

TEST 6: LOVING ONE ANOTHER

1 JOHN 04:07–21

Introduction

Do we really love God? This is the sixth test, the one sure way to measure whether or not we love God: Do we love one another? Do we really love our neighbours, all of our fellow men? No matter who they are, do we love them? If we love our fellow man, this proves that we love God. Loving one another proves seven things.

- I. Loving one another proves that we are born of God and know God (vv. 7-8).
- II. Loving one another proves that we see God's love (vv. 9-11).
- III. Loving one another proves that God's Spirit is within us (vv. 12-13).
- IV. Loving one another proves that our testimony and confession are true (vv. 14-16).
- V. Loving one another proves that God is going to deliver from judgment (v. 17).
- VI. Loving one another proves that God delivers us from fear (v. 18).
- VII. Loving one another proves that we love God (vv. 19-21).

I. 1 John 04:07–08 Love Proves Our New Birth

Loving one another proves that we are born of God and that we know God. Note two things.

1. God is love; His very nature is love (v. 7). Therefore, if a person loves God, he becomes a loving person; he takes on the very nature of God. If a person really loves God, then he does what God does: he loves everyone. Note exactly what the verse says. When we love one another, people see two things:
 - => People see that we are born of God. They see that we have the nature of God, that God has put His divine nature into us. How do they see God's nature in us? By our love. They see us doing the very same thing that God does — loving people. They see us loving everyone: the rich and poor, healthy and suffering, deserving and undeserving, acceptable and unacceptable, good and bad. They see us loving everyone, no matter who they are.
 - => People see that we know God. They see that we have been talking to God and learning about God; that we are doing what God says, carrying out His instructions. They see that we know God, fellowship and commune with Him: that we are living godly lives, and that we are actually taking on the very nature of God. How do they see all this? By our love. They see that we are loving and caring just as God is loving and caring.
 2. But note a significant fact: the person who does not love others reveals something as well: he does not know God (v. 8). Who is this person? Who is it that does not know God? The person who...
 - lives selfishly
 - hoards and banks
 - discriminates
 - is prejudiced
 - elevates himself
 - steals
-

- neglects others
- abuses
- criticizes
- backbites
- gossips
- curses
- gets angry
- hates
- murders

This person does not know God. God is love and this person is not loving. He is not living like God lives; he is not demonstrating love for other people, not showing concern and care and not helping and ministering to people's needs. He is not blessing other people; he is causing hurt and pain and destroying them. And this is not God's nature; God is love. God blesses people; He does not hurt and destroy them.

Mat 22:39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

John 13:35 "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

John 15:12 "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."

Rom 12:9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

1 Th 3:12 May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.

1 Pet 1:22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.

II. *1 John 04:09–11 Loving Proves Our Experience of God*

Loving one another proves that we see God's love.

1. Note God's love (v. 9). In fact this is the very way that we know that God is love. If someone asks, "How do we know that God is love? The world is full of so much evil and bad, how can we be sure God loves us?" Note the Scripture: this is the way God revealed that He loves us. "God sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him." The world is full of evil and bad. Men commit all kinds of evil, and in addition to this they...

- curse God
- reject God
- ignore God
- rebel against God
- neglect God
- deny God
- disobey God
- oppose God
- disbelieve God

But this is the glorious love of God. God still loves man and still wants to help and to take care of man. Man has the most serious problem imaginable: not only is he engulfed with all the evil of the world, but he dies and ceases to be on this earth. He lives at most for just a few short years and then he is gone forever from the earth. But as stated, God is love and He has proven His love. He has sent His only Son into the world so that man might live through Him.

2. Note how we know the love of God: by salvation. We know that God loves us because God saves man. How can we live through Christ? How does God give us life

through Christ? By sending Christ to be the propitiation, the atoning sacrifice for our sins (v. 10. See *Atoning Sacrifice*, 1 Jn. 2:2.)

3. The conclusion is compelling: “Dear friends, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (v. 11). If God loved us when we opposed and did things against Him, when we disobeyed and ignored Him, then there is no person we should not love. If God went to such great lengths to give His very own Son to die for us, then we should go to the same length to love one another. We are to love those who...

- oppose us
- curse us
- do things against us
- reject us
- ignore us
- persecute us
- distrust us
- kill us

No matter who the person is, God loves him and has shown in the most supreme way possible that He loves him. Therefore, we are to love that person and demonstrate our love for him. We are to sacrifice ourselves and try to bring life to him. This we do by loving him, by showing him there is a better way, the way of love.

III. 1 John 04:12–13 Proof of the Indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit

Loving one another proves that God’s Spirit is within us.

1. God is not known by sight (v. 12). No person has ever seen God face to face. No person has ever penetrated the spiritual world and crossed over into heaven and seen God. No matter what some claim, Scripture is clear — no person has ever seen God. Even Jesus Christ Himself declared the same fact:

John 1:18 “No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known.”

