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**The Results of Complete Love**

*I John 4:17-21*

**INTRO:** John uses the Greek word *agape* eleven times in I John 4:17-21. *Agape* love is divine love; it is supernatural love; it is the love that the Holy Spirit puts in the hearts of believers when they are born again. *Agape* love is the love of God that enables us, by the Holy Spirit, to reach out and love others.

When God's love is perfected in us (vs. 12), we will experience:

1. Assurance at the Judgment Seat of Christ.
2. Absence of fear in our daily lives.
3. Abundant love for the brethren.

**I. VS. 17, ASSURANCE AT THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST.**

A. "Herein is our love made perfect."

1. "Our love" is the love of God; it is *agape* love; it is divine love; it is supernatural love. Our love has God for its source (vs. 7). This *agape* love does not begin with us; it begins with God (vs. 10). When you were saved, God poured His love into your very being by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5).

2. John says, "Herein is our love made perfect."

a. "Herein" points us back to verse 16. To have complete love, we must dwell in the love of God.

b. To have love that is mature, perfect, or complete, the believer must let Jesus have first place in his life. He must allow the love of God to flow without obstruction. The believer must tear down the dams of sin and allow the love of God to flow in him and then out of him to others.

c. When God gave His love to us, it was to make us perfect, mature, or complete. God wants you and I to be like Jesus. He wants us to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29). "God wants to reproduce Jesus Christ in His children so that when a nonbeliever looks at the child of God, he will come to know the Father" (Pentecost 118).

B. One of these days the trumpet is going to sound and the saints of God are going to be raptured out of this world (I Thes. 4:16-18). Immediately after the rapture, we, believers, must all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. As each saint stands before the Judgment Seat, he will either be ashamed or assured. He will either approach the Judgment with timidity or boldness.

1. To have boldness at the Judgment Seat, our lives must be dedicated entirely to Jesus.

2. To have boldness, we must, in this life, seek first the kingdom of God.

3. To have boldness, our works and motives must be pure with nothing to be ashamed of. Our works must be gold, silver, and precious stones.

4. To have boldness, we must live the Christ life. The Christ life is a life of love.

5. To have boldness, then we must have boldness now as we approach the throne of God in prayer (Heb. 4:16).

C. "As He is, so are we in this world."

1. Right now up in heaven, Jesus is representing the believer before the throne of God. He is our intercessor, our representative, our spokesman in heaven.

2. We are His representatives here on earth. We are ambassadors for Christ. We are His representatives, His spokesmen on earth. If we are good ambassadors, we will have boldness as we stand before Him at the Judgment Seat.

## II. VS. 18, ABSENCE OF FEAR.

- A. When God's love is perfected in us there is not room for fear.
1. John is not speaking of godly fear or reverence for God: "a holy fear of displeasing the Father (I Peter 1:17; Heb. 12:28)" (Wuest 109).
  2. John is talking about the kind of fear that enslaves people. People are enslaved by many kinds of fear.
    - a. Fear of dying.
    - b. Fear of being found out.
    - c. Fear of the future.
    - d. Fear of what others think.
    - e. Fear of God, fear of facing Him at the Judgment.
- B. "Perfect love casteth out fear."
1. Because of God's love in the heart of the believer, he can face the future without fear (17c).
  2. "For the lost person there is fear, but when one comes to Jesus Christ the love of God moves into the heart. As the love of God develops in that person's life it dispels fear" (Vines 169).
  3. Fear is not of God (II Tim. 1:7).
    - a. Adam did not fear God until he sinned (Gen. 3:10).
    - b. It is sin that produces fear and sin is of the devil.
- C. "Fear hath torment."
1. Torment is the Greek word *kolasis* which means "correction, punishment, penalty."
    - a. Lost people need to fear the torment that they will face in hell (Matt. 25:46; Luke 16:24).
    - b. People who are unprepared fear to meet God.
  2. When sin enters into the life of the saint of God, it produces fear. Fear of knowing that he is unprepared to stand before Christ at the Judgment Seat.
    - a. The saint who is sinning cannot enjoy his salvation.

b. "If we are not manifesting love, we have cause for fear that, instead of having boldness at the Judgment seat of Christ, we shall lose our reward, the expression of His approval" (Wuest 88).

D. "He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

1. If we fear the judgment, it is evidence that we have not experienced the perfected love of vs. 17.

2. When we have perfected love, there is not room for fear (Rom. 8:15).

3. If you are prepared for a test, you do not fear it; but if you have goofed off and are unprepared, then the test is dreaded and feared. Many Christians are unprepared for their meeting with the Lord because they are unprepared for the test.

4. Remember it is sin that produces fear. When a parent leaves two children with jobs to do before he comes home and one does it and the other doesn't, the one who does it is not fearing your return. The one who doesn't is expecting punishment.

### III. VSS. 19-21, ABUNDANT BROTHERLY LOVE.

A. Vs. 19, In verse seven, John says, "Love is of God."

1. Love does not originate with man. Man is sinful and depraved. The heart of man is filled with evil. Man does not love God until he experiences the love of God (Rom. 5:8).

2. God loves us first.

a. Because God loved us first, He sent Jesus to die for us (John 3:16).

b. The death of Christ did not cause God to love us. Christ died because God already loved us.

c. The cross says that God first loved you.

B. Vs. 20, How can we claim to love God and hate our brother? The true believer loves God whom he has not seen (I Pet 1:8).

1. Too many people have an imaginary god in their mind. They have a god that they can love while being ugly and hateful to those around them. Their god is not the God of the Bible.

2. Don't go around singing, "Oh, how I love Jesus" if you don't love your brother. To do so is pious hypocrisy.

3. Many people have a profession of faith, but no possession of faith. You may know the doctrine of God, but if you do not love your brother you have not experienced that love and you cannot respond in love (vs. 19). If you cannot love your brother, you do not know God (Vs. 8).

C. Vs. 21, This is a distinct command and is not to be taken lightly.

1. This command is binding (John 13:34,35; Gal. 5:14; Rom. 13:9,10).

2. Because He loves us, we are to express that love in loving others.

**CONCLUSION:** The way to true happiness is to love God with all of our heart.