

— 1 John —
Lesson #14 Chapter 4:7-14

Read all of 1 John chapter 4 to get a running start for this week's text! John Flavel said, "When you go to God in any duty, take your heart aside and say, 'O my soul, I am now engaged in the greatest work that a creature was ever employed about; I am going into the awful presence of God upon business of everlasting moment. O my soul, leave trifling now; be composed, be watchful, be serious; this is no common work, it is soul-work; it is work for eternity; it is work which will bring forth fruit to life or death in the world to come.' Pause awhile and consider your sins, your wants, your troubles; keep your thoughts awhile on these before you address yourself to duty."

1. John closed chapter 3 with the reminder that Jesus Himself commanded us to believe in Him and love one another. Briefly summarize John's train of thought from 1 John 3:23-24 into 1 John 4:1-6.
2. In 1 John 4:7 John resumes the topic of love for one another. What things do you learn about love from verse 7?
3. What straightforward truth do you learn about those who don't have a love for the brethren according to verse 8?
4. First John 4:7-8 is meant to be another of John's assurances of salvation for the believer. Review 1 John 3:10, 14, 23-24 and 1 John 4:7-8 to see how love for the brethren reveals a redeemed and transformed life.

- a. What further ways does John help you see if your testimony of faith in Jesus Christ is genuine? See 1 John 1:5-10; 2:3-6, 9, 15, 19, 23; 3:6-10, 14; 4:20.

5. How is God's love revealed toward us according to verse 9? What reason is given in verse 9 for God doing this marvelous thing?

6. John says God sent His Son into the world so we might live through Him. What does John mean by that statement? First, see 1 John 5:11, then see John 11:25-26; 14:6; Colossians 3:3-4 as you put together your answer.

7. Now take a moment to consider what John is telling us about God in verse 9. How can the truths contained in verse 9 provide the hope and foundation we need when we struggle to believe that God really loves us? See also John 3:16; Romans 5:8-10; 8:31-32.

8. What is the perfect definition of love according to 1 John 4:10? Why is this the gold standard for assessing love, rather than relying on how we love Him (as stated in verse 10)?

"These passages abundantly prove, that, as the gift of Christ to us was the fruit of the Father's love, so it was an instance of His love, that infinitely outweighs all else that He ever has done, or ever can do, for sinful man." ~Charles Simeon¹

¹ Simeon, Charles. 1833. *Horae Homileticae: James to Jude*. Vol. 20. London: Holdsworth and Ball.

9. Propitiation isn't one of those words we commonly use, yet for the believer it is a precious truth! Define *propitiation* as used in verse 10 [Strong's #2434 (NIV *atoning sacrifice*)].
10. List what you learn about propitiation by looking up the following verses: Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2; then look at Leviticus 4:34-35 and Hebrews 9:6-14.

"The English word "propitiate" means "to appease and render favorable." That was the pagan meaning of the Greek word. The pagan worshipper brought gifts to his god to appease the god's wrath and make him favorable in his attitude towards him. But the God of Christianity needs no gifts to appease His wrath and make Him favorable towards the human race. Divine love springs spontaneously from His heart. His wrath against sin cannot be placated by good works. Only the infliction of the penalty of sin, death, will satisfy the just demands of His holy law which the human race violated, maintain His government, and provide the proper basis for His bestowal of mercy, namely, divine justice satisfied. This is the *hilasmos* (ἱλασμος), that sacrifice which fully satisfies the demands of the broken law. It was our Lord's death on Calvary's Cross." ~Kenneth Wuest²

11. Have you ever felt alienated from God? Estranged from Him? Have you felt unloved or think you must be a terrible disappointment to Him? John's words of hope in verse 10 are the answer to all your fears and struggles! The answer is not in your efforts to love the Lord but instead lies in *His love for you*. How can God's initiating, immovable, intentional love toward you help you think rightly when those feelings of inadequacy, guilt, or fear put a stranglehold on your joy in the Lord?

How Thou canst think so well of us,
And be the God Thou art,
Is darkness to my intellect,
But sunshine to my heart.
~F. W. Faber³

² Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*. Vol. 13. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

³ Barclay, William. 2002. *The Letters of John and Jude*. 3rd ed. The New Daily Study Bible. Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press.

12. What should God's great love prompt in us according to verse 11? Why do we need this admonition to love?

13. Why is it important that we obey this command to love one another according to verses 7-11?

14. Within John's discussion on God's love for us and our love for others, what do you learn about God in the beginning of verse 12? What is the *connection* between our obeying the command to love the brethren and John's statement about God's nature from verses 11-12? See also John 13:35; 1 John 4:20-21 to help you form your answer.

