

Revealing the Invisible God

How to Bring His Love to Full Expression

This morning I want you to discover how you can grow spiritually and how to have his love brought to full expression in you. We will discover that in order to have God's love more fully expressed in us we have to abide in love and love one another. Loving one another is how we abide in love and so this morning we will look more closely at how to abide in love and what does loving one another look like?

1Jn 4:12-16 (ESV)

*"No one has ever seen God; **if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.** 13 By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. 15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. 16 So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. **God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.**"*

This passage tells us that if we love one another God abides in us. Why is that? Why is loving people connected to God living inside us? We are even told that if we love one another his love is perfected in us. That sounds pretty amazing right? Imagine having God's love perfected in you? Would you like that? Well, we are told you can have it but what's the way? The way is abiding in love. How do you abide in love?

1. Know and believe the Love God has for you.

V16 tells us that we have come to know and believe the Love that God has for us. Do you know and believe the love God has for you? Do you really know? V14 tells us that the way we know is because God the Father sent his son Jesus into the world. Jesus coming to earth, living a life of perfect obedience and dying a criminal's death on a Cross is the ultimate proof of Father's love for you. God so loved the world that he sent His only Son. Could you send your only son to a life of suffering and pain? You must come to know and believe and understand regularly the love God has for you. This is one of the Spirit's roles.

Rom 5:5 (ESV)

"and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."

Alex Buchanan says "God loves you unconditionally, wholeheartedly and continually."

Do you believe God approves of you? You need to know because of Jesus' death on the Cross God approves of you and loves you unconditionally, wholeheartedly and continually."

Chosen Women at Well video clip? <https://youtu.be/el7dzoNV3IY>

To abide in love you first must abide in God's love for you. Do this daily. Regularly. Memorise scriptures of God's love for you. (See Father's love letter). Worship daily. When your thoughts start to condemn you, When your emotions get anxious, angry or uptight start to take control of your thoughts. Direct your thoughts intentionally by speaking out Scripture of God's love and acceptance of you. Say sorry if you need to for failing or falling short but immediately come back to his love, grace, forgiveness and repeat:

He loves me unconditionally, wholeheartedly and continually.

To abide in love you must first abide in His love for you. Secondly to abide in love you must:

2. Love one another

1 John 4:12: If we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

V16: God is love and whoever abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.

Whoever abides in love abides in God and God abides in him. We want to abide in God and God to abide in us. How does this happen? It happens to whoever abides in love.

What does it mean to abide in love and how do you do it?
Does it mean to sing love songs for an hour per day?
Does it mean to pray and read your Bible for an hour per day?

Jesus in John chapter 15 tells us what it means to abide in love.

'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. '

John 15:9-12

So let's fit these pieces together.

1 John 4:16: Whoever abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.

John 15:10. Jesus said if you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love ... This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

Putting these two together we can say:

Whoever abides in love - by keeping Jesus' commandments to love one another- abides in God and God abides in him.

We can conclude then that to abide in God and for God to abide in me requires me to love one another as Jesus loved us.

Our love for one another and neighbour then is essential to our relationship with God and to our spirituality. This is why Christianity is about community and you can't grow spiritually as fully as God intended in isolation.

The word IF here is very significant. If we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

2a. Bringing Joy to the Spirit With Words and Actions

The meaning here is clear. If we do not love one another, God does not abide in us fully and his love is not perfected in us. Why is that? Well, when we hurt people and are not loving them, we grieve the Holy Spirit who lives inside of us. Our lack of love for people hurts and grieves the Spirit of God living inside us. Eph. 4:25-32 makes this very clear.

Eph 4:29-32 (TPT)

*“And never let ugly or hateful words come from your mouth, but instead let your words become beautiful gifts that encourage others; do this by speaking words of grace to help them. **30** The Holy Spirit of God has sealed you in Jesus Christ until you experience your full salvation. So never grieve the Spirit of God or take for granted his holy influence in your life. **31** Lay aside bitter words, temper tantrums, revenge, profanity, and insults. **32** But instead be kind and affectionate toward one another. Has God graciously forgiven you? Then graciously forgive one another in the depths of Christ's love.”*

The instruction in v30 to never grieve the Holy Spirit is a summary of the verses before and after on Paul's teaching about words. Your words, attitudes and actions can grieve or delight the Holy Spirit. They can bring him sadness or joy. If we tear others down with our speech or even by our attitudes, coldness or indifference we grieve the Holy Spirit. If we talk behind others backs or gossip about them we grieve the Holy Spirit. But if we love one another, the Spirit is God abides in us. The Spirit of God in us is not suppressed, hindered, grieved or quenched when we love others and his love is perfected in us. These few verses in Ephesians show us clearly what loving one another includes. It includes the words: NEVER BUT INSTEAD.

