**What is *This* Love?**

**3**See what an incredible quality of love the Father has shown to us, that we would [be permitted to] be named *and* called *and* counted the children of God! And so we are! ***For this*** reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. **2**Beloved, we are [even here and] now children of God, and it is not yet made clear what we will be [after His coming]. We know that when He comes *and* is revealed, we will [as His children] be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is [in all His glory]. **3**And everyone who has ***this hope*** [confidently placed] in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure (holy, undefiled, guiltless).

**4**Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness [ignoring God’s law by action or neglect or by tolerating wrongdoing—being unrestrained by His commands and His will]. **5**You know that He appeared [in visible form as a man] in order to take away sins; and in Him there is [absolutely] no sin [for He has neither the sin nature nor has He committed sin or acts worthy of blame]. **6**No one who abides in Him [who remains united in fellowship with Him—deliberately, knowingly, and habitually] practices sin. No one who *habitually* sins has seen Him or known Him. **7**Little children (believers, dear ones), do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who practices righteousness [the one who strives to live a consistently honorable life—in private as well as in public—and to conform to God’s precepts] is righteous, just as He is righteous. **8**The one who practices sin [separating himself from God, and offending Him by acts of disobedience, indifference, or rebellion] is of the devil [and takes his inner character and moral values from him, not God]; for the devil has sinned *and* violated God’s law from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. **9**No one who is born of God [deliberately, knowingly, and habitually] practices sin, because God’s seed [His principle of life, the essence of His righteous character] remains [permanently] in him [who is born again—who is reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed, and set apart for His purpose]; and he [who is born again] cannot *habitually* [live a life characterized by] sin, because he is born of God *and* longs to please Him. **10*By this*** the children of God and the children of the devil are clearly identified: anyone who does not practice righteousness [who does not seek God’s will in thought, action, and purpose] is not of God, nor is the one who does not [unselfishly] love his [believing] brother.

**11*For this*** is the message which you [believers] have heard from the beginning [of your relationship with Christ], that we should [unselfishly] love *and* seek the best for one another; **12**and not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother [Abel]. And why did he murder him? Because Cain’s deeds were evil, and his brother’s were righteous.

**13**Do not be surprised, believers, if the world hates you. **14**We know that we have passed out of death into Life, because we love the brothers and sisters. He who does not love remains in [spiritual] death. **15**Everyone who hates (works against) his brother [in Christ] is [at heart] a murderer [by God’s standards]; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. ***16By this*** we know [and have come to understand the depth and essence of His precious] love: that He [willingly] laid down His life for us [because He loved us]. And we ought to lay down our lives for the believers. **17**But whoever has the world’s goods (adequate resources), and sees his brother in need, but has no compassion for him, how does the love of God live in him? **18**Little children (believers, dear ones), let us not love [merely in theory] with word or with tongue [giving lip service to compassion], but in action and in truth [in practice and in sincerity, because practical acts of love are more than words]. **19*By this*** we will know [without any doubt] that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart *and* quiet our *conscience* before Him **20**whenever our heart convicts us [in guilt]; for God is greater than our heart and He knows all things [nothing is hidden from Him because we are in His hands]. **21**Beloved, if our heart does not convict us [of guilt], we have confidence [complete assurance and boldness] before God; **22**and we receive from Him whatever we ask because we [carefully and consistently] keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight [habitually seeking to follow His plan for us].

**23This is His commandment**, that we believe [with personal faith and confident trust] in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and [that we unselfishly] love *and* seek the best for one another, **just as He commanded us.** **24**The one who *habitually* keeps His commandments [obeying His word and following His precepts, abides and] remains in Him, and He in him. ***By this*** we know *and* have the proof that He [really] abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us [as a gift].

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Our life and love as children of God evidenced in our sonship

Contrasted with living as children of the devil

The Moral Test of living a righteous life

The love of the Son of God as it occupies and operates in our life

“The most important thing we have to do in this world is prepare ourselves for all eternity.”

- Martin Lloyd Jones

“Right now counts forever – it counts now and for the life to come.”

- RC Sproul

“Oh, God, stamp eternity on my eyeballs.”

- Jonathan Edwards

**Verse 1 –** “See” – spiritual sight – nothing physical about his request.

*“how great a love”* - 1 John 4:7 love is from God.

