



Alêtheia
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
November 21, 2021
“Perfected Love”

Sunday school at 9:30, Service at 10:30 with King’s Kids.

NEWS

Wednesday Nights at Alêtheia 6:30 🛎 Christmas Party December 10, 6:00 - See Karen Dalton

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776

Visit the website ~ www.myaletheia.com

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Emails: pastor@myaletheia.com, stacey.sundt@myaletheia.com

One of the most important _____ of Christianity is that acts of compassion toward your fellow Christian motivated only by God’s _____ poured through you, is Christianity.

You can get everything else _____, but miss this one thing, and you are nothing - you will be nothing (I Corinthians 13).

If you love though... It, all by itself, will be _____.

I John 4:7-21 ~

Through our actual love for each other as brothers and sisters, all people, the unsaved, as well as the Saved, get their most enduring _____ of God. It is seeing His love manifested among Christians that makes Him known.

Our love for one another proves to the world that we are His _____. We look at that from our perspective - “look I’m a Christian,” but the real point is that it shows all the world that Jesus is the Christ - that He is God - that supernatural things are afoot.

Perfected here is τελειόω (tē-lā-ō-ō) meaning the ultimate purpose, goal, fulfillment. Here it is that God’s _____ has reached His intended effect. What is that?

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

When God's love flows through you to another person His love is perfected. This is not a feeling - this is your concrete action driven by God's love and experienced by the other person.

Like forgiveness, the person who can pass along what God has done for them with regard to love, proves that they get it.

In an ultimate way - you're not doing it for anyone, but rather because it is who you are. What is the Fruit of the Holy Spirit, if not Godly character?

Anyone at all who "confesses that Jesus is the Son of God," is a Christian, because that is the only requirement to be reborn into eternal life as a Child of God (Joel 2:32, Acts 2:21, Romans 10:10-13, I John 3:23, etc.).

It is the above the line items. You must accept the basic concepts to include the idea that in order for peace to exist between you and God, you've got to fully embrace the path He provided - fully embrace Christ as Lord and Savior.

If anything is required beyond acceptance of what is provided, then to that degree, the person saves themselves, and therein lies the lie of all the various forms of legalism.

Verses 16&17 tells us that while all Christians have been blessed by the love of God, only some believe with all their heart that God loves them. Do you?

If you truly know Him, you will come to recognize Who He is, and you will come to trust Him fully, including coming to trust in His perfect love for you. The proof that you do, is your actual physical love for other Christians, motivated only by your complete confidence in His Love.

The only people who have no fear are people who fully believe that God truly loves them individually. Love perfected, is love extended, and for such a person there is no fear. That perfected love has driven out all fear because that person believes that God has them, now, and forevermore.

Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

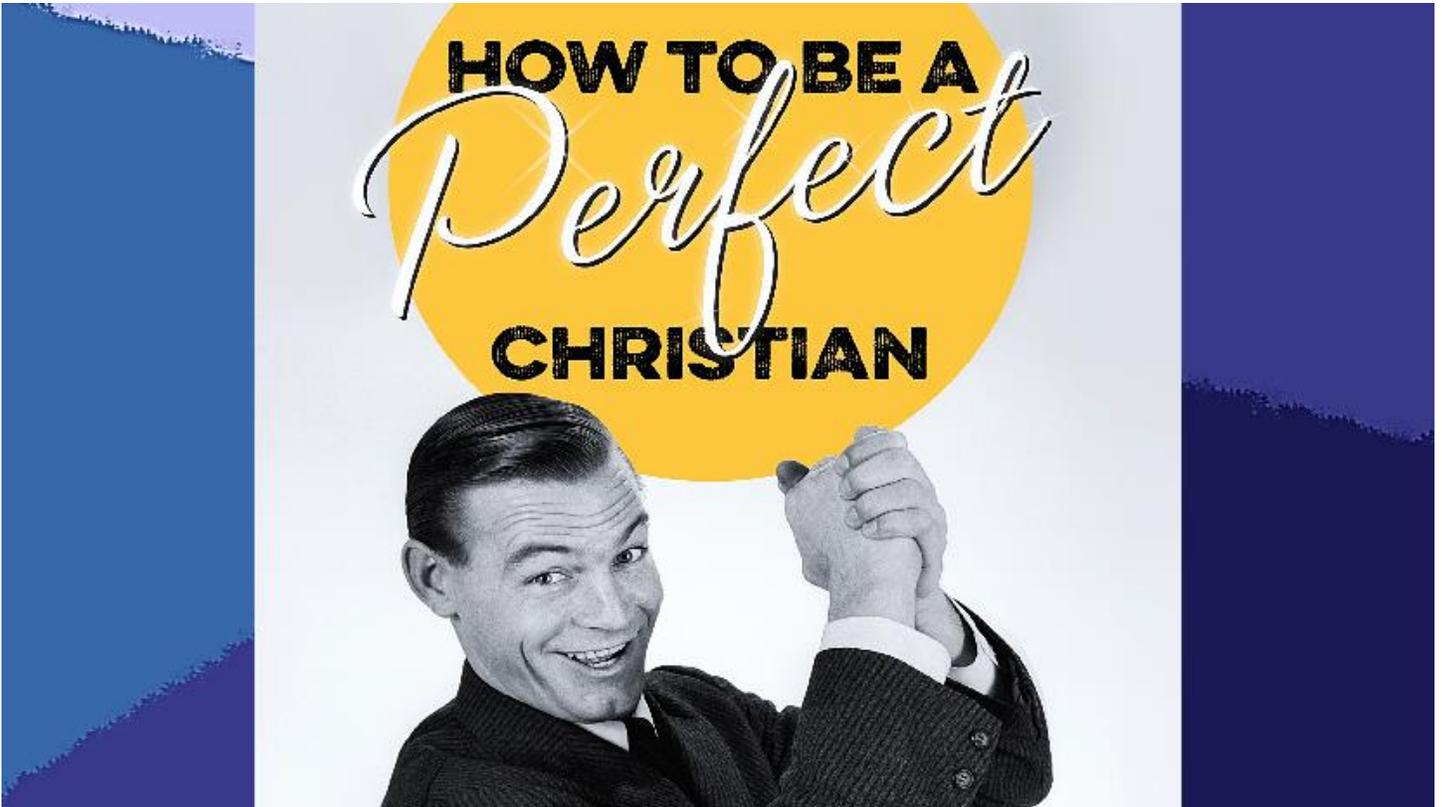


Today I want you to see one of the most important Truths of Christianity. It is so essential, and yet, so poorly grasped.

The reason it's so difficult to put together is because it's the opposite of a soundbite. This Truth is so interwoven and deep that cannot be understood, or accepted, without hours of setting the stage. Well, if you've been here the last couple of months you've put in the preparatory work. If you haven't, or if you don't clearly see the Truth presented today, I encourage you to go back and listen to the last 5 or 6 sermons and then this one again and make sure you do fully get this Truth today, because it has the power to change your perception, which can enable God to change your reality.

I'm going to tell you what it is a few times today, and in fact, I stated it plainly last week. The point is not to kind of get it, but to fully get it. What is it? "Actual, concrete, physical, actions of care, concern, and devotion, to your fellow Christian, starting in your local church family, motivated only by God's love poured out in and through you, is Christianity."

It is being a disciple... A follower of Christ... A child of the Living God... It is to abide in the Truth, walk in the Light, be like God, stand without fear... My friends, it is to obey the commands of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords... It is to be a Christian.



All the other stuff we do is nothing compared to this. Please understand that you can be the most uptight, ridged, strict, separatist the world has ever seen. You can avoid even the appearance of evil like the plague, and you can give all your money to the poor and you can work yourself to death saying "Yes" to everyone.

You can plaster the 10 Commandments on your house and car and refrigerator and even have them tattooed to the back of your eyeballs.

You can get baptized until the fish know your social security number, sing in the choir, never miss a church gathering, speak in the tongues of angels, prophecy in from the rooftops, comprehend all the mysteries, master all the knowledge, move mountains with your faith, feed the hungry, and give your body to the flames to be burned... But if you do not have actual love for the people in this room you are nothing more than a noisy gong, a clanging cymbal, you are nothing... And all of that, will profit you nothing.

But if you love - it, all by itself - will be enough. I've mentioned it many times before. It's my favorite extra-biblical story about the Apostle John. In his extreme old age John's disciples used to carry him into their church services. John would repeatedly say Agapê - love. Over and over, nothing else, just repeating, "Love, love, love." Finally, Polycarp, who would go on to be the Bishop of Smyrna, asked John why. The Apostle whom Jesus loved, replied, "There are many things to Christianity, but if you would just love, it would be

enough.” Well, I better prove that by putting all this together as we close this chapter, and we better find out exactly what actually loving one another entails. We’ll start by re-reading our passage from last week and let it naturally flow into the verses for today...



I John 4:7-21NLT, 7Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. 8But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. 10This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as

a sacrifice to take away our sins. 11Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. 12No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us. 13And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us.

14Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. 15All who declare that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. 16We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. 17And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world. 18Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love. 19We love each other because he loved us first. 20If someone says, "I love God," but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? 21And he has given

