

1 JOHN 4:7-21 (NASB)

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹ By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

¹³ By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. ¹⁴ We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *to be* the Savior of the world.

¹⁵ Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. ¹⁶ We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. ¹⁷ 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.

REVIEW

We arrive at the crux of John's message: Jesus reveals God to us. By his incarnational ministry, we observe and learn how we must join Jesus in revealing God to the whole world. What a beautiful and overwhelming responsibility!! But how are we expected to show this world God? John makes it simple: show them how much you love.

STUDY IT

- How is someone "born of God"? (v.7)
- How can we know what love is? (v.7-8)
- How can those who observe our faith know and recognize love? (v.9-10)
- Does it matter that God's love precedes and supersedes our love of Him? Why/why not? (v.10)
- What is the command reiterated by John in verses 7, 11, and 19? How does Jesus himself issue the same command? (John 13:34-25; 15:9-17) [Go deeper: How does Jesus model love? How does he expect his followers to demonstrate love?]
- What is John's testimony? (v.12-14)
- "God is love" (in vs 8 and 16) is a declaration of God's divine attribute. What does this phrase mean? (What does it *not* mean?)
- What is the goal of God's revealed love? (v.17)
- How does love counteract the effects of fear? (v.18)
- Why does it matter who loved whom *first*? (v.19-20)

APPLY IT

- Though we cannot see God (v.12), we can recognize Him. How do you think people see God *in you*? (If you struggle with this question, how would you *hope to reveal God* to others?)
- When are times you see God in others? How does recognizing His presence in their lives strengthen and challenge your faith?
- How do you experience God's personally revealed attribute of love? How might your experience be translated into the way you love others?