PERCEIVE WITH BEWILDERMENT and ASTONISHMENT the indescribable quality and essence of this foreign ‘out of this world’ holy and ‘far and above anything we could ever know on this earth’ love the Father has lavished on us!

It didn’t stop at the Cross….Every moment of every day, God is pouring out His love upon us. We are literally swimming in an ocean of the love of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

* He provides for us
* He protects us
* He causes all things to work together for our good
* He marked out our path
* He goes before us
* He continues to minister to us every day
* He encourages us when we are discouraged
* He directs us when we are confused
* He gives us His wisdom we are disoriented
* He cleanses us from all our sins
* He delights to forgive us
* He micro-manages our life in providential detail
* He honors us
* He answers us
* He enjoys us
* He purifies and perfects us
* He disciplines us in love
* He is with us in times of trouble
* He rescues us
* He prays for us
* He strengthens, sustains and enables us
* He steadies our emotions, enables our minds and empowers our bodies

Trying to comprehend *this* love of God is like trying to drink the ocean.

- Steven Lawson

*See how GREAT a love the Father has bestowed on us.*

*- Apostle John*

So this is where *this* starts ...*’see how great a love*…’.

**Verse 1** - “*and such we are*” - John is saying NOW this is who we are; not ‘if we can make it to heaven,” “if we will just persevere and remain faithful while we are here, *then* we will be bestowed the honor of being children of God.” NO! It’s the moment we become children of God we ARE children of God.

**Verse 1** – “*for this reason*” … (being in the world but not of the world), “*the world does not know us.”*

They could not figure out Jesus….they saw him with eyes of unbelief. Either as a mad man, demon possessed man, a mere carpenter’s son…they didn’t have a category to place Jesus Christ.

**Verses 2-3 -** ‘*Beloved’* is a term of endearment - *First you will see Him, then you will be made like Him.*

The word “see” comes from the English word optomolegist – we will see him with our eyeballs. “just as He is.” King of Kings and Lord of Lords….in regal majesty and stately splendor. You see him as he is in the book of Revelation. When John saw Him he fell at his feet like a dead man because he didn’t have a glorified body to handle it.

*“We will be like Him”* – we need to have an existence, a body that is adapted to our new environment in heaven – just like those in hell will have new bodies adapted for the flames of fire so that they are never consumed. We will have a new body that will be able to function in the presence of Christ.

Glorified eyes to see Him

Glorified ears to hear Him

Glorified heart to love Him

Glorified instruments (hands, feet, mouth) to worship Him– we couldn’t be in His presence in this little tent of a body.

We will be made like Him in physical body and made like Him on the inside. We will finally live as God intended us to live.

Your best life is not now, your best life is yet to come.

**Verse 3** – “*everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself”* - Should *this* make any difference on and in our life. *This* should have a radical effect on our daily walk!!

* “everyone” - ONLY true believers!
* “hope” – confident assurance and a certain conviction of Christ’s appearing
* “fixed on Him” – fastened on Christ and on things above
* “purifies himself” – we have an active role in purifying ourselves. The Holy Spirit is leading the way, and we bear personal responsibility and we are accountable to God to purify ourselves. *Purifies* is in the present tense meaning we are ALWAYS to be purifying ourselves.
* “Even as He is pure” – that is a high standard we will never reach in this world, but is the standard we are to be striving for and NEVER make an excuse for sin:

*That’s my temperament*

*That’s the way I was brought up*

*That’s all the people around me*

*Nobody’s perfect. We all make mistakes.*

*God understands.*

Purify our hearts – Proverbs 4:23

Purify our minds – 1 Peter 1:3

Purify our eyes – Job 31:1

Purify our ears – Prov 2:21

Purify our feet – Prov. 4:26

Purify our hands – Matthew 5:21

Romans 12:1 – Your whole body is presented to God as a holy sacrifice – purify yourself

Take your life of purity seriously.

Stamp eternity on my eyeballs.

- Jonathan Edwards

Wherever you are, be all there.”

- Jim Elliott

**1 John 3:4-6**

**The key word –** is the word ‘sin’

2x verse 4

2x in verse 5

2x in verse 6

2x in verse 8

2x verse 9

Serious Christians take sin seriously.

