

GOD'S LOVE IN ACTION

Living in Love, Living in God

1 John 4:13–21

“God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.” 1 John 4:16b

Day 1: Read 1 John 4:13–21.

1. In verses 13–16 John gives three marks of a person who lives in God and in whom God lives. List them below:
 - vs. 13:

 - vs. 15:

 - vs. 16:

2. Verses 13 and 14 mention all three members of the Trinity. In what roles do we see the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in these verses?

3. The topic of the previous paragraph (vss. 7–12) is love, and in verse 16 John explicitly returns to the subject of love. How does his mention of the Spirit (vs. 13) fit into his discussion of love? (Rom. 5:5; Gal. 5:22)

4. What is the connection between the Spirit and the kind of testimony and acknowledgment mentioned in verses 14 and 15? (1 Cor. 12:3; cf. vs. 2)

5. How important is it not only to believe in Christ but to confess him publicly? (vss. 14–15; Rom. 10:9; Mark 8:38)

Day 2: Read 1 John 4:13–16.

6. Verse 16 tells us about the nature of our triune God: “God is love.” How has this loving nature been demonstrated concretely, “with actions and in truth” (3:18)? (vss. 9–10; Jn. 3:16)

7. How is this statement of God’s nature fundamentally different from the reverse, “Love is God”? Why does it matter?

8. What does it look like to rely on God's love (vs. 16a)? In what ways could you rely more on his love?

Day 3: Read 1 John 4:16–18.

9. John now discusses “confidence on the day of judgment” (vs. 17). The transitional phrase, “In this way . . .” (vs. 17) may point back to the idea of living in love and so living in God (vs. 16), or ahead to the statement that “in this world we are like him” (vs. 17)—or perhaps it points in both directions. In what way are the ideas of living in love and being like Jesus parallel? (3:16–18; cf. Jn. 13:12–17)
10. We know that we are saved “by grace . . . through faith,” and “not by works” (Eph. 2:8–9)—yet John is saying here that our manner of living leads to spiritual assurance. How can this be so? (Consider Jas. 2:14, 17; Jn. 15:1–5, 9–10, 16–17; Phil. 1:6.)
11. Being like Jesus can also mean being like him in his relationship to the Father. What is this relationship, and what characterizes it? (3:1; Jn. 15:10; 17:20–23; Rom. 8:15; Heb.10:19–22)
How does this encourage you?
12. How does a clear apprehension of God's love for us drive out fear (vs. 18)?

Day 4: Read 1 John 4:19–21.

13. According to John, what are the two attitudes a person can have toward others? Is there any middle ground?
14. What blunt term does John use for anyone who claims to love God while not loving his brother? Which of these loves does he seem to be saying is more difficult?
15. What precedes the love we demonstrate toward others, and in fact makes any such love possible? (Look again at 3:16; 4:7a, 9–10; Jn. 15:5; Gal. 5:22)

Day 5: Read 1 John 4:13–21.

16. Think about the people in your life. Whom do you find it especially difficult to love? Toward whom do you have an attitude of indifference, which John calls “hatred”? Confess your sin to God, and ask him to fill your heart with love by his Spirit.