



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V23 N51 December 19, 2021

WONDER

“The Wonder of Love”

1 John 4:7-12

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Love

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

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

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.”

1 John 4:10-12



Why should we love one another?

The Apostle John makes it clear that love is the mark of a disciple of Christ. He bases what he has to say on the subject on what Jesus had to say on it in the Upper Room Discourse, delivered mere hours before his betrayal. “A new command I give you: Love one another.” Jesus told them, “As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (Jn 13:34-35).

John later echoes Jesus’ words when writing his first epistle: “Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in (cf. “abides in,” ESV; “remains in,” HCSB) us and his love is made complete in us” (1Jn 4:11-12).

John also makes it clear that he is not writing to distinguish those who are saved from those who are not, but rather to distinguish those who are saved and *living in the light* from those who are saved and *living in darkness*. Earlier in his epistle, he writes: “Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness. Anyone who loves their brother and sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble. But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them” (2:9-11). Clearly, John is addressing brothers and sisters in Christ, admonishing them to “abide” or “remain” in fellowship with Christ (see 1:5-7; cf. Jn 15:1-17, esp. vv. 9b-12).

On the subject of *fellowship* with God, not *relationship* to God, one commentator writes: “*Simple fellowship* with God takes place when the Christian walks with an open and honest heart in the light of what God is (1:5) — ‘God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet

walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin’ (1Jn 1:5b-7) — *More advanced fellowship* occurs when the commandments of our Lord are learned and kept so that we *abide* or *dwell* in Him, walking as He walked in love. The one who so lives *knows* God. The opposite lifestyle, marked by hatred toward one’s brother, is a pathway to spiritual disaster, even though the disobedient Christian can never be lost by his Lord (John 6:35-40). To live **in darkness** and hate is to make the Savior a stranger in one’s experience on earth. Though saved, such a Christian has forfeited the vital, intimate knowledge of his God” (Zane C. Hodges, *The Epistles of John*, 89, italics added).

To walk in the light is to *love* one’s brothers and sisters in Christ, and to *love* them is to *serve* them — figuratively speaking, to wash their feet. Jesus provides the example for us to follow. After washing the disciples’ feet, he told them: “Do you understand what I have done for you? You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, *you also should wash one another’s feet*. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you” (Jn 13:12b-15). While we seldom engage in washing others’ feet *literally* — although we would if necessary — we must serve others, believers and unbelievers, too, by meeting their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs in tangible ways. For example, we can minister the Word of God to others. We can turn the other cheek and refuse to repay evil with evil. We can show kindness to others. We can be thoughtful and do good to all people, “especially those who belong to the family of believers” (Gal 6:10), esteeming them above ourselves. In a nutshell, we can sacrificially love and forgive others.

1

EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

1 John 4:7-12

7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 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. 11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

Read in another Translation

7 Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been fathered by God and knows God. 8 The person who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 By this the love of God is revealed in us: that God has sent his one and only Son into the world so that we may live through him. 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.

11 Dear friends, if God so loved us, then we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God resides in us, and his love is perfected in us. (NET)

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Bracket "Dear friends" in vv. 7, 11.
- Highlight "love one another" in vv. 7, 11, 12.
- Underline "love/s/ed" throughout.
- Double underline "know/s" throughout.
- Box "for" in v. 7, "because" in v. 8, and "since" in v. 11 indicating *reason*.
- Circle "one and only" in v. 9.
- Box "that" indicating *result* in v. 9.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in vv. 10, 12.
- Circle "atoning sacrifice" in v. 10.
- Circle "lives" in v. 12.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. John addresses his readers as “children” (13x) and “friends” (6x)—see especially 3:2. Do you think he also has unbelievers in mind as he writes? Explain.
2. “Everyone” in the phrase “*everyone* who loves” can’t be taken *absolutely literally*, can it? If not, to whom does “everyone” refer?
3. Explain what can be said about “everyone who loves.”
4. Explain what can be said about “whoever does not love.”
5. *Contrast* the two.
6. Put what “God is love” means in your own words.
7. Explain God’s *purpose* for sending his one and only Son into the world.
8. Explain the *contrast* in verse 10.
9. Read verse 12. What if we *don’t* love one another?
10. **Discussion:** Talk about what you infer about yourself and about your church from this passage.

Commentary On The Text

John apparently enjoyed a particularly close relationship to Jesus. He was one of three selected to witness the Lord's transfiguration (Mt 17:1-8; Mk 9:2-8; Lk 9:28-36), and in the Fourth Gospel he refers to himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (13:23). On top of that, the others must have recognized that he had a special relationship to the Lord, for when Peter wanted to know the name of the disciple whom Jesus had just said would betray him, he motioned to John, who was reclining next to the Lord at the time, and said, "Ask him which one he means" (13:24). It was John who went into the high priest's courtyard when Jesus was being interrogated following his arrest, while Peter waited at the door (18:15, 16), and it was to John that Jesus entrusted his mother's care before dying on the cross (19:26, 27).

