

## **THREE KINDS OF LOVE: DUPLICATED LOVE**

### **1 John 4:11-19**

We are all familiar, at least I hope we are, with **Hebrews 4:12** which says: “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of our hearts.” **Verse 11** of **1 John 4** is, in my opinion, one of those verses that penetrates deeply into the heart.

As I read and study this **verse 11** and the verses which follow I am forced to ask myself if my love for others is as it should be? I do love the Lord. I love people: saved and unsaved. But do I manifest that love as I can or should?

Don't you think these kinds of questions are the kind of questions we ought to be asking ourselves when we consider what **verse 11** says? I think so! And, probably, in light of the fact we are considering the idea that our love is to be **DUPLICATED LOVE** like that by which the Father loves us, those questions and others are more than appropriate, I think.

**1 John 4:11** says: “If (which means since or in light of the fact) God loved us, we ought (which means we are duty bound, this is an expectation, maybe could be considered a command) to love one another.” Although this could be construed to include all mankind, I believe there is an undeniable expectation for us to especially love our brothers and sisters in Christ. Let's face it, although the love which God loves us with (that is the kind of love placed in the heart of those who become “partakers of the divine nature”), is not always easy to express.

Although it may be a challenge to manifest (and I'm just trying to be as honest as I can) it is possible! It is not only possible, but I am persuaded it is a desire of everyone who names the name of Christ. How can that be? It is because it is a part of our nature as Christians. As we have seen, we have a heavenly obligation to love others, especially those who are in Christ. To do so is both a privilege and a responsibility. (see **Galatians 6:10**)

The kind of verses we find in this passage demands we examine ourselves whether we want to or not; whether we like it or not. Although the exercise is not an easy one to perform, it will prove to be a profitable one if it is performed honestly. In

light of all the thoughts we could consider and develop in relation to this verse, allow this one to suffice. Can you, have you, demonstrated your love for other believers, especially those who are not a part of your “Favorites List?” If not, then maybe, according to John, we have some serious work to do.

As I said earlier in this study, loving someone does not mean we have to take them to dinner, hug their necks every time we see them, or invite them on vacation with us. It does mean though, when someone has a need we can help with, we are available and willing to help meet that need.

I know what I have just written is challenging (to say the least) but, John is telling us just how important God’s love in the heart and life of a believer really is. In fact, **verse 12** tells us it is the only way mankind can see God as God is intended to be seen in this life. (**2 Corinthians 3:2-3**)

**Verse 12** begins with a profound statement: “No man hath seen God at any time.” Now we know Moses talked with God “face to face” (**Exodus 33**), Isaiah said he saw “the Lord sitting upon a throne” (**Isaiah 6**), and there are other similar examples we could point to, but John says emphatically here and in **John 1:18** that “no man hath seen God at any time.” In this statement, John is not denying the testimony of Scripture. What he is saying is no man has seen God in the fullness of His being or in His complete essence. Man has seen something of Him as Moses did when the Lord passed by him allowing him to see His “back parts” **Exodus 33:23** but, he did not see all there is to see of Him.

Let’s look quickly at what Jesus said in **John 14:9**: “...he that hath seen me hath seen the Father.”? By becoming a man, Jesus “fleshed out” the Word of God. (**John 1:4**) He put God in shoe leather, so to speak. He brought God close to man by becoming Himself a man. In **Colossians 2:9** we read: “For in him (Christ) dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily:” Still, even in light of the fact God was veiled in the flesh of His Son Jesus Christ of Nazareth, it can still be truly said “no man hath seen God at anytime” meaning in the fullness of His essence. The failure to see God as He is lies in the inability of man to see what can be seen.

Now listen to what John goes on to say: “If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.” Isn’t that amazing!? I think it is! John is saying today, God can be seen through the lives of believers who love one another, that is, those who represent Him in this life. Those who are “ambassadors for

Christ” **2 Corinthians 5:20**. It means God’s love is “perfected in us” or brought out to its fullest form as it works through us that believe in Him and live for Him. Man cannot see God, but they can see us. If we have experienced God’s love expressed in us, it ought to be expressed through us. Look at **verse 17b** in connection with this idea: “because as he is, so are we in this world.” What a great and grave responsibility you and I have as ambassadors of Christ!