**Verse 4** – “*practices*” - only an unbeliever can practice sin. *Practices sin* means a habitual life style of living *in* sin. Practicing sin is practicing lawlessness. Sin is lawlessness (Matthew 7:21-23)

It is God’s standard that says:

You shall not practicing the sin of stealing, and you shall not practice the sin of slander.

You shall not practice the sin of fornication, and you shall not practice the sin of fibbing.

You shall not practice the sin of adultery, and you shall not practice the sin of arguing.

Sin is any lack of conformity to the holy character of God;

practicing sin is living in rejection to such conformity.

**Verse 5** - “*you know*” means ‘this is Christianity 101’ – this is elementary theology –

*‘appeared’* – refers to his first coming –

**Verse 6a** – *‘sins’* – present tense and it refers to an on-going practice to sin

**Verse 6b -** “seen[understood] /known Him” - if you are practicing sin that means you have no clue who Jesus Christ is and you do not know Christ.

**Verse 7** – “deceives you” - 1 John was written for several different reasons but one to correct this false teaching because it was growing: ‘you can be a believer, but live like an unbeliever.’ It claimed you could be free from the penalty of sin, while not free from the practice of sin.

*‘The one’* – refers to every true believer.

*‘practices righteousness’* – we are not saying a Christian does not sin – we all still sin -we just don’t live in it. God will convict us of sin and bring us to the point of repentance and confession.

If you are a true Christian – a true believer and have been born again, you have a new heart, a new mind, new desires, new affections and you are practicing righteousness with a radical break from your past. Could you ever lapse back in to that sin again? Yes. Could you go back and live in it? Never!

**Verse 8** – *“the devil”* - Behind all this false teaching and deception is the devil…

*‘of the devil’* – means you belong to the devil, you are one of his children, you have never been born again, your life is held captive by the devil. And this is true of every unbeliever. You are born as a child of the devil that’s why you must be born again.

*‘practices sin’* – this is opposite of ‘practices righteousness’ - We are reminded here that there are only 2 families in the world – one human race with two families – family of the devil and the family of God.

2 Cor. 4:4 – the power of the devil is extraordinary as he has a grasp on the mind of every unbeliever. Eph. 2:2 – ‘course of this world’ is the evil world system - There is an evil spirit in every unbeliever that is working in them to make them sons and daughters of disobedience. The devil is real. And he is controlling the hearts and minds and wills of unbelievers to keep them practicing sin.

**But the Good News is …**

**Verse 8** – “The Son of God appeared” – referring to His first coming – made visible – He came publicly and went to Jerusalem and showed Himself for this purpose – here is one of those purposes:

TO DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL.

The power of the Cross and the power of Christ has utterly disarmed the devil. That is why it’s totally impossible for a true follower of Christ to follow the evil world system and the devil.

He destroyed the works of the devil, not the devil himself.

**Verse 9** – “*No one born of God practices sin”* - A Christian is not going to live in habitual sin – you can live in carnality for a season and scripture does not define how long that season is…Paul said to the church in Corinth that you are carnal and he referred to them as those who are saved, washed, sanctified, redeemed and justified so a believer can live in a period of carnality in his life, but not long.

**You can have a head full of bible knowledge and not be born again.**

**You can be an active member of a local church and not be born again.**

**You can be a part of a bible study like this and not be born again.**

**You can grow up in a Christian home and not be born again.**

**You can be in ministry and not be born again.**

**You can be doctrinally sound and not be born again.**

**You’re best friends and family can be born again and you not be born again.**

Nothing can be more important than to be born again and to KNOW that you are born again. And nothing can be more grievous than to think you are born again, and discover you are not born again.

*‘born of God’* **-** John is referring to a spiritual birth; to be born again. God lives inside of you and He gives eternal life, spiritual life, supernatural life, divine life to be inside of you and you now COME ALIVE! God gives you a new heart – a new mind – a new bent – a new disposition – a new understanding of truth, new tastes, new likings, new disliking’s, new joys, new sorrows, new hatreds, new loves, …it is a radical dramatic change and it starts immediately at the point of your entrance into the kingdom of God.

*‘because His seed abides in him and he cannot sin*’ – His seed abides in him – the seed that abides in us … the Greek word for seed is ‘*sperma’* – English language is sperm. God uses that to create life, new life, within the woman. John is using language here that plays off the reproduction process of being born physically with the parallel of being born of God – born spiritually – there has to be *sperma* put inside the ‘ovaries’ of your heart for there to be a Sovereign impregnation of God – a divine intervention by God.

