

“IF WE LOVE ONE ANOTHER ...”

1 John 4:12-21

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I. GOD ABIDES IN US. 1 John 4:13-16

We can be assured that God abides in us and we in Him if we see His Spirit producing in us confession of the truth about Jesus Christ and love for one another.

- A. We know that we abide in God and He in us because He has given us of His Spirit. 13
- *We abide in the Spirit's presence.*
- B. We know that God abides in us and we in Him when we confess the truth about Jesus Christ.14-15
- *We confess the Son as Savior.*
- C. When we know and believe God's love for us and we abide in love, we abide in God and He in us.16
- *We know the Father's love.*

II. GOD'S LOVE IS PERFECTED IN US. 1 John 4:17-21

Love that comes from God gives us confidence in the day of judgment and must be expressed in love for others in obedience to God's commandment.

- A. Practicing the love of Christ gives us confidence in the day of judgment. 17-18
- *We can be confident for the future. 17*
 - *We can be confident with no fear. 18*
- B. Love that gives us confidence in the day of judgment comes from God and must be expressed in love for others in obedience to God's commandment. 19-21
- *To love God and hate your brother is to live a lie. 19-20*
 - *To love God and love your brother is to obey God's command. 21*

SOME COMMENTARY ON 1 JOHN 4:13-21

4:13-16. One way we know that we abide in a relationship with God is by His Spirit, whom He has given us. The Spirit fosters affection in us toward the brethren (13). The Spirit stimulates our accepting by faith the apostles' testimony of the incarnation (15). John and the other apostles have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world (14). Given John's historical context in his battle against the Gnostic heretics, if someone denied that Jesus of Nazareth was God's Son, he was not saved. Conversely, anyone who confesses that the historical, earthly Jesus is the heavenly Son of God shows that God abides in relationship with him, and he is in a relationship with God (15). By accepting the doctrine of the incarnation, John and other like-minded people have come to know and have believed the love which God has for them. Three evidences of being saved are mentioned here: (1) knowledge of the truth, (2) believing it, and (3) remaining in or displaying love to others (16).

4:17-18. A Christian's love should be perfected, i.e. gradually grow and show itself more and more toward others. A fully developing love gives reassurance to a believer that he or she is right with God, and will enable him to have confidence on the day of judgment. The believer does not dreadfully anticipate it. Nor will that day hold any terrors for him regarding his eternal destiny (though shame is an expectation for those believers who do not strive to abide in Christ). This confidence arises because of the believer being a loving person in this world as Jesus is Himself loving (17). Such growing affection displayed toward other believers harbors no fear of divine judgment. In fact, a maturing love casts out and refuses to tolerate fear. The disciple who fears coming judgment has not matured in his love (18).

4:19-21. This section affirms that we love Him and other believers. The cause of our affection is because He first loved us. Our love is a response to His (19). The professing believer who claims to love God but hates his brother ... is a liar. If one cannot do the easier (love his brother whom he has seen), he cannot do the harder (love God whom he has not seen) (20). Another reason that Christians should love is the commandment ... from Him to do so. The disciple is to show affection for both God and his brother (21).

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