is God," just as one cannot say that "light is God." Without the article, "love" is qualitative, depicting the nature of His being. The fact that God as a person "is love" does not invalidate the fact that He is also holy and righteous. All aspects of His nature belong together and unite

in determining His action and response. In His attitude and actions He is totally consistent. "Because He is love, God works against whatever works against love." ([1 John 4:7-21](#))

**F F Bruce** - "The love which dwells in the community of God's children and which they show to one another is His love imparted to them. More than that: the God of love imparts Himself to His people, so dwelling within them that they, in their turn, dwell in His love and dwell in Him. (Borrow [The Gospel and epistles of John](#))

John is the apostle of three foundational statements about the nature of God - God is spirit (Jn 4:24). God is light (1Jn 1:5). God is love (1Jn 4:7+). Each gives us some small insight into the nature of our Transcendent God. Each of these attributes of God interacts with the other. For example, everything that God does is governed by His love because that is Who He is even when He is led to dispense judgment or wrath. Of these three aspects (Spirit, Light, Love), clearly love is easiest for us to identify with as it is the most personal and closest to our human experience.

**Dodd on God is love** - All His activity is loving activity. If He creates, He creates in love; if He rules, He rules in love; if He judges, He judges in love. All that He does is the expression of His nature, is—to love.

**Warren Wiersbe** says **God is love** "is the basis for a believer's relationship with God and with his fellow man. Because God is love, we can love. His love is not past history; it is present reality." ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**William Barclay** on **God is love** - In this passage there occurs what is probably the greatest single statement about God in the whole Bible, that God is love. It is amazing how many doors that single statement unlocks and how many questions it answers.

(i) It is the explanation of creation. Sometimes we are bound to wonder why God created this world. The disobedience, and the lack of response in men is a continual grief to him. Why should he create a world which was to bring him nothing but trouble? The answer is that creation was essential to his very nature. If God is love, he cannot exist in lonely isolation. Love must have someone to love and someone to love it.

(ii) It is the explanation of free-will. Unless love is a free response it is not love. Had God been only law he could have created a world in which men moved like automata, having no more choice than a machine. But, if God had made men like that, there would have been no possibility of a personal relationship between him and them. Love is of necessity the free response of the heart; and, therefore, God, by a deliberate act of self-limitation, had to endow men with free will.

(iii) It is the explanation of providence. Had God been simply mind and order and law, he might, so to speak, have created the universe, wound it up, set it going and left it. There are articles and machines which we are urged to buy because we can fit them and forget them; their most attractive quality is that they can be left to run themselves. But, because God is love, his creating act is followed by his constant care.

(iv) It is the explanation of redemption. If God had been only law and justice, he would simply have left men to the consequences of their sin. The moral law would operate; the soul that sinned would die; and the eternal justice would inexorably hand out its punishments. But the very fact that God is love meant that he had to seek and save that which was lost. He had to find a remedy for sin.

(v) It is the explanation of the life beyond. If God were simply creator, men might live their brief span and die for ever. The life which ended early would be only another flower which the frost of death had withered too soon. But the fact that God is love makes it certain that the chances and changes of life have not the last word and that his love will readjust the balance of this life.

**I Howard Marshall** adds that "**God is love**" is rightly recognized as one of the high peaks of divine revelation in this Epistle. Logically the statement stands parallel with '**God is light**' (1Jn 1:5+) and '**God is spirit**' (Jn. 4:24) as one of the three great Johannine expressions of the nature of God... 'God is spirit' describes his metaphysical nature, while 'God is light' and 'God is love' deal with his character, especially as he has revealed himself to men." (Borrow [The Epistles of John](#))

**Spurgeon on abides in love** - This is not mere benevolence; there are many benevolent people who still do not **dwell in love**. They wish well to their fellow men; but not to all. They are full of indignation at certain men for the wrong that they have done them. John's words teach us that there is a way of living in which you are in accord with God, and with all mankind; you have passed out of the region of enmity into the realm of love. When you have come there, by the grace of God, then God dwells in you, and you dwell in Him. ([1 John 4](#))

*It is the divine indwelling which alone  
makes possible both belief and love.*

**John Stott** - The only way to love, as the only way to believe, is by living in God and God in us. For it is the divine indwelling which



alone makes possible both belief and love. They are its fruit, and therefore its evidence: 'he who dwells in love is [i.e. is thereby seen to be] dwelling in God' (NEB)... Without the Holy Spirit our minds are dark and our hearts cold. Only the Holy Spirit can enlighten our minds to believe in Jesus and warm our hearts to love God and each other. So believing and loving are evidence that his Spirit is at work within us. (Borrow [The Letters of John](#))

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**Guy King** on our **spiritual position, in love** - The whole passage is full of references to, descriptions of, and blessings in, the Love House - an exquisitely delightful residence.