John wrote his first letter so that his readers might have the same close fellowship that he had with Jesus. "We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his son, Jesus Christ" (1Jn 1:3). We may not attain the level of intimacy that John enjoyed, but it is available to us by abiding in Christ, which is made evident in the love we have for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

The message of 1 John 4:7-12 is simply a synthesis of John's *four* assertions contained in it. John opens with the exhortation, "Dear friends, let us love one another" (v. 7a). He is clearly addressing his readers as believers. He makes that perfectly clear in 3:2, which contains two words used more than twenty times in his letter. "Dear *friends*, now we are the *children* of God . . ." He not only exhorts his readers to "love one another," but he also gives them the reason for doing so. "Love comes from God." One commentator writes: "'Love,' as well as faith (i.e., acknowledging the true doctrine of Christ, vv. 1-6), is a product of God's Spirit. The believer (one 'born of God'), who also 'knows' God (i.e., has intimate fellowship with Him), 'loves' (cf. 2:3-5). 'Us' and 'we' in this verse and the following verses (vv. 8-14) refer to the readers along with the apostles" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on 1 John," 2021 ed., 94-95, planobile chapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1john.pdf).

In his *second* assertion (vv. 7b-8), John states, "Everyone who loves," that is, every one of his "dear friends" who loves their spiritual brothers and sisters, "has been born of God and knows God." This is true because "love comes from God." According to

another commentator: "In other words, true Christian love, whenever expressed, finds its source in, and takes its character from, **God Himself**" (Zane C. Hodges, *The Epistles of John*, 183). So two things can be said about those who love one another: 1) they have been born *from above* (Jn 3:3 NET), and 2) they know God. John is not asserting, however, that either of these two things can be said about *everyone* who loves *anyone* or *anything*!

What's more, since the concept of the new birth and the concept of knowing God are not the same, he isn't asserting that those who do not love have not been born of God. The same commentator above writes: "It should be carefully noted that John here treats these concepts as two different things. This is especially observable when he goes on to say (in verse 8) that 'he who does not love does not know God.' It would have been both natural and easy to say, 'He who does not love, is *not born of God and does not know God*' in direct antithesis to the statement of this verse. But this is precisely what *cannot be said*. Already John has talked about a person who 'hates *his* brother,' which is a feat quite impossible for a non-Christian since a Christian is not *his* brother (cf. 2:11; 3:10b; 3:15; 4:20)" (Hodges, 183).

According to his *third* assertion (vv. 9-11), the demonstration of God's love in the sending of his unique Son as an atoning sacrifice obligates God's children to love one another. God loved the whole world and took the initiative to demonstrate that love by providing his Son to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world (see Hodges, 71; 1Jn 2:2; cf. Jn 3:16), confirming the fact that "God is love" (v. 8). The term *hilosmos* can be translated "propitiation" (ESV), "expiation" (RSV), and "atoning sacrifice" (NIV, NET). The first translation connotes *averting God's wrath*, the second connotes *cleansing from sin*. The fact that these two ideas are not mutually exclusive makes room for the third translation that appears in many English versions and connotes both.

Finally, John makes the uncontested assertion, "No one has ever seen God." However, the love that believers show to one another demonstrates that the unseen God abides in them, and his love is perfected in them. Simply said, "As believers love one another, we make the invisible God visible to the world" (Constable, 98), and his love achieves its final goal when it is reproduced in them (Mt 1:24).

Word Studies/Notes

vv. 7, 11 *Dear friends* “He addresses his readers as ‘dear friends’ (*agapētoi*), expressing something of his affection for them and introducing a matter for which he wants their special attention, as he frequently does in this letter (2:7; 3:2, 21; 4:1, 7, 11)” (Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, PNTC, 156).

v. 7 *love one another* “This verse is a concise summary of the argument of this whole epistle” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on 1 John,” 2021 ed., 95, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1john.pdf). The exhortation “love one another” is followed by the *reason* for doing so. “If the readers (who were **Beloved** both to God and to John), obeyed the command to **love one another**, they would be carrying on an activity that was distinctively sourced in their heavenly Father. The reason for this is that **love itself is of God**. In other words, true Christian love, whenever expressed, finds its source in, and take its character from, **God Himself**” (Zane C. Hodges, *The Epistles of John*, 183).

v. 7 *knows God* “His point is that love for one another is evidence that a person ‘has been born of God and knows God’ because such love comes from God” (Kruse, 157). “If love belongs the divine sphere, it follows that anybody who shows love [to their brothers and sisters in Christ] must belong to that sphere; he has been born of God and now lives in the knowledge of God” (I. Howard Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, NICNT, 211).

v. 8 *does not know God* “It follows, then, that of **everyone who loves** two things may be safely said: (1) such a person **is born of God and** (2) he also **knows God**” (Hodges, 183). “Absence of love shows that a person ‘who does not love’ does not have intimate fellowship with (‘know’) God. It does not necessarily show that he was never born of God” (Constable, 95).