"He can be seen, however, in the lives of those who demonstrate His love to others. There are no exceptions to who has seen God ("no one"), and there are no exceptions to the time frame ("has ever")."
~Daniel Akin⁴

15. One of the big takeaways from this section in John's letter is seen again in verse 12. John states, "If we love one another, God abides in us." What big truth does John want us to understand? See verses 7 and 12.

16. When we obey the command to love the brethren, what dual realities are at work in us according to the beginning of verse 13?

⁴ Akin, Daniel L. 2001. *1, 2, 3 John*. Vol. 38. The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

17. Define *perfected* [Strong's #5048 (NIV *made complete*)]. Also see 1 John 2:5 and 4:17-18.

"If you want to know what God is like, you can look at what He has done for us and what we should do for one another. This invisible God actually lives in us. The love He has for us is made visible and complete as we love one another. This is the way the world sees God's love, as it is expressed by Him through our lives. Only as God's love completes its purpose of reaching out to those He loves—the world (John 3:16)—is His love complete or fulfilled." ~Holman New Testament Commentary⁵

18. John again seeks to give assurance about real faith. How do we know we abide in the Lord according to verse 13? When John uses the word *abide* here in verse 13, he's talking about what kind of person? See 1 John 2:6, 10; 3:6, 9, 14.

19. What special gift has God given us according to 1 John 4:13? See John 14:16-17; 1 John 3:24.

- a. What else do you learn about the Holy Spirit's role and works from John 3:3-5; 7:39; Acts 5:32; Romans 8:14; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:13-14; 1 John 2:27?

"It is encouraging to remember that the "Helper" was sent to replace the physical presence of Christ. In fact, Jesus promised that He would not leave them as orphans because of the Helper's coming (Jn. 14:17), the Helper would enable the disciples to do greater things (Jn. 14:12) and the abiding presence of the Helper would also mean the abiding presence of Christ and the Father through the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:16-24). All believers have that same Holy Spirit!" ~Jack Hughes

⁵ Walls, David, and Max Anders. 1999. *I & II Peter, I, II & III John, Jude*. Vol. 11. Holman New Testament Commentary. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

“Where the Holy Spirit is, there will always be *deep conviction of sin, and true repentance for it*. It is His special office to convince of sin (John 16:8). He shows the exceeding holiness of God. He teaches the exceeding corruption and infirmity of our nature. He strips us of our blind self-righteousness. He opens our eyes to our awful guilt, folly and danger. He fills the heart with sorrow, contrition, and abhorrence for sin, as the abominable thing which God hates. He that knows nothing of all this, and saunters carelessly through life, thoughtless about sin, and indifferent and unconcerned about his soul, is a dead man before God. He has not the Spirit of Christ.” ~J.C. Ryle⁶

20. What testimony does John again repeat for his readers in verse 14? Why does he want believers to understand this crucial point? See verses 9-10; John 3:16; Romans 5:18; 1 John 2:1-2.
21. Believers have not yet seen Him, yet they love the Lord Jesus (1 Peter 1:8) and testify about Him. Briefly, what is your “testimony” about Jesus and His saving work?

“What was that message? “The Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.” There is salvation; there is a Christ ready to save. Look to Him, blind eyes; look to Him, dead souls; look to Him.” ~J.C. Ryle⁷

“In the love of Christ to us is both the *reason* and the *model*, for our love to each other. Was His love to us unmerited? We also should freely exercise love even to the evil and unthankful. Did His love lead Him to forego the glory and felicity of heaven, and to submit to the accursed death of the cross for us? Such should be our love to our fellow-creatures: there should be no measure of labour or self-denial which we should not willingly exercise for the good of others; yea, even to the laying down of our life for them. Here then we see *the proper duty of this season*: search out the poor, the sick, and the afflicted, that you may administer to them the consolations they stand in need of: and especially exert yourselves to see what you can do for *the souls of men*—This is the work that will most assimilate you to Christ, and will best prove the sincerity of your love to Him.” ~Charles Simeon⁸

⁶ J. C. Ryle, *Old Paths: Being Plain Statements of Some of the Weightier Matters of Christianity* (London: Charles J. Thynne, 1898), 282–283.

⁷ Spurgeon, Charles. 2014. *Spurgeon Commentary: 1 John*. Edited by Elliot Ritzema. Spurgeon Commentary Series. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

⁸ Simeon, Charles. 1833. *Horae Homileticae: James to Jude*. Vol. 20. London: Holdsworth and Ball.