

Perfect Love - cont.

... boldness and confidence in the day of judgment that he is right with God and not fear punishment (1 John 2:28; 3:21; see also John 5:24).

No Fear

John writes that “perfect love casts out fear”. Sin brings fear (Genesis 3:8-10; Psalms 73:19). And fear is itself a form of torment or punishment (Revelation 18:10,15). A Christian who contemplates the judgment day with fear is one who does not have mature love.

Judgment and hell bring fear to those who are not right (Matthew 10:28; Hebrews 10:27,31). Hell will be torment (Matthew 25:46; 2 Peter 2:9). But, there is no fear when God abides in us and we in God. There is no fear when we act like Christ (1 John 3:3, 7).

Faithful Christians Anticipate Heaven, Not Hell

John tells us that perfect love leaves nothing to be feared (Romans 8:15). Paul is a good example of this (Philippians 1:23; 2 Timothy 4:7-8). He did not fear the judgment day. Friend, does the thought of coming judgment bring you boldness or fear? Do you practice “perfect love”? - Chris Reeves

- Word of the Week -

“Martyr” (Gr. μάρτυς) is first one who gives his witness or testimony (Matthew 16:18) and then one who tells others about Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8, 22). This person is willing to stand up for Jesus and identify with him. Also, a “martyr” is one who is willing to even die for Jesus like Stephen (Acts 22:20) or Antipas (Revelation 2:13). So, how convicted and committed are we about Jesus? In a world that continues to care less about Jesus, will we stand up and speak for Jesus? Let’s live this week and always as a martyr for Jesus.

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

And we know and have believed the love which God hath in us. God is love; and he that abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, even so are we in this world. There is no fear in love: but perfect love casts out fear, because fear hath punishment; and he that fears is not made perfect in love. We love, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he that loves not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen. And this commandment have we from him, that he who loves God love his brother also.

- 1 John 4:16-21

The Apostle John writes a lot about love in his three epistles: 26 times in 1 John, four times in 2 John, and three times in 3 John. Here in 1 John 4:16-21, John writes about three important aspects of love. First, he first writes about the character of God - God is love. God does not simply *have* love or *show* love, he *is* love. Just like God is light - holy and righteous (1 John 1:5), so God is love - kind and caring (1 John 4:8, 16). It is in his very nature or character to love others.

Second, John writes that when Christians abide in God (have fellowship with God), they will show others the love that God shows them. God shows his love to others and Christians show their love to others because they are like God. Christians are to love their brethren and others and not hate them (1 John 2:9, 11; 3:13, 15). Christians are not to say they love God and then hate their brother (1 John 4:20). And, Christians do not simply have love from time-to-time, occasionally, or now and then. Christians are to “abide in love” (1 John 4:16); that is, remain in the realm of loving others each and every day.

Third, John writes that a Christian is to have a certain kind of love: a “perfect love”. God has a “perfect love” (1 John 2:5; 4:12, 17) and Christians are to have the same “perfect love” (1 John 4:18). Let us examine what it means to have a “perfect love” and what this “perfect love” will accomplish in our life.

Some Terms Defined

What does “perfect” (Gr. *teleios*) mean in this context? It means “having reached its end; finished; or, complete.” John is writing about love that is complete. What does “love” (Gr. *agape*) mean in this context. It is a kind act of sacrificial service. John is writing about benevolent, kind, and

gracious thoughts and actions toward others, especially the brethren.

What does “fear” (Gr. *phobos*) mean in this context? It mean flight; scared; dread; terror; or being afraid. John is writing about being terrified about God’s coming judgment. What does “torment” or “punishment” (Gr. *kolasis*) mean in this context? It means the chastisement that will come to anyone in “the day of judgment” who is not right with God (1 John 4:17).

“Perfect Love”

Christians must work in their life toward a love that is mature, fully developed, and obedient to God’s word (1 John 2:5; 5:3; James 2:22). Their love is not supposed to be lacking, superficial, immature, or disingenuous. Their love is to be pure and without hypocrisy.

What will be the result for a Christian who has “perfect love”. John writes that this “perfect love” will cast out fear. Fear of being punished in the day of judgment will be cast out or thrown out. In other words, a Christian who practices a perfect, mature, and complete love toward God and others will have ... - *continued*