

INTRODUCTION

1. We are continuing in our study this morning of 1 John.
2. For the last 4 weeks we have been addressing John's commentary on love in chapter 4.
3. Today we are concluding this section which begins in chapter 4, verse 17 and runs to verse 21 or the end of the chapter.
4. So please take your Bibles this morning and turn with me to 1 John chapter 4 and I will begin reading at verse 17:
5. John says in 1 John 4:17-21 (NASB) "By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. 18 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. 19 We love, because He first loved us. 20 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. 21 And this commandment we

have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.”

6. All of us have experienced fear.
7. Some have experienced in what are called “Night terrors,” others have experienced it by being afraid of someone who wanted to harm them.
8. Fear is good because it involves flight at the moment of danger.
9. The University of Minnesota produced an article called “The Impact of Fear and Anxiety” and in it lists the benefits and problems of fear.
10. The article begins by telling us that “Fear is a human emotion that is triggered by a perceived threat. It is a basic survival mechanism that signals our bodies to respond to danger with a fight or flight response.¹
11. It also “prepares us to react to danger. Once we sense a potential danger, our body releases hormones that slow or shut down functions not needed for survival (such as our digestive system). It sharpens functions that might help us survive (such as eyesight). Our heart rate increases, and

¹ <https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/enhance-your-wellbeing/security/facing-fear/impact-fear>

blood flows to muscles so we can run faster.²

12. But chronic or persistent fear is different.
13. It weakens our immune system and can cause cardiovascular damage, gastrointestinal problems such as ulcers and irritable bowel syndrome, and decreased fertility.³
14. It can interrupt processes in our brains that allow us to regulate emotions, read non-verbal cues and other information presented to us and can cause fatigue and depression.⁴
15. But John has an answer that puts away chronic or persistent fear.
16. It's called love...perfect love that comes from a perfect God.
17. This is John's 5th treatment of it in 1 John chapter 4.
18. We have already considered...

² <https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/enhance-your-wellbeing/security/facing-fear/impact-fear>

³ <https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/enhance-your-wellbeing/security/facing-fear/impact-fear>

⁴ <https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/enhance-your-wellbeing/security/facing-fear/impact-fear>

LESSON

- I. The Exhortation to Love (vv.7-8)
- II. The Manifestation of Love (v.9)
- III. The Intervention of Love (vv.10-11)
- IV. The Debt of Love (v.11)
- V. The Assurance of Love (vv.12-16)
- VI. The Perfection of Love (vv.17-21)

John begins verse 17 with two familiar words we have been seeing throughout this epistle, “By this.”

In most cases it has pointed forward, meaning what he is about to say.

In this case, it refers back to the last part of verse 16.

You may ask, “By what is love perfected in us?”

What is “this?”

The second half of verse 16 says, “The one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.”

In verses 12-16 we learned that God, who is invisible, is seen when we love one another.

And when that occurs, verse 12 says “His love is perfected in us” or it has achieved its goal.

The same is true here.

Love is “perfected with us.”

“Perfected” (teleioo) means “to bring an activity to a successful finish—to complete, to finish, to end, to accomplish.”⁵

The expression is unusual; but the general idea is, that love is rendered complete or entire in the manner in which the apostle specifies.

In this way love becomes what it should be, and will prepare us to appear with confidence before the judgment-seat.⁶

William MacDonald says “John is now taking us on to that future time when we will stand before the Lord.”⁷

And as such, shows us what this perfect love produces:

⁵ Louw, Johannes P., and Eugene Albert Nida. [*Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains*](#) 1996 : 657. Print.

⁶ Albert Barnes, Barnes' Notes on the Bible.

⁷ MacDonald, William. [*Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*](#). Ed. Arthur Farstad. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995. Print.

A. Perfect Love Produces Confidence in the Day of Judgment (v.17)

John says by us abiding in God and He in us, love is perfected, “so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is so also are we in this world.”

The word “confidence” (parrhesia) means “openness”⁸ plainness of speech that conceals nothing and passes over nothing.⁹ It is freedom of speech, unreserved of utterance.¹⁰

This is “mature love marked by confidence in the face of judgment.”¹¹

1. God’s children can have confidence in the day of judgment because of what Jesus has done for them

a) On the cross, Jesus took our judgment on Himself

(1) Romans 4:25 (NASB) He who was delivered over because of our

⁸ Kittel, Word Studies in the Greek New Testament

⁹BAGD

¹⁰ W.E. Vine, Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

¹¹ MacArthur, John, Jr., ed. [The MacArthur Study Bible](#). electronic ed. Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997. Print.

transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.

(2) 2 Corinthians 5:21 (NASB) He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

b) On the cross, Jesus took away our condemnation

(1) Jesus said in John 5:24 (NASB) “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”

Not only did Jesus take our judgment on Himself but He also took away any hint of it in the future.

(2) Romans 8:1 (NASB) Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

It is possible for the child of God to look

forward to meeting God with complete assurance in his or her heart¹² because there is confidence given because of love's perfection in our hearts.