Options of what His seed [*sperma*]is:

*Seed* – the Word of God

*Seed* – the divine nature and the divine life that God places inside of the one who is born again.

* It is possible to have the Word of God in you and not be born again – it is possible to have it in your head, to affect your conscience and not be born again. Judas had it in his head and hung himself.
* I think the reference here is to ‘this new nature, this new person, this new life’ that is placed inside of you. It is the very nature of God Himself. This seed refers to the divine life God places in us in the new birth and once He does that, according to Ezk 36:25, He then writes His Word upon the new heart and causes us to walk in newness of life.

**Verse 9** – *‘because His seed abides in you’* – God’s Divine Nature abides in you. Repentance means you have done a 180! You have totally turned around! He grants repentance and the new Divine Nature in you embraces Christ as your Lord and Savior.

1. **As partakers of the Divine Nature,** believers do not have to follow the sin nature any more. At salvation, our old nature is defeated, and we receive a new, divine nature that desires the things of God (2 Corinthians 5:17). We love what He loves and hate what He hates (Galatians 5:22; 1 John 4:4).  
  
2. **As partakers of the Divine Nature,** believers are no longer enslaved to the passions and sins of the flesh (Romans 6:6, 14). We have power from on high to conquer every temptation that comes against us (1 Corinthians 10:13).  
  
3. **As partakers of the Divine Nature,** believers are made part of the family of God (John 1:12), and this results in a changed life. First John 3:9 says, “No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God.” By giving us His nature, God makes us His sons and daughters and conforms us to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 6:18).  
  
4. **As partakers of the Divine Nature**, believers have the Holy Spirit indwelling them. God declares that we are “more than conquerors” because of the power of the Holy Spirit within our hearts (Romans 8:37). Our Comforter/Advocate/Counsellor is with us wherever we go (John 14:16).

**Verse 9** – *“cannot sin*” is three words in the Greek language (our English made it two words) – it’s the verb ‘can’ with this adverb ‘not’ with the noun ‘sin’ –

* Greek word ‘Can’ – *donami* – *dynamite* is the English word - can means to have the power to do something – to be able to do something but the NOT cancels it out – can is in the present tense, therefore it is saying he CAN *not* pursue sin as a lifestyle…what it is NOT saying is that a Christian is sinless perfect. That is not what this is saying. It is saying he will not be on an old path ..he CAN *not* ‘do it anymore’ – he CAN *not* practice sin – he HAS THE POWER TO *not* live with on-going sin

BECAUSE … he is born of God!

This is the biggest thing that will ever happen in your life! Nothing comes close to the change in your life than the new birth. It’s bigger than being married…having children…having a promotion …bigger than your family…bigger than your job…it’s the biggest thing to ever happen in your life is this deep radical change of new birth that has now set you entirely on a new course and in a new direction.

**Verse 10** - ‘*by this’* refers to new birth –

**Verse 10 -** *‘obvious’* is a Greek word that means ‘open to sight’ – to be plainly visible – ESV translates it evident. KJV translates it manifest. These two groups are clearly distinguished.

**Verse 10 -** *‘Anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God’* – ‘not of God’ means ‘*not born of God*.’

**Verse 10 -** ‘*Nor the one who does not love his brother.’* If I do not sincerely and demonstratively love that man or that woman who is a born again believer, then I am actually making a statement on myself that I belong to a different family. But if I love that man or that woman, it gives evidence we have the same Father, the same kindred spirit and a commonality and a unity…therefore, this is the NUMBER 1 acid test that is singled out…love for the brethren!

1 John 4:20 - Every time you say you love God you are lying through your teeth if you do not love your brother and sister. You have a dead testimony. You are not a born again believer, but a a liar!

**Verse 11 –** “*we should love one another” -* love is the proof that we’re in the fellowship. Second, love is the evidence of our sonship. Chapter 4, love is the manifestation of the presence of God in us.

Chapter 2 - First time, he’s saying it means you belong to the community of believers.

Chapter 3 - Second time, it means you belong to the family of God Himself.

Chapter 4 - Third time, it means God dwells in you.

1 John 3:11 – *‘we should love one another’* – “love” is a Greek word that refers to unconditional love. Sacrificial love that rises to the highest level. A love that requires our all – stretches our love to maximum capacities.