- Double-fronted - love to GOD, love to others.
- Long lease - even for eternity.
- Sunny aspect - constantly lit by the Sun of Righteousness.
- Every modern convenience - for "charity never faileth."
- Safe from disturbance - for "perfect love casteth out fear."

Note that the phrase employed is "*dwells* in love," not "*lodges*," as if for a while - there is all the difference between visiting the seaside for a holiday, and living there permanently. It is this latter condition that is envisaged here. The house itself is a permanency - "now abides ... charity," 1 Corinthians 13:13- and we are never to move elsewhere.

We are said to be Born there - "born of God" (1Jn 4:7+). Not by natural birth, but by new birth. In the beautiful atmosphere where love reigns - that is, in effect, where GOD reigns, for "God is love" - there is no room for a spirit of hate, a spirit of fear, a spirit of greed, a spirit of jealousy, a spirit of self. It is a sign of a newly born body that it breathes life; likewise is it a mark of a new born soul that it breathes love for we cannot really know GOD without catching from Him some of His wonderful spirit of love (1Jn 4:8+).

We are said to Grow there - "herein is our love made perfect" (1Jn 4:17+). Love is not a merely static thing, but is for ever growing deeper as the days go by - from the cupboard love of the cat, to the childish love of the infant, the callow love of the youth, the awakening love of the sweetheart, the deepening love of a married couple, to the perfect love of a Darby and Joan. So does it come about, in the higher sphere, that the more we know GOD the more we love Him - and, incidentally, the more we love others. As the Christian should be always on the go, so should he also be always on the grow "as newborn babes, desire the sincere [the unadulterated] milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby," (1Peter 2:2+).

We are to grow in all kinds of Christian excellencies - for instance, in grace, in knowledge, and in love. This love that the Epistle is so full of is a supernatural quality - "shed abroad in our hearts [not by our effort] by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us," (Romans 5:5+). The New Testament word for love is not found in heathen writers; and their word for it is not found in the New Testament - though it is given an exalted place in London's Piccadilly Circus! Let us see to it that, as members of the Fellowship we are growing in the Divine virtue.

We are said to Live there - "dwells in love" (1Jn 4:16). The Love life follows a pattern, "manifested" in the blessed fact that GOD sent His Son to be incarnate (1Jn 4:9+) and crucified (1Jn 4:10+) for us. A strange word is used of the latter fact - "the propitiation"; and we must give careful attention to it, in view of certain strictures that occur in certain quarters. They begin by quoting from this very Epistle, this very chapter, that "God is love". Very well, then, if that be the case, He will surely forgive "our sins", without any need to be propitiated on account of them. Yet the Bible does describe the Cross, not only as an example of love (how true!), but as a propitiation for sins. You see, there are two sides to the nature of GOD, as revealed to us - "God is love", (1Jn 4:8+); but also, "God is light", (1Jn 1:5+), and the two must be held in balance. The first word signifies, shall we say, His attitude towards our highest good; the second word embraces His attitude against all evil - in consequence of this latter capacity, innate in a Holy Deity, sin must be adequately dealt with. He cannot, from the very nature of this side of His Being, deal with it as if He were an easygoing, indulgent FATHER. A propitiation there must be - but note carefully the phrase that He "sent ... the propitiation." The same thought is in Romans 3:25-26+, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation... that He might be [at the same time] just, and the justifier." The Cross dealt with the sin, and delivered the sinner who believed. So that we come to this "righteous" conclusion that, seeing there must be a propitiation, His love provided what His holiness demanded! "Herein is love" (1Jn 4:10+) - indeed.

And now we have to remind ourselves that Life in Love lays upon us the obligation to reproduce, in our measure, the pattern of love that is set before us - not to do what He did, which was uniquely His work, but to do as He did. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (11). "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1Jn 4:19+).

It is no use our saying that the copy is too remote, and the task too difficult, for, as we learned in an earlier study, GOD never commands His children to do the impossible, Exodus 18:23, and "this commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also" (1Jn 4:21+). This rule of the household is His command; the grace for the doing of it is ours to command! What further residence is there for the members of the Fellowship? ([1 John 4:7-21 The Position of the Fellowship](#))