There are things we must never let out our mouths BUT INSTEAD we must speak certain WORDS. It's not just a matter of what we must STOP. It's what we must STOP and START. The goal to abide in love is not less words just more of the right words. It's an active speaking to BUILD OTHERS UP. Abiding in love involves loving others which includes building others up with your kind words.

How often do you intentionally and proactively build others up with kind words? Here's how Paul teaches you can abide in love:

- Let your words become beautiful gifts that encourage others
- Speak words of grace – undeserved kindness- to others

- Be kind and affectionate or tender-hearted. This is for men and women. How can you become more affectionate? More tender-hearted? How affectionate are you with words?
- Graciously forgive one another in the depths of Christ's love.

2b. His Love Brought to Full Expression in You

1 John 4:12 says: *if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.*

TPT puts it this way: "But if we love one another, God makes his permanent home in us, and we make our permanent home in him, and his love is brought to its full expression in us."

TM: "No one has seen God, ever. But if we love one another, God dwells deeply within us, and his love becomes complete in us—perfect love!"

So how does loving one another cause God's love to be perfected in us, or be brought to its full expression in us, or to become complete in us? What does that mean?

Let's say I give you an expensive gift for free, £10,000. The instruction I give is here is a free gift. I would like to keep half and deliver the other half to your neighbour for me. When is the task complete? The task is complete when the gift is delivered. The task is complete when the gift is given away! It's not a perfect illustration but helps us to understand that what God gives to us has dual purpose. He gives to bless us in order that we can bless others. Abraham and his descendants were blessed to be a blessing. The purpose includes the giving away of what is received. The full purpose of the gift is not complete until it is given away.

This includes God's forgiveness. We are to receive it and give it away.

It includes his kindness and love. We are to receive and give it away.

It includes his blessings; financial and possessions. We are to receive it and give it away.

It's the giving away of what is received that completes and brings to full expression the love that was freely given. The giving is what delights and brings joy to the Father.

This is the implication of v11.

1Jn 4:11-12 (ESV)

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. **12** No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us."

Marianne Meye Thompson, in her commentary on 1-3 John says this about this verse:

"But those who are in touch with the very source of love, who have been shown what love is and who are the recipients of a great and healing love, can receive the commandment with hope and joy. For they are not commanded to do something that is alien to their experience or beyond their ability to learn and to do."

So strong is John's confidence that the Christian community will fulfill this command that he writes that **mutual Christian love manifests the presence and action of the invisible God** ([1Jn 4:12](#); Smalley [1984] p. 246).

When he writes no one has ever seen God, he calls to mind the same statement in the Gospel of John ([Joh 1:18](#)). In both cases, he is not trying to tell us what God is like but how God is known. And God is known not only in the revelation that comes to us in Jesus ([Joh 1:18](#)) but also by the manifestation of our love for each other ([1Jn 4:12](#)). The love of believers makes evident and concrete the activity of God among them. In fact, when the Elder writes that this is how [God's] love is made complete, he means that it reaches its intended goal when it flows from God, through us, to our fellow believers. The love with which God loved us must in turn be extended to the fellowship of believers."

1-3 John: IVP New Testament Commentaries Paperback
by [Marianne Meye Thompson](#)

No-one has seen God but Jesus has made him known. Jesus gave us His Spirit and returned to the Father and now it's our turn. We have now to make the invisible God known. How? By loving others, the way Jesus loved us. This is how the world will come to see the invisible God. 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 everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." '

2c. The Greatest Commandment

In a previous message called The Main Thing I taught how love for God and loving one another are inseparable. Recorded in matt. 22 a lawyer asks Jesus which is the greatest commandment in the law. Jesus doesn't give him one but two.

(36) "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"

(37) And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

(38) This is the great and first commandment.

(39) And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

(40) On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

Jesus corrects the false assumption. There wasn't one greatest commandment. There were two. What does it look like to love God? "Love your neighbour" Love for God was best demonstrated and authenticated by loving one's neighbour.

