

Study Guide: 1 John Lesson 74: Exhibiting Perfect Love

Wednesday, August 26, 2026

The following study guide explores the teachings found in 1 John 4:7–21, focusing on the nature of God's love and how it is manifested in the life of a believer. This lesson explains that humanity was created in the Image of God (*Imago Dei*), which is not a physical likeness but a spiritual capacity for personal relationships. Because God has always existed in a family-like reality as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, He designed human beings to give and receive love. As you review these materials, consider how God defines love and how His love is perfected through our obedience to Him.

Study Quiz

1. According to the lesson, what does it mean for man to be created in the "Image of God"?
2. Why is the human heart said to cry out for love more than any other topic in literature or music?
3. How is God's existence described in relation to "loneliness" or "isolation"?
4. In the Greek language, what is the meaning of the word *Teleo*, and how does it relate to "perfect love"?
5. When Jesus Christ was on the cross, He said, "It is finished." How does this relate to the concept of perfected love?
6. According to Romans 5:5, how is the love of God delivered to the hearts of believers?
7. What is the specific requirement mentioned in 1 John 2:5 for God's love to be perfected in a person?
8. The lesson mentions three "L" words that describe the essence of God's nature. What are they?
9. How did the Gnostics view themselves compared to others, and why was their lack of love a problem?
10. Why is it incorrect to say "Love is God," even though the Bible says "God is love"?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Being created in the Image of God does not mean humans have His physical traits. Instead, it refers to immaterial and spiritual traits, such as self-consciousness, the ability to reason, and the capacity for personal relationships with others and with Him.
2. The human heart cries out for love because God specifically designed humanity for interpersonal relationships. This deep longing is reflected in the fact that there are more songs, plays, books, and films written about love than any other subject in history.
3. God has never existed in a lonely or solitary fashion. From the beginning, He has existed in the fullness of a family-like reality as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, never being isolated from one another.
4. The Greek word *Teleo* means to be complete, whole, or to carry something out to its greatest extent. Perfect love is therefore a love that is complete and cannot be improved upon or added to.
5. When Jesus Christ used a form of the word *Teleo* on the cross, He meant that His work was complete and could not be added to. Perfected love is a legacy from Him that provides a fullness to which nothing else needs to be added.
6. Romans 5:5 states that the love of God is "poured out" into our hearts. This "thick" and abundant love is granted to us by the Holy Spirit, Who was given to us when we were saved.
7. For the love of God to be perfected in a person, they must keep His word and be obedient. While all believers receive His love, the richness and fullness of that love are experienced through an obedient life.
8. The three "L" words used to describe God's essence are Light, Life, and Love. If His life and light are in us, then His love will naturally be reflected through us to others.
9. The Gnostics felt superior to everyone else, believing they were smarter or possessed more knowledge about God. However, their lack of love for others proved they did not truly know Him, regardless of their complex theology.
10. God gets to define what love is; love does not define Who God is. While "God is love" is a biblical truth, reversing the phrase ignores the fact that His nature is the standard, and He is not subject to human definitions of sentimentality.

Essay Questions

1. Explain the "cycling" nature of John's teaching. How does his emphasis on love change from chapter 2 to chapter 3, and finally to chapter 4?
2. Discuss the difference between "emotional sentimentality" and the "love of the will" (*Agape*). Why is the latter considered the highest and noblest form of love?
3. Describe the relationship between the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and the human desire for fellowship. How does God's nature explain why He created humanity?
4. Using the example of Alexander the Great and his soldier, explain why a Christian's behavior must match their name. What does this reveal about "Orthodox doctrine"?
5. How does the lesson describe the "Floodgates of God's Love"? Discuss the role of the Holy Spirit and human obedience in experiencing this "gushing" stream of love.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Agape:** A love of the will; the highest and noblest type of love that is habitual and self-sacrificing, rather than based on emotion or physical attraction.
 - **Fellowship:** A relationship characterized by caring, sharing thoughts, and experiencing a rich human connection; in a spiritual sense, it is evidence of being "in the light."
 - **Gnostics:** A group of people in the early church era who claimed to have superior spiritual knowledge but often lacked moral obedience and love for others.
 - **Imago Dei:** A Latin phrase meaning the "Image of God"; refers to the spiritual and relational capacity God placed within humanity.
 - **NKJV:** The New King James Version of the Bible, used as the standard text for scripture references in this study.
 - **Orthodox Doctrine:** Correct or traditional beliefs and teachings of the church; the lesson notes that having right doctrine is not enough if one does not also have love.
 - **Perfect Love:** Love that is complete, whole, and finished; it is a love that has reached its maximum extent and cannot be improved.
 - **Sanctification:** The process of being made holy or set apart for God's use, which is directly connected to knowing and obeying Jesus Christ.
 - **Trinity:** The Christian doctrine that God exists as three persons in one essence: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
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Greek Word Guide

Greek Word	Phonetic Pronunciation	Definition
Agapao ¹	(ah-gah-PAH-oh)	To love with a love of the will; a habitual, divine love.
Phileo ²	(fil-EH-oh)	A brotherly love or friendship; a love characterized by affection.
Teleo ³	(tel-EH-oh)	To bring to an end, to complete, or to finish a task.
Tetelestai ⁴	(te-TEL-es-ty)	A form of <i>Teleo</i> meaning "It is finished" or "It is complete."

¹ **Agapao** (or *Hagapio*): Used in 1 John 4:7 to describe "divinely loved ones" and the command to love one another by choice and will. ² **Phileo**: Mentioned as "brotherly love" in contrast to the more complete "perfect love." ³ **Teleo**: The root verb used to describe love that has been "perfected" or made "complete." ⁴ **Tetelestai**: The specific word Jesus Christ spoke on the cross to signify that His work of redemption was entirely finished and perfect.