

# God is Love

1 John 4:7-21

**MPS** Christ-followers testify of God's love to the world by our love for one another.

**OBJ** Every person should know God is love by a Christ-followers' testimony of love for one another because of three reasons.

**READ** 1 John 4:7-21

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup>Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup>In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup>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. <sup>11</sup>Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup>No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.*

*<sup>13</sup>By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup>And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup>Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. <sup>16</sup>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. <sup>17</sup>By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. <sup>18</sup>There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. <sup>19</sup>We love because he first loved us. <sup>20</sup>If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. <sup>21</sup>And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother. **1 John 4:7-21***

Didn't we already talk about loving one another in chapter three? What is different now in John's message, or is he simply repeating what he said earlier? If John returned to the theme of "love God", one would likely say, "That is understandable because that is the central command for the Christian life". And that explains why John returns to this theme of love one another, because it is a theme that cannot be overstated; the way one knows they are in right relationship with God is not based on how they feel or even think about God, but how they love one another.

**TRANS** John doesn't just return to this theme to rehash what he has already said. Instead, he adds another component for why loving one another is so important for the way Christians live.

**Christ-followers testify of God's love to the world by our love for one another.**

**John's rationale is clear.** If God is love, and He is, then when we know God it will be most accurately and fully displayed by our lives that are marked with love for one another. If God is love, then those who know God should love like God loves. And this will be the greatest testimony of God to the world. **Christ-follower, the way your life shows God is love is by loving one another.**

**OBJ** **Three reasons Christ-followers testify God is love to the world by loving one another.**

**1. Christ-followers love because He first loved us. .7-12**

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup>Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup>In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup>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. <sup>11</sup>Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup>No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.*

John begins with an exhortation to love one another because those who truly now God have been born of God. John explains his reasoning by both a positive argument and a negative one; those born of God live like Him, and those who are



not born of God are not like Him. [Just as in life by the DNA of our biology, so in new life a person who has been born of God holds spiritual characteristics that distinguish them as God's children.](#)

John reminds us that life with God only comes through Jesus Christ, whom He sent into the world. Of course, there are many who claim life with God, but the only true life with God comes through Jesus Christ. And this life with God is unique in this way, that we live through Him. If we are to live the life of a real Christ-follower, it is not merely a life that we offer to God and hope for the best. The life we live for God is one completely surrendered to live through Him. In other words, our life is not lived in our strength, knowledge, wisdom, nor power, but in His! And the way He accomplished this was by sending Jesus to die for us in our place. This is the second time John uses this word “*propitiation*” (.10), which means that He took our place to die for our sin. Another way we say this is that Jesus was our substitutionary atonement. John reminds us that the way God loved us when we were separated from Him, dead in our sin, was that He sent Jesus to die in our place for our sin so that we might live with Him. Jesus died the death of our life so that by faith in Him we might have His life! This is what Paul declares in Ephesians 2. READ Ephesians 2:4–5

***But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— Ephesians 2:4-5***

Salvation does not mean that we are merely or only alive by God or from God but “*with Christ*”. Our whole life is because of and only IN Jesus Christ. John concludes his first reason by saying that since God so loved us, we ought to love one another. And this “ought” does not simply mean we must add another item to our “Task list for God”. But since the life we have in Jesus is from God’s love, the life we live to truly demonstrate that life in Him should be one that is true to His love. [When we love one another in the way that we have been loved, we demonstrate God’s love that abides in and is perfected in us.](#)

**Q?** [Have you learned to stop trying to love others, or to only live your life, for God so that you earn His favor?](#) Instead, live your life for God by abiding in Christ so that He is alive in you. When we say that Christ-followers love one another because He first loved us, this does not mean that He is merely our motivation to “get up and go do”, but that the ONLY WAY one can truly love at all is because Christ lives in us! You may have some semblance of love for others in this world that is not rooted and sourced in Jesus. But you will never love one another as you have been loved by God until the way you love with your life is because God has first loved you through Christ. [The only love that Christ-followers truly have to give, that faithfully demonstrates His love for us, is because He first loved us.](#)

**TRANS** [If abiding in Jesus is the only way for us to live and to truly know that His love is shown through our life, then how do we do this?](#) God knew there would be many counterfeit loves in the world, so He gave us one way to supply it.