**Know** (1097) (**ginosko**) refers to knowledge gained by experience, a knowing intimately and not just intellectually. For example, John uses **ginosko** to describe those who refused to believe in Jesus writing "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not **know** Him." (Jn 1:10+, see context Jn 1:11-13+) After most of the followers departed from Jesus in Jn 6:66+, Jesus confronted the twelve disciples asking "You do not want to go away also, do you?" (Jn 6:67+) to which Peter replied "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. And we have believed and **have come to know** (**ginosko**) that You are the Holy One of God." (Jn 6:68-69+) Notice that here John links believing in Jesus with knowing Him. And the greatest use of **ginosko** in the Bible (IMO) is John 17:3+ "This is eternal life, that they may **know** (**ginosko**) You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom You have sent." To **know** God and Jesus Christ is salvation, eternal life. On the other hand if Jesus does not **know** you, that means you are dead in your trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1-3+) and will spend eternity away from His glorious present (2Th 1:9+). Jesus was crystal clear when He declared "I never (never ever - **oudepote**) **knew** (**ginosko**) you; **DEPART** (**present imperative**) FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS." (Mt 7:23+) Dear reader, I pray for your soul, that you never hear these words, thinking that you have made a profession of Jesus, but never truly experienced possession of Jesus. In His Name. Amen.

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

**Believed** (4100) **pisteuo** from **pistis**; pistos; related studies the faith, the obedience of faith) means to consider something to be true and therefore worthy of one's trust. To accept as true, genuine, or real. To have a firm conviction as to the goodness, efficacy, or ability of something or someone. To consider to be true. To accept the word or evidence of.

**JOHN'S USES OF PISTEUO** - Jn. 1:7; Jn. 1:12; Jn. 1:50; Jn. 2:11; Jn. 2:22; Jn. 2:23; Jn. 2:24; Jn. 3:12; Jn. 3:15; Jn. 3:16; Jn. 3:18; Jn. 3:36; Jn. 4:21; Jn. 4:39; Jn. 4:41; Jn. 4:42; Jn. 4:48; Jn. 4:50; Jn. 4:53; Jn. 5:24; Jn. 5:38; Jn. 5:44; Jn. 5:46; Jn. 5:47; Jn. 6:29; Jn. 6:30; Jn. 6:35; Jn. 6:36; Jn. 6:40; Jn. 6:47; Jn. 6:64; Jn. 6:69; Jn. 7:5; Jn. 7:31; Jn. 7:38; Jn. 7:39; Jn. 7:48; Jn. 8:24; Jn. 8:30; Jn. 8:31; Jn. 8:45; Jn. 8:46; Jn. 9:18; Jn. 9:35; Jn. 9:36; Jn. 9:38; Jn. 10:25; Jn. 10:26; Jn. 10:37; Jn. 10:38; Jn. 10:42; Jn. 11:15; Jn. 11:25; Jn. 11:26; Jn. 11:27; Jn. 11:40; Jn. 11:42; Jn. 11:45; Jn. 11:48; Jn. 12:11; Jn. 12:36; Jn. 12:37; Jn. 12:38; Jn. 12:39; Jn. 12:42; Jn. 12:44; Jn. 12:46; Jn. 13:19; Jn. 14:1; Jn. 14:10; Jn. 14:11; Jn. 14:12; Jn. 14:29; Jn. 16:9; Jn. 16:27; Jn. 16:30; Jn. 16:31; Jn. 17:8; Jn. 17:20; Jn. 17:21; Jn. 19:35; Jn. 20:8; Jn. 20:25; Jn. 20:29; Jn. 20:31;

1 Jn. 3:23; 1 Jn. 4:1; 1 Jn. 4:16; 1 Jn. 5:1; 1 Jn. 5:5; 1 Jn. 5:10; 1 Jn. 5:13

**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+).



**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)

**Abides** (resides, dwells) (3306)(meno) in simple terms means to remain in the same place or position over a period of time. It means to reside, stay, live, lodge, tarry or dwell. Meno describes something that remains where it is, continues in a fixed state, and so endures. In the present context John speaks of the intimate oneness that believers (continually - present tense) have with God.

**Warren Wiersbe** - That important little word abide (or dwell, KJV) is used six times in 1 John 4:12-16. It refers to our personal fellowship with Jesus Christ. To abide in Christ means to remain in spiritual oneness with Him, so that no sin comes between us. Because we are “born of God,” we have **union** with Christ; but it is only as we trust Him and obey His commandments that we have **communion** with Him. Much as a faithful husband and wife “abide in love” though they may be separated by miles, so a believer abides in God’s love. This abiding is made possible by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (1 John 4:13+). ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**MENO 24 times in First John** - 1 John 2:6, 10, 14, 17, 19, 24, 27-28; 3:6, 9, 14-15, 17, 24; 4:12-13, 15-16.  
(Note: four verses have more than one use)

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### Hymns Related to 1 John 4:16