2. How then can we know God (v. 12)? God is known only by love, only by His Spirit who dwells within believers. When a person believes in the love of God, that God loves us so much that He gave His Son to die for our sins, it pleases God supremely. God is perfectly pleased, for God loves His Son with a perfect love. Therefore, when a person honours God’s Son by believing in Christ, God takes that person and puts His Spirit into the person. God actually implants His divine nature, the Holy Spirit, into the life of the believer. He does this so that His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, will have many followers, followers who will honour Christ by living and loving just as He lived and loved.

Simply stated, we know God by love. If we love God, then we accept what God has done for us in Christ. When we accept Christ, God puts His Spirit in us. It is that simple. We simply know God by loving Him, loving Him for all that He has done for us in Christ. And when we love Him and love His Son, God just floods our being with His precious Holy Spirit.

Now note what happens when God begins to live and dwell in us (v. 12). We love one another and God's love becomes perfected, that is, complete and fulfilled in us. We just grow and grow in love. We mature more and more, ever completing and perfecting the love of God upon earth.

3. Note one other thing: How do we know that we live in God and He in us (v. 13)? By the Holy Spirit whom He has given to us. If we have the Holy Spirit living and dwelling in us, He bears witness with our spirit. It is impossible for God to be living within the body and life of a person and the person not know it. It is the Spirit of God who tells us that we have been saved and are in God and God in us.

Thought 1. If a person does not have the witness of God's Spirit within him, he needs to evaluate his conversion. The likelihood is that he has never been saved. Even if he is temporarily in a backslidden state, the Holy Spirit is convicting and bugging him to repent and turn back to God.

John 16:7-11 *"But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned."*

Rom 8:11 *And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.*

Rom 8:16 *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.*

Gal 4:6 *Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."*

1 John 3:24 *Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.*

1 John 4:13 *We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.*

1 John 5:6 *This is the one who came by water and blood — Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.*

IV. 1 John 04:14–16 Love Proves Our Testimony

Loving one another proves that our testimony and confession are true. This is the great testimony of John. But note how it is the testimony of every genuine believer as well.

1. There is John's declaration: that he and the early believers had seen and testified that the Father sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world (v. 14. See 1 Jn. 1:1-5.)

2. There is the great promise to the whole human race: “If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.” (v. 15. See 1 Jn. 4:2-3. Apply what is said about teachers to every person. Also see *Jesus Christ, Deity*, 1 Jn. 1:1.)
 3. There is the great testimony and confession of John himself and the early believers: “and so we know and rely on the love that God has for us” (v. 16). What is it that they knew and believed? Three things, and all three are critical. Note them closely.
 - a. “God is love.” God has sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world. This is the way we know that God is love.
 - b. Believers must love. They must live in love, love one another with all their hearts.
 - c. Loving one another is the way we can tell that we are saved. If we live in love, then we live in God and God in us. The way we know that we live in God and God in us is by our love. If we love one another, then we are demonstrating the nature of God. If we are *not loving* one another, then we are demonstrating that we *do not have* the nature of God. Loving one another shows whether or not God is in us.
- ⇒ God is love; therefore, if we have the nature of God, we are loving people — all people — just as God loves them.
- ⇒ God is love, therefore, if we are *not loving* people, we *do not have* the nature of God. We are *not saved* no matter what we claim. The proof that we are saved, that we have the nature of God, is loving others.

John 6:28-29 *Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”*

Rom 10:9-10 *That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.*

Phil 2:11 *And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

1 John 2:23 *No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.*

1 John 3:18-19 *Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence.*

1 John 4:6-8 *We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood. Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.*

1 John 4:15 *If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.*

V. 1 John 04:17 Assurance of Deliverance from Judgment

Loving one another proves that God is going to deliver us from judgment. Judgment is coming — a day of universal judgment when all persons will be brought before the great Judge Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the clear declaration of Scripture:

Mat 12:36 *“But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.”*

Mat 16:27 *“For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.”*

Mat 25:31-32 *“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.”*

Rom 14:10 *You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat.*

2 Cor 5:10 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.*

Col 3:24-25 *Since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.*

1 Pet 1:17 *Since you call on a Father who judges each man’s work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.*

2 Pet 2:9 *If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.*

2 Pet 3:7 *By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.*

Jude 1:14-15 *Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: “See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”*

Rev 20:12 *And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.*

But note the most wonderful thing: we can be delivered from judgment. We can face the great day of judgment boldly without dread and fear. How? By living a life of love,

by loving one another completely. In fact, the fruit of love is having boldness in the day of judgment. If we love completely — if we allow our love to be complete and fulfilled — if we allow love to *live itself out* through us — then we will have boldness in the day of judgment. God will give us assurance that we shall not be judged, but on the contrary, we shall be rewarded.

How, then, is it possible to complete our love while on earth? By living in the world just as Jesus lived. Even as He was in the world, so we are to be in the world. That is, Jesus Christ loved when He was in the world; He walked in love. Therefore, we are to love one another while in the world. We are to bear witness and proclaim the love of God and love one another just as Christ did. This is to be the consuming passion of our lives. The more we love, the more we grow and become completed in love; and the more we grow and become completed in love, the more assurance and boldness we have about the future judgment. The more we love, the more assurance God gives us that we shall not be judged in that day.