It’s a comprehensive love affecting our minds, affections, and our will – seeing our brothers and sisters in Christ as family.

* It is to affect our thinking - intentional choices to give ourselves to our brothers and sisters
* Having new affections for them – an emotional component of feelings, sympathy, support, care.
* We willingly go out of our way to encourage and care and forgive and support.

**1 Cor. 13:4-7**

**The weight of these words are to have a lasting affect on our mind, heart, soul and will.**

* Love is patient –
* Love is kind
* Love is not jealous
* Love does not brag
* Love is not arrogant
* Love does not act unbecomingly
* Love does not seek its own
* Love is not provoked
* Love does not take into account a wrong suffering
* Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness
* Love rejoices with the truth
* Love bears all things
* Love believes all things
* Love hopes all things
* Love endures all things
* Love keeps loving

Love is to be a continual flow, even when we are mistreated and others are not loving to us, we are to love.

Genuine love. We can only live this out by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Verse 12** – “*Cain*” – Son of Adam and Eve – the brother of Abel – John just puts it out there when he says, “he was of the evil one…’ that is satan. Satan had control of his life and incited him to kill his brother. The evil one has control of every unbeliever – the evil one produces evil deeds. The devil is the evil one and behind all hatred, and hatred is what leads to putting someone to death. And every intermediate degree of hatred is of the devil. There are degrees in hatred.

slanderous and unkind words

false accusations

speaking with the intent to bring someone down; wanting others to think less of them

assuming wrongfully of someone

belittling and condescending speech

relational rejection based on gossip, jealousy, envy,

participation in gossip

speaking in such a way that injures the reputation of another

unjustifiable and hurtful actions toward another

thinking wrongly about someone before consulting God for His perspective

looking down or snubbing someone

closing the heart toward someone’s needs

behaving with meanness

selfishness or superiority toward someone

**Verse 12 –** ‘*slay’* it carries the idea of an assignation – those who suffer unjustly and attacked physically, verbally, and emotionally by unbelievers – it is an aggressive attack on the life of another person to bring down or end their life, their influence, their reputation.

* Because his deeds were evil and his brother’s were righteous
  + His evil deeds were his false worship – his self-styled worship – and then the jealousy and the envy that arose in his heart because his brother’s sacrifice was acceptable and Cain’s was rejected – rather than repenting, confessing his sin to God, he was provoked and there was hatred toward his own brother and it escalated to the point that he killed him – provoked by jealousy and envy. For us as believers, we have to set a guard over our heart. It is easy to be jealous and envy toward other people – we must be content no matter what in our circumstances. He failed to love his own brother.

Do not be surprised, believers, if the world hates you.

It is going to be the purifying of the church when this hatred is unleashed.

**14**We know that we have passed out of death into Life, because we love the brothers and sisters. He who does not love remains in [spiritual] death. **15**Everyone who hates (works against) his brother [in Christ] is [at heart] a murderer [by God’s standards]; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. **16*By this*** we know [and have come to understand the depth and essence of His precious] love: that He [willingly] laid down His life for us [because He loved us]. And we ought to lay down our lives for the believers.

**17**But whoever has the world’s goods (adequate resources), and sees his brother in need, but has no compassion for him, how does the love of God live in him? **18**Little children (believers, dear ones), let us not love [merely in theory] with word or with tongue [giving lip service to compassion], but in action and in truth [in practice and in sincerity, because practical acts of love are more than words]. **19*By this*** we will know [without any doubt] that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart *and* quiet our *conscience* before Him **20**whenever our heart convicts us [in guilt]; for God is greater than our heart and He knows all things [nothing is hidden from Him because we are in His hands]. **21**Beloved, if our heart does not convict us [of guilt], we have confidence [complete assurance and boldness] before God; **22**and we receive from Him whatever we ask because we [carefully and consistently] **keep** His commandments and **do** the things that are pleasing in His sight [habitually seeking to follow His plan for us].

**23This is His commandment**, that we believe [with personal faith and confident trust] in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and [that we unselfishly] love *and* seek the best for one another, **just as He commanded us.** **24**The one who *habitually* **keeps** His commandments [obeying His word and following His precepts, abides and] remains in Him, and He in him. ***By this*** we know *and* have the proof that He [really] abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us [as a gift].