

LOVE

The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

(1 John 4:8)

. . . the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Romans 8:39)

And 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.

By this, love is perfected with us, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

We love, because He first loved us.

If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

(1 John 4:16–21)

I praise my Father in heaven for continually showing me what love is. Love from His perspective—love, which is an act of will. Love that says, "I love you." Period. No conditions, no strings attached, and no end. I needed the Holy Spirit to reveal to me that kind of love—the unconditional love. It is love that surpasses knowledge. It is a conquering love, and an incorruptible love—a godly love. *Love from the heart is the goal of my faith*—faith working through love (Galatians 5:6). I can only love with this kind of love—the unconditional love, because I know that is how God loves me. The knowledge of God's love is paramount to me.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

(John 3:16)

(The Greek word for "world" in this verse is the "sons of Adam.")

The love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

(Romans 5:5)

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

(Romans 5:8)

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus.

(Ephesians 2:4–6)

See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are.

(1 John 3:1)

By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

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

(1 John 4:9, 10)

As we see in these verses, it is God who loved us first. He demonstrated His love for us by sending His Son to die on the cross for us.

Yes, there is an appointed day—“The Day of Judgment.” God, who loves us, is rich in mercy, and He provided a way out. He doesn’t want anyone to perish, but He wants all of us to be saved (1 Timothy 2:3, 4). God alone provided salvation.

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.”

(John 14:6)

When we receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we receive God’s love (John 17:26), because we receive Him. Every believer is indwelt by God, and God is love. We become children of God, and begin what I call “The Incredible Journey with Jesus.” Our goal is to know our Father and His love for us in Christ Jesus. We need to be strengthened with power through the Holy Spirit, who is in us, and to be rooted and grounded in love, so we can comprehend the depth of the love of Christ, which surpasses knowledge. *To love is to be filled up to all the fullness of God.* If you want to know how “spiritual” you are, ask yourself this question, “Am I controlled by the love of Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:14)?

The love that we have been accustomed to in this world is different from God’s love. Agape love—God’s love is a higher kind of love than human love. It is a foreign love to a

natural man. It is a supernatural love. Only the Holy Spirit can produce godly love in us. The apostle Paul described such love in the letter to the church in Corinth.

Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.

(1 Corinthians 13:4–8)

Can you say:

“I am always patient, always forgiving. I am patient even when ‘things’ don’t go my way. I am patient when someone makes a mistake or when I am wronged?”

“I am always kind. Before I speak or do anything, I always think how my words or actions will affect others?”

“I am never jealous. I am so happy when others succeed; I rejoice with them in my heart. I never envy anyone?”

“I never brag. I never stretch my achievements. I don’t esteem myself more highly than I should?”

“I am never arrogant, never puffed up or rude. I always consider others?”

“I never act unbecomingly. I always behave as I should?”

“I never seek my own. I always look out for the interests of others?”

“I am never provoked. I can always turn the other cheek; I can swallow an insult. I am not touchy and oversensitive. I am far from getting angry if things don’t go my way?”

“I never keep record of wrongs. I don’t hold grudges. I never retaliate when wronged?”

“I never rejoice in unrighteousness. I never rejoice in someone’s misfortune, someone’s downfall, someone’s mistakes, someone’s sufferings?”

“I always rejoice with the truth. I always seek the truth, and when I know truth, then I stand by it regardless of the consequences. I love truth; I like to be corrected if I am wrong?”

“I can bear all things. Nothing is too difficult for me to go through victoriously. I count it all joy when I encounter various trials that are so common in this world?”

“I believe all things. I always look for the best in everything and in others. I give them the benefit of doubt before I come to a conclusion. I don’t always see the worst in everyone or in everything?”

“I always hope. I know that God will complete the work He began in me and other believers. I believe that He will cause all things to work together for good to those who love Him?”

“I always endure. I never complain, never grumble?”

