

# Perfect Love

1 John 4:17-19



Good Hope  
Baptist Church

Living Together In The Love Of God

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**FOCAL Read Responsively** 1 John 4:17-19 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. **(18) 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. (19) We love him, because he first loved us.**

What makes a Christian different from a non-Christian? Let's explore that for a moment.

Are Christians perfect? Can a true Christian sin? I want you to think about this for a moment - play poker with me and keep your answers to yourselves.

**Can a true Christian lie, and by that lie endanger a loved one?**

**Can a true Christian get drunk - sloppy drunk - so much so that he publicly exposes himself in nudity?**

**Do Christians get so depressed that they consider killing themselves?**

**Could a true Christian deny his Lord Jesus while standing in front of a crowd of unbelievers?**

**Could a true Christian commit adultery - sexual sin with another man's wife - and then engineer the murder of the husband in order to cover up his sin?**

If you answered "no" to any of these questions, then you are Biblically incorrect. When our forefather **Abraham**

was in fear of his life **he lied about Sarah, saying that she was his "sister" and not his wife. (Genesis 12:13)** She was carried away to Pharaoh's harem because of Abraham's sin. When **Noah** left the Ark he **grew a vineyard, make wine, and then got sloppy drunk. (Genesis 9:20-21)**. When **"Righteous Lot" (2 Peter 2:7)** left Sodom and Gomorrah he hid in a cave with his daughters **(Genesis 19:33), became drunken, and committed acts of incest with his daughters**. The Prophet **Elijah**, after defeating the 450 Prophets of the false god Baal, **"he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers" (1 Kings 19:4)**. The Apostle **Peter denied Christ three times - taking God's Name in vain - while standing before a crowd of unbelievers (Matthew 26:75)**. And can forget that **King David** committed adultery with **Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, and then conspired to have this worthy man murdered (2 Samuel 12:9)**.

The Apostle Paul himself - great believer that he was - became lifted up with pride. The disciple **John Mark refused to go to Pamphylia on a missionary journey**, so Paul wrote him off after that **(Acts 15:38)**. If it were not for **Barnabas who gave John Mark a second chance**, we would not have the *second Gospel, the Gospel of Mark*.

Christians sin. True Christians can truly sin. The difference between a Christian who sins and a non-Christian who sins is that the Christian *does not enjoy the sin, nor does he remain there very long*. Sin is against God. God abides in the Christian. Thus, when we

sin, we immediately feel the impact of the sin. The Lord Who indwells us convicts us, telling us that this is wrong. Christians sin. True Christians can do grievous sin. But they cannot enjoy their sin, nor remain in their sin, for God - who is love - is the foundation their faith is built on.

A few years ago in Tennessee I had the privilege of helping build a Family Life Center for a Church I was pastoring. At the beginning of the building process the contractor suggested that we do a "Compaction Test" to check the ground for flaws before we erected the building. The test cost about \$500.00, but I demanded that it be done. You see, if the foundation is flawed, then no matter how pretty the building is, you'll have problems later on. A neighborhood in **Springfield, Florida** found that out several years ago. The residents of the **Town and Lake Country Estates** - a subdivision that was built around 1963 - began to experience serious problems. Houses began to settle, walls cracked, sidewalks busted and buckled, fences twisted, and the floors inside of the houses are sloping. No one realized what was causing this. Many of the houses had their own wells instead of city water, and the water started to take on a sour smell. Some resident began to develop rashes. Gardens were plowed, and often overturned dirt contained bottles and old cans. It was only then that the residents began to realize that the land their houses were built on had, at one time, been a *landfill - a garbage dump*.

The Christian life is not built on a landfill. **We are built on Love**. God is love, and God reached out for us before

we ever reached out for Him. God is love, and lives inside of us. We might have been a landfill at one time, but now we are the Temple of God!

In the Old Testament God had a Temple that His people used. In the New Testament God has a people for His Temple, and He uses us for His glory.

We are not garbage, though the garbage of sin may blow across our lawns occasionally. We are Children of God, born of Love, kept by Love, indwelt by Love, and commanded to Love.

