

The Confession That Confirms

Chapter 14

New Testament Audio Lesson #86



Objective: To understand that we confess Christ through loving God and loving others



Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

—1 John 4:7-8

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar.

—1 John 4:18-20

John gives many reasons why we must love one another and therefore confess the Spirit of Christ, which is the spirit of love. God is the source of love, and we are the only ones who can love with *agape*. If we love, we are born of God and know God, because *agape* comes only from God. God's essence is love. If we are saved, we are in Christ, and our credential is love.

We also should love one another because if we dwell in love, we dwell in God and He dwells in us. *Agape* is selfless, without expectations, like Jesus' love for us. God wants us to love people around us with His love.

Another reason we must love is so we can have boldness at the Judgment Seat of Christ. If we love perfectly, we can face judgment confidently because love is the fulfilling of the law. Perfect love casts out fear—one of the great problems of today. If you have perfect love for God, you can submit everything you have and everything you are to Him. If you have perfect love for others, you can say, "Everything I have is yours. I'm committed to love you." When you have that sense of giving away, you have nothing to fear or to lose.

We also must love others because we cannot love God without loving others, too. Finally, Jesus, our Lord and Master, commanded that we love others, and we must obey Him.

John writes about three witnesses in our experience that give us assurance: the witness of and the fruit of the Holy Spirit in us; the water, probably referring to baptism, which requires a public confession of faith; and the blood of Jesus.

In 1 John, John's focus is assurance. In 2 and 3 John, his emphasis is on the truth that Jesus taught, and our steadfast commitment to that truth. Heresy began early in church history, and John says very clearly that we are to have nothing to do with heretics.



1. True or False: It is impossible to test spirits, because they are not in the flesh.
2. True or False: The three witnesses of our salvation are: the Holy Spirit, the water, and the blood.
3. True or False: Knowing Jesus personally is more important than knowing about Him.
4. True or False: John urged his readers to try to bring heretics back to the faith.

Choose all answers that apply.

5. What does John mean by testing the spirits?
 - a. Call on the spirit world for answers to life's questions.
 - b. Everything that is spiritual is good.
 - c. See if that spirit agrees with the Truth of God's Word.
 - d. Put other people to the test spiritually.
6. What did Jesus pray His apostles would do?
 - a. Become the most powerful religious leaders of all time.
 - b. Love one another so the world would believe God had sent Him.
 - c. Stop fighting among themselves.
 - d. Be successful in all that they do.
7. According to John, how do we confess Christ in our flesh?
 - a. By following His commands
 - b. By loving one another
 - c. By having fruit of the Spirit
 - d. By sinning and being forgiven

8. What is one reason why Christians must love others?
 - a. We are the only ones who can love with *agape*.
 - b. We are to love because it makes us feel good.
 - c. We will never love like God does, so we should not even try.
 - d. Loving others shows that we understand the Gospel.

9. What are some characteristics of *agape*?
 - a. It is conditional, based on behavior.
 - b. It is selfless, not self-centered.
 - c. It takes care of others after taking care of self.
 - d. It forgives most failures.

10. How can the way we love others give us assurance of salvation?
 - a. God is love, so if we dwell in love, we dwell in God and He dwells in us.
 - b. If we love enough people, we will be good enough to get into heaven.
 - c. When we love, we become love and are assured of God's love.
 - d. We do not really have to love others to get into heaven.

11. Why can we face judgment with confidence if we love well in this life?
 - a. We can be proud of ourselves for following this command.
 - b. It will be clear that we are better than other Christians who did not love others.
 - c. Agape love is the fulfilling of the Law of God.
 - d. We will finally get the recognition and reward we deserve for obeying.

12. Why does John say that perfect love casts out fear?
 - a. God's love for us casts out our fear of Him.
 - b. It is impossible to have perfect love.
 - c. Perfect love can only be achieved with God, not with others.
 - d. If we have perfect love, we let go of all we have so there is nothing left to lose.



List three or four things that you have learned from this study about loving others. How can you put them into practice this week? How can you make them a regular part of your life?

John says, "*Perfect love drives out fear.*" (1 John 4:18) What are some of your fears? As you consider each one, determine what you are afraid of losing or giving up. Can you commit right now to loving God enough to give these fears to Him? If not, pray for the strength to do that within the next month.



As you go about your life today and every day, consider praying this prayer: *“Lord, today I want to go where the hurting people are and place myself between all the love that you are and all the pain they feel. Please pass your love through me and minister to their pain through me.”*

Thank God that He first loved us. Thank Him that His love, *agape* love, is freely given without conditions or expectations. Ask Him to grow your love for Him and for others. Ask for strength to love those you consider unlovable. Ask God to help you continue to struggle with what you have learned in this study, especially those things that you find difficult to understand or implement.

NOTES



Going Deeper

1. According to 1 John 4: 1-6, how would you apply personally and explain to others the way we are to test the spirits to see if they are of God? _____

2. According to 1 John 4: 1-6, how would you personally apply and explain to others the way a spirit confesses Christ to this world? _____

3. According to 1 John 4: 7-21, name and personally apply the ten reasons why John tells us we must love one another. _____

4. How would you explain and personally apply the way verse 16 of chapter 4 tells us that we can know God and become a conduit of God's love as another building block of assurance? _____

5. How would you explain and personally apply the way nine words in verse 17 describe authentic disciples who confess Jesus Christ in their spirits? (“... As He is, so are we in this world...”)

6. How would you personally apply and explain to others the way perfect love would make it possible for us to eliminate fear and look forward to being judged by Jesus Christ with boldness?

7. What commandment (in 4: 21) do you think John was referencing in his final reason why we must love, and how would you apply this personally and explain it to others? _____