“Love never fails. If I love unconditionally, I will see the strongholds come crashing down. Nothing stands in the way of love. Love is the greatest power?”

How did you do? Beloved, you may believe it, but do you put your faith in it, and act upon it?

A Closer Look at Human, Carnal, Fleshly Love

Contrary to God’s love, the human love is a self-centered love: “I love you”—until I am told that you are breaking up with me. I am sure that we have all heard “There is no fury, like a woman scorned,” or “If I cannot have you, nobody will.” And we even kill! If we don’t kill literally, we get angry at others, and according to Jesus, that is equal to murder in our heart. And we call it love? A bit shallow, isn’t it? I think that in reality we love ourselves. After all, we are number one. Right? Well, according to the teaching of this world we are. Carnal love has a problem with loving someone who is not exactly “lovable,” or who is an enemy on our list. Only God’s love is able to love enemies and forgive everyone from the heart.

Do Not Take Revenge

Do we understand what happens when we adhere to these words? According to God, evil cannot be overcome with evil. It just adds fuel to the fire. Only good can overcome evil. Every time we don’t return evil for evil and an insult for insult, every time we don’t retaliate, I believe we deal a blow to self, to the evil that might be in us, and also we deal a blow to the evil coming from the other person.

Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “*Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,*” says the Lord.

But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head.”

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

(Romans 12:17–21)

Brothers and sisters, don’t just read the Bible; think everything through, and see the great wisdom in all God has to say to us. There is just one way that works—God’s way. God gave us a free will to choose. We can try to solve problems our way, but only God’s way will bring the desired results. He knows all!

We love, because He loved us first. How we view our relationship with God determines our relationship with others. Only when we understand:

- the way God loves us in Christ Jesus
- His great mercy and grace toward us that is in Jesus
- that in Jesus we are totally forgiven
- that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus
- that in God's love there is no fear, for perfect love casts out all fear
- and rest in what God had accomplished on our behalf

we are able to turn around, and love others the same way. If we see God, as someone who is constantly displeased with us, who is keeping a record of our wrongs, and who will punish us, that is how we will treat others. Some Christians can be stern, mean, and unforgiving. Why? That is how they see their Father in heaven treating them. Don't they realize that that is not how God deals with His children? Don't they realize that God has already punished Jesus for all the sins the whole world committed, is committing, and will commit? The judgment is already pronounced:

He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.
(John 3:18)

And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.
(1 John 5:11, 12)

God is dealing with us on the basis of a new life. If you are a child of God, the Holy Spirit wants to lead you. Let go of self; let go of sins. Don't try to constantly deal with what is "dead." God is showing you a better way—His way. Beloved, let your heavenly Father renew your mind and then act upon it. You *will* experience a supernatural living.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
(Galatians 5:22, 23)

Love is listed among the fruit of the Spirit. Fruit of the Spirit is a by-product of our faith in God and His Word, and our acting upon it.

Love For One Another

You shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.
(Leviticus 19:18)

But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those
who persecute you.

(Matthew 5:44)

Jesus said,

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one
another, *even as I have loved you*, that you also love one
another.

“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if
you have love for one another.”

(John 13:34, 35)

Jesus said,

“This is My commandment, that you love one another,
just as I have loved you.

“Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his
life for his friends.”

(John 15:12, 13)

Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he
who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.

For this, “You shall not commit adultery, you shall not
murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet,” and if
there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this
saying, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Love does no wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the
fulfillment of the law.

(Romans 13:8–10)

Wherefore, accept one another, just as Christ also
accepted us to the glory of God.

(Romans 15:7)

And may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in
love for one another, and for all men.

(1 Thessalonians 3:12)

If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law, according to
the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,”
you are doing well.

(James 2:8)

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another *from the heart*,

for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God.

(1 Peter 1:22, 23)

The one who says he is in the light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now.

The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

(1 John 2:9–11)

We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

(1 John 3:14–18)

And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.