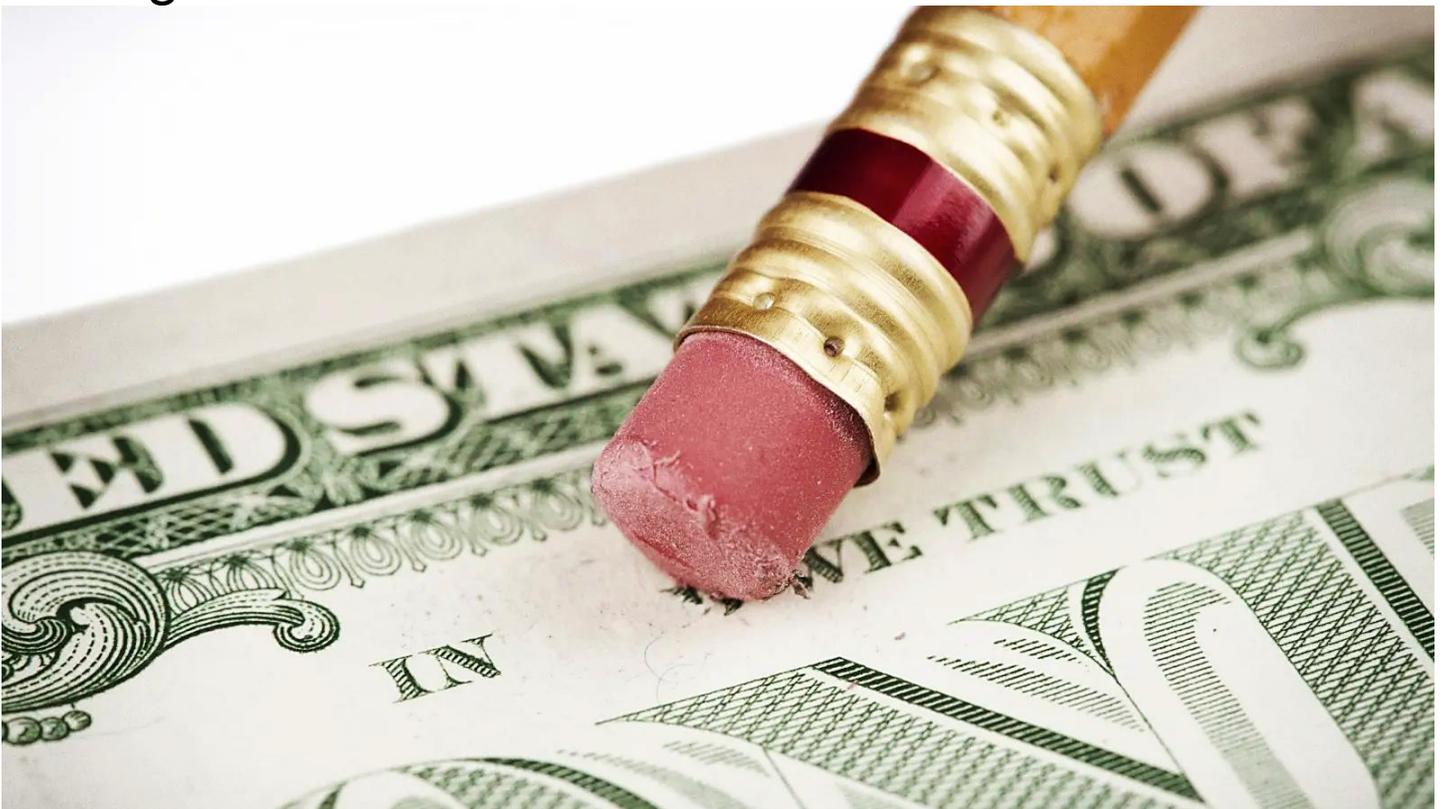
us this command: Those who love God must also love their fellow believers.



Okay, we start in verse 12, "No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us."

Last week I plainly said that the lost people of this fallen a depraved world see God in the love we have for one another. It's not in our voting record, our protests, our efforts to end abortion, our charitable contributions, our Christmas & Easter celebrations, or even in our telling people about Jesus... It is through our actual love of each other as brothers and sisters

that unsaved, eternally doomed, human beings can see God - frankly it's how we see God ourselves. Initially, you might see God through prayer, miracles, Bible revelation, and other things, but the most enduring vision of God is seeing His love manifested among Christians.



Why would the world believe in a God who is so utterly impotent that there is no tangible evidence for His existence? "Well, you just gotta have faith." That's dumb. That's the nonsensical blind faith the lost assume is required. God provides tangible evidence so that our faith has a basis in reality.

There's the natural world around us, the universe beyond us, the Bible as a preserved guide, the testimony of the earliest disciples, the occasional miracle, sure, all of that, but the Truth from God Himself, is that the evidence is "God loving His children through His children."



