

# Living and Perfecting Love

(1 John 4:7-10)

Yearly Theme: “Love Goes...”

Series Title: *Love Goes the Distance*

January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019

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## Something to think about:

What is fear?

fear, n.,

*a distressing emotion aroused by impending danger, evil, pain, etc., whether the threat is real or imagined; the feeling or condition of being afraid.*<sup>1</sup>

- How can living in a loving relationship with Jesus Christ help us to overcome our fears?
- What does it look like when God’s love is perfected in a person?
- Is it even possible to love perfectly the way God loves perfectly?

Let’s take a look:

## **1 John 4:7-21 (NLT)**

<sup>7</sup> *Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God.* <sup>8</sup> *But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.*

<sup>9</sup> *God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him.* <sup>10</sup> *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.*

<sup>11</sup> *Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other.* <sup>12</sup> *No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.*

<sup>13</sup> *And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us.* <sup>14</sup> *Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.* <sup>15</sup> *All who confess that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God.*

<sup>16</sup> *We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love.*

*God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.* <sup>17</sup> *And 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.*

<sup>18</sup> *Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love.* <sup>19</sup> *We love each other because he loved us first.*

<sup>20</sup> *If someone says, “I love God,” but hates a Christian brother or sister, that person is a liar; for if we don’t love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see?* <sup>21</sup> *And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their Christian brothers and sisters.*

**Key Point: “Living in an intentional relationship with Christ perfects love and drives out fear.”**

So, how do we do this, and what does this look like?

### **1. God’s love is perfected in us as we live it out.**

*Ephesians 5:2 (NLT),* <sup>2</sup> *Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.*

### **2. As love is perfected in us it drives out fear.**

*2 Corinthians 4:17-18 (NLT),* <sup>17</sup> *For our present troubles are small and won’t last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever!* <sup>18</sup> *So we don’t look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.*

## **Something to take home:**

When we live in God’s love, and God’s love lives in us, we have no need to fear our accusers, or those that would seek to do us harm; we have no fear of eternal damnation or judgment because of the security we have in God’s perfecting love in us.

**Key Point: “Living in an intentional relationship with Christ perfects love and drives out fear.”**



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Series: *Love Goes the Distance*

## KICK STARTERS:

- ⇒ What is “fear?”
- ⇒ Describe a time when you felt the most afraid...

**SCRIPTURE:** (Before studying this material, consider listening to the corresponding message online at: <http://www.northmaincog.org/media/sermon-media>)

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## GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. For today’s study, let’s focus on verses 11-21. What specific things is John talking about in these few verses?  
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2. *As a refresher from last week’s lesson, consider again:* There are four words for love in the ancient Greek language that the New Testament is written in: 1) *Eros*—Romantic love, 2) *Phileo*—Brotherly/Friendship love, 3) *Storge*—Family love, and 4) *Agape*—Selfless, sacrificial, unconditional love. How many words does the English language have for love? How does the English speaking person differentiate between the different types of love with only one word?  
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3. John writes that “God has given us His Spirit as proof that we live in Him and He in us.” What is the proof of the Spirit in the life of the believer in Christ (read Galatians 5:22-26)?  
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4. Can love be “perfect?” Explain...  
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5. How does a person’s love grow more perfect as they live in God (v. 17)? Explain...  
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6. John says that as God’s love is perfected in us, it drives out all fear. Explain how God’s love living in us expels all fear?  
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7. John’s talk about “fear” is in direct relation to the “fear of the day of judgment,” or what we would consider the end of time, when we will all stand before God. With this in mind, how does God’s perfect love help us remain secure in our salvation?  
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8. What are some common fears that keep people from assurance of their salvation? Why do many believers in Christ continue to struggle with fear, worry, and anxiety?  
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9. Consider these encouraging words from the Apostle Paul and James in the New Testament and discuss the perspectives they offer (2 Corinthians 4:17-18 and James 1:2-4)...  
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## SELF-EVALUATION/APPLICATION:

- ⇒ **WHAT DO YOU FEAR? HOW DO YOU PLAN TO OVERCOME YOUR FEARS?**
- ⇒ **WHEN WE LOVE AS GOD LOVED** and live as Jesus lived we don’t have to worry about where we will spend eternity. We can have assurance that what we experience now cannot be compared to the greatness of eternal glory that God has prepared for us who have surrendered to His Son Jesus Christ in a life of reciprocal *agape* love between us and Him and others. When we live in God’s love, and God’s love lives in us, we have no need to fear our accusers, or those that would seek to do us harm; we have no fear of eternal damnation or judgment because of the security we have in God’s perfecting love within us.
- ⇒ **MEMORY VERSE:** 1 John 4:16-17 and Ephesians 5:2.