### **1. The Lord God Almighty Clothed Himself In Humanity For ME!**

**CONTEXT** 1 John 4:1-3 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. (2) Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: (3) And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

**Word Study** The Apostle begins by saying: "**Beloved**". This is the Greek AGAPETOS (αγαπητος pronounced ag-ap-ay-tos'), which means "**someone who is worthy of love**".

The Christian is worthy of love, not because he is worthy within himself. None of us are worthy within ourselves. The Christian is worthy of love because **God has made him worthy**.

How did God do this? **He came in the flesh**. God the Son:

**Philippians 2:7-10 ... made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: (8) And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. (9) Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: (10) That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;**

Jesus Christ is God in the flesh. He came to this earth because He loved us. He came to this earth because we are natural born sinners, separated from God because of our sin. Jesus Christ came for one thing:

**Luke 19:10 .... to seek and to save that which was lost.**

There are a lot of people who believe in Jesus, like they believe in Buddha, Muhammad, or Confucius. There are people - like **Oprah Winfrey** - who have great followings and speak of Jesus as "a great Teacher" or "a great Spiritualist". John says "**Beloved, don't believe every spirit you hear. TRY the spirits to see if they**

are from God or not. You ask, "But John, how am I to try the Spirits? How am I to know that someone speaks of God, or speaks from somewhere else?" John answers,

**CONTEXT 1 John 4:2** Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that **Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:**

**Word Study** The words translated "**is come**" is a *Perfect Active Participle* in the Greek. The Perfect Participle refers to an action that was **completed in the past, and thus stands forever**. It could be rendered as "**Jesus Christ has come in the past *once and for all***".

What Jesus Christ did on the Cross is a *singular event in human history*. No one else accomplished what He accomplished. No one else can accomplish what He accomplished. He is not *one God among many Gods*, nor is He *one Way among many ways to God*.

If someone says "**Jesus Christ is come in the flesh as God's only solution for our sin**" then that person speaks in one accord with the blessed Holy Spirit of God. But if a person says "**Jesus Christ was just a man, a great Teacher, a great Leader Who headed a religion**", then *that spirit is not of God*. It is of Satan, or of the world which is of Satan. But it is not of God.

**ILLUSTRATE** Let me put it another way: If Satan walked into a Church to join it, he would not have any problem singing our songs. He would not mind being

baptized. He would not have a bit of problem partaking of the Lord's Table. He could run the bus ministry. He could do many things. But he would *never* bend the knee to Jesus Christ as Lord, nor would he ever admit Christ is the only way unto God.

We who are Christians are worthy of love - called **Beloved** - because of Christ's Blood shed for us. God took upon Himself our humanity, and shed Blood for our sins on Calvary. The Scripture repeatedly declares:

**Ephesians 1:5-7** Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, (6) To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. (7) In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

**He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In Jesus Christ we have redemption through His Blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace.** Jesus Christ is come - once and for all - for us. He is come in the flesh, and He alone - Eternal God in human flesh - is our payment for sin.

We who have believed on Jesus Christ are not of this world any more. We belong to God. And the God of Whom we belong to has promised us

**Hebrews 10:16-18** .... I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; (17) And their sins and iniquities will I remember no

**more. (18) Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.**

Perfect Love saved us, and keeps on saving us because **Jesus Christ is come in the flesh!**

**ILLUSTRATE** A professional photographer took pictures of a certain woman. When she looked over the pictures she refused to pay for them. When asked why she said "Because these pictures don't do me justice". The photographer replied, "**lady, you don't need justice, you need mercy**"

We who belong to the Lord are Beloved - not because we deserve it - but *because of mercy*. Jesus did it all for us.