## **2. Christ-followers love because His Holy Spirit lives within us. .13-16**

<sup>13</sup>By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup>And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup>Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. <sup>16</sup>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.

**Q?** [Have you ever been at a loss to know what to do or how best to love a person?](#) We have all been at this point when we see another in a hard situation of life that is beyond our control. This power to love because we have been loved is no simple matter. Far more than only hard to do, it is impossible for one to do absent of God and to even know what or how to do it by our own understanding.

John states that as we abide in Jesus Christ, His Holy Spirit is given to us to manifest the fullness of His love within and through us. And because of Holy Spirit, we become personal witnesses to the Savior of the world that the Father sent. The presence of Holy Spirit within us is not simply to satisfy some lack within us, but to empower us as witnesses to testify to Jesus Christ. Remember what Jesus told His disciples after his resurrection, just before He ascended into Heaven.

***“You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup>And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.” Luke 24:48-49***



Why did Jesus not begin with “Go do”, but with “Wait until you are clothed”? Because until we have been clothed with His power we cannot testify to His glory! The only way that a person can live for Jesus is by Jesus living in them by Holy Spirit. And the reason Jesus puts His Holy Spirit within us is to be His witness in this world. **Salvation, being a Christ-follower, means that we are loved by God in Jesus and filled by Jesus with His Holy Spirit to testify to God’s love!**

This is why John returned to the command to love one another, to be a faithful witness to God’s love in Jesus Christ to the world. John is not teaching that we show God’s love when we feel a certain way or when we demonstrate an certain emotion, no matter the extent to which it may manifest itself from us. Words falls short, no matter how many there may be, when love for others is less than God’s love for us. Emotions are meaningless, no matter how intense they may be, when our love for others is less than God’s sacrificial love for us. The only way to testify to the world that God is love is to abide so Holy Spirit fills us to produce His love for one another. **Christ-followers love because God’s Holy Spirit lives within us.**

### 3. **Christ-followers love because His love is transforming us.** .17-21

*<sup>17</sup>By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. <sup>18</sup>There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. <sup>19</sup>We love because he first loved us. <sup>20</sup>If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. <sup>21</sup>And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.*

When we abide in Christ so that Holy Spirit fills us to testify of God’s love by loving others, something very powerful occurs. **Do you know what this is?** God’s love is perfected in us. When God’s love is perfected in us, a powerful, eternity-impacting result occurs within us, we have a confidence before God because we have come to live as Jesus is! Friend, this is the Biblical definition for transformation, being changed in our very nature and likeness to the image of Jesus Christ. When we abide in Jesus to be filled with God’s love by Holy Spirit, it testifies to the world about God’s transforming love by the transformation of our own life. If your love for others is because of any other motivation or source, it is not from God. And we know that we are being transformed because we hold a confidence before God about judgement day; fear is gone from us because His love has filled us. Fear is cast out because there is no fear in love. This doesn’t mean there is a total absence of or that we never experience fear in this life, but that we have no fear about our life with God because love has given us a confidence with God. **We love because His love is transforming us.**

**APPL** **Is God’s love transforming you in the way John describes?** There is a way to know. Use these three questions to assess how God’s love is transforming you.

**Q?#1** The first question is one we should continually ask of ourselves. **“Are you loving others the way you have been loved by God?”** The way we love one another is the primary indicator of our relational health with God. This is the whole aim of John’s letter, and the reason he constantly returns to this theme.

**Q?#2** **Do you have a confidence about your life with God? What is your confidence with God rooted in, a decision you made, a feeling you often get, an act you performed?** None of these things will matter at all before God on the Day of judgment. Only God’s love in Jesus Christ by the work of Holy Spirit provides true confidence with God that drives our fear because we are hidden in Christ!

**Q?#3** **What do I do when I find myself NOT loving others the way God has loved me?** When we find ourselves NOT loving one another the way God has loved us, or with a lack of confidence before God, our response is not to pray that God would help us to do better, or to simply go do so we can restore confidence before Him, but to remember and abide in God’s love to be filled more by Holy Spirit, so that we feel His power overflows from our life to love others as we’ve been loved by God.

**Christ-followers testify of God’s love to the world by our love for one another.**

**What do you need to do this week to testify that God is love by loving one another more like Jesus?**

