

1 John 4-Part 3

C. The nature of a love relationship with God.

1. (12) Seeing God through the evidence of love.

No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.

a. **No one has seen God at any time:** John relates a basic principle about God the Father – that no one, no one, has seen God at any time. Anyone claiming to have seen God the Father is speaking – at best – from their own

_____, because as John plainly states, **no one has seen God at any time.**

i. In speaking of God the Father, Paul wrote in [1 Timothy 1:17](#): *Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible.* Jesus declared of God the Father, *God is Spirit,* ([John 4:24](#)) meaning that God the Father has no _____ body which may be seen.

ii. Knowing God the Father is invisible should make us more humble in our relationship with Him. God the Father is not completely knowable by us; we can't completely figure out God, or know all His secrets. He is _____ us.

iii. Of course, no one has seen God the Holy Spirit at any time either, though He has represented Himself in various ways. And just as certainly, God the Son, Jesus Christ, *has been seen* – John himself testified to this in [1 John 1:1-3](#). But of God the Father, it can truly be said, **no one has seen God** _____.

b. **If we love one another, God abides in us:** This is the greatest evidence of God's presence and work among us – **love**. Since no one **has seen God at any time**, this provides _____ for the presence of God.

i. Some people think the greatest evidence of God's presence or work is *power*. Some people think the greatest evidence of God's presence or work is *popularity*. Some people think the greatest evidence of God's presence or work is *passionate feelings*. But the greatest evidence of God's presence and work is _____.

ii. Sometimes Jesus seemed weak and lacking in power, but He was always full of love. Sometimes Jesus wasn't popular at all, but He was always full of love. Sometimes Jesus didn't inspire passionate feelings in people at all, but He was always full of love. Love was the constant, greatest evidence of the presence and work of God in Jesus Christ.

c. **His love has been perfected in us:** **Perfected** uses the Greek word *teleioo*, which doesn't mean "perfect" as much as "_____" and "_____." If we **love one another**, then the love of God is "mature" and "complete" in us.

- i. John comes back to the familiar idea: if we really walk in God’s love towards us, it will be evident in our love for one another.
- ii. The mature Christian will be marked by love. Again, the true measure of maturity is not the image of power, or popularity, or passionate feelings – but the abiding presence of God’s love in our lives, _____ to others.

2. (13-15) Assurance of the work of the Triune God in us.

By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

a. **We know that we abide in Him:** By beginning with the words by this, John connected the thought of this verse directly to the previous verse. We can *know by experience* that we live in God, if *His love has been perfected in us*. And we know that *His love has been perfected in us* if we *love one another*.

i. Plainly, Christians can say, “_____.” We don’t have to merely “hope” we are saved, and “hope” we will make it to heaven, thus having no assurance of salvation before we pass from this world to the next. We can **know**, and we can **know** now, on *this* side of eternity.

b. **We abide in Him, and He in us:** Our abiding in Jesus is not a _____ affair, with us struggling to abide in Him, and Jesus trying to escape us. Just as true as it is that we should **abide in Him**, it is true that He does **abide in us**.

i. Jesus said in [John 15:4](#), *Abide in Me, and I in you*. And in [John 15:7](#), He said, *If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you*. One of the ways Jesus abides in us – lives in us – is through His word.

c. **He has given us of His Spirit:** John brings up the work of the Holy Spirit in us at this point for two important connections. First, it is the Spirit of God in us that is the abiding presence of Jesus – the presence of His Spirit is *how* He abides in us. Secondly, it is the _____ of the Holy Spirit within us that makes it possible for us to **know that we abide in Him**. As Paul puts it in [Romans 8:16](#): *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God*. The Holy Spirit gives us this assurance.

d. **We have seen and testify:** The “**we**” who give testimony in this verse are those who saw Jesus originally, the _____ to His presence. They *knew* the Father sent the Son as Savior of the world.

e. **We have seen and testify:** Speaking as one who has the Spirit of God (**He has given us of His Spirit**), John declares three essential truths about who God is and how He saves us.