Allow me to quote something from Warren Wiersbe: “God’s love is proclaimed in the Word (“God is love”) and proved at the cross. But here we have something deeper: God’s love is perfected in the believer. Fantastic as it may seem, God’s love is not made perfect in angels, but in sinners saved by His grace. We Christians are now the tabernacles and temples in which God dwells. He reveals His love through us.” Isn’t that simply amazing? I thought you would agree....

Now listen to what John continues saying in **verse 13**: “Hereby know we that we dwell in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.” Later in **chapter five** of this letter we will learn, the Spirit which has been given to us by God has been given to us to be a witness in us. Here, in this verse, I believe he is telling us the Spirit has been given to us to be a witness through us.

“And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.” **verse 14**. Talk about going to the very heart of the Gnostics’ ideology! John does here. As an Apostle, knowing he had been chosen by Christ Himself to be one of the “eyewitnesses of his majesty” (**2 Peter 1:16**) John proclaims, again, Jesus Christ was the only begotten Son of God sent into this world for the purpose “to seek and to save that which was lost.” (**Luke 19:10**)

What John is saying here is, God’s love has been displayed in His Son seeking to save sinners. This is the kind of love we display as we take the Gospel to lost and dying man. This kind of love is manifest when we do what we can to get the Gospel to our family, neighbors, workmates, classmates, casual acquaintances, and even those who claim to be our enemies. This is how God’s love is perfected or shown forth through us. (see **John 14:12**) Of all the different kinds of love the world knows, this is the kind of love the world needs.

Before we leave **verse 14** should we not be reminded of what the purpose was that sent Jesus into this world? “...the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.” This, as you know, is referring to His first coming when He came as a

man. **Philippians 2:7-8** says: "...and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man..." He came in this manner so He could accomplish the mission the Father had sent Him on, which was to be the "Saviour of the world."

Just as a side note, on a number of occasions, we find in the Old Testament a record of Jesus coming into this world in what is known as a Christophany. A Christophany is a pre-incarnate appearance of our Lord on planet Earth. For instance, in **Genesis 18**, we find He accompanied two angels to Sodom and Gomorrah via Mamre and had a visit with Abraham on His way to bring judgment upon those two cities and other cities of the Dead Sea area.

With that in mind, don't you think we have every reason to rejoice over the fact "...God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (**John 3:17**)? There was no need for Him to condemn the world when He came bodily and physically the first time. The world already lay under the judgment and condemnation of God. It had been under condemnation since the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden. I'm sure you remember that the name given to Mary and Joseph by the messenger angel Gabriel clearly set forth the purpose of His first coming. As you know, the name Jesus means that He would "save his people from their sins" **Matthew 1:21**. It was His purpose for coming. He loves mankind so much, even as they were nailing Him to the cross He was praying for those who were driving the nails in His hands and feet. His prayer was: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" **Luke 23:34**.

Please allow me to add one more thing here before moving on. Although John tells us Jesus came in this world to be the "Saviour of the world" it does not mean everyone will be saved automatically. (see **1 Timothy 4:10**) He is the Saviour *potentially* for the world, but *only actually* for those who will repent of their sins, put their faith in the finished work He did at Calvary. When lost mankind chooses to do that, then they will be saved, but not until. Just because Jesus died does not mean all of mankind will be saved, it means all of mankind can be saved.

In **verse 15** John makes a great statement. He says: "Whosoever shall confess (which means to say the same thing that another says or to agree with another on a certain position) that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." Again and again (see **4:9, 10, 14**) John repeats the fact that Jesus Christ of

Nazareth is the Son of God, sent from God, and thus God, very God of very God manifest in the flesh. In this statement the seasoned Apostle once again takes a stand against the false teaching of the Gnostics that taught Christ came upon Jesus at the baptism by John in the Jordan and departed from Him at the crucifixion.

When we “confess that Jesus is the Son of God” we learn the result is that “God dwelleth” in anyone and everyone who does. This means, as I understand it, since God dwells in us, so does His love. Therefore, if we have His love in our hearts we are expected to share His love with others. In other words, the inner life of a believer cannot be separated from his outer life. His outer life will manifest God’s love which is resident in a believer’s heart. That is exactly what, I believe, we are told in the next verse.

