



Daily Verse and Comment

[John 13:35](#)

(35) By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

New International Version

Even as [God](#) is revealed by what He does, so will His children. Our love for God has not made this possible, but His love for us has, as [1 John 4:19](#) says, "We love Him because He first loved us." Thus, our love for Him is a response to His love for us. Since God shows His love for us by drawing us to Him, it behooves us to do acts of love toward others to draw them.

God's act of love in giving His Son defines the ultimate requirement of true love, the giving of our most beloved possession in sacrifice for another's gain. We can understand, then, that godly love will almost always have sacrifice involved in its giving. Sacrifice is the essence, the essential or vital part, of love.

[God's love](#) originates in Himself, was manifested in His Son, and is perfected in His people. God's love is perfected in us when we reproduce it in or among ourselves, primarily in our fellowship. We either use love and perfect it or lose it. This partly explains the apostle John's intense concern about fellowship. What concerned him is not just an optional blessing to believers, but a fundamental outlet for the manifestation and perfection of God's love among and in the saints.

It should be obvious that we neither have God's love by nature, nor is it self-generated. [Romans 5:5](#) verifies this understanding: "Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which was given to us." We receive godly love from its Source, God, by means of His Spirit.

Only by knowing God can we have this love, and only by loving can we know Him! This may sound like a vicious cycle, but the two go together. Only by learning to love God can we learn His nature, that is, what He is like. We cannot have that love until we first come to know Him. By fellowshiping with Him, we come to know Him and receive His love, and in using His love, we become like Him and really know Him. We can only really come to know God by experiencing the use of His love ourselves.

All this is possible because God, in His love, initiates a relationship with us, grants us [repentance](#), gives us His Spirit, and then, because of His love, takes the lead in sustaining the relationship. This is why Paul says in [Romans 5:10](#) that "we shall be saved by His life." He primarily shoulders the burden of our salvation. How comforting!

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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[The Fruit of the Spirit: Love](#)

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