

True Love

John 15:8-10

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A. Love is from Above (vs. 8-9):

1. My Father – The relationship between the Father (God) and the Son is best described in John 10:30; “I and the Father are one,” and “I am in the Father and the Father is in Me?” (John 14:10) Everything that Christ did was led by the Father (John 14:10-11). So because ‘God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son...’ so that we have eternal life (John 3:16), the Father (God) is Christ Father and is now ours (John 20:17).
2. My Father – The one and only person who began this spiritual birth (John 3:16; Christ birth through Mary), who is love by His very nature, still directs how His love is displayed through Christ to all those who are saved through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-25). Love should be a part of our nature since the Holy Spirit fully lives in us (Titus 3:4-8).
3. “My” – Throughout this passage, the word “My” will be repeated five times. This process is very personal from God the Father to Christ the Son to

us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Love comes from a personal relationship with God before it is a personal relationship with others.

4. Is glorified by this - The manifestation of the glory of God is the ultimate most excellent expression of the innate perfect nature of God in full display.

a) In this section of scripture, Christ says that God is manifested in all His excellent nature when the fruit of discipleship evolves in and through the lives of Christ's disciples. This cannot happen until they accept His pruning and, in the midst of it, commit to remain and dwell in His Word.

5. That you bear much fruit – The full expression of God's most excellent nature is displayed when believers continually, habitually express, by their behavior, the powerful inner working of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-25).

a) The vinedresser does two things to ensure maximum fruit production. In the winter, he cuts off the dry and withered branches. This may involve pruning the vines to the extent that only the stalks remain.

Later, when the vine has sprouted leaves, he removes the smaller shoots so that the main fruitbearing branches receive adequate nourishment. Philo refers to “superfluous shoots ... which are a great injury to the genuine shoots, and which the husbandmen cleanse and prune” (*Dreams* 2.9; cf. 2.64; *Agriculture* 10).^[1]

b) Bearing fruit proves that discipleship actually took place.

- Thirst – 1 Peter 2:2; Psalm 42:1.
- Understanding God’s Word is the Development of the Holy Spirit who takes over our Lives as we Walk in it – John 15:15-18.
- Serving using their Spiritual Gift – 1 Peter 4:10.
- Battle with Sin – Galatians 5:16-19.
- Believers Become Committed to Die to Themselves – John 12:23-26.
- A Maturing Believer Relationship Stimulates Spiritual Growth in Others - John 15:1-15.

- A Maturing Believer Remain Committed Through Trails Because they Understand this is an Important Part of Spiritual Growth – Hebrews 12:7-12.

- A Maturing Believer is Committed to Giving to God - Matthew 6:19-20; 1 Corinthians 9:10-11.

6. That you bear much fruit – The character of God continually finds its full expression when believers remain steadfast in their obedience to God’s Word in the midst of trials. This divinely maturing process shapes a believer's life to “be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” (James 1:2-4) It also purifies believers from the pollution that can infiltrate their lives (1 Peter 1:3-9).

7. Prove to be my disciples – When believers, once and for all, faithfully and persistently remain committed, no matter the circumstances, to obeying God’s Word, they validate that they are true learners and followers of our Lord Jesus Christ. The ultimate purpose of God’s work in us (John 13:34-35; Philippians 2:12-13) is to be His disciples.

8. Just as the Father has loved me – Similarly, the Father who began this spiritual process in Christ, decisively and persistently, not phileo (friendly love), but agape, loved Christ, now loves us through Christ. The Father loved Christ with a willingness to affectionately sacrifice all that was needed to

care for Christ while Christ ministered for the Father on earth. The Father visibly exposed the disciples to Christ's love, which must have been encouraging when Christ extended it to them.⁹ I have also loved you – At the end of His physical ministry with the disciples, Christ, assures them with much affection from the depths of His heart, that He has vividly and sacrificially extended God's love towards them in the very manner they saw God love Him.

10. Abide in My love – Christ commands the disciples to stand firm and remain committed to obeying His Word no matter the cost (John 16:33). This way, just like in His case with His Father, He will love them affectionately and compassionately.^t

a) What does it mean to “abide”? It means to keep in fellowship with Christ so that His life can work in and through us to produce fruit. This certainly involves the Word of God and the confession of sin so that nothing hinders our communion with Him (John 15:3). It also involves obeying Him because we love Him (John 15:9–10).^[2]

b) When he comes in to abide, he brings his love with him, which in turn is the very love enjoyed by Christ from the Father. Christian love becomes thereby divine in character.^[3]

c) Remain in My love might seem to be mystical but Jesus makes it very concrete. Obedience to the Father's commands is the same for a disciple as it was for the Son (cf. 14:15, 21, 23; 1 John 2:3; 3:22, 24; 5:3). Active

dependence and loving obedience are the proper paths for all of God's children.^[4]

11. Abide in **My** love—The disciples' obedience caused them to experience much tribulation (John 16:33). Christ's love did not remove their distress; it sustained them through it, creating a profound impact on ministry and tremendous spiritual growth.

