

“The Demonstration of Fellowship”

1 John 4:7-21

Introduction

Tina Turner argues that love is just a second-hand emotion in her song, *What's Love Got to Do with It?* Many popular songs in American culture try to implant a distorted view of love in our minds. They tell us love is only a feeling or just an old-fashioned idea. It only lasts as long as there is passion, or it should depend on how well the other person treats us. However, Biblical love sounds nothing like this. It entails commitment and sacrifice and points us directly to our heavenly Father. Our fellowship with God is expanded as we reflect His nature in our commitment to love one another.

Biblical love is rooted in God’s eternal character because God is love. Believers are commanded to love one another as a reflection of His divine nature. By loving others, we express who God is. Obeying this command demonstrates the reality of our relationship with God and how seriously we take Him. If we want our relationship with God to grow, we will act like what He says is true. Action is key. Love is an act, not merely a thought or feeling. Love must be visibly expressed, not only verbally articulated. It must also benefit others. Since love displays our gratitude to Jesus for loving us enough to die on the cross and forgive our sins, it should be gratefully demonstrated in ways that involve forgiveness and restoration, especially to other believers. Biblical love in action means committing compassionately, righteously, responsibly, and sacrificially to seek the well-being of another.

The profound impact of love on our lives will be evident—first, love results in a deeper level of spiritual intimacy. As we abide in love, we draw near to the Lord, and He will draw near to us. Love will become our lifestyle, not an occasional act. Second, love results in greater spiritual rewards. It will give us confidence at the Judgment Seat of Christ because of how much our love can offset our failures. Third, love results in being spiritually confident. We will experience a stronger sense of God’s presence in our lives; therefore, fear will no longer control us. Our concern, worry, and anxiety over our circumstances will be overridden by the God who is for us—the One worthy of all glory.

Getting Started

1. Is the word “love” overused in our culture today? What could people mean when they say they “love” something?
2. “Actions speak louder than words.” What does this expression mean to you? Do you agree or disagree?

Let’s Get Personal

1. How does the concept of love as a reflection of God's nature impact your understanding of your responsibility to love others?
2. Why is it important for love to be visibly expressed rather than just verbally articulated? Whom have you been neglecting to love through your actions?

3. In what ways are you desiring greater intimacy in your relationship with God? How will demonstrating love to others lead to that deeper level of intimacy?

Take the Next Step

1. How can you visibly express love to your family, friends, coworkers, and church community this week?
2. Where has fear taken control in your life? How can you begin to develop more spiritual confidence so that you can allow God's presence to overtake the fear?
3. Want to go deeper? Take time to look at the following passages: 1 John 4:7-21; Ephesians 1:4-6; John 13:31-36; Romans 5:8; Matthew 5:46; Luke 10:27; Romans 8:35-39; Romans 12:9; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13.

Renew Your Mind

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God."

1 John 4:7