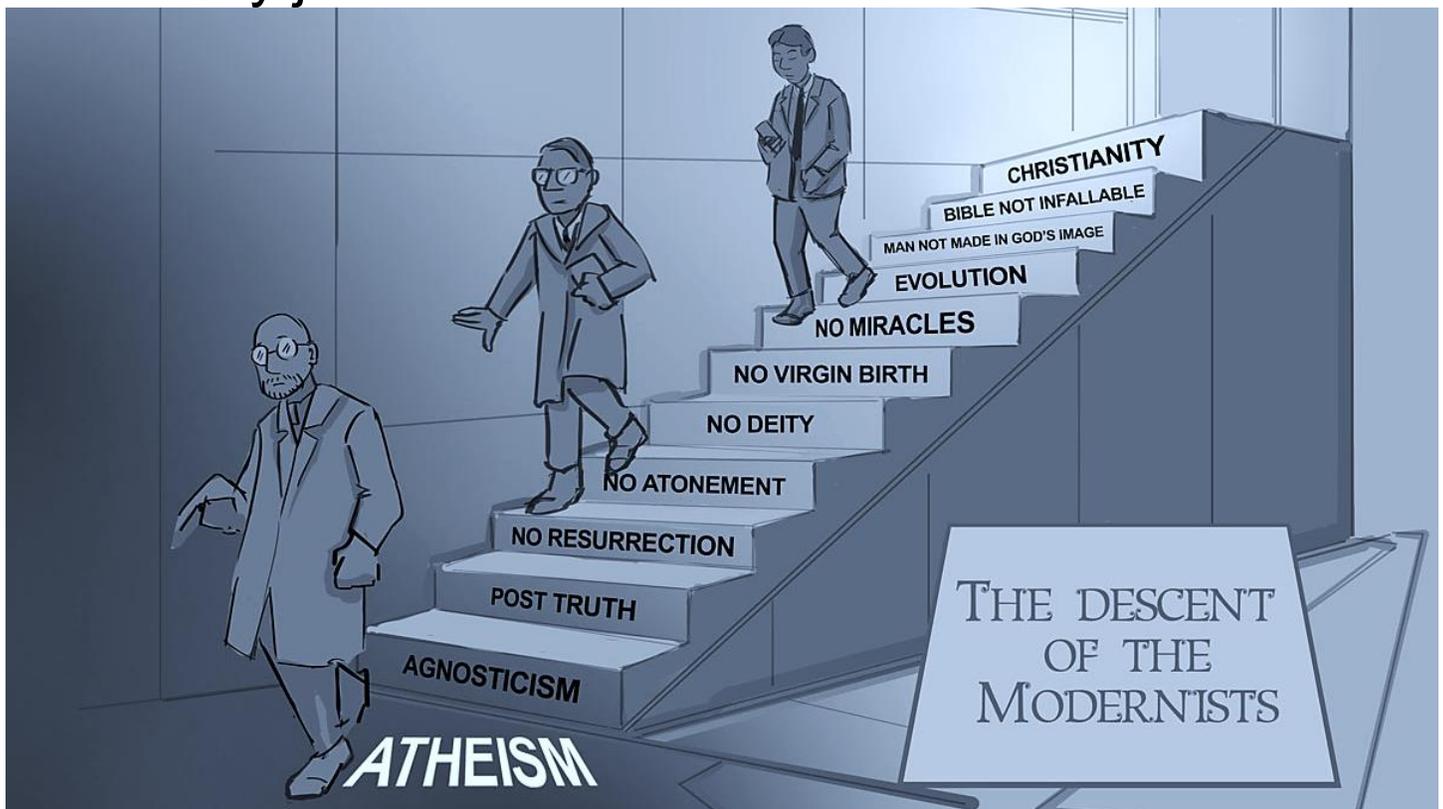
Jesus declared, after commanding us to "Love one another" that it was our love for one another that would prove to the world that we are His disciples. We look at that as being a badge showing all the world that we are Christians, but the real point is that it shows all the world that Jesus is the Christ - that His sacrifice worked, that He is at the right hand of the Father and

that the Holy Spirit has been sent into the hearts of men and women as evidenced by their unnatural, unconditional, altruistic, God-love that they have for one another!



Jesus Himself commanded us to "Love one another," and we run around making Christianity about everything else. Shame on us, shame on us for making it so easy for Satan to derail all of Christianity to the point that no one in the world can see God. The so-called Christian community is made up of a sorry bunch of knuckleheads. We have hundreds of cults big and small practicing and promoting a false Christianity, which is not only not Christianity, it is anti-Christianity

as in Antichrist. They're the ones who typically get this service to one another right which is what draws the world to them. The world can be hoodwinked into thinking that the false love of false Christians is the real deal, because much of the world is desperate to see God - they just don't.



Then we have the radically liberal branches of Christianity where the Gospel is so watered down it's hard to imagine how anyone could find God there. It's mostly about social justice, charitable enterprises, ecumenism, and encouragement to be a good person nonsense, but what they have is the pomp and circumstance - the ritual, tradition, and ceremony.



Then you've got the radically right-wing Christian groups that act like Trump is their Messiah. They draw people who are upset with the changes the Progressive Democrats push. Please hear me... Jesus is not a Trump supporter, He's not even a Republican, because He's not an American. Jesus is God. He has your eternal soul on His mind, not your displeasure with America's political scene.



So, where can the world see God? Where can we, ourselves, see God? If we would simply obey Jesus, we would all see God regularly and the world would be without excuse because God would be looking them right in the eye through the church.

The Bible constantly proclaims this Message, but we don't see what we don't want to see. Here in verse 12, it is as plain as it could possibly be and yet... Yet, what? "No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us." The "No one" is all-inclusive, once again. It means that there has never been, and

there never will be, a human being on earth who has seen God, period, end of story.

If, if, if Christians love other Christians, that very love reveals God because it can only be from God as we've seen before and so it means that God abides in the person and can therefore be seen by Christian and non-Christian alike. God is made known in this way.

In what way precisely? by His perfect God-love perfected in human beings. Perfected here is τελειόω (těl-lā-ō-ō) meaning the end goal, the ultimate purpose, the idealized fulfilment. Here it is that God's love has reached His intended goal for it. What is that? When a person feels God's love for them through the actions of a Christian allowing God to use them in that way.

When God's love flows through you to another person That love is perfected, it's complete, mature, had its intended effect.

