

**Real Love
Perfect Love
1 John 4:17 - 21**

1 John 4:17 This is how love is made perfect in us: that we can be without fear on the day God judges us, because in this world we are like him.

18 Where God's love is, there is no fear, because God's perfect love drives out fear. It is punishment that makes a person fear, so love is not made perfect in the person who fears.

19 We love because God first loved us.

20 If people say, "I love God," but hate their brothers or sisters, they are liars. Those who do not love their brothers and sisters, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have never seen.

21 And God gave us this command: Those who love God must also love their brothers and sisters.

Big Idea – Perfect love is God's love growing daily in my life.

1. It is God's will that I grow spiritually perfect/mature/complete.

"Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:18)

"All scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for...that the child of God may be perfect (spiritually mature or complete) , fully equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16, 17)

2. Perfect love comes from God dwelling/living/abiding in me.

1 John 4:16 "And so we know the love that God has for us, and we trust that love. God is love. Those who live in love live in God, and God lives in them."

The more God dwells in us and we dwell or live in Him the more our love is made perfect.

Look with me at the word "dwell" in the Bible

Colossians 3:16 "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom..."

1 Peter 3:7 “Husbands, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor unto them as the weaker vessel, being heirs together of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.”

Proverbs 1:33 “Whoever listens to me (to wisdom) will dwell safely and will be secure without fear of evil.”

Psalms 4:8 “I will lie down in peace and sleep, for you alone Lord make me dwell in safety.”

3. Perfect love gives me confidence/boldness in the day of judgment

1 John 4:17 “...as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.”

The word boldness can mean "confidence" or "freedom of speech." It does not mean brazenness or brashness. A believer who experiences perfecting love grows in his confidence toward God.

He has a reverential fear of God, not a tormenting fear.
He is a son who respects his Father, not a prisoner who cringes before a judge.

"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27).

Christian doesn't fear future judgment, because Christ has suffered his judgment for him on the cross. "Truly, truly I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life" (John 5:24).

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). For a Christian, judgment is not future; it is past.

His sins have been judged already at the cross, and they will never be brought against him again.

The secret of our boldness is, "As He is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4:17). Positionally, we are right now "as He is." We are so closely identified with Christ, as members of His body, that our position in this world is like His exalted position in heaven.

4. Perfect love drives out/expels all fear.

We have adopted the Greek word for fear into our English vocabulary: phobia.

All sorts of phobias are listed in psychology books; for instance, acrophobia—"fear of heights," and hydrophobia—"fear of water." John is writing about krisisphobia—"fear of judgment."

When people are afraid, it is because of something in the past that haunts them, or something in the present that upsets them, or something in the future that they feel threatens them. Or a combination of all three.

A believer in Jesus Christ does not have to fear the past, present, or future, for he has experienced the love of God and this love is being perfected in him day by day.

We do not have to be afraid of the future, because our sins were judged in Christ when He died on the cross. The Father cannot judge our sins again without judging His Son, for "as He is, so are we in this world."

We do not have to be afraid of the past, because "He first loved us." From the very first, our relationship to God was one of love. It was not that we loved Him, but that He loved us (cf. 1 John 4:10). "For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Romans 5:10). If God loved us when we were outside the family, disobeying Him, how much more does He love us now that we are His children!

We do not need to fear the present because "perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18). As we grow in the love of God, we cease to be fearful of what He will do.

Of course there is a proper "fear of God," but it is not the kind of fear that produces torment. "For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons, by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!'" (Rom. 8:15) "For God hath not given us a spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7).

Fear is actually the beginning of torment. We torment ourselves as we contemplate what lies ahead. But since a Christian has boldness in the day of judgment, he can have boldness as he faces life today, for there is no situation of life today that begins to compare with the terrible severity of the day of judgment.

5. Perfect love is shown to me by God.

We need not fear life or death, for we are being perfected in the love of God.

Romans 8:35 “Can anything ever separate us from Christ’s love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death?

38 And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love.

39 No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Imagine! Nothing in all creation—present or future—can come between us and God's love!

The perfecting of God's love in our lives is usually a matter of several stages. When we were lost, we lived in fear and knew nothing of God's love. After we trusted Christ, we found a perplexing mixture of both fear and love in our hearts. But as we grew in fellowship with the Father, gradually the fear vanished and our hearts were controlled by His love alone.

An immature Christian is tossed between fear and love; a mature Christian rests in God's love.

A growing confidence in the presence of God is one of the first evidences that our love for God is maturing. But confidence never stands alone; it always leads to obedience.

6. This perfect, divine love empowers me to love others also.

1 John 4:10 This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

11 Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other.

1 John 4:19 We love each other because he loved us first.

21 And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their Christian brothers and sisters.