- [Agony, The](#)
- [Come, Ye That Know and Fear the Lord](#)
- [God Is Goodness, God Is Love](#)
- [God Is Love](#)
- [God Is Love, by Him Upholden](#)
- [God Is Love; His Mercy Brightens](#)
- [Love Came Down at Christmas](#)
- [Love Divine, All Loves Excelling](#)
- [O Love Divine and Golden](#)
- [O Love Divine, I Come!](#)
- [O Love Divine! Where'er I Am](#)
- [O Thou Who Gavest Power to Love](#)
- [See, Sinners, in the Gospel Glass](#)
- [Thou Lord, Art Love, and Everywhere](#)
- [Through Love to Light](#)
- ['Tis Love That Makes Us Happy](#)

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### THE GREATEST VIRTUE - John MacArthur (See [Truth for Today: A Daily Touch of God's Grace - Page 207](#))

He who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. 1 JOHN 4:16

The greatest virtue of the Christian life is love. The New Testament proclaims agape love as the supreme virtue under which all others must line up. It centers on the needs and welfare of the one loved and pays the price necessary to meet those needs and foster that welfare.

Jesus clearly stated that the Bible’s two greatest commandments are: “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Matt. 22: 37–39).

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### A W Tozer - GOD UNDERSTANDS US - See [Mornings with Tozer: Daily Devotional Readings - Page 20](#)

God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. 1 John 4:16

We should revel in the joy of believing that God is the sum of all patience and the true essence of kindly good will!

Because He is what He is, we please Him most, not by frantically trying to make ourselves good, but by throwing ourselves into His arms with all our imperfections and believing that He understands everything—and loves us still!

The God who desires our fellowship and communion is not hard to please, although He may be hard to satisfy. He expects from us only what He has Himself supplied. When He must chasten us, He even does this with a smile—the proud, tender smile of a Father who is bursting with pleasure over an imperfect son who is coming every day to look more and more like the One whose child he is!

This is the best of good news: God loves us for ourselves. He values our love more than He values galaxies of newly created worlds.

He remembers our frame and knows that we are dust!

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### **Andrew Murray - THE LOVE OF GOD**

God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them 1 JOHN 4:16

The most wonderful word in heaven is love—for God is love. And the most wonderful word in the inner chamber must be love—for the God who meets us there is love.

What is love? It is the deep desire to give itself for the beloved. Love finds its joy in imparting all that it has to make the loved one happy. And the heavenly Father, who offers to meet us in the inner chamber, has no other object than to fill our hearts with His love.

All the other attributes of God find in His love their highest glory. The full blessing of the inner chamber is nothing less than a life in the abundant love of God. Because of this, we should approach God with faith in His love. As you set yourself to pray, seek to exercise great and unbounded faith in the love of God.

Take time in silence to meditate on the wonderful revelation of God's love in Christ until you are filled with the spirit of worship and wonder. Take time to believe the precious truth: "He has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love" (Romans 5:5).

As you pray, be assured of this: Your heavenly Father longs to manifest His love to you. Be deeply convinced that He can and will do it

### **THE LOVE OF GOD**

God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. 1 JOHN 4:16

The love of God—what an unfathomable mystery! Jesus said: "Only God is good" (Matthew 19:17). The glory of God in heaven is that He wills to do all that is good. That includes the two meanings of the word: good—all that is right and perfect; good—all that makes happiness.

The God who wills nothing but good is a God of love. He does not demand His own way. He does not live for Himself but pours out His love on all living creatures. All created things share in this love so that they may be satisfied with that which is good.

A characteristic of love is that it "does not demand its own way" (1 Corinthians 13:5). It finds happiness in giving to others. It sacrifices itself wholly for others. God offered Himself to mankind in love in the person of His Son, and the Son offered Himself upon the cross to bring that love to men and women. The everlasting love with which the Father loved the Son is the same love with which the Son loves us.

The love of God to His Son, the love of the Son to us, the love with which we love the Son, the love with which we love each other and try to love all men—all is the same eternal, incomprehensible, almighty love of God. Love is the power of the Godhead in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

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### **Joseph Stowell - TRUE LOVE** (See [Strength for the Journey: Day By Day With Jesus - Page 87](#))

GOD IS LOVE. WHOEVER LIVES IN LOVE LIVES IN GOD, AND GOD IN HIM.—1 John 4:16

We love God by giving ourselves willingly to Him, His Word, and His will. "This is love for God: to obey his commands" (1 John 5:3). But loving God is also expressed by extending love toward others. In fact, loving others is the proof of our commitment to Christ (1 John 13:34–35). These upward and outward directions of love are brought together in Christ's command that we are to first love God and then our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:34–40).

The opposite of love is not always hate. It is more often self-centeredness rooted in a fear of loss, of being taken advantage of, of being misunderstood, of becoming vulnerable, or of losing control of our own destiny. Fear turns our attention inward. It thrives on self-centeredness—on our concern for our own welfare. When we are fearful, we refuse to surrender to God's control and are afraid to reach out to others.