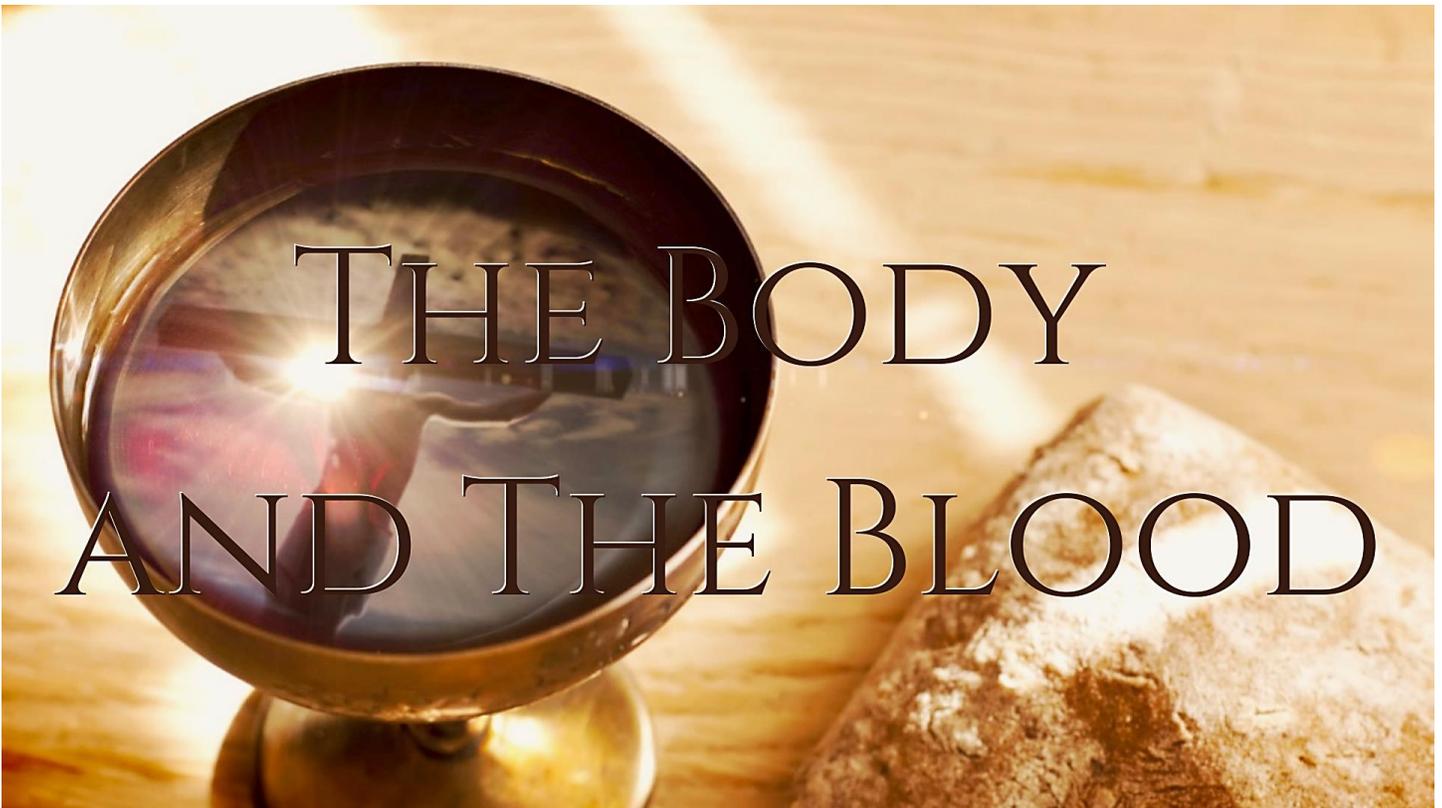
This is not a feeling - not some esoteric oozing from God through you to another - this is your concrete action driven by God's love and experienced by the other person.



While simply thinking happy thoughts towards another is not it, something as simple as an encouraging word to a person struggling with their faith, or hugging a person in need of a human connection, or lending a shoulder for someone needing to cry, can be. Selflessly, self-sacrificingly, serving others, can take many forms from dropping a note, to chopping firewood. From teaching a class to working in the nursery. From leading worship to cleaning the bathrooms. From giving wise counsel to lending an ear.

The one thing that all these things have in common is that in order to do them, without prejudice, one must put aside their feelings, opinions, preferences, and

agendas for the common good. You must humble yourself in order to be actively involved in the lives of other Christians - you must be a loyal, trustworthy, and faithful member of a local church family, because charity starts at home. This is how people see God. This is what the Apostle Paul meant when he told us that when we share Communion it proclaims Christ to the world.



Isn't it interesting that Communion, one of the things that Jesus instituted to help us fulfil His command to "Love one another," has been one of the biggest points of disagreement, division, and disavowal in the universal church?

Whole denominations have split over how the elements are administered, how they are taken, how they are perceived. What was to bring Christians together in unity as a demonstration of God's Love poured out among us has turned to an excuse to fuss and fight. Kudos to Satan - shame on us.

Allow God to perfect His love in you and you'll know it's happening when He starts physically touching other people through you. That's what perfected means. Let God's love have His intended effect.