**Verse 16** seems to be somewhat of a commentary on what has just been stated. It reads: “And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” Can we not see how these truths are interwoven? The fact of the matter is this: we cannot love while we are at the same time nursing hatred in our heart for a brother or sister in Christ. Such a thought, according to John, is not possible. What we find in this verse is that we cannot love God, in truth, without loving others who belong to God which refers to our brothers and sisters in Christ. It is just this simple: if we love God we will love one another.

In **verse 17** we find at least three remarkable truths. First of all we read: “Herein is our love made perfect...” As we have already seen, love is perfected when we do for others what we can when we have the opportunity to. I will admit I do not know in entirety what the word “perfect” means here, but I do know it refers to maturity and in order to mature we must be grow. Growth comes over time. John is saying to be mature is to grow. It is growing in how we love others over time until we love others (who may not be easily loved) as when God loved us when we were not easily loved.

The second truth tells us how: “...we may have boldness in the day of judgment...” This judgment is a reference to what is known as the Bema or the judgment seat of Christ spoken of by Paul in **2 Corinthians 5:10**, **Romans 14:10-12**, and **1 Corinthians 3:9-15**. The Bema is the place where believers are rewarded based on how faithfully they served in this life. In that day, all believers will give a complete account of their life, those things good and bad. We will account for our

obedience and our disobedience. We will account for those sins of the flesh and of the spirit. (**2 Corinthians 7:1**) We will give account of those moments we wish we had not had sinned in, and a variety of other things. We will give a truthful account of our stewardship. Possibly, one of those things we will give account for will be how we did or did not love those around us. No doubt we will have to answer as to whether or not we loved with the kind of love which was “shed abroad in our by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (**Romans 5:5**). With this in mind, maybe we ought to give more attention to the manner in which we manifest the love of God that is in within us. Still, John says we can face that day with boldness (confidence) and not with dread. The reason we can face it with boldness is found in what brings this verse to a close.

The third truth we find in this verse is something rather amazing. We find: “...as he is so are we in this world.” As I begin considering part of **verse 17**, I feel like I have stepped onto holy ground. What a blessing this is to know! “As he is (in Heaven) so are we (to be) in this world.” From this we see we are forever connected to the Savior who is also our Lord. As He represents us in Heaven, at the Throne before the Father we are to represent Him here on planet Earth before our families, friends, and foes. I’m afraid He’s doing a better job on my behalf than I am on His behalf. (see **Ephesians 2:1-6; 1:29**)

What John is actually referring to in this verse is our *standing* in Christ. The doctrine of a believer’s *standing* and *state* in Christ is an all too little recognized doctrine. Let’s examine it here briefly. Our *standing* has to do with our *position* which has to do with our relationship with God the Father. It is a relationship that is permanent and unalterable. As a believer our *position* is in Christ and as such we are: a child of God: justified by faith **Romans 5:1**; an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ **Romans 8:17**; the temple of the Holy Spirit **1 Corinthians 6:19**; have been baptized into the body of Christ **1 Corinthians 12:13**; we are accepted in the beloved **Ephesians 1:6**; blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ **Ephesians 1:3**; sealed with the Holy Spirit **Ephesians 1:13**, and many other wonderful things as well.

On the other hand, we find our *state* has to do with our actual spiritual condition. Sad to say, but our *state* far too often falls short of what the Scriptures demands, and, good or bad, affects our fellowship with the Father. Our *state* is constantly fluctuating for either better or worse. The *state* of a believer is often reflected or characterized by those things which negatively affected the Church at Corinth.

Things such as: division, carnality, sin, doctrinal issues, disbelief, and a variety of difficulties. (1 **Corinthians 1:11; 3:1, 5:1-2**) In the Church at Corinth, Paul dealt with all of those things and more.