Yet John reminds us that "perfect love drives out fear" (1 John 4:18). Love loves in the face of our fears and expels fear from our hearts. When I trust God to protect and prosper me, I have nothing to fear and am free to love. I am free to yield lovingly to God regardless of my circumstances and to unconditionally love others without seeking to protect my own interests. Paul helps us understand how foreign fear is to authentic faith: "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love" (2 Timothy 1:7)

NKJV). A conscious commitment to true love will dispel fear and help drive out other fear-inspired enemies, such as anger, jealousy, and hatred.

A loveless life is often a life that has been victimized by fear. Trust Him to cover your fears and risk an act of love that tells Him how much you love Him. Reach “up” to Him in trust and “out” to others.

Start to love today by choosing one concrete way to express your love to God by loving someone you know who is in need.

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#### **Henry Blackaby - Believing God's Love** ([Experiencing God Day by Day: Daily Devotional - Page 280](#))

And we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and the one who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him.—1 John 4:16

The greatest truth in all of Scripture is this: God is love. Understanding this in its full dimensions will set you free to enjoy all that is yours as a Christian. But you must accept that God loves you. If you grew up experiencing unconditional love in your family, this may not be difficult for you. However, if your early years were void of love, this truth may be hard to accept. God loves you, not because you deserve His love, but because His nature is love. The only way He will ever relate to you is in love. His love for you gives you an inherent worth that nothing can diminish.

If you cannot accept the truth that God loves you, you will be limited in how you can relate to Him. When He disciplines you, you will not take it as an expression of His love. Rather, you may resent Him. When God says no to a request that is less than His best for you, you will conclude that He doesn't care about you. Without a clear understanding and acceptance of God's love for you, you will be disoriented to Him and to what He wants to do in your life. If you will accept God's love, however, you will be able to return love to God as well as to others (1 John 4:19).

Are you experiencing the profound sense of joy and security that comes from knowing you are dearly loved by God? Being assured of God's love for you sets you free to enjoy the numerous expressions of love He showers upon you each day

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#### **James Smith - "God is love!" 1 John 4:16**

That is, in Christ, God is love.

All that God does for His children — is in love!

All that He withholds from us — is in love!

And all that He requires of us — is in love!

His precepts are from love — as much as His promises!

His warnings are as much from love — as His invitations!

His prohibitions are as much from love — as His permissions!

His love uses the rod — as well as gives the kiss!

His love withholds — as well as gives!

All, all, is done in love!

O sweet and blessed representation of Jehovah! How can I be justified in complaining of any of His dealings? In Jesus, all His thoughts, are loving thoughts; all His words, are loving words; and all His works, are loving works.

In giving, or withholding — He manifests His love.

In afflicting, or restoring — He alike displays His love.

Every pain, and every pleasure — is from His love.

Every storm, and every sunbeam — is from His love.

The fruitful shower, and the destroying hurricane — are ruled and overruled by divine love, for the good of the believer in Jesus.

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And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. 1 John 4:16

The saints peculiarly and eminently have communion with the Father; and this is love—free, undeserved, and eternal love. This the Father peculiarly fixes upon the saints; this they are immediately to eye in Him, to receive of Him, and to make such returns thereof as He is delighted withal. This is the great discovery of the gospel: for whereas the Father, as the fountain of the Deity, is not known any other way but as full of wrath, anger, and indignation against sin, nor can the sons of men have any other thoughts of Him (Rom. 1:18; Isa. 33:13-14; Hab. 1:13; Ps. 5:4-6; Eph. 2:3)—here He is now revealed peculiarly as love, as full of it unto us; the manifestation whereof is the peculiar work of the gospel (Titus 3:4). For we read, “God is love” (1 John 4:8). That the name of God is here taken personally and for the person of the Father, not essentially, is evident from verse 9, where He is distinguished from His only begotten Son whom He sends into the world...there is indeed a twofold divine love, a love of good pleasure and destination and a love of friendship and approbation; both are peculiarly assigned to the Father in an eminent manner. For, we read that God so loved the world (John 3:16); that is, that it was of His good pleasure and purpose; and so also whoever loves Christ will the Father come and love Him (John 14:23)

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**F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily - 1 John 4:16** We have known and believed the love that God hath to us.

Life is one long education in various phases and aspects of love. First as a child, then as a friend, then as a lover, as wife or husband, as father or mother. We are perpetually being allowed to sit in some higher form for the progress of this Divine study. For to love is to live. To be loved is to drink of the sweetest cordial that can be prepared from the vintages of earth. And all is intended to help us to understand better the nature of God, who is love. As each new experience enters our life, we should consider a fresh facet or angle to break up and reveal to us the glory of God's love. We should say to ourselves, Now I understand and know more accurately than before how God feels, and what his love is.

