



Recap

1 John 4:1-6

Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must **test** them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world. **4:1**

Greater the claim,
greater the evidence

Recap

Rules of Discernment

Is the belief or behaviour found **in** the bible?

Is it found in **more** than one place in the bible?

Does the belief/behaviour find its place in **Jesus**?

How does belief/behaviour fit into the **Jewish** context?

Recap

Test-We are what we believe

Basis-Centres around the authentic Jesus

Evidence-Nothing will separate us from God

Transformation

Recap

Who do you **belong** to?

What makes you **question** this?

Our Greatest Misunderstanding of Love, Maria Popova

For centuries, our culture conditioned us to "see the problem of love primarily as that of **being loved**, rather than that of loving," which in turn conditioned us to believe that the hardest thing about love is **finding** the right person to love us, but once we do, love is easy.

Searching for love rather
than being loving

Our Greatest Misunderstanding of Love, Maria Popova

Erich Fromm (March 23, 1900–March 18, 1980) inverted this equation. Drawing on his work with patients and on emerging ideas in humanistic philosophy that had only just begun revising the old narratives of religion and Romanticism, he observed that the key to love is to treat it not as a noun – a state to be found and possessed – but as a verb – **a practice to be mastered**.

God is **love**

"This is the most comprehensive and **sublime** of all the biblical affirmations of God's being." [John Stott](#)

But what kind of **love**?

"It is significant that this **warning** comes in the midst of John's discourse about **love**, because false spirits tend to make a great deal of the subject of **love**. Every cult, every deviant group, every false movement makes its appeal in the name of **love**." [Ray Stedman](#)

1 John 4:7-21

John uses the word love **28x** in this section

Proof of Love: 7-8

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. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love. [Vs 7-8](#)

Proof of Love: 7-8

Continue: implication being that as we surrender our lives to Jesus, the **by-product** is an overflow of love and its derivatives: empathy, grace, compassion, less ego etc.

Love comes from God: This type of love; family of God, enemy love, sacrificial love in John's perspective seems supernatural. We all possess the "**basic**" love package (love for those who love us), but to **upgrade** we need Jesus

Love**less**ness is god**less**ness

Depth of Love: 9-10

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. **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. *Vs 9-10*

Depth of Love: 9-10

John deepens the love by showing Jesus' **sacrificial** love.

This is a **contrast** and **compare** statement.

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were **still** sinners, Christ died for us. *Romans 5:8*

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were actively seeking our own good, ridiculing God, hurting others, living a self-indulgent narcissistic life, Christ died for us. *Romans 5:8, New Pastor Raja Translation*

Visibility of Love: 11-12

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. *Vs 12*

Visibility of Love: 11-12

This is John's **ouch** moment

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love **one another**. John 13:35

Humanity has always found ways to **fragment** along a variety of lines. But this 'supernatural' love that John keeps elevating is a **unnatural** cohesive agent that transcends human fault lines and keeps us in **vibrant** community

Trusting Love: 13-16

All who declare that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. 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. Vs 15-16

Trusting Love: 13-16

Why does John equate **trust** and **love**?

Even if we feel **guilty**, God is greater than our feelings, and he knows everything. 3:20

And now, dear children, remain in fellowship with Christ so that when he returns, you will be full of courage and not shrink back from him in **shame**. 2:28

But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from **all** wickedness. 1:9

Trusting Love: 13-16

Who do you **belong** to? And what makes you **question** that? Short answer, **sin**

Our **doubts** and **fears** are rooted in our brokenness, which in turn **defines/diminishes** God for us. John is trying to move us beyond such a **superficial** understandings of love

Perfecting Love: 17-18

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. 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. [Vs 17-18](#)

Perfecting Love: 17-18

"It is a sign that our love is far from perfect, when our doubts, fears, and apprehensions of God, are **many**." [Matthew Henry's Commentary](#)

Important fact, **love grows**. If it does not grow it is not love and certainly not a **divine** love. It is almost as if John implies that our spiritual **maturity** is deeply **connected** to our love ethic

Community Love: 19-21

We love **each other** because he loved us first. If someone says, "I love God," but **hates a fellow believer**, that person is a **liar**; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their fellow believers. [vs 19-21](#)

Community Love: 19-21

John's true **test** and not so hidden **agenda**, "other believer" love. Which is comical because it should be the easiest thing, except for the fact it is easier to love a stranger than a "family" member. Welcome to God's **dysfunctional** family. This is also a test of our **authenticity**. Are we fooling ourselves?

Do not merely listen to the word, and so **deceive** yourselves. Do what it says. [James 1:2 \(John 1:8-10\)](#)

Community Love: 19-21

Loving another believer does not mean you agree with what they say or how they behave (**preferences**). However, if they are living contrary to Jesus then (**if** we are in relationship with them) privately "admonish" them with love

Preferences-Gracious space
Behaviour-Discipleship to maturity
Error-Loving private dialogue

What Kind of Love?

God is **love**

But what kind of **love**?

Our culture has **reversed** "God is love" to "Love is god"

To truly understand God's love, it must be held in **tension** with God's character

What Kind of Love?

Many people in our culture have a grave **misunderstanding** concerning the love of God. They attribute to God this squishy, all-encompassing love that **never demands** repentance, never addresses sin, and would surely never be expressed in righteous anger. [Sean Cole](#)

What Kind of Love?

The Christian faith has always emphasized preeminently two very important things -- **truth and love**. Jesus Christ himself was the preeminent expression of both of these -- **truth and love** -- held in perfect **balance**. He was fully the expression of truth, and fully the expression of love. Therefore Christianity, which is but the expression of his life in the world, is, to use that wonderful expression of the Apostle Paul, to be an experience of "**truthing in love**." [Ray Stedman](#)

What Kind of Love?

Wrath is love's response to sin. It is God's voluntary gag reflex at anything that destroys his good creation. God is against sin because he is for us, and he will vent his fury on everything that damages us. [Michael Wittmer](#)

What Kind of Love?

"The wrath of God...is his steady, unrelenting, unremitting, uncompromising antagonism to **evil** in all its forms and manifestations." [John Stott, The Cross of Christ](#)

"When we displace God's anger towards sin, what are we asking God to do? What are we asking Him to **overlook**? Are we forgetting that sin is the cause of every form of brokenness on this planet, and that in every sin, there is a **victim** that cries out for justice."

What Kind of Love?

Love is a **practice** to be mastered [Erich Fromm](#)

God's love is **pursuing**,
but waits for us to **respond**

God's love is **unconditional**,
but is not **blind** our choices

God's love is **gracious**,
but not **affirming** of our sin

God's love is **transformative**,
but we give it **permission**

God's love is **just**, and
not **defined** by culture

"To love at all is to be **vulnerable**. Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact you must give it to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements. Lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket, safe, dark, motionless, airless, it will **change**. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. To love is to be vulnerable." [C.S. Lewis, The Four Loves](#)

Because of Christ and our faith in him, we can now come **boldly** and confidently into God's presence. [Ephesians 4:12](#)

When I think of all this, **I fall to my knees** and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. **Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong.** [Vs 14-17](#)

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