v. 8 *God is love* “This statement affirms that His basic nature is characterized by **love**. Naturally the statement does not mean that God has no other attributes, such as wisdom and justice. But it does indicate that **love** is fundamental to what **God** is and to what He does” (Hodges, 184). “The statement refers to his action. Yet it signifies more than ‘God loves,’ for its effect is to claim that all God’s action is loving” (Marshall, 213).

v. 9 *one and only* Cf. “only begotten” (NKJV); Gk. *monogenēs*. “The use of *monogenēs* in 1 John 4:9 fits into the same category as its use in John 3:16, for here in 4:9 the author also emphasizes the fact that the one whom God sent into the world was his ‘one and only’ Son. Once again the emphasis is not that

Jesus was ‘begotten’ of God, but that God had only one Son, and this ‘one and only’ Son he sent into the world so that ‘we might live through him’” (Kruse, 159). “The word means ‘one-of-a-kind’ and is reserved for Jesus alone in the Johannine literature of the NT. While all Christians are children of God (*tekna thou*, *tekna qeou*), Jesus is God’s Son in a unique, one-of-a-kind sense. The word is used in this way in all its uses in the Gospel of John (1:14, 18; 3:16, 18)” (*The NET Bible*, 24sn on 1Jn 4:9).

vv. 10, 12 *atonement sacrifice* Cf. “propitiation” (ESV, HCSB). Does the Gk. term *hilosmos* connote placating God’s wrath or cleansing humanity’s sin? (See discussion in Hodges, 70-71.) The rendering “atonement sacrifice” in many translations includes both ideas. “*The two connotations (averting wrath and cleansing) are not mutually exclusive*, and it is unlikely that the propitiatory aspect of Jesus’ work should be ruled out entirely in the usage in 2:2 [and 4:10]. Nevertheless, the English word ‘propitiation’ is too technical to communicate to many modern readers, and a term like ‘atonement sacrifice’ (given by Webster’s *New International Dictionary* as a definition of “propitiation”) is more appropriate here. Another term, ‘satisfaction,’ might also convey the idea, but ‘satisfaction’ in Roman Catholic theology is a technical term for the performance of the penance imposed by the priest on a penitent” (*The NET Bible*, 18tn on 1Jn 2:2, italics added).

v. 12 *lives* Cf. “abides” (ESV); “remains” (NASB); “resides” (NET); “dwells” (MEV); see Jn 15. “That is, he *lives*, or *dwells*, in his Lord, just as a branch lives, or dwells, in a vine. So long as this connection is maintained, the experience of ‘abiding’ in Christ continues. The ‘abider’ is a believer who has learned to live like the Lord Jesus Christ” (Hodges, 83).

v. 12 *perfected* The Greek verb (*teleioō*) means “to complete,” “to finish,” “to bring to its goal,” “to bring to full measure.” “God’s **love** achieves its goal and reaches its full measure **in us** when that **love** is reproduced in us and reflected through us by loving **one another**” (Hodges, 189).

4

APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Fellowship with God belongs to Christians who love one another, so love one another and God will abide in you and through you show himself to the world.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

Growing up, my parents owned a restaurant and December was filled with event after event, nonstop catering and parties. Looking at it from my current point of view, I know my folks were absolutely worn out. My mom shared how she would leave the restaurant Christmas Eve and kamikaze shop for my brother and me. I imagine her throwing things into a cart like a timed grocery store game show. Bless her, then she had to go home and wrap those gifts. Can you feel the exhaustion? She didn't share this piece of information with me until I was well into my 40s, and I'll be honest, as a kid, I never knew. Christmas morning to me was a magical surprise of gifts. I don't ever remember being disappointed (except that one year when I was five and I wanted the Memory Game sooo bad). As a child, I never understood the sacrifice of time, energy and money my parents made in order for us kids to have a fun Christmas morning filled with gifts. I think the sacrifice God made for us in sending His Son can get lost on us, too. Intellectually we understand, but our hearts fail to truly grasp what God did. Sometimes Christmas becomes tinsel and lights and magical experiences that are wonderful, but we miss the beautiful expression of love God demonstrated. His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, our sacrificial lamb, was presented as a gift to His people. As a family, what are you doing to impress this on your children? Let's

What Does The Bible Say?

Read 1 John 4:7-12.

1. Where does love come from?
2. How did God show His love for His people?
3. Knowing this, how should we treat others?

What Do You Think?

How does the way that we love others demonstrate that we know God?

What Do You Do?

Find everyday objects around the house to come up with a comparison for our love and God's love (ex. small potato/ large potato or tiny cup of water/ giant jug of water). Explain to your family what our love looks like compared to God's love.

CORE COMPETENCY: Love

I love and forgive others no matter what.

MEMORY VERSE: Isaiah 9:6

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

KidPIXCOUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- I completed my Bible Study
- I memorized this week's verse
- I brought my Bible to church
- I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME _____

GRADE PARENT SIGNATURE _____

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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