The apostle says we have known the love of God. — Indeed, it is so. Through years of life, each of which has been filled with the most various experiences, but filled also to the brim with proofs of God's tender loving-kindness, we have had innumerable proofs of his love, for

“E'en the cloud that spreads above, and veileth Love,  
Itself is Love.”

The apostle says we must believe God's love, — Standing on the sure foundation of what we have proved God to be in the past, we may look on the present and future with perfect faith. We have known Him too well to doubt Him now. We have known, and now we believe. He has made no mistakes. He is making none. He has done the best; and is doing it. We do not understand his dealings, but we know Him who is behind the mystery of providence, and can hear Him saying

“It is all right, only trust Me. Fear not! it is I.”

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**C H Spurgeon - A psalm of remembrance** (See full sermon [A Psalm of Remembrance](#))

“We have known and believed the love that God hath to us.” 1 John 4:16

“Hast thou considered my servant Job?” “Ah,” says Satan, “he serves thee now, but thou hast set a hedge about him and blessed him, let me but touch him.” Now he has come down to you, and he has afflicted you in your estate, afflicted you in your family, and at last he has afflicted you in your body. Shall Satan be the conqueror? Shall grace give way? O my dear brother, stand up now and say once more, once for all, “I tell thee, Satan, the grace of God is more than a match for thee; he is with me, and in all this I will not utter one word against the Lord my God. He doeth all things well—well, even now, and I do rejoice in him.” The Lord is always pleased with his children when they can stand up for him when circumstances seem to belie him. Here come the witnesses into court. The devil says, “Soul, God has forgotten thee, I will bring in my witness.” First he summons your debts—a long bill of losses. “There,” says he “would God suffer you to fall thus, if he loved you?” Then he brings in your children—either their death, or their disobedience, or something worse, and says, “Would the Lord suffer these things to come upon you, if he loved you?” At last he brings in your poor tottering body, and all your doubts and fears, and the hidings of Jehovah's face. “Ah,” says the devil, “do you believe that God loves you now?” Oh, it is noble, if you are able to stand forth and say to all these witnesses, “I hear what you have to say, let God be true, and every man and everything be a liar. I believe none of you. You all say, God does not love me; but he does, and if the witnesses against his love were multiplied a hundredfold, yet still would I say, “I know whom I have believed.”

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**J R Miller** - When one who has never sailed out upon the ocean stands on its shore and watches the trembling waves as they surge and break upon the sands, how little does he know of the majesty and grandeur of the great deep, of its storms, of its power, of its secrets, of its unfathomable chambers, of its unweighed treasures? He sees only the little silver edge that breaks at his feet. So we stand but where the Spirit of God breaks upon the shore of our world. We see its silver edge. We feel the splash of its waves upon

our hearts. But of its infinite reaches and outgoings beyond our shores we know almost nothing. Yet blessed are they who even stand by the shore and lave their hearts in even the shallowest eddies of this divine ocean.

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## **HEARTS AGLOW WITH RESPONSIVE LOVE** (See [NIV, Once-A-Day: Walk with Jesus: 365 Days in the New Testament](#))

And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. 1 JOHN 4:16

What does love look like?

Augustine pictured love this way: "It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs of men."

Basically, love looks like Jesus!

Love talked about is easily turned aside. Love demonstrated is irresistible. And love modeled is the best way to learn how to love in return. "We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). That's why John used the word "love" more than 30 times in his letter—and why this thought from A. B. Simpson is both appropriate and timely.

### **WALK WITH A. B. SIMPSON**

"The secret of walking closely with Christ, and working successfully for him, is to fully realize that we are his beloved.

"Let us but feel that he has his heart set upon us, that he is watching us from those heavens with tender interest, that he is following us day by day as a mother follows her babe in his first attempt to walk alone, that he has set his love upon us, and in spite of ourselves is working out for us his highest will and blessing, as far as we will let him—and then nothing can discourage us.

"Our hearts will glow with responsive love. Our faith will spring to meet his mighty promises, and our sacrifices shall become the very luxuries of love for one so dear.

"This was the secret of John's spirit. 'And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.' The heart that has fully learned this has found the secret of unbounded faith and enthusiastic service."

### **WALK CLOSER TO GOD**

How much does God love you? The evidences are obvious: Calvary's cross, the empty tomb, the indwelling Comforter.

How much do you love God? The evidences should also be obvious. Count them with gratitude for God's goodness to you.

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## **Daily Light for the Daily Path - Keep yourselves in the love of God.**

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."

The fruit of the Spirit is love.—"By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love."—Whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected.

