



## Discussion & Application

1. Many people fear that if they become a Christian they will stop truly “**living**.” What do you think they mean by “living”? What do they misunderstand about God’s love, His plan for them, and their real purpose for living? What does 1 John 4:9 say about that? If you are a born-again follower of Jesus, how did your life change when you trusted in Jesus alone for salvation? What negative things went away? What positive things were added?
2. Pastor Paul believes that one of the keys to interpreting 1 John is understanding how John uses “**THE love**” (definite article). How does John define “THE love” in 1 John 4:9-10? [Note: verse 10 with the definite article = “This is THE love...”] How does that definition of THE love help make sense of the rest of the passage?
3. What does it mean that we **abide** in God and abides in us? What are the different ways that John says we can have **assurance** that we abide in God and He abides in us? (see verses 12-16)
4. In **Eph. 3:14-21**, the Apostle Paul prays that believers will understand the love of God on an ever-deeper level. A deep understanding of God’s love promotes a stronger assurance. But many “honest” believers admit that there are times when they don’t feel like God loves them. What do you do to deepen your understanding of God’s love for you? What practices have helped you the most? What other passages of Scripture help you? What role does a worship service and partaking of communion play in it?
5. Some synonyms for the word “**perfected**” = mature, complete, reached its intended goal (see verses 12, 17, and 18)? What is John’s point in verses 17-18? How do you know when THE love of God is perfected in a person’s life? How does that help them face the trials and tribulations of life and/or face death without fear?
  - v. 17 – By this, THE love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment
  - v. 18 – There is no fear in THE love; but THE perfect love casts our fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in THE love
6. How does focusing on THE love of God in the cross of Jesus Christ help us when we:
  - Have been sinned against by others?
  - Are relating to people who don’t “deserve” our love and attention?
  - Lose a loved one?
  - Lose a job?
  - Hear that we have a terminal disease?
  - Are about to die?
7. In 1 John 5:1-2, notice all three of the tests of eternal life: believe that Jesus is the Christ; love God and fellow believers; lifestyle of obedience to His commands. Do you see evidence in your life that all three of those are true as a pattern of life? Give God praise that THE love has been perfected in you!
8. Is your life **characterized** by consistently loving others sacrificially? If not, how would meditating on THE love of God in Jesus Christ motivate you to die to self and love others?
9. **Memorize** 1 John 4:12-21.