

Channeling God's Perfected Love

1 John 4:7-12 (ESV) ⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because **God is love**. ⁹ In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, **not that we have 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 ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.**

Most people think perfected means that something was changed from a state of flawed imperfection into a state of flawless perfection. **But the Greek word (*teleioo*) generally means finished, or completed, or accomplished.**

Notice "perfected" in James 2:22: "You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was **completed (perfected)** by his works." How do works perfect faith? Not by making it a flawless faith beyond the need for improvement, but by making it active faith. In other words faith is imperfect until it reaches its goal in good works.

John 4:34: "My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to **accomplish** his work." How did Jesus "perfect" God's work? Not by taking the flawed work of God and making it flawless. He took an assignment of God and turned it into action and so completed it.

1 John 4:16-18 (ESV) ¹⁶ So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and **whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him**. ¹⁷ **By this is love perfected with us**, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but **perfect love casts out fear**. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been **perfected in love**.

Abiding in love results from abiding in God, which is actually God abiding in us.

"perfected" love refers to God's love in us coming to completion as we love each other. *"If we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us."*
So, "perfected love" is the love of God expressing itself in our love to each other.

The flow of thought is very much like:

1 Jn 3:18–19 (ESV) ¹⁸ Little children, **let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth**. ¹⁹ **By this we shall know** that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him;

That is the same as saying, "Let the love of God be perfected in you." The way to have confidence before God on the day of judgment is to love each other with the perfected love of God—that is, love that doesn't just talk but turns into deeds.

Which brings us back to...

1 John 4:17-18 (ESV) **By this is love perfected with us**, so that we may have **confidence for the day of judgment**, because **as he is so also are we** in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. (*is not abiding in God's love*)

The reason there is no fear in love is that there is no threat of punishment for being a loving person. Fear is what you feel when you have done something that ought to be punished. But love is never threatened with punishment. There is no fear in love.

Same sequence of thought in 1 John 2:28-29 (ESV) ²⁸ And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming. ²⁹ If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

Same sequence of thought in 1 John 2:3-6 (ESV) ³ And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. ⁴ Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, ⁵ but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: ⁶ whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

John sums up what he has been saying. If you are abiding in God's love you will manifest it in loving actions toward your brethren.

1 John 4:19-21 (ESV) ¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹ And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

God is love. He wants us to understand his love and show his love to others.

John 13:1-17 (ESV) ¹ Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ² During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, ³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, ⁴ rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. ⁵ Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. ⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" ⁷ Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." ⁸ Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." ⁹ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you." ¹¹ For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean." ¹² When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you?" ¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴ If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

How are you doing with being perfected in God's love?

1 Corinthians 12:31 (ESV) ³¹ But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way. **1 Corinthians 13:1-3 (ESV)** ¹ If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (ESV) ⁴ Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

1 Corinthians 13:13 (ESV) ¹³ So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Every aspect of our relationship with God and with human beings is about love.

- God's entire revelation of his will can be summed up in two commandments.
Matthew 22:36-40 (ESV) ³⁶ "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" ³⁷ And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."
- Love is the ultimate goal of everything the apostle Paul taught.
1 Tim 1:5 (NASB) ⁵ But the goal of our instruction is LOVE from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.
- Love sums up the Christian's responsibilities.
Rom 13:8-10 (NKJV) ⁸ Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who LOVES another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰ Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore LOVE is the fulfillment of the law.
- Love is the distinguishing mark of the Christian.
Jn 13:35 (NKJV) ³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have LOVE for one another."
- Love is the crowning virtue of all others.
Col 3:14 (ESV) ¹⁴ And above all these put on LOVE, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.
- Love is the first trait listed in the fruit of the Holy Spirit.
Gal 5:22-23 (ESV) ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is LOVE, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
- Without love a Christian is nothing.
1 Cor 13:3 (NKJV) ³ And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not LOVE, it profits me nothing.