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."—God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.—God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

Jude 21; John 15:4–5; Gal. 5:22; John 15:8–10; 1 John 2:5; John 15:12; Rom. 5:8; 1 John 4:16

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## **Nancy Leigh DeMoss - God Is Love** (See [The Quiet Place: Daily Devotional Readings - Page 28](#))

So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.—1 John 4:16

A FRIEND in the midst of a long, hard battle with breast cancer once wrote to tell me how she had come through the experience with a deeper comprehension of the love of God, as seen through her husband's response to her double mastectomy.

"As we wept and trembled when he took off my bandages for the first time, I was so ugly, scarred, and bald. I was in intense grief that I could never be a whole wife to him again. But he held me tightly and with tears in his eyes said, 'Honey, I love you—because that is who I am.'"

"I instantly recognized Christ in my husband," she continued. "As His bride, we are also eaten up with cancer—sin—and are scarred, mutilated, and ugly. But He loves us because that is who He is. No comeliness in us draws Christ's attention; it is only His essence that draws Him to us."

Yes, God does love us. Whether or not we feel loved, regardless of what we have done or where we have come from, He loves us with an infinite, incomprehensible love—not because we are lovely or lovable but because He is love.

If you are His child, trusting in Him for salvation, you are no longer His enemy. In spite of your rebellion and your alienation from Him, He has loved you and sent His Son to die for you. He loved you in eternity past; He will love you for all eternity future. There is nothing you can do to make Him love you less, and nothing you can do to make Him love you more. That's just who He is.

When does His love seem the most distant from you?

Knowing that nothing can ever separate you from His love (Rom. 8:38–39), what are some possible reasons for your feelings?

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**Joni Eareckson Tada - God Is Love** (See [Pearls of Great Price: 366 Daily Devotional Readings - Page 13](#))

And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love.— 1 JOHN 4:16

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are fellowshiping in a waterfall of love and joy. It is nothing short of amazing that the Trinity is driven to share that joy with us. It was the Savior's mission: "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you" (John 15:11). What joy the Trinity enjoys! Misery may love company, but joy craves a crowd, and so the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit's plan to rescue humans is not only for man's sake. It is for God's sake. The Father is gathering a crowd — an inheritance, pure and blameless — to worship his Son in the joy of the Holy Spirit. "God is love" and the wish of love is to drench with delight those for whom God has suffered.

Soon believers will step into the waterfall of joy and pleasure that is the Trinity. Better yet, we will become part of a Niagara Falls of thunderous delight as "God is all and in all." In heaven, we will not only know God, we will know him in that deep, personal union, that utter euphoria of experiencing him. There in heaven we will "eat of the tree of life" and be filled to overflowing with more joy and pleasure than we can contain (Revelation 22:2).

Amazing grace, how can it be, that God would share his joy for eternity with me? Remember, God shares his joy on his terms; and those terms call for us to, in some measure, suffer as his beloved Son did while on earth (1 Peter 2:21). If you and I experience hardship, it is paving the way for a deeper joy for all of eternity!

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, thank you for inviting me into the fellowship of your joy. Thank you for preparing me for heaven's joy as I trust you in the fellowship of your sufferings while on earth.

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**Robert Hawker** - WHO hath known and believed in terms equal to the greatness of the mercy itself, the love of God to the poor sinner? God's love must be an infinite love, and consequently the display of it must be infinite also. God, we are told, commendeth his love to us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Had God loved and delighted in saints that loved him, this would have been love. Had God taken the holy angels into a nearer acquaintance with him, this would have been love. But when he raised beggars from the dunghill, and took rebels from the prison to sit upon his throne; and at a time when his justice would have been magnified in their destruction, to prefer sinners, haters of God, and despisers of his grace; to bring them into the closet and nearest connexion with him, in the Person of his dear Son, and all this by such a wonderful plan of mercy as the incarnation and death of Jesus—who hath ever calculated the extent of such grace? Who hath thoroughly known, or considered, or believed, in any degree proportioned to the unspeakableness of the salvation, the love that God hath to us? Oh! Lord! add one blessing more. Cause my cold heart to grow warm in the contemplation of it: and let it be my happiness to be daily studying the breadth, and length, and depth and height, and to know the love of God, which passeth knowledge, that I may be filled with all the fulness of God.

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**Martyn Lloyd-Jones - MYSTICISM**

And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. 1 JOHN 4:16

John has gone on repeatedly writing about the love of God, and you notice how he never tires of doing so. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him" (1 John 4:9). "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John 4:14). Now [verse 16] he repeats it again. This is because he knew that in his own day and age there were all those so-called mystery religions or curious cults that talked about the love of God; and they all tried to teach that you can know the love of God directly. That is always the characteristic of mysticism; what finally condemns mysticism is that it bypasses the Lord Jesus Christ. Anything



that bypasses Christ is not Christian. I do not care what it is, however good, however uplifting or noble; it is Christ who is the manifestation of the love of God, says John.