When you love your neighbour, you are loving God His creator and you are bringing great joy to the Spirit of God. When you hurt your neighbour, you are not loving fully the God who created them and you grieve or make sad the Spirit of God.

Anyone who mistreats a neighbour according to this formula is not loving God. Vertical love for God was to be demonstrated through horizontal love for neighbours.

So back to verse 12. “if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.”

Actually, loving one another and your neighbour is actually loving God. If you want to love God who is invisible, love your neighbour who is visible. Love for God is best demonstrated by loving your neighbour and one another. If we mistreat each other or a neighbour we are actually not loving God. This is why Jesus said:

Mat 5:23-24 (TPT)

“So then, if you are presenting a gift before the altar in the temple and suddenly you remember a quarrel you have with a fellow believer, **24** leave your gift there in front of the altar and go at once to apologize with the one who is offended. Then, after you have reconciled, come to the altar and present your gift.”

In other words, in order to worship God fully you first have to love your neighbour and one another. So don't come and worship God if you have first not apologised to someone you have hurt. Sort that out first then come and worship God. If we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

2d. Growing in Love For One Another

To grow spiritually you can't just grow in prayer, meditation, worship and even bible knowledge. All of these things are good but if you want to grow spiritually, if you want God to abide in you more, if you want his love perfected in you more you need to grow in your love for one another. And not just one another. Jesus takes it even further to include love for enemies: **Luk 6:32 (TPT)** “Are you really showing true love by only loving those who love you back? Even those who don't know God will do that.”

So how do I abide in love? Well 1 Cor. 13 gives us the definition of love. 1 Cor. 13 tells us if we have not love we are nothing. Wow!

To abide in love you need to abide in and grow in:

1. Incredible patience. If you want to love one another you need to be incredibly patient with one another. How can you grow in patience and practice patience?
2. Gentleness. A fruit of the spirit. To abide in love, you need to abide in gentleness. Gentleness is not weakness and getting walked all over. It is controlled strength. Are your actions, words, comments and responses gentle? How can you grow in and practice gentleness?
3. Kindness. Another fruit of the spirit. To abide in love, you need to abide in kindness. Kindness includes sometimes being silent and not responding. Kindness involves asking questions. Kindness involves a phone call, a text, a message. Kindness involves your time. How can you grow in and practice kindness?
4. Rejoicing when others are blessed. Envy is hidden and lurks deep in the heart. Are you happy genuinely when someone is blessed or jealous? To abide in love, you must refuse to be jealous and practice rejoicing when others are blessed.

5. To abide in love, you must grow in humility. Love does not parade itself or brag about one's own achievements. Search your motives. Are you sharing something to genuinely help and encourage others or to parade yourself and brag about your achievements? It can be a fine line. When you are happy about something of course you want to share it and there is nothing wrong with that. But it's right to ask yourself: is this parading or bragging? It's easy to spot when someone else is parading or bragging. However, we need to take the plank from our own eye first.
6. Politeness. To abide in love, I must not behave rudely. This includes in the home. It includes behind a steering wheel. It includes in comments on social media. It includes in the work place. It includes when someone is rude to you. Love does not behave rudely. Love is not disrespectful. We need a reformation of manners. Manners is a way to abide in love. When we forget manners or have poor manners we are not acting in love.
7. A calm response. Love is not easily provoked or irritated. Now when we are tired and stressed, we can get easily irritated and provoked. Tiredness and stress and therefore not the greatest help to us in abiding in love. Abiding in love therefore requires as much as we are able a healthy and balanced life. Living with margin, slowly, not over-committed and sleeping well. Love is not easily provoked. When you feel yourself being provoked – take action. Put out the fire. Come back to love. Control your thoughts. Pray. Calm down. Don't respond immediately.

Dr Caroline Leaf in her book "Clearing Up Your Mental Mess" has a rule called the

"The 30–90 Second Rule—the "Regret Zone" The 30–90 Second Rule is a directed neuroplasticity practice you can use any time you need to....

"Remember, even if a thought or emotion feels urgent and is demanding a response from you, you are the boss. You don't need to respond to every emotion, word, or action. As mentioned already, this is a directed neuroplasticity practice you can use to get the optimal energy balance in the brain, which will help you think through things more clearly as you work through the 5 Steps."

Pray