Too many times our *state* gets confused with our *standing*. Our *state* is always changing, but our *standing* is unchanging always perfect. Listen again to how the Scripture reads: “as he is so are we in this world.” It is, sad to say and all too often noticed, our *state* does not come up to or match our *standing*. In an effort to bring them to the place they match the Holy Spirit continually works in us and through us in order to achieve that very thing. Having the Spirit working in us in this manner is what is known as sanctification. Sanctification is a lifelong process. God’s ultimate goal for the believer can be found in what Paul recorded in **Romans 8:29**. It reads as follows: “For whom he did foreknow, *he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son*, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” (emphasis mine)

Being “as he is” comes as the result of placing our trust in Christ. When we place our trust in Christ, God places us in Christ. Therefore, it can be said: when God sees His Son, He sees me and you in His Son: what the Son is, so are you and I: what the Son possesses, you and I possess because we are in His Son; as the Son is with the Father, so are we with the Father, because “as he is so are we in this world.” What an amazing truth this is! Glory to His name!

**Verse 17** is one of those verses that seems to be boundless. For instance, these nine words that bring this verse to an end, “as he is, so are we in this world,” sums up wonderfully, to some degree, the whole of the Christian life. Although many other great things could be said in relation to the truth in this marvelous verse, please allow what has been said to suffice for now, at least, as we move on.

So, as we continue, let’s not forget to remember we are thinking about and learning about **DUPLICATED LOVE**. The fact we as believers are to duplicate the love God has shown to us and placed in us towards others around us.

John continues by saying something special in **verse 18**? Listen as he says: “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.” How wonderful that is to know!

Let's pay close attention because in this verse, John introduces us to two words he has not used before in this letter. Those words are fear and torment. I don't know about you but both words cause some unwelcome thoughts and feelings to stir in my heart and mind. Although it may seem strange for those words to be a part of a believer's life, I am afraid they are too often just that.

In **verse 17** John made mention of judgment. In fact, he told us how we may have "boldness" or confidence in that day. In other words, we may face judgment without fear or torment in light of the fact "as he is, so are we in this world." Isn't that just an amazing statement!? Oh how we need the Lord to open our understanding about its message.

One thing I believe would help allay the fears of many believers in reference to the Bema or the judgment seat of Christ is to understand this judgment is not a judgment that determines whether or not one is saved or lost. That determination is made in this life before we die. The Bema is a place where those who know Christ as Savior will be rewarded for their stewardship in this life. If one appears at the Bema seat of Christ it is evident one is a saved individual.

Although it is a place for rewarding, we must understand the idea connected to the Bema is judgment. All of us who name the name of Christ will give account of the deeds done in our body. We will give account of our personal stewardship. At that reviewing place we will either receive rewards for our service or come to understand what we could have received had we been faithful in our service. Again, although this is a place of judgment, it is **NOT** a judgment to determine whether or not one is saved and going to Heaven or lost and going to Hell. As was said earlier, that is decided in this life, before death. What this judgment will decide our place or position in the kingdom.

I'm afraid, even with a good understanding of the Bema, too many people live with fear which can and often does produce torments: torments of the mind and the spirit. The thing which can defeat those torments is knowledge about the love of God. God wants us to know about His love: academically yes, but more so experientially. (**Ephesians 3:14-21**)

The love of God is not designed to remove that healthy sense of reverential fear towards God we possess. Yet, it is designed to remove that unhealthy tormenting fear we have, such as the fear a guilty man would have when facing a stern judge.



Nor is John attempting to do away with the kind of healthy fear a son who loves and respects his Father should have. But, he is trying to do away with the kind of fear a believer should not have as he stands before the Son in that day.

It is not uncommon for one to fear. Fear is not a stranger to most of us. There are many things in life to be fearful of, especially in this day and time. When people have fear, there is a cause. It does not matter whether their fear is rational or not, there is fear, nonetheless.

Different people fear different things. For instance, some people fear their past. All of us have a past. We all have things in our past. When those things are remembered, they stir unwanted feelings and thoughts. And those feelings oft times result in torment. While some people fear the past, some fear the present, while others fear the future although they know absolutely nothing of what the future holds. Whether one has fear about the past, the present, or the future, and whether or not those fears are anchored in rational or irrational thought, they can and do produce torment of some degree.