Thought 1. Most people, even believers, are wrong in their ideas about the return of Christ. He is Judge as well as Saviour. And believers are to be judged at the judgment seat of Christ. Some will be weeping even as others will be joyful. It all depends upon how we have lived, what we have done in our bodies and in our works for Him.

2 Cor 5:10 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body whether good or bad.*

The only way to be assured of deliverance from judgment, of having boldness to stand with uplifted face, is to live a life of love — to love everyone more and more while on earth.

Eph 3:12 *In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.*

Heb 4:16 *Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

2 Tim 1:12 *That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.*

Heb 10:22-25 *Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

1 John 2:3-5 *We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him:*

1 John 3:18-22 *Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.*

1 John 4:13 *We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.*

1 John 4:17 *In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him.*

1 John 5:11-13 *And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.*

VI. 1 John 04:18 Deliverance from Fear

Loving one another proves that God delivers us from fear. This is an excellent verse on fear and how to conquer fear. Note the four things said.

1. There is no fear in love. If we really love someone, there is no need to fear him. In fact, we will not fear him. If we love the person, sacrificially give him our very best, then we have done all we can. Our lives and what we have done are in God's hands. We will rest assured that we can do no more. A peace, an assurance, will sweep over our soul. Note this, for it is the promise of God: when we really love someone, really give sacrificially all that we can, God will give us a peace and an assurance of soul that erases all fear. Our souls will know no fear, only peace and assurance of God's care. This is the promise of God even if some people react against us and persecute us and martyr us. God will give us such a deep sense of His presence — so deep that we will be flooded with peace and assurance. This is what Peter calls "the Spirit of glory and of God" that rests upon the believer when he is reproached.

1 Pet 4:14 *If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.*

2. Perfect love drives out fear. This is critical to note, for only a love that is growing and growing will be blessed by God. A believer cannot love one person and hold feelings against another person. This is not love. True love is impartial. A person who really

loves, loves everyone. There is no such thing as a heart filled with love and hate. The two are incompatible. Therefore, the only believer who knows the peace and assurance of God is the believer who is being completed in love, the believer who is growing and growing in love, fulfilling and completing his love.

3. Fear has punishment; that is, it thinks about and expects punishment or suffering or loss. A person feels that something is going to happen to him. Such feelings, of course, cause all kinds of disturbance and problems for people, all to varying degrees. People fear all kinds of things:

=> suffering	=> economic slump
=> divorce	=> the future
=> loss of health	=> God and His judgment
=> loss of a loved one	=> loss of a job
=> loss of wealth	=> heights, darkness, etc.

Fear causes anxiety, dread, alarm, fright, panic and terror. It causes all kinds of unpleasant emotions, phobias, neurosis and even the more serious psychotic disorders. The torment of fear is one of the worst problems faced by man.

4. Fear means that a person is not made perfect in love.

=> The person is not fully grasping (perfected) the love and care of God for him (see 1 Jn.4:9-11).

=> The person is not loving other people like he should; he is not growing more and more in love. His eyes are upon himself, not upon God and others like they should be.

In summary, fear can be driven out only by the perfect love of God. The more we know of God's love and care and the more we love other people, the more fear is conquered in our lives. The reason is clearly seen in the promises of God. God loves us so much that He will take care of us through all the trials and temptations of life, no matter what they are.

=> There is no need to fear people, the evil that they can do to us; God will strengthen and deliver us even through death.

2 Tim 4:16-18 *At my first defence, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Psa 23:4 *Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.*

Psa 118:6 *The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?*

Heb 13:6 *So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”*

⇒ There is no need to fear judgment. God delivers us from judgment.

Rom 8:34-35 *Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?*

⇒ There is no need to fear the dark or the enemies of the dark. God will take care of us.

Rom 3:3-5 *What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God’s faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: “So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge.” But if our unrighteousness brings out God’s righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.)*

Psa 91:5 *You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day.*

Prov 3:24 *When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.*

⇒ There is no need to fear not having food to eat or clothing.

Mat 6:31-33 *“So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”*

VII. 1 John 04:19–21 Proof that We Love God

Loving one another proves that we love God. How do we know that we love God? There are three ways.

1. We know that we love God because we know God’s love for us (v. 19). He loves us and we have seen His love; therefore, we love Him. (See 1 Jn. 4:9-11.)
2. We know that we love God because we do not hate our brother. If we love God, it is impossible to hold feelings against our brother. Why? Because God is love. If we have the nature of God in us, then we love our brothers. Note how strong this verse states the fact.

If anyone says, “I love God,” yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. (v. 20)

We cannot see God, but we can see our brothers. It is far easier to love someone in this world whom we can see than it is to love someone whom we cannot see.

Therefore, if we say that we love God and hate those whom we see, we are lying.

3. We know that we love God because we obey His commandment. What is His commandment? If we love God, we are to love our brothers also.

John 13:34-35 *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

John 21:16 *Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”*

1 John 3:14-17 *We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him. This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?*

1 John 3:23 *And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. ■*