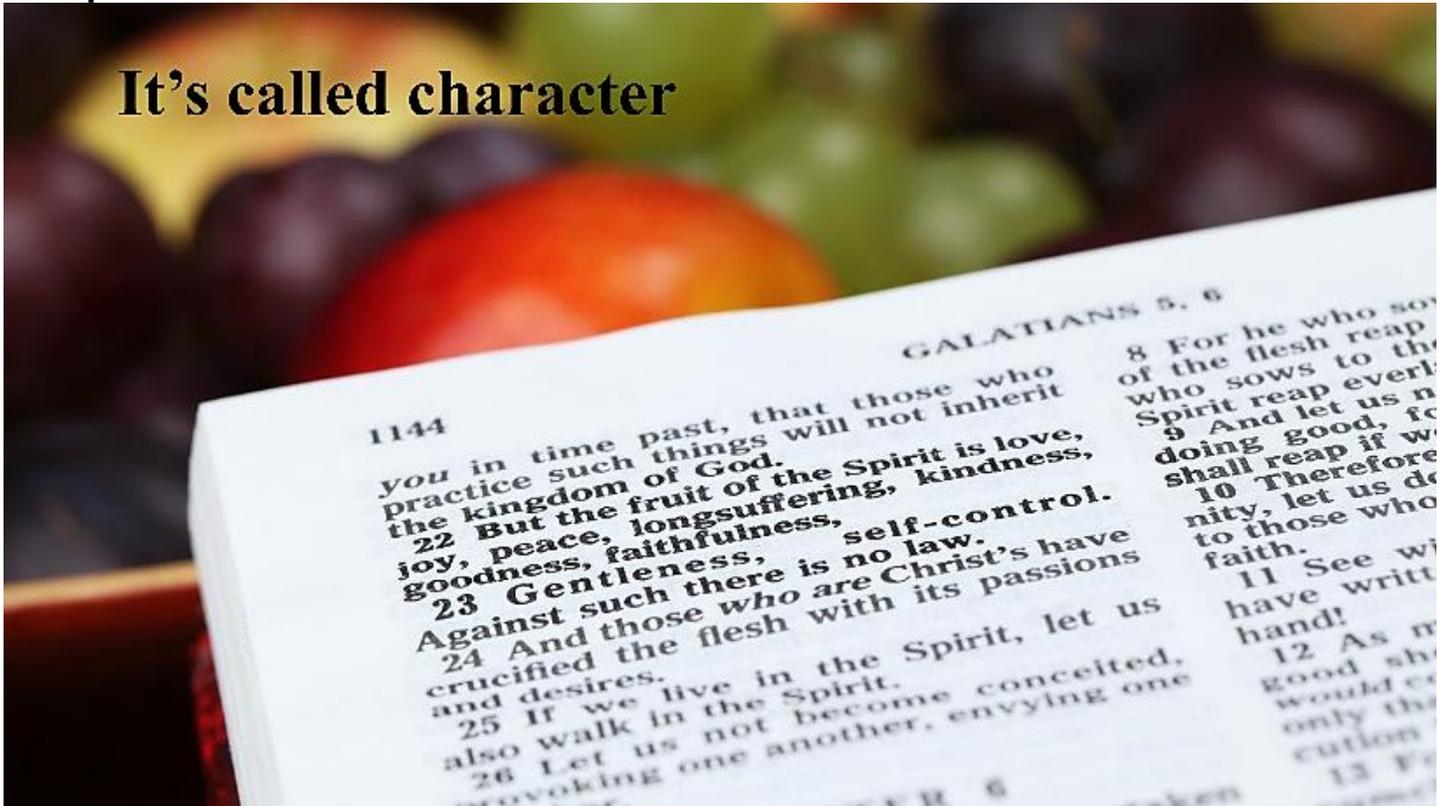
Like forgiveness, the person who can pass along what God has done for them in this way, proves that they are Fathered by God and that they actually know Him, because they have allowed His Holy Spirit to mature and sanctify them.



We were discussing the reality that discipline simply means conformity. Discipline is training through both positive and negative reinforcement to get a person to operate within a set of predetermined parameters - to get them to think, act, and speak, like a member of the group to which they are being conformed - a disciplined person is a disciple. We discipline children until they fit in society. We discipline recruits until they are Marines. God disciplines us until we are living like the Christians, He has made us to be. The longer and harder one fights the process, the lengthier and more difficult it is and the less time remains to be that which you were intended to be. Stop fighting, trust God, be disciplined.

