

1 John 4:17-21
“Perfected in love”

- I. Intro**
- II. Vs. 17-19 Love’s confidence**
- III. Vs. 20-21 Love’s honesty**

I. Intro

We are now in the last of the chapter starting in verses 7-21 that was based upon three repeated phrases or words that form a chorus:

1. Vs. 7-12 The exhortation to “*love one another*”
2. Vs. 13-16 The connection between Love and sound doctrine seen in the words “*abide in Him and he in us*”
3. Vs. 17-21 The perfection of love seen in the confidence of the believer before God at the judgement. And her the words repeated is “*perfected love*”

John’s focus over the last few weeks has been on *three aspects of God’s love seen in God’s gift*

to fallen humanity in sending His only Son, Jesus: The measure of God love realized in those

three aspects:

- **THE GIFT**: “*God gave His best*”
- **THE PURPOSE OF THE GIFT**: “*God gave His Son to die*”
- **WHO THE GIFT WAS FOR**: “*God gave for sinners*”

The context of these three truths was to reveal to the reader the reason why God could expect from His now transformed children the exhortation that the body of Christ ought to be “loving one another” as God’s Love is far more than a mere “**OBLIGATION**” instead it’s an expression of our **DEVOTION** and “**APPRECIATION**”. The reason for this is that as believers we have been impacted by the love of God three ways:

- **God’s love has done something to us**
- **God’s love has done something for us**
- **God’s love has done something in us**

And because of those facts **God’s love has no choice but NOW MUST do something**

THROUGH US to love one another! The connection between this section and what we have

already examined in this chapter is in verses 13-16 the apostle introduced the proof of God's love was the abiding of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. The perfection of God's love in the believer was not to be that which was open to fallen humanities definition of love which is a love called forth by the object that they love meeting their specific expectations and whims. Instead, the love that we are to love one another with is the love that God has for us in which it is a love springs forth from the person ill-respective of the object being worthy of this love. The only way a person can love this way towards another is if they have been touched by God themselves.

II. Vs. 17-19 Love's confidence

Vs. 17-18 Here the chorus is found in verse 12 and again in 17 with the word "*perfected*". The Greek word used here is in the perfect tense which means a "past act in the believer's life with a present reality". The point is that "***The person who has been impacted by the love of God in the past can expect for it to have a present reality NOW!***" In verse 12 John used that word "*perfected*" in reference to God's love in the life of the believer saying that; "*God's abiding work in us makes the believer the instrument of making visible the invisible God to a world that is blind to His reality.*" This describes the work of God's love working through us. But now John lists two more ways God's love works in the life of the believer

1. Vs. 17-19 Confidence
2. Vs. 20-21 Honesty

The apostle tells his readers in what specific way the believer's "confidence" is perfected by God's love in verse 17 "*that we may have boldness in the day of judgment*". The maturity of the believer in God's love produces "confidence" and that will be seen in the "absence of fear" as we can realize that we are secure in God's love as His love is both:

- Driven towards us in SPITE of us and not because of us.

• And is a “*perfecting*” love **that grows deeper and deeper in the life of the believer.** John’s reference is specific “*in the day of judgment*” and it is this perfecting of God’s love “in us” that produces “boldness and confidence” which in the Greek is “freedom of speech”. **God’s perfecting love removes any hesitation of our communication with God especially in the day of judgment as we won’t fear any torment as His love has perfected in us. People are afraid because of something in the PAST still haunts them in the PRESENT and make them worried about the FUTURE!** But the believer that God’s love has impacted seen in how they love one another has nothing to fear from the past, present, or future for they have experienced God’s love in spite of themselves and in their life’s God saw it perfected them from day to day!

Furthermore, the assurance of this confidence is in the phrase, “**because as He is, so are we in this world**”. Our confidence is assured in judgment first and foremost because Jesus suffered our judgment upon the cross and because of this fact **for the Christian our “judgment is NOT future; it is in the PAST”**. This produces a sweet assurance that when Jesus returns we shall be like Him, God will have completed His work making us in His likeness! There are **three things God’s love changes** about the **believer’s position in judgment:**

1. **Future:** We are now identified with Jesus so closely as members of His body that since He took our spot here on earth on the cross, He has given us His spot in heaven with Him. That means with regards to judgment The father could not judge our sins again without judging His Son, “for as He is, so are we in this world”.
2. **Past:** The words in verse 19 that “He first loved us” restate the truth that from the very start God’s love was not based upon our goodness but His! He choose based upon His nature alone to love us and because of this we have no fear of the past sins coming back upon us because of present failures. Since God loved us while were yet practicing sinners and outside of His family how much more should we be confident that NOTHING can separate us from the love of God now that we are His children?
3. **Present:** Neither do we need to fear the present because “**perfect love cast out fear**”, verse 18. As we grow more in God’s love we will become less fearful of what God will do and is doing in our lives!

All of this speaks to the believer’s assurance that because of the love of God they can enjoy both now and in the future at the judgment seat of Christ a “**free and fearless confidence with**

nothing to hide or be ashamed of'. The Love of God that has been enjoyed by faith, casts out fear, unites us to God who is love and assures our future with Him. Paul wrote of the power of this love in Rom 8:35-39 when he declared that there was nothing anywhere that can separate us from His love. Let that sink into your heart and head that your security is so safe that there is literally NOTHING and NEVER WILL BE that will be able to separate you from God's love! The Greek wording of this phrase is "**As for us, let us be loving, because He Himself first loved us**". The security is further stated by John as he reminds his readers that it was God while we were yet sinners Who initiated His love which was clearly not drawn out based upon those to whom God would lavish His love upon.

III. Vs. 20-21 Love's honesty

Vs. 20-21 The above assurance and confidence isn't a greeting card it's to give the believer a shot in the arm. As the second thing experiencing the Love of God does for the believer is that it creates HONESTY especially as it relates to self-evaluation. For the Seventh time John writes "If someone says..." and each time they are meant to cause the reader of this letter to evaluate their heart before the truth presented to determine if they are "PRETENDERS" instead true believers! The lack of experiencing the love God cannot be hidden as it will be seen in insecurities that they will try to cover up but will be unable to do so for any length of time. It will produce a lack of confidence in the Lord, it will cause fear towards the Lord as we won't be able to trust Him. And it will be seen in us becoming fakes and phonies towards other people. A Christian who lacks confidence with God will also lack confidence with God's people! So, the admonition is again put forth by the Apostle John that if "***Anyone says, that they are constantly loving God with His love, and at the same time saying or behaving in a way that demonstrates that they are hating their brother or sister, then that person is lying to themselves and others!***" The reason

for this John says is that God's love is transformative, and it causes us to love the way He has loved us and if we aren't then we are not in contact with God's love! God's love is very messy once it's got us it can't help but get on everyone else that we are in contact with!!!