a) First, the Father's love for the Son is the pattern for the Son's love for his disciples (9). Secondly, the Son's obedience to the Father is the pattern for the disciples' obedience to the Son (10). Thirdly, the need to *remain in my love* is repeated three times in vs 9–10. Fourthly, the Son's joy is the basis for the disciples' joy (11). There is a particular poignancy here in view of the approaching passion (but *cf.* Heb. 12:2).^[5]

12. Abide in **My** love – This affectionate and compassionate love is guaranteed to those who abide in His Word because it comes directly from Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

a) This is why a man must become Christ before he can consistently love his wife (Ephesians 5:25-32; the man is commanded to do so because he is Christ, the word – wash the wife, in the home). A wife has to become the church before she can consistently love her husband (Titus 2:4).

13. For those who commit to abiding in God's Word no matter the circumstances, Christ can now command and expect us to abide in His love towards one another: "*This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.*" (John 15:12; NASU)

B. Empowered (v. 10):

1. If you keep my commandments – We must decisively commit to learning and obeying God's Word and view it as authoritative, directly provided to us by Christ. This is critical to experiencing God's love through Christ.

a) Christ's love is God's love, and the love we abide in is His – John 14:15; 15:10. The only way a person can keep loving is to keep the Lord's

commandments (Mt. 22:36-40). Jesus had to do the same thing as fully man, especially with all the enemies He had. This led Him to ask God to forgive all those who crucified and mocked Him.

2. You abide in **My** love – The best way to experience Christ's benevolent love (His love is focused on our needs, not our desires) is to be completely committed to trusting and obeying His Word even if the circumstances we encounter are stressful.

3. You abide in **My** love – We can be completely certain we will experience the Lord's love when we surrender ourselves to remain steadfastly committed to walk in His Word.

4. Just as I have kept My Father's commandments - No matter what level of extreme circumstances Christ encountered, He remained completely surrendered to "be about His Father's business." He modeled for us (1 Peter 2:21-25) how our trust in God's Word 'works all things out for our good.' (Romans 8:28)

a) In this Gospel the obedience of Jesus to his Father is frequently mentioned (e.g., 4:34; 6:38; 8:29, 55), and that obedience reaches its climax in his yielding his life for the salvation of mankind (10:17–18;

12:27–28; 14:31). Bultmann accordingly defines the Son’s “remaining” in the Father’s love as a “being for” the Father, fulfilled in his obedient work as Revealer; even so the believer’s “remaining in” the love of the Son consists in a “being for” him, fulfilled in the service of love as he commanded (541).^[6]

5. Abide in His love – We need to be determined to continuously, steadfastly remain firm, no matter what, surrendered to obeying God’s Word so that God’s love for Christ becomes Christ's love to others.

a) How can we tell when we are “abiding in Christ”? Is there a special feeling? No, but there are special evidences that appear and they are unmistakably clear. For one thing, when you are abiding in Christ, you produce fruit (John 15:2). What that “fruit” is, we will discuss later. Also, you experience the Father’s “pruning” so that you will bear more fruit (John 15:2). The believer who is abiding in Christ has his prayers answered (John 15:7) and experiences a deepening love for Christ and for other believers (John 15:9, 12–13). He also experiences joy (John 15:11).^[7]

6. You abide in His love - For those who commit to abide in God's Word no matter the circumstances, Christ can now command and expect us to abide in His love towards one another: "*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*" (John 13:34-35; NASU)

7. "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.'*" (Matthew 22:36-40)

8. When a person cannot love someone, it exposes that they love their feelings or the way they think more than they love God. To vividly portray their true relationship with God, a person must love their enemy (Romans 12:14-21). Loving an enemy is one of their many rewards (Matthew 5:43-48) and is the perfecting of their faith. Christ portrayed this when He was on the cross. When all His enemies were below the cross, and those walking by were mocking Him, despite the pain, humiliation, and betrayal, Christ said, "*Father, forgive them; for they do not know when they are doing.....*" (Luke 23:33-37)

9. The most incredible display of a person's love for God (a true disciple) is when they faithfully obey God's Word towards a person they ought to hate (the Book of Hosea).

^[1] Arnold, C. E. (2002). [*Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: John, Acts*](#). (Vol. 2, p. 144). Zondervan.

^[2] Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [*The Bible exposition commentary*](#) (Vol. 1, p. 355). Victor Books.

^[3] Pfeiffer, C. F., & Harrison, E. F., eds. (1962). [*The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament*](#) (Jn 15:9). Moody Press.

^[4] Blum, E. A. (1985). [*John*](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 326). Victor Books.

^[5] Guthrie, D. (1994). [*John*](#). In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 1057). Inter-Varsity Press.

^[6] Beasley-Murray, G. R. (1999). [*John*](#) (Vol. 36, pp. 273–274). Word, Incorporated.

^[7] Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [*The Bible exposition commentary*](#) (Vol. 1, p. 355). Victor Books.