So, what is the remedy for fear? The answer is simple, actually, for a child of God. It is knowing and understanding (as much as we can), about the love of God. As our understanding of the love of God matures or becomes perfected in our hearts and minds over time, we discover fear becomes less and less of an issue for us. When we remember: “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” as Jesus said in **John 3:16**, it produces a much welcomed peace in our heart. When we remember, as God loves His Son, so He loves me and you, His “little children,” it brings peace to our troubled heart. When we remember Paul sums up one of the greatest declarative statements in the Word of God by saying: nothing “shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” **Romans 8:35-39**, we come to understand we have no need to fear anything. It does not matter if it is something from our past, something in the present, or one of those multitude of unknown things waiting in our future. When we mature in our understanding of God’s love for us, we may find ourselves singing joyfully, “Jesus loves me this I know; for the Bible tells me ....”

Let’s be honest. Thinking about judgment ought to concern us. But, when we remember Christ not only died for us (**2 Corinthians 5:21**), He also died as us, as our substitute (**Isaiah 53:6**), we discover a peace who’s only source can be God. We would be wise to remember Jesus said: “Verily, verily I say unto you, He that

heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*” **John 5:24.** (emphasis mine) We should also remember: “There is therefore *now no condemnation* to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.” **Romans 8:1.** (emphasis mine) When we do remember those things (and many other things as well), we soon find fear and its associated torments take their leave. As our understanding of God’s love towards us grows and matures, we also find the peace of God grows as well.

For a follower of Christ, judgment of our sins is not a future thing but a past thing. Our sins, *all of our sins*, have been judged in Christ, on the cross, who “...his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree that we being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.” **1 Peter 2:24.** In light of these (and other) great truths, we must understand God deals with us as His children and not as sinners who know nothing of the grace of God or nothing of the God of all grace. Our relationship with Him changes everything.

Before I leave this, I need to say having a reverential fear towards God is a good thing. I believe all spiritually healthy Christians have such a fear. But, if we live with a fear that produces torments of any degree we would be wise to check up on our love towards God in light of **Romans 8:15** which says: “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear: but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”

**Verse 18** sets forth a great truth. “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torments. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.” Isn’t John saying as we grow in understanding and knowledge about God’s love for and to us, that such knowledge will drive away our fear of facing Him in judgment? Notice I did not say it will drive away our reverence for Him. I pray we never lose that! But as our understanding of God and His love grows (as we “grow in grace and in knowledge” **2 Peter 3:18**) we will find those fears once anchored in ignorance fading away in the light of the truth of God’s Word.

I believe the more we discover about God and His grace we will find our love for Him growing and the peace that accompanies it growing as well. It cannot be any other way. As our love for Him grows so will our confidence. As we continue spending time with Him I believe two things will happen: first, we will mature as we learn about our Lord, academically and experientially. Second, this will result

in our juvenile fears giving way to confidence as we come to know more about our Lord and Savior.

**Verse 19** is much more than the little I am going to say, but please allow me to say something you already know. “We love him, because he first loved us.” Isn’t that true? Because He loves us we love Him. His love for us is designed to be reciprocated. God has made man able to love and to respond to love. When we understand how much God loves us and how He has made manifest His love for us, we will want to love Him in return.

As we bring this study to a close, allow me to say just a few brief things about the third kind of love we find in this study. The third kind of love we find is **DEFICIENT LOVE**. To be “deficient” means to be lacking in some specific quality. In this case it is the quality of love. This isn’t the first time John has been blunt in his letter. We find **1 John 4:20** reads as follows: “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”

The simple answer to that question is, he cannot! Regardless of what he says. As I have said throughout this study, the proof is in the pudding. Man may say anything he wishes, but just because he says something doesn’t mean it’s true. Let’s not forget it was John who said we are to love in “deed and truth.” **1 John 3:18**.

This chapter closes with **verse 21** setting forth something important. It reads as follows: “And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.” Isn’t that profound? It’s also simple. John is not setting forth a suggestion here, but a command. It is a command that is both telling and revealing for everyone. For those who truly love, but especially for those who only pretend to love. “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God.” **1 John 4:7**.

In our next study, as we step into **chapter five** and begin to bring the study of this letter of John to a close, we will find it to be a chapter worthy of our closest consideration.

Tom Price, 2020