- **That the Father has _____ the Son.**

- That He (Jesus) was sent **as _____ of the world.**

· Knowing and understanding Jesus is the foundation for abiding in Him (**Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God _____ in him, and he in God**).

f. **Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God:** It isn't enough to *know* the facts about who Jesus is; we must _____ the truth. The idea behind the word *confess* is "to be in agreement with." We must agree with God about who Jesus is, and we find out what God says about Jesus through the Word of God. You may *know* something without being in *agreement* with it; God demands our true *agreement*.

i. Though John has been writing much about love, he does not ignore the issue of *truth*. John does not think it is "enough" if a person has some kind of love in his life if he does not **confess that Jesus is the Son of God**. It isn't a matter of deciding between love or truth; we must have _____.

3. (16) The Christian's response to God and His love.

And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

a. **And we have known and believed the love God has for us:** This is the Christian's proper response to who God is, and how He loves us. We are called to take the love and grace God gives, to know it by experience and to believe it. This is what _____ with God is all about.

i. People respond to the love of God differently.

- Some respond with a sense of self-superiority ("I'm so great, even God loves me!").
- Some respond with doubt ("Can God really love even me?").
- Some respond with wickedness ("God loves me, so I can do what I want").

ii. The Christian must *know* and *believe* **the love God has for us**. We should consider what would it take to make us *stop* believing God loves us. Paul knew that *nothing* could separate him from the love of God that was in Jesus Christ ([Romans 8:35-39](#)), and each Christian should have the same confidence.

b. **He who abides in love abides in God, and God in him:** The Christian who has this kind of relationship with God will be virtually "immersed" in God's love; it becomes his environment, his place of abiding.

4. (17-18) The perfecting of love, both now and in eternity.

Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

a. **Love has been perfected:** For **perfected**, John doesn't just use the Greek word *teleioo* (which has the idea of "maturity" and "completeness"); he writes *teleioo teleioo* – speaking of love that is "perfectly perfected" or "_____."

b. **In the day of judgment:** This is *when* the completeness of love's work in us will be demonstrated. As much as we can know the completeness of God's love now, we will know it all the more **in the day of judgment**.

c. **That we may have boldness in the day of judgment:** This shows the greatness of God's work in us. We might be satisfied to merely *survive* the **day of judgment**, but God wants to so fill our lives with His love and His truth that we have **boldness in the day of judgment**.

ii. Some think they will go there and judge *God* ("When I see God, there's a few questions I have for Him!"), but that is _____. The only way to have boldness in the day of judgment is to receive, and walk in, the transforming love of God *today*.

d. **Boldness in the day of judgment:** How can anyone have such **boldness**? We can imagine Jesus being bold before the throne of God, but us? Yet, if *we abide in Him, and He in us* ([1 John 4:13](#)), then our identity is bound up in Jesus: as He is, so are we in the world.

i. How **is** Jesus now? He is glorified, _____, forever righteous and bold, sitting at the right hand of God the Father. Spiritually, we can have that same standing *now*, while we are in the world, because as He is, so are we in the world.

ii. Certainly, this glory is in us now just in "_____" form; it has not yet fully developed into what it will be. But it is there, and its presence is demonstrated by our love for one another and our agreement with God's truth – and that all serves to give us **boldness**.

e. **There is no fear in love:** The completeness of love means we do not cower in fear before God, dreading His judgment, either now or in the day of judgment. We know all the judgment we ever deserved – past, present, and future – was poured out on Jesus Christ _____.

i. What about the many passages of Scripture, Old and New Testament (such as [Ecclesiastes 12:13](#) and [1 Peter 2:17](#)), which tell us we should *fear God*?

The **fear** John writes of here is not the appropriate reverence we should all have of God, but the kind of fear which involves _____ – that agonizing kind of fear which robs our soul of all joy and confidence before God. It is the fear that is the opposite of boldness in the day of judgment.

f. **But he who fears has not been made perfect in love:** If our relationship with God is marked by this tormenting fear, it shows that we have not been _____ – that is, complete, and mature – in His love.