

The Consummation of Love

1 John 4:17-21

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1 John 4:12-16 Summary: Describes how we get to know God through His Spirit in us and that those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God will have the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Applications from this passage...

- We cannot see God the Father, but we can certainly see His love.
- Christians have eternal security; God in us is the assurance of our salvation.
- Truth and love go together; you can't have one without the other.

1 John 4:17-18 – The perfecting of love

Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

What does it mean that love has been perfected?

For **perfected**, John doesn't just use the Greek word *teleioo* (which has the idea of "maturity" and "completeness"); he writes *teleioo teleioo* — speaking of love that is "perfectly perfected" or "completely complete."

What is the day of judgment?

This is when the Lord intervenes in the affairs of men, the Tribulation... we will not be there, we'll be in heaven perfected in our resurrected bodies.

- This is *when* the completeness of love's work in us will be demonstrated.

When will we know the completeness of God's love?

As much as we can know the completeness of God's love now, we will know it all the more **in the day of judgment**.

- You may know you are a sinner now; you will really *know* it **in the day of judgment**.
- You may know now you are not a better person than those who are going to hell; you will really *know* it **in the day of judgment**.
- You may know the reality of hell now; you will really *know* it **in the day of judgment**.
- You may know the greatness of Jesus' salvation now; you will really *know* it **in the day of judgment**.

How may we have boldness in the day of judgment?

This shows the greatness of God's work in us...

- We might be satisfied to merely *survive* the **day of judgment**, but God wants to so fill our lives with His love and His truth that we have **boldness in the day of judgment**.
- The only way to have **boldness in the day of judgment** is to receive, and walk in, the transforming love of God *today*.

We can imagine Jesus being bold before the throne of God, but us?

Yes, if *we abide in Him, and He in us* (1 John 4:13), then our identity is bound up in Jesus: *as He is, so are we in the world*.

How is the glory of our boldness before God in us now in "seed" form?

Currently, Jesus is glorified, justified, forever righteous and bold, sitting at the right hand of God the Father.

- Spiritually, we can have that same standing now, while we are in the world, because as He is, so are we in the world.
- Our right standing before God is demonstrated by our love for one another and our agreement with God's truth; and that serves to give us *boldness*.

How is there is no fear in love?

The completeness of love means we do not cower in fear before God, dreading His judgment, either now or *in the day of judgment*.

- We know all the judgment we ever deserved — past, present, and future — was poured out on Jesus Christ on the cross.

What about the many passages of Scripture, Old and New Testament which tell us we should fear God?

The *fear* John writes of here is not the appropriate reverence we should all have of God, but the kind of fear which *involves torment* — that agonizing kind of fear which robs our soul of all joy and confidence before God.

- It is the *fear* that is the opposite of *boldness in the day of judgment*.

What does it tell us about someone who fears the judgment of God?

The one whose relationship with God is marked by this tormenting fear, it shows they have not been **made perfect** — that is, complete, and mature — in His love.

1 John 4:19 – The reason for our love to Jesus.

We love Him because He first loved us.

What does it mean to love Christ?

This is the heart of every true follower of Jesus Christ...

Simply and boldly put, *we love Him*.

- If a man does not love God, they are not born of God.
- Every Christian should be unafraid to proclaim: “I love Jesus.”

What does it mean that Jesus first loved us?

Before we ever loved Jesus, He loved us...

Ephesians 1:4 – He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love

Every man who ever was saved had to come to God not as a lover of God, but as a sinner.

What does this verse tell us *where* our love for Jesus comes from?

It comes from *Him*. Our love for God is always in *response* to His love for us; He initiates, and we respond.

- We never have to draw God to us; instead, He draws us to Himself.

Why do we love God?

- We love him because we find he has loved us.
- We love him from out of gratitude.
- We love him from the influence of his own love for us

Are we saved by loving Jesus?

No... the way for anyone to be to be saved is to trust Jesus for the pardon of sin, and then, trusting Jesus, love comes as a fruit.

- Love is by no means the root.
- Faith alone occupies that place.
- Spurgeon: “Love believed is the mother of love returned.”

Should we make ourselves love our Lord?

No... we should look to Christ’s love first, for His love to us will beget in us love to Him.

What should a person do who is distressed because they cannot love Christ as much as you would like?

Just don’t focus on your own love for Him, but think of His great love to you; and then, immediately, your love will come to something more like what you’d want it to be.

- If you want to love Christ more, think more of what you have received from him.

What does Jesus’ love mean for us in the here & now?

Then this means Jesus chose me, redeemed me, called me, pardoned me, and has taken me into union with himself.

1 John 4:20-21 – The commandment to love.

If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.

How do those who falsely proclaim to love God reveal themselves?

It is easy for someone to proclaim a love for God, since it is a private relationship with an invisible God.

- But our claim of loving God is false if we do not also love our brother.

Jesus said the world could measure our status as disciples by our love for one another...

- John 13:35 – *By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another*

What is the *commandment we have from Him*?

To love. Though love springs forth from our abiding relationship with God and comes from our being born of Him, there is also an essential aspect of our *will* involved.

What gives us the capacity to love?

Being born of God and abiding with Him gives us the ability to love; but it is a choice of our will to draw upon that resource and give it out to others.

- Therefore, we are given a command to love, *that he who loves God must love his brother also.*

Are there people we just can’t bring ourselves to love?

The excuse, “I just can’t love that person” is invalid.

- If we are born of Him and are abiding in Him then the resources for love are there.
- It is up to us to respond to His command with our will and whole being.

How can we learn to better love God by loving other people?

He who loves God must love his brother also:

We can *learn* how to love God by loving people...

- One might say, “I want to love God more; I want to grow in my love for Him. But how can I love a God who is invisible?”
- God would say to us, “Learn to love Me, Whom you cannot see, by loving My children, whom you can see.”
- Practice in loving the unlovable will help us better appreciate God’s love for us.

Why is God more pleased with our getting right with our brother than praising or giving to Him?

Matthew 5:23-24 – Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

God is more pleased when you get it right with your brother, than if you bring Him a sacrifice of praise or resources.

What applications do we see from this discussion?

- The love of God enables us to be bold before Him.
- Christians do not fear the judgment of God, that is the opposite of boldness.
- God loved while we were yet sinners; that is amazing love!
- Our love for others will enhance our love for God.