

1 John 4:7-21

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, 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 has been 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 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *as* Savior of the world. ¹⁵ Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ We love Him because He first loved us. ²⁰ If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? ²¹ And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also. *NKJV*

Have you ever watched one of those television commercials where a car is put to the test by speeding on a slick road and then stops on a dime? In the book of 1 John, John is able to “stop on a dime” and switch gears all-together as he brings up a new topic or chooses to rehash a topic formerly addressed. Whichever the case, John doesn’t waste words on transitions, and declares that his entire book is a declaration of the work of Christ. I marvel at the ability of John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to so skillfully outline core doctrine to the Christian faith in such simple and direct terms.

As if the incarnation of Christ, the discerning of an unbeliever with a believer, the summarization of God’s greatest commandments, the deception of the anti-Christ, and the outlining of the process of a child of God to become renewed in his fellowship with God weren’t hard enough truths to condense into a relatively short letter, John chooses to explain the doctrine of the Trinity next!

John’s explanation of the Trinity is *not* sculpted into cathedral-type marble meant to be untouched or marveled at as a museum piece. John’s practical talk of the Trinity is given every-day “boots and overalls.”

(If you will allow me to say without any irreverence.) The point is that John doesn’t seek to put the doctrine of the Trinity into lofty terms, but clearly shows how a relational being like God seeks to draw us into a relationship with Him—which is the supreme purpose of man! **The way that God relates to Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is meant to be reflected back to Himself by mankind.** The purest form of love that man can have is the kind of love that only God has. Therefore, the believer’s highest aim is to reflect the love of God back to Him and also to others.

This is the third time that John discusses love in this letter:

1. **2:7-11** Love is a proof of true fellowship
2. **3:10-17** Love is evidence of a believer’s sonship
3. **4:7-21** Perfect Trinitarian love (as it relates to the character of God, the coming of Christ, the Christian’s claim to faith)

and the Christian's
confidence in judgment.)

LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

The Trinity of God explains that God is a relational being.

- God has always enjoyed the fullness of interpersonal relationships (Father, Son & Holy Spirit)
- God has never been lonely but has always been satisfied completely with perfect Trinitarian bliss.

Since the Trinity is a flawless relational model, God designed man to be able to relate with Him and with one another. Love for the brethren is evidence of our being "born of God."—since God's seed would ultimately reflect Him, just like a child does its parents. Love for the brethren is not an inherent virtue or a learned behavior—but it is only "from God."

- Whoever does not love, does not "know" God at all
- B/c God in His very nature is love

Note: John has already said: "God is light." 1:5 and God is righteous 2:29; now he adds that "God is love." 4:8, 16.

1. Where does love originate from? (v. 7)
2. How did God demonstrate His love for us? (v. 9)
3. To what extent are we to love the people of God? (v. 11)
4. Identify which persons of the Holy Trinity are mentioned in which verses: (ie v. 9 = Father, Son)
5. The basis for Christians' love for one another is in the relational love of the Father, Son and Spirit of themselves. True or False
6. Is there anything lacking in God's love for us? (v. 17) Why is that important to believe?
7. True or False. According to v. 20 a person's profession of faith is on level terms of validity with his love or hatred for his brother. (see also v. 21)
8. Have you received the love of God by placing your faith in His demonstration of love by the giving of His Son as a substitute offering for your sin? (v. 10)