

**Lesson 5**  
**1 John 4 – 5:5**

**Getting to the bottom of Love**

**Memory verse:** “This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him.” ((1 John 4:9 NIV)

For the third time, we are considering the subject of love!

This does not mean John ran out of ideas and had to repeat himself. It means that the Holy Spirit, who inspired John, presents the subject once more, from a deeper point of view.

First, love for the brethren has been shown as proof of fellowship with God (1 John 2:7–11); then it has been presented as proof of sonship (1 John 3:10–14). In the earlier passage, love for the brethren is a matter of light or darkness; in the second it is a matter of life or death.

But in 1 John 4:7–16, we get down to the very foundation of the matter. Here we discover why love is such an important part of the life that is real. Love is a valid test of our fellowship and our sonship because “God is love.” Love is part of the very being and nature of God. If we are united to God through faith in Christ, we share His nature. And since His nature is love, love is the test of the reality of our spiritual life.

The nature of God is love. And a person who knows God and has been born of God will respond to God’s nature. As a compass naturally points north, a believer will naturally practice love because love is the nature of God. This love will not be a forced response; it will be a natural response. A believer’s love for the brethren will be proof of his sonship and fellowship.

We then turn to a deeper—and more important—topic: a believer’s love for the Father in the passage. We cannot love our neighbour or our brother unless we love our heavenly Father. We must first love God with all our hearts; then we can love our neighbour as ourselves.

The key word in this section is perfect. God wants to perfect in us His love for us and our love for Him. The word perfect carries the idea of maturity and completeness. A believer is not only to grow in grace and knowledge (2 Peter 3:18), but he is also to grow in his love for the Father. He does this in response to the Father’s love for him.

How much does God love us? Enough to send His Son to die for us (John 3:16). He loves His children in the same way as He loves Christ (John 17:23). And Jesus tells us that the Father wants the love with which He loved the Son to be in His children (John 17:26).

In other words, the Christian life is to be a daily experience of growing in the love of God. It involves a Christian’s coming to know his heavenly Father in a much deeper way as he grows in love.

It is easy to fragment the Christian life and become preoccupied with individual pieces instead of the total picture. One group may emphasize “holiness” and urge its members to get victory over sin. Another may stress “witnessing” or “separation from the world.” But each of these emphases is really a by-product of something else: a believer’s growing love for the Father. Mature Christian love is the great universal need among God’s people.

May we learn the very foundation of Christian love, our own personal love for God and how God perfects that love in us!

Things to learn: 1) The Foundation of Christian love 2) God Perfects Love 3) Experience Maturing Love

**Discussion questions:**

1) How did John who encourages us to love one another use the foundational facts about God to support his admonitions in verses 1 to 16? (20 mins)

2) How can a believer know that his love for the Father is being perfected (refer 1 John 4: 17 - 5:1-5)? (20 mins)

3) How does a believer go about experiencing a maturing love and the blessings that flow from it? (10 mins)