

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED UPON JOHN'S FIRST EPISTLE

OUR LOVE IS GOD'S LOVE

1 John 4:11-12 "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected in us."

In 1 John 4:11-12, the Holy writer John under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, communicates what is the expectation of those loved by God? What is John's strong belief? What is it that the recipients of God's love will do as a result of God loving them? This is a legitimate question based upon the first word of verse 11, "Beloved." Bruce Schuchard, in his commentary on 1 John, writes, The word "Beloved" is in reference to the love of the seen brothers in response to the love of the unseen God."

Throughout 1st John, reference is made to the mutual indwelling of the believer and God. The relationship God has created through His love implanted in the lives of believers is referenced in the words "us in God and God in us (1 John 4:13) and here in verse 12 "God abides in us and His love is perfected in us." "If God so loved us. . .," if He is filling our hearts with His love and continues to pour more and more of it into us, then His love will overflow, flow out of your heart, from you to come in contact with those who are near. "We" who have been filled with God's love, "also ought to love one another," writes John.

Through the Holy Spirit's guidance John gives two instructions. The first is that we believe in the name of God's Son, Jesus Christ. The second is that we love one another. This is how, John writes, you know the true God and His love for you. This is how you remain a member of the household of God. This is the community God creates through His love for the community and every member of it.

The foundation upon which your Christian faith and life is built is God's love. The goal God has for you is not to excel in your love for your brothers and sisters over against what others might have. (There is no competition.) Rather, it is simply to love one another. Your life is to excel in communion with your fellow Christians

and in your collective commitment to Jesus Christ your Savior. In this way your love is God's love.

Prayer: May Your love, O Lord, be my love. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heav'n, to earth come down!
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling, All Thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, Thou art all compassion, Pure, unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation, Enter ev'ry trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit Into ev'ry troubled breast;
Let us all in Thee inherit; Let us find Thy promised rest.
Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning, Set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty, to deliver, Let us all Thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never, Nevermore Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing, Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray and praise Thee without ceasing, Glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish then Thy new creation, Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation Perfectly restored in Thee.
Changed from glory into glory, Till in heav'n we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee, Lost in wonder, love, and praise!
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