## **2. Now That I Am Born Again, My Heart Is Redirected To Love**

Just as a splinter in your finger is unnatural, and if left in place, will eventually infect the Body, that which is not love will infect and eventually destroy the Body of Christ, the Church. Mac Brunson, the Pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas, wrote about a Church that he simply called **Moriah Church**. The women of the Church were all very good cooks, and often competed with one another as to who made the better dish. On one occasion when the Church called a new Pastor, they planned a meal. Dr. Brunson said:

**ILLUSTRATE** "The new Preacher was invited, along with his family, to go first in line and fill up his plate. Every woman was eying the preacher as he slowly

made his way past the salads. ... The Pastor headed straight for the deviled eggs. ... He finally took a couple of deviled eggs off of one plate and walked forward. The women all glanced at the one woman who had made the chosen eggs. She just smiled .... knowing that all eyes were on her. The preacher came to a table which contained six different types of potato salad. ... The preacher, without thinking, just grabbed the first bowl with a serving spoon in it. As all the women looked on, they watched the pastor unwittingly choose the potato salad made by the woman who had made the deviled eggs he had chosen. Now the fight was on. Accusations began to fly. Some charged the woman with moving the serving spoon to her bowl so the preacher would have to pick hers. .... Others whispered that she had tipped off the pastor, telling him to pick her salad, which was seen as favoritism. By the time the meal was over .... people were taking sides. Half of the women sat on the left side of the Church, and the other half sat on the right side of the Church. .... By the Pastor's third anniversary, he had decided that this Church was not even listening to him. He would be gone by the next quarterly business meeting. **Bitterness is a serious thing.** (from *Why Churches Die: Diagnosing Lethal Poisons In The Body of Christ*, pages 93-94)

A Church that does not love is not a Church. It is a building with people in it, a clubhouse, a fraternity - but it is not a Church!

What does John tell us? He says:

**CONTEXT** 1 John 4:4-6 **Ye** are of God, little **children**, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. (5) **They** are of the world: therefore speak **they** of the world, and the world heareth them. (6) **We** are of God: he that knoweth God heareth **us**; he that is not of God heareth not **us**. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

Please note that the pronouns used in the above text are *all plural*. The Apostle says “**you All are of God, little children, and have overcome them**”. And again, “**WE are of God**”.

God designed the Christian to stand against the world – not by himself – but with other Christians. We need each other! We are a Family!

We who belong to Jesus by faith in His shed Blood are bound *together against the world*. Like an army, our effectiveness is not based on the One, but on the Many following the directive of the One! When we stand together the Bible says “**greater is He Who is in YOU – ALL, than He that is in the world**”.

The born again Christian is called of God to love, and hones his or her love by working cooperatively with other believers. **The world speaks of the world, and acts according to the world**. We who are born again *through the undeserved love of God* are to love one another. **Greater is He that is in you, than He that is in the world**.

**ILLUSTRATE** Just the other day I was listening to a preacher who was telling about his efforts to witness while on vacation at the beach. He said that he was told by one unbeliever, “**You're right – I do need to meet Jesus. Where is He?**” The Pastor said “**I didn't know what to tell him.**” Are you kidding me? Where is Jesus? As Eternal God, Jesus Christ is *everywhere*. The Bible says:

**Acts 17:28** **For in Him we live, and move, and have our being ...**

Where else is Jesus? He has told us:

**Hebrews 13:5** .... {Jesus} **hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.**

And

**John 12:26** **If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be:...**

Jesus is with the Christian. There is no place you can go, no depth you can fall, no time you can be in where Jesus is *not* with you. Jesus is with His people. But the Bible also makes it very clear that:

**Matthew 18:20** **For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.**

Jesus Christ is in the middle of His people, His **CHURCH** - protecting them against the onslaught of the world. He is with His people – but only when they

are gathered together in His Name, and under His authority.

We who belong to Jesus are called to “**love one another with a pure heart fervently**” (1 Peter 1:22). We are commanded of God to

**Ephesians 4:1-4 .... walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, (2) With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; (3) Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (4) There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;**

We who are the adopted Sons of God are directed to love. The Apostle says:

**CONTEXT 1 John 4:7-8 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. (8) He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.**

What is the *proof* that you are born of God? Is it that I have been *baptized*? That I have taken the *Lord's Table*? That I teach a Sunday School class, sing in the choir, am a Deacon or even the Preacher? No, none of these are proof that I am saved. The proof of salvation is that **we love one another in a Christlike manner.**

We all received the same undeserved Grace. We are all equally flawed. Yet we are **Beloved – together –**

because God reached out to us.