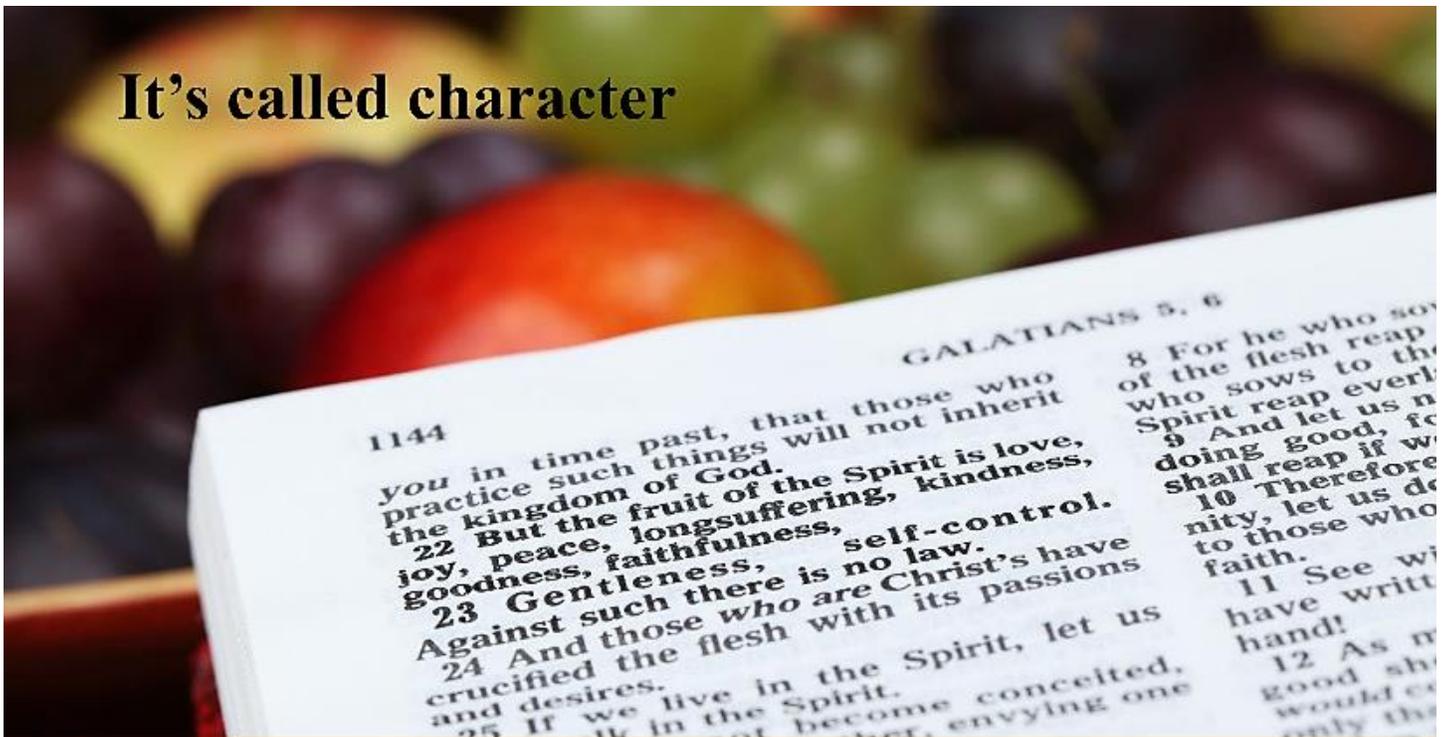
Disciplined here, means intentionally allowing God to love others through you, regardless of how they respond.

It's called character



In an ultimate way - you're not doing it for God, or for them, or for you, but rather because it is you. When you behave in this way because it is now who you are, from your Holy Spirit conformed character, you are doing it the same way that Jesus did it on earth - the same way your Heavenly Father has done it to you.

It's called character



¹³And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us.

That's the gist of verse 13. What is the Fruit of the Holy Spirit, if not Godly character? Likewise, how can you know that you even have the Holy Spirit if you keep Him locked away in some remote corner of your heart that is "two sizes too small" (Dr. Seuss).



In verse 14, the “Disciple whom Jesus loved,” the great Apostle John, who witnessed Jesus Transfigured, who ate the Last Supper next to the Lord, who was at the foot of the Cross where Christ entrusted His earthly mother to his care, what was in the Upper Room on the Day of Pentecost, who was inspired to write 5 Books of the Bible including the Gospel and the Revelation - that guy here reminds us that these are not his musings on the matter. This is not something he was taught in church, or picked up in seminary.

14 WE HAVE SEEN AND TESTIFY THAT THE FATHER HAS SENT THE SON TO BE THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD.



He bluntly and boldly states that he, along with the other Apostles, hand-picked by Jesus, together with hundreds of disciples, all personally saw, touched, and knew the One and Only Son of Almighty God sent by the Father with the commission to Save the world. They lived, ate, traveled, laughed, cried, and learned directly from the Anointed One, the promised and long-awaited Messiah, the Christ - who is Jesus.

JESUS

Anyone, and that actually means anyone without exception, who “confesses that Jesus is the Son of God,” is a saved, Holy Spirit filled child of the Living God. That is the only requirement to be reborn into eternal life as a Christian. It is never this plus something else. This is the thing that is necessary for Salvation, and it is the only thing necessary. What does it mean? It is synonymous with “calling on the name of the Lord” (Joel 2:32, Acts 2:21, Romans 10:13), and with “confessing with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believing in your heart that God raised Him from the dead” (Romans 10:10). It is the same as John just

mentioned in the last chapter. "Believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ" (I John 3:23).