2. God's children can have confidence because of who is representing them

John says, "Because as He is, so also are we in this world."

Just as judgment is passed for Him, so we are beyond the reach of condemnation.¹³

Warren Wiersbe says, "Positionally, we are right now 'as He is.' We are so closely identified with Christ, as members of His body, that our position in this world is like His exalted position in heaven. This means that the Father deals with us as He deals with His own beloved Son. How, then, can we ever be afraid?"¹⁴

a) Jesus represents us in heaven as our intercessor

¹² Jerry Vines, Exploring 1,2,3, John, p.170

¹³ Ibid., MacDonald

¹⁴ Warren Wiersbe, Be Real, p.158

(1) Romans 8:34 (NASB) Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

(2) Hebrews 7:25 (NASB) Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

b) We represent Him on earth as His ambassadors

2 Cor.5:20, "...we are ambassadors for Christ."

John Calvin says, "What God is in heaven, we are told to be in this world."¹⁵

Jesus told the Pharisees in Matthew 5:48 (NASB) Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

That means, as 1 Peter 1:15-16 (NASB)

¹⁵ John Calvin, 1,2,3 John, p.84

says, “But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16 because it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

Not only are we to be holy but we are to have holy love.

Paul sums it up in Romans 12:9-18 (NASB) when he says, “Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; 11 not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, 13 contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. 16 Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. 17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. 18 If possible, so far as

it depends on you, be at peace with all men.”

3. We are then to follow the example of Christ

- a) He abided in the Father’s love - John 15:10 (NASB) 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.
- b) We too are to abide in that same love - John 15:9 (NASB) Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.

B. Perfect Love Casts Out Fear (v.18)

John continues in verse 18 by saying, “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.”

The word “fear” means “alarm, dread, fright,” the self-regarding fear of the criminal or slave because of a sense of guilt (Rom. 13:3).¹⁶

¹⁶ Hiebert, D. Edmond. [The Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary](#). Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1991. Print.

1. “Fear” is the opposite of “boldness”; where the one is, the other is not.
2. The reason that the believer need not fear is that the relationship between him and God through Christ is based on love, and in love “there is no fear.”¹⁷
3. There is no place for fear on our part in connection with this love of God for us. This love has removed all our sins (1:9; 2:1, 2; 4:10); what is there left to make us afraid?¹⁸

Albert Barnes says, “Love is not an affection which produces fear. In the love which we have for a parent, a child, a friend, there is no fear. If a man had perfect love to God, he would have no fear of anything - for what would he have to dread? He would have no fear of death, for he would have nothing to dread beyond the grave. It is guilt that makes people fear what is to come; but he whose sins are pardoned, and whose heart is filled with the love of God, has nothing to dread in this world or the world to come. The angels in heaven, who have always loved God

¹⁷ Akin, Daniel L. [1, 2, 3 John](#). Vol. 38. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001. Print. The New American Commentary.

¹⁸ Lenski, R. C. H. [The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude](#). Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1966. Print.

and one another, have no fear, for they have nothing to dread in the future; the redeemed in heaven, rescued from all danger, and filled with the love of God, have nothing to dread; and as far as that same love operates on earth, it delivers the soul now from all apprehension of what is to come.”¹⁹

- a) The Bible says in Proverbs 14:26 (NASB) In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, and his children will have refuge.
- b) John has already stated in 1 John 2:28 (NASB) Now, little children, **abide in Him**, so that when He appears, we may have **confidence** and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

4. God has not given us the spirit of fear

- a) 2 Timothy 1:7 (NASB) For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.
- b) Romans 8:15 (NASB) For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear

¹⁹ Ibid., Barnes

again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!”

C. Perfect Love Causes Us to Love (vv.19-21)

1. It causes us to love God which is due to His love to us - “He first loved us”
 - a) Ephesians 2:4-5 (NASB) But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).
 - b) 1 John 4:10 (NASB) 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.
 - c) Titus 3:3-5 (NASB) For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. 4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, 5 He saved us, not on the basis of

deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.

2. Our love is not based on what we say but what we do (v.20)

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.

D. Edmond Hiebert says, “The original language places “God” and “his brother” side by side, encompassed by the contradictory emotional responses of love and hatred, thus suggesting that these two cannot truly be the object of these opposite inner attitudes at the same time. Love and hatred are mutually exclusive; there is no neutral ground between them.”²⁰

3. John concludes in verse 21 by giving this summary statement:

And this commandment we have from Him, that

²⁰ Ibid., Hiebert

the one who loves God should love his brother also.

This points back to verse 7.

CONCLUSION

1. How can you know you're a Christian?
2. Do you hate your sin?
3. Do you practice righteousness?
4. Do you love your brother?
5. John says perfect love produces confidence, casts out fear, and causes us to love God and one another.
6. Do you have this perfect love?
7. If not, you can have it right now by recognizing it was for you that Christ died to demonstrate His love on.
8. Confess and repent of your sins and turn to Christ who alone can save you.
9. Let's pray.