The Bible says “**He that loveth not knoweth not God**”. Love is an action that – moving outwardly from its host – it uplifts, encourages, protects, and blesses.

If you do not love, then you are not born again. The born again are indwelt by God Who is love – therefore the believer *loves*.

### **3. As I Learn To Love More Perfectly, Perfect Love Will Cast Fear Out Of My Life**

**FOCAL 1 John 4:18 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.**

"There is no fear in love: but *perfect love* casts out all fear".

**Word Study** The word translated "perfect" is the Greek **TELEIOS** (τελειος pronounced tel'-i-os), which means "mature, complete, that which is lacking nothing". **Perfect or complete/ mature Love casts out fear.**

We live in a fearful age, with strange things going on all around us. How do we escape the fear? We love instead. We learn to love.

**CONTEXT 1 John 4:20-21 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? (21) And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.**

God does not put perfect people together in a local Church. He puts *saved adopted Children of God together so that they can learn to love*. Love is learned, it is learned by doing.

If you look at me very long you will find something about me you don't like. The same is true of me to you.

None of us are perfect.

But God brought us together so that we could learn to love one another. We need one another. **Perfect love casts out all fear.** As we gather together as a Church, we share our burdens. The Bible says:

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. (10) For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. (11) Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? (12) And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

As you learn to love one another, you will also learn to *encourage* one another. Life is hard. Sooner or later each and every one of you will pass through some adversity, through some fire. What will sustain you during that time

of trial but the love and prayerful concern of your fellow believers?

I often meet people who have "given up" on Church because of the imperfect people within it. Strange. I notice that no one has "given up" on baseball games.

No one has given up on grocery stores. No one has given up on banks. These are all places that are filled with imperfect people. When people say "I've given up on Church" or "I can worship God just as well in the woods", they are being incredibly near sighted. When you are sick and in misery in the hospital will the woods come and encourage you? When you lose your job, and see yourself swamped under debt, will the baseball game or the grocery store come and encourage you? No, they won't. Sooner or later you are going to go through a valley that seems so deep and dark that it will sap your strength.

At those times you *need your Church family*. You need someone to love you and encourage you. **Perfect love casts out all fear.** You need someone to pray for you, to redirect your gaze to Jesus. **Perfect love casts out all fear - out of my life and out of the lives of others.**

If you are saved by the glorious Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, then you are called by God to carry that Gospel into all the world.

What is the best way to carry the Gospel to the world? Let the world see you as Christ loves through you. The Gospel is not validated unless the world sees you all

loving one another. John ended this chapter by saying:

**CONTEXT** 1 John 4:20-21 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? (21) And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

Love and hate do not belong in the same vessel. If you love God, you are commanded to love your fellow believers. Let the world see this love, and Christ will be honored by it.

May God touch your hearts with His Word.



**FOCAL Read Responsively** 1 John 4:17-19 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. **(18) 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. (19) We love him, because he first loved us.**

Genesis 12:13; Genesis 9:20-21; 2 Peter 2:7; Genesis 19:33; 1 Kings 19:4; Matthew 26:75; 2 Samuel 12:9; Acts 15:38

**1. The Lord God Almighty Clothed Himself In Humanity For ME!**

1 John 4:1-3; Philippians 2:7-10; Luke 19:10; 1 John 4:2; Ephesians 1:5-7; Hebrews 10:16-18

**Word Study** The Apostle begins by saying: "**Beloved**". This is the Greek AGAPETOS (αγαπητος pronounced ag-ap-ay-tos')

**Word Study** The words translated "**is come**" is a *Perfect Active Participle* in the Greek.

**2. Now That I Am Born Again, My Heart Is Redirected To Love**

1 John 4:4-6; Acts 17:28; Hebrews 13:5; John 12:26;

Matthew 18:20; Ephesians 4:1-4; 1 John 4:7-8

**3. As I Learn To Love More Perfectly, Perfect Love Will Cast Fear Out Of My Life**

1 John 4:18; 1 John 4:20-21; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 1 John 4:20-21

**Word Study** The word translated "**perfect**" is the Greek TELEIOS (τελειος pronounced tel'-i-os),

- God does not put perfect people together in a local Church. He puts

**Additional Notes**