I do not hesitate, therefore, to aver and to add strongly as follows: I must distrust any emotion that I may have within me with respect to God unless it is based solidly upon the Lord Jesus Christ. In Him God manifested His love. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Therefore, I say that I must never attempt by any means or method to get to know God or to try to make myself love God except in and through my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I must avoid every other direct approach to God, every direct dealing with God.

Anything that bypasses Christ is not Christian.

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**The Lemon Tree** - People who have given up on love probably agree with the words to the song "Lemon Tree" by the folk group Peter, Paul, and Mary:

"Don't put your faith in love,  
my boy," my father said to me,  
"I fear you'll find that love is like the lovely lemon tree."  
Lemon tree very pretty and the lemon flower is sweet  
but the fruit of the poor lemon  
is impossible to eat.

Many people feel that way. "Love is bitter," they say, because they've been used or abused. But there is a love that is sweet: "God is love" (1John 4:16). The world wants to turn John's phrase around. "Love is God," they say, and seek love as the highest good. But John did not say that love is God. "God is love," he said. Author Frederick Buechner wrote, "To say that love is God is romantic idealism. To say that God is love is either the last straw or the ultimate truth." The last straw? Yes, for some it is. They have looked for love in all the wrong places and have no other place to turn. But when they give themselves to God, as He is made real and personal in Jesus, they find the love they've been looking for all their lives. God is not indifference, abandonment, and abuse, my friend. God is love. By David H. Roper ([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

**God's love knows no limits.**

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## **Horatius Bonar - GOD'S GREAT LOVE TO THE SINNER**

'And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.'—1 JOHN 4:16.

THERE are many differences between man and man, but here is one of the most explicit, yet most simple. Some believe the love of God, and some believe it not. All others are subordinate to this. It is this that draws the line, on the one side of which is heaven, on the other hell. Two things let us notice, (1) God's love; (2) our knowledge of it.

I. God's love.—There are two kinds of love, the love of compassion and the love of complacency or delight. Both may perhaps be included here, but specially the former; for the apostle is referring to that by which he and his brethren became what they were, children of God. God's free love or grace must go first; it is the foundation, the alphabet of the gospel. It is free love to the sinner, as a sinner,—not as elect, or as penitent, or as converted, but as a sinner. 'God so loved the world, that He gave His Son.' 'God commended His love.' 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us.' The object, then, of this free love is simply man, the sinner; and the extent of this love is the widest circle of human unworthiness. The question of more or fewer objects is of no moment. Its range is to the uttermost,—to each sinner on this side of hell. It compasses the wide earth; it goes up to the very gates of the prison. It came down on the crucifiers of the Son of God; and on whom, then, will it not fall? It has plucked millions of brands from the burning, and can pluck millions more. The gift of the beloved Son is the expression, the manifestation of this love: 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, that He laid down His life for us.' How infinite the fountain, to pour forth such a stream! And in the love of Christ we read the love of the Father. It was reflected in Him. In every word and deed, he who saw and heard Him saw and heard the Father. No man who came into contact with Jesus could doubt His love. The law of love was in His heart and on His lips; He

came from the bosom of the Father to show what was there. And this is God's answer to any one who doubts His love, 'I have given my Son.' You say, I am the chief of sinners; still His answer is the same, 'I have given my Son.' This is His message of love to the chief of sinners.

II. Our knowledge of this love.—The record is given, yet it is not every one that knows it; it is true, yet it is not every one that believes it. They who know and believe it are few. But there are some who do so, and it is in their name that the apostle speaks. The love is free, sure, fully published. It is not to be bought, or deserved, or waited for; it is simply to be known and believed. For the things contained in this gospel of the free love, are such that they flow into us immediately in knowing and believing. There are cases in which good news may merely point to blessing, and tell of the possibility of obtaining it by exertion or purchase. Not so here. The good news are such that the simple knowledge of them is itself the blessing. That there are blessings after, or following upon this knowledge, is true; but the primary blessing is in knowing and believing. 'Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound.' It is out of this free love that we extract the peace which we need, our strength, our health. This love is everything to the soul; and he who has it shall abide satisfied. To know it is life.

This is the history of a Christian man. It is all that he can tell about himself: he has known and believed the love. He has nothing good to say for himself.

This is the line of separation between him and the world. They know not this love; he knows it. A small difference, a slender line, some would think; yet real, and deep, and broad. All on one side of it, darkness; all on the other, light.

This is the ground of his hope. He has known the love, and rests on it. It is shed abroad in his heart, and gives him the hope which maketh not ashamed.

This is the secret of his sanctification, the knowledge of God's love. For it is holy love as well as free; and he who knows it knows what is best fitted to make him a holy man.

This is our defence against adversaries, and our consolation under the world's hatred. Let who will hate, revile, persecute, we are in possession of a love which is more than a compensation for all.