

The I MERGEFO | God

1 Jol RMAT 6 ESV)

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. ¹³ By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

Love among Christians demonstrates love *for* God and love *from* God, for God is love. That love was demonstrated unmistakably by Jesus. The response of the children of God, then, should be to love one another, that God's love may be perfected (reach its designated goal) in them. Being born of God, loving God, and knowing God are inseparably intertwined. Recognition of Jesus as the Son of God and the Savior of the world leads believers to know the love of God. This love flows through them to others and is an evidence of their relationship to God. This love also gives them the assurance of being accepted by God, to the extent that even their fears of the final judgment are overcome.

1. Loving one another proves that we are born of God and know God (v.7-8).
2. Loving one another proves that we see God's love (v.9-11).
3. Loving one another proves that God's Spirit is within us (v.12-13).

1 John 4:7-8 (ESV)

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

God is love. He is the *comes from God*. Je , sent from God the Father, embodied love demonstrated that love in his life on earth. Such love does not come naturally for humans. We are not born with it, neither can we learn it. Believers receive God's love only through the Holy Spirit.

The phrase "anyone who loves is born of God" does not trivialize the relationship with God as given to anyone who simply knows how to "love." Only those who have experienced the new birth are able to have the love described here.

John 1:12-13 (ESV)

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

It cannot be attained by heritage; it cannot be attained by an act of human will; it has absolutely nothing to do with human planning. It comes from God as a gift. Those who have received this gift are endowed with the nature of God and thereby become partakers of the divine love, agape. Love for fellow Christians provides proof of spiritual birth and relationship with God.

Anyone who loves *knows God*. This speaks of an ongoing knowledge—"getting to know" God—a continual, growing, spiritual knowledge based on actual experience of God in believers' lives.

A person *who does not love* other Christians has never known God. The statement "God is love" ought not be turned around to say "Love is God" or watered down to "God is loving," as if this were just one of God's attributes. Rather, love is God's very essence. It is not one of God's many activities; instead, all of his activities are infused with love. When he disciplines or teaches, for example, he does so with love. And conversely, because he loves, he disciplines and teaches. Because he *is* love, he can do nothing without love.

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And he said to him, "You love the Lord your God with all your heart and will with all your mind. ³⁸This is the great commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

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John 13:35 (ESV)

By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

John 15:12 (ESV)

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

1 Thessalonians 3:12 (ESV)

and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you

1 Peter 1:22 (ESV)

Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart

Biblical love finds its origin in God. He is the source—an infinite spring of divine kindness and care.

From him Christians can draw and find refreshment both for themselves and for others. Unfortunately, we often neglect this marvelous resource and attempt to summon up human love from the depths of our own imperfect hearts. This kind of love not only runs out quickly but also lacks the purity and vitality of love that has come straight from God. If you are having a difficult time loving someone who is not exactly lovable, retreat to the source of love. Contemplating His love for us, though we don't deserve it, enables us to love others.

Remembering Christ's sacrifice for us on the cross helps us show kindness and generosity to others. He provides an abundant supply of love long after your reserves have been depleted.

John has already described God's absolute nature as "light" (1:5); here he describes him as "love." Anyone in

whom God dwells re know God while failin is just as false as claim still living in darkness and selfish view of love, has turned these words around and contaminated the common understanding of love. The world thinks that love is what makes a person feel good and that it is all right to sacrifice moral principles and others' rights in order to obtain such "love." But that is the opposite of real love—selfishness. Real love is holy, just, and perfect, like God. Those who truly know God will love as he does.

God's love always involves a choice and an action, and our love should be like His. How well do you display your love for God in the choices you make and the actions you take?

1 John 4:9-11 (ESV)

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. (Rom. 5:8) ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Believers must not only say that they love, love must be shown by their actions. This also follows God's example, for He showed His love by a very clear and definite action.

God so dearly loved all the people in the world that He was willing to give His one and only Son, who gave His life so that no one would have to perish but rather would be given eternal life—simply by trusting in Him, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The great proof of God's love, as well as the motive for our love, is that He sent His only Son, who is life, so that we could live through Him.

Of all the different kinds of love, God's love—agape love—is the truest. As was mentioned previously, Greek has four words to depict four different kinds of

love: (1) eros for sex, (2) storge for family devotion, (3) philia for friendship, and (4) agape for loving-kindness. The word **6** was used exclusively by John to characterize God's love. It speaks of compassion, regard, kindness, and unselfishness. This kind of love motivated God to send His Son to the world to die for undeserving sinners.

This is love not that we loved God, but that he loved us. The love relationship was initiated by God; people had nothing to do with it. How could we? All people were totally dead to God—dead in trespasses and sins. He loved us even though we were totally unworthy of His love.

He loved us so much that he *sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins*. The supreme manifestation of God's love was demonstrated in sending His Son to die in order to take away the sins of all who believe. By removing sin, God removed the barrier between Him and His people so that He could live within His people and they could live within Him. Nothing sinful or evil can exist in God's presence. He is absolute goodness. He cannot overlook, condone, or excuse sin as though it never happened. God loves people, but His love does not make Him morally lax. Those who trust in Christ, however, will not have to bear the penalty for their sins. They will be acquitted by His atoning sacrifice.

1 Peter 2:24 (ESV)

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

Romans 5:18 (ESV)

Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.

Couples often debate about who loved whom first, but John makes it clear that when it comes to a person's relationship with God, there's no question about who made the first move. God loved first. He initiated. Not

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Imagine the impact that Christians could have by letting God fill us with His unconditional, redemptive love—a love that actually pursues evildoers until they stop running, then blesses them! Trust God for the wisdom and courage to love an unbeliever; then take a step of faith to do a concrete loving act for that person. God's supreme love is the motive of believers' love for one another—*if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another*. Because believers are born of God, they should resemble their Father, who is love. As they grow in appreciation of God's love for them, their love for Him and for other Christians will grow as well. The way God loves people—sacrificially, unselfishly, completely—provides the example for how believers should love each other. Those who have seen and experienced God's love ought not be able to return to a life of selfishness and greed because they are transformed and can love others as God loves.

1 John 4:12-13 (ESV)

No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us (and is perfecting us).¹³ By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

Only the Son, who is himself God, has seen God and can communicate his glory to humanity. Jesus completely expresses God in human form; thus, he has revealed God to us.

John 1:18 (ESV)

No one has ever seen God; the only God (Jesus), who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

