



Perfect Love Casts Out Fear Now

1. What does “perfect love casts out fear” mean (1 John 4:18)?

It means that when we truly understand and experience the depth of God’s love for us, there is no room left for a slavish fear of punishment or judgment. This perfect love, which is from God, gives us confidence and assurance, replacing our dread of the future with a joyful anticipation of being with Him

2. Why does John emphasize love so much in 1 John?

John emphasizes love because it is the defining mark of a true Christian. It is the “cement” that bonds believers together and the visible proof that we truly know God. Loving one another is not just a suggestion but a direct commandment from God

3. How can I love God if I can’t see Him (1 John 4:20)?

John argues that the way we love the invisible God is by loving the visible people He has placed in our lives. If we cannot love our



brother or sister whom we see every day, it is impossible to claim we love God whom we have not seen. Love for others is the tangible evidence of our love for God

4. What is the “day of judgment” mentioned in 1 John 4:17?

It refers to the final judgment when God will judge the world. For the Christian, this is not a day to be feared but a day of confidence and homecoming. Because we are in Christ, we can have boldness on that day, knowing we are cleansed by His blood.

5. Why is it a sin to hate my brother or sister in Christ?

Hatred is incompatible with the very nature of God, who is love. John states that anyone who hates their brother is a liar if they claim to love God. Such an attitude not only damages the unity of the church but also puts a person’s own salvation at risk.

6. How do I apply 1 John 4 to my daily life?

You can apply it daily by actively choosing to love others, especially fellow believers, in tangible ways. This means showing patience, offering forgiveness, and seeking reconciliation when conflicts arise. It also means confessing your faith in Jesus as the

Son of God and allowing that faith to produce a life of love.

7. If God is love, why is there punishment (1 John 4:18)?

The punishment referred to is for those who reject God's offer of salvation through Jesus Christ. For believers, there is no fear of this punishment because Christ has already borne it on the cross. God's love and justice work together; His love provides a way of escape from the punishment that justice demands.

"15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in him, and he in God. 16 We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him. 17 By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, we also are in this world. 18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. 19 We love, because He first loved us. 20 If someone says, "I love God," and yet he hates his brother or sister, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother and sister whom

he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God must also love his brother and sister.”

“¹⁵ Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in him, and he in God. ¹⁶ We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him.” Note in verse 16 that John describes a beautiful and close relationship between each faithful Christian and his/her spiritual Father. A newborn baby will gaze on a mother with a deep, complete love that is so pure and precious. That is the kind of love that every Christian MUST have with the Father in Heaven.

John’s message in 1 John repeatedly stresses the importance of love. One may wonder “Why the emphasis? Why constantly stressing love?” Of course, John’s concern was his immediate readers, the danger of false teachers, and the growing threat, or reality, of Jewish and then Roman persecution.

Love was, and is, the cement that bonds Christians together regardless of location, culture, age, or race. But Christian love was also the bond that will strengthen Christians in the face of hardship and suffering. Love and faith go hand in hand.



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Verses 17 and 18 are an extension of that love. The day of judgment will happen and many either fear that day or try to deny that it will even happen. But for a Christian, the opposite is true. Every Christian has, or should have, hope – a sense of anticipation for the coming of something wonderful.

How many times has a child waited for the arrival of his/her father returning from work?

When he arrives home, that child is filled with delight and joy, because the wait is over! Do faithful Christians make spiritual mistakes in this life? Of course. But John already answered such concerns in 1 John 1:7, *“7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light,*



we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." The frequent practice of sin has been cast aside. The old person of sin fades into obscurity as the spirit works within a Christian and true love becomes stronger and richer. Or, as John stated, "love is perfected with us." No, the day of judgment is not a day of dread for a Christian. The blood of Jesus cleanses every Christian. Instead, the day of judgment is a day of homecoming! Finally! Finally, the work in this world is over. Life does not end; it continues in a glorious life that cannot be comprehended by mortal man.

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John said that there is no fear in love. The fear described in verse 18 is a fear of punishment. This writer remembers as a child being told by my mother "*Wait until your father gets home!*" With those words, there was concern, and not joy or anticipation, for when my father would arrive home. And as the hour approached, the fear became stronger because I knew I would have to face punishment for my actions. But when I had done nothing wrong, then my attitude was entirely different when my father arrived home.



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But think of the warnings given in the New Testament for those that ignore or reject the message of salvation through Jesus Christ. A free offer made by the Living God because He allowed His Son to be tortured to death on a cross for the sins of mankind. His offer was the forgiveness of sins, accepting that person as His child, and given the hope of being in the presence of the Living God for eternity! There is no greater offer than this. But consider how God will view a person that has rejected all of that! As life comes closer to the inevitable end, that fear and dread must be almost overwhelming.

“¹⁹ We love because He first loved us. ²⁰ If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and yet he hates his brother or sister, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother and sister whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.”

Christian love is in response to the love that God has shown every one of His children, and John again emphasized that each Christian MUST APPLY that same principle to other Christians. Each time that John stated this principle, the emphasis of his words became stronger.

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Yes, there will be misunderstandings, confusion, hurt feelings, and all the other issues that come up as brethren interact with one another. But such issues will be resolved AS LONG AS Christian love is present. But when common conflicts or personalities fester and grow into hatred, then it does not matter who was right or wrong in the beginning. Whoever hates a brother or sister in Christ cannot love God and that person has no relationship with God the Father – period! *“Well, I may have an intense dislike for him/her, but I don’t really “hate” that person.”* Such statements are nothing more than excuses to justify actions that are sin! If a Christian secretly wishes harm or ill-fortune on another Christian, then that is hatred by the scriptures.

John’s logic is very clear in his words. “You can see and interact with your brother or sister, but you do not love that person as a Christian? You claim to believe and love God through your faith when you have not physically seen him in this life. Yet, you cannot even love the person you are with?” Such actions and attitudes condemn the person. How can a person say that he/she is a Christian and HATE a brother or sister in Christ?

Family Drama is also occur within Families?

There is another aspect to this that must be considered. In many cases, several family members, extended families, and relatives are Christians, and that is something that is wonderful. This is how generations strengthen one another though their faith and love for the Lord. But “family drama” is also occur within families. When physical brothers and sisters are young, they share many experiences



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within the family unit. But as adults, their experiences, attitudes, and tastes often begin to vary. Unfortunately, differences within families can become heated and bitter. Sometimes, family members may not talk or interact with one another for weeks, months, or even years. But when all claim to be Christians and love the Lord, but view one another with anger and disdain, what about John's warnings? There are no exceptions for Christians. Again, John's words are clear, *"for the one who does not love his brother and sister whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen."*

This is where the devil can be very active. Families have memories, past hurts, old wrongs not resolved, and the devil will dig into individual emotions and feeling like a sickness or cancer seeking to undermine the relationship of love between Christians. It does not matter if they are physically related or not. Love for every Christian must be present. Oh, how easy to say, "Yes, I know but..."

How does such rationalizations compare to the suffering that Jesus Christ experienced?

How does that compare to the glorious offer of the Living God?

Remember, hatred can not only damage Christian relationships and the harmony within a congregation, but that person's soul can be lost!

“²¹ And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God must also love his brother and sister.”

Note that this is not simply John’s words. It is a commandment from God.

Paul’s words in Romans 12:14-21 are very similar where he wrote,

“¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. ¹⁷ Never repay evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all people. ¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all people. ¹⁹ Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written: “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. ²⁰ “But if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”