(1 John 3:23)

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and every one who loves is born of God and knows God.

The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

(1 John 4:7, 8)

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

(1 John 4:11, 12)

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him.

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

(1 John 5:1–3)

Love one another.

(2 John 1:5)

As we see in these verses, our love should extend to all—to our brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus and to all people. In the Scriptures we read that Jesus fulfilled the law. How? He walked by perfect love. Love is the fulfillment of the law. If we love as we ought to love, we will not kill, steal, commit adultery, covet, etc., or even think these thoughts. All of this ungodliness should be the furthest thing from our mind. Right? None of them have anything to do with love. So we say, “We don’t murder,” but are we angry with our brother? We have just read in 1 John 3:15, that everyone who hates his brother is a murderer. Beloved, we have to look at each other from a new perspective—through the eyes of God. Jesus said to love each other as He loved us. God wants us to love from the heart, and to accept each other as He accepted us. He wants us to forgive as He forgave us. We have to think about His words and put them into practice.

And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

(Colossians 3:12, 13)

And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

(Ephesians 4:32)

Some of us may have a problem with forgiving others or self. Yet how could we not forgive everyone from the heart knowing that God forgave us for our transgressions? To forgive is liberating. It takes away all hurt, all bitterness, all anger, and all hate. It sets us free from all these strongholds—these big mountains. God knows what He is talking about. His ways are the only ways. His ways work. God’s love goes deep.

The Love for God

And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your might.
(Deuteronomy 6:5)

O love the Lord, all you His godly ones!
(Psalms 31:23)

And He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your
mind.
“This is the great and foremost commandment.”
(Matthew 22:37, 38)

Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ
with a love incorruptible.
(Ephesians 6:24)

Yes, we love, because God loved us first. His love was poured in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. To really love God, we have to first grasp His great love for us. Read carefully these verses, the words of our great Lord and Savior Jesus Christ:

Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he
will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We
will come to him, and make Our abode with him.”
(John 14:23)

Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also 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.

(John 15:9, 10)

Jesus said,

“O righteous Father, although the world has not known Thee, yet I have known Thee; and these have known that Thou didst send Me;

and I have made Thy name known to them, and will make it known; that the love wherewith Thou didst love Me may be in them, and I in them.”

(John 17:25, 26)

Imagine that—God lives in every born again person! And nothing, absolutely nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . .

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,

nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Romans 8: 35, 38, 39)

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

(1 Corinthians 13:1–3)

Beloved, let us show the love of God through our actions. In Christ Jesus we can!

NOTHING COMPARES TO LOVE; LOVE IS THE GREATEST OF ALL!

Because Thy lovingkindness is better than life,
My lips will praise Thee.

So I will bless Thee as long as I live;
I will lift up my hands in Thy name.

(Psalm 63:3, 4)

Hatred stirs up strife,
But love covers all transgressions.
(Proverbs 10:12)

Better is a dish of vegetables where love is,
Than a fattened ox and hatred with it.
(Proverbs 15:17)

He who covers a transgression seeks love,
But he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends.
(Proverbs 17:9)

A friend loves at all times,
And a brother is born for adversity.
(Proverbs 17:17)

For the Father Himself loves you, because you have
loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from the
Father.
(John 16:27)

But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the
greatest of these is love.
(1 Corinthians 13:13)

Let all that you do be done in love.
(1 Corinthians 16:14)

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not
turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but
through love serve one another.

For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the
statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."
(Galatians 5:13, 14)

And walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave
Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a
fragrant aroma.
(Ephesians 5:2)

And beyond all these things put on love, which is the
perfect bond of unity.
(Colossians 3:14)

But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.

(1 Thessalonians 5:8)

And may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ.

(2 Thessalonians 3:5)

But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

(1 Timothy 1:5)

But flee from these things, you man of God; and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.

(1 Timothy 6:11)

For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

(2 Timothy 1:7)

Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

(1 Peter 4:8)