It is, once again, the above the line items. You must understand and accept some basic propositions in order to fully embrace Jesus as the Christ - as your Lord and Savior. Ideas such as God exists, and He intervenes in the affairs of man. Man for his part is utterly depraved and cannot save himself. God unilaterally sent His Ambassador, the Word of God made flesh and blood, to broker peace. As such, Jesus operating under the full authority of God paid the price for man's transgression paving the way for reconciliation. You must believe the basic idea that in order for peace to exist between you and God, you've got to fully embrace the deal - fully embrace Christ. That's the gist.

Baptism, Communion, church attendance - even loving other Christians is not part of that deal. None of that, none of any of the other below the line items is necessary for God to save you. If any of it was necessary, then to that degree, you'd be saving yourself, and therein lies the lie of all the various forms of legalism.

The Pharisees were the most rigid, devout Jews on the planet, and they murdered Jesus. I wonder how much better the most rigid, devout Christians on the planet would do if Jesus showed up at their church. I don't know why so many people claim that they believe the Bible, but then refuse to accept what the Bible plainly states. An eyewitness to the entire ministry of Jesus. A man who saw Jesus heal thousands, turn water into wine, walk on water, calm violent weather with a word, stand transfigured on a mountain together with Elijah and Moses, be brutally crucified and hastily buried. A dude who saw the resurrected Jesus, ate, and conversed with Him for 40 days after He died and then saw Him caught up into Heaven. As I already mentioned a guy who was in the Upper Room on the night of His betrayal, and also on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit confirmed all that he had experienced by pouring Himself out among the Followers of Jesus.

JESUS

**¹⁵WHOEVER CONFESSES
THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD, GOD ABIDES
IN HIM, AND HE IN GOD.**

This Apostle wrote, “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.” Where are all the other requirements we love to attach to the deal? It’s Jesus - it’s only ever Jesus.

¹⁶WE HAVE COME TO KNOW AND HAVE BELIEVED THE LOVE WHICH GOD HAS FOR US. GOD IS LOVE, AND THE ONE WHO  ABIDES IN LOVE  ABIDES IN GOD, AND GOD  ABIDES IN HIM. ^{17A}BY THIS, LOVE IS PERFECTED WITH US...

Verses 16&17 make the whole thing I've been on about today crystal clear if we are willing to see it... John now states something truly profound. He tells us that when God's love is poured out upon a person who has been reborn of the Heavenly Father - become a Spirit-filled Christian, that reality has an effect upon them.

For John, and those like John, who have intentionally and actively courted that, meditated on it, prayed for it, and allowed themselves to be transformed by it - well, they believe it. Please get that. All Christians have been blessed by the love of God, but only some believe with all their heart that God loves them.

Do you believe that God love you? Do you believe, recognize, and accept the fact that God loves you completely? That's the kicker. You probably want to believe it, according to the Bible and God's character you can believe it, but it doesn't follow that you will believe it.

There is only one way you can join John and those mature Christians like him, and that is to know God. If you truly know Him, you will come to recognize Who He is, and you will come to trust Him and that includes coming to trust in His perfect love for you.

Now, there is a proof that you are there - a proof that is tangible and real that you truly believe in God's love because you trust Him, because you know Him, and that proof is repeatedly stated as well as commanded in this passage. It is, of course, our actual physical love for other Christians motivated only by the complete belief that God loves you and wants to love others through you.

Now, when that proof is observed, you are genuinely operating in the family business - you are a minister of

God's grace. You know that God is operating in and through you and you have absolute confidence in your personal relationship with Him and so, naturally, you are no longer driven by fear.



We fear everything as human beings - it is our defining motivation. We fear rejection, we fear the future, most of all we fear death, and maybe not death as much as the unknown following death. All human beings, regardless of the stupid things that they say, fear God's Judgment. The only people who have no worries at all about any of that, are the people who fully believe that God loves them. Of course, some people believe that

God loves them because they are delusional. Don't be delusional.

If you actually have a wonderful, vibrant, reciprocal relationship with God now, as evidenced by His love being perfected in you, why would a little thing like death change that relationship? Why would you fear His judgment in any way, shape, or form?

Perfected: Reaching the Ultimate Goal



Love perfected, is love extended, and for such a person there is no fear. That perfected love has driven out all fear because that person believes that God has them, now, and forevermore.

That is the confidence we can have. It's not automatic and I daresay few Christians ever get there. It requires getting to know God and that requires a whole lot of effort, including the effort to pay attention every chance you get when someone's teaching you Who God is.

I'm intensely aware that these sermons are long and difficult, and I have many pastor friends who think I'm out of my mind for preaching this way... But my dear friends, I'm convinced that you must know the things that require you to work. They are important deep Truths. Every church has its niche and its purpose. There is no end of churches that preach milk... We don't need to duplicate that here. I know that it takes time, and effort, and patience and perseverance, but I believe in you - I believe that you can handle the Truth.



The Truth here is that God loves you - He gave up what was most precious to Him to save you - not from Hell, but to Himself. You have nothing to fear - so don't. And because you have no fear love others well with abandon regardless of what they do or don't do, how they act or react. Do it because that's who you are in Christ. A member of God's family.