

# Notes for 1 John 4:7-21

April 2024

1 John 4:7-21 New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

## God Is Love

<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. <sup>9</sup> God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us.

<sup>13</sup> By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world. <sup>15</sup> God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. <sup>16</sup> So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. <sup>17</sup> Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. <sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. <sup>19</sup> We love<sup>[a]</sup> because he first loved us. <sup>20</sup> Those who say, "I love God," and hate a brother or sister are liars, for those who do not love a brother or sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. <sup>21</sup> The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

Message

Agapé - love

## Love.

A letter from the beloved disciple – the one who leaned on Jesus' breast.

4:<sup>7</sup> love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

If we love, we know God and live out of God.

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4:<sup>7</sup> love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

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4:<sup>8</sup> Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.

And because John does not mind driving point home he says again in the negative:

4:<sup>8</sup> Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.

Having just defined God, he then he relates all this to God in Jesus Christ – sent into human history to atone for us as saviour of the world.

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Then later, to anyone running for cover or doubting his words he gets really serious!

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The beloved pulls no punches!

Shall we look at this encouragement to love?

Let's do a simple:

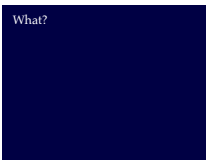
So... Agapé - love

What?

How?

Why?

## What, How, Why



### What?

It's that Greek word *agapé* that defines what is meant here:

It's self-giving, sacrificial love. The love that flows in God's gift of life and what drove Jesus in his mission.

As you will have heard, it's not love you may have for ice cream, or even the love for a family member because they are close, or someone you really like.

It's that which leads you to give of yourself, even at cost for the other.

So, is loving at cost part of our normal life together?

The mind needs to have a vision for how we can give to bless, or benefit the other

That's quite simple. God provides the vision as set out in a verse we know well.

<sup>16</sup>“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,

But **How** might we do that?

In 1992 a book came out that I have found really helpful:  
The Five Love Languages by Gary Chapman - Familiar??

It's geared for couples but applies widely.

As with any book form anywhere it needs adaption to the local context and culture.



What Chapman points out is that we are all individually conditioned to give love and receive love in several distinct ways. I relate this to spiritual gifts as in how God's love flows through us.

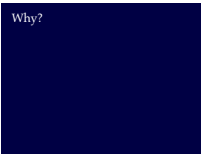
As I go through the 5 ways of communicating love, as yourself, what can I do AND, what speaks love to me? Don't expect all these things to light up. They don't need to.

1. **Words of affirmation:** Praise, compliments and recognition. This is simply talk conveying the value of a person, who they are and what they do. It can start with thanks for a job well done and go from there.
  - a. Is this in you to give upbuilding talk – speaking to edify?
  - b. Do you experience love in this?
2. **Acts of service:** Simply doing things for another. “Can I help you with that?” Coming early or staying on to help someone in their work. If you feel actions speak louder than words then this might be you? This is typically not so verbal but about action.
  - a. Is this in you to give?
  - b. Do you experience love in this?

3. **Physical touch:** Hugging, touching, and presence? Outside of sexual intimacy this is perhaps very cultural. But be honest, do you give or receive affection this way? If a hearty handshake is all you want then fine but for many people touch is bigger than that.
  - a. Is this in you to give?
  - b. Do you experience love in this?
  
4. **Quality time:** It's giving your attention to another, even when boring or worse. It's simply being there for them at the cost of quality time.
  - a. Is this in you to give?
  - b. Do you experience love in this?
  
5. **Giving and receiving gifts:** Tangible expressions of thoughtfulness and effort. Do you love creating or receiving the surprise? It really is the thought that counts.
  - a. Is this in you to give?
  - b. Do you experience love in this?

Q: What might be missing here?

- a. Praying for someone?
- b. Hospitality?
  - i. Consider Mary and Martha on this.



Then we come to **Why?**

Why Love in any of these ways?

Why not just do you own thing and play alongside others?

That is the default,

Either, Don't annoy others and they will not annoy you.

or,

Don't do to others what you would not have done to you.

That's less than what Jesus said. He framed it positively: (Luke 6:31)

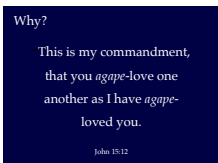
<sup>31</sup> **Do** to others as you would have them do to you.

In other words, our love is to positively flow out and not just avoid hurting people.

This is what Jesus modelled and commanded his disciples to do.

This is the verse after our gospel reading ended today (John 15:9)

As the Father has loved me, so I have *agapé*-loved you; abide in my *agapé*-love.



And again 6 verses later: (John 15:12)

“This is my commandment, that you *agape*-love one another as I have *agapé* -loved you.

If we are God's people in Jesus, then that answers the why question.

But still beyond simple obedience, it flows out of the heart loved by God.

It's a spiritual outworking, an overflow a giving forward in God's grace.

Final comment.

As a spiritual outflow it may well just happen. God's love flows in and we leak. What could be simpler?

This who love God know God.

If that were so John would not be writing to the church then and us now as he did:

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let us love one another,

It actually requires a bit of decision and intentionality hence this sermon.

So, when we are with the church family, are we intentional about giving to build and bless another?

You may want to begin with an audit? What did I agape-love someone today?

When might I have

- brought a kind word of encouragement or affirmation?
- When might I have served?
- Who needed a hug or kind presence?
- When could I offer quality time?
- Did I have something to give?