

Abiding Love

[00:00:00] **Adam:** Welcome to Know God Deeply with Precept, where we discuss how to dig deeper into the Bible and discover God's truth for ourselves. Because when we know God more deeply through His Word, we live differently.

Let's dig deep.

Hello and welcome to the Know God Deeply podcast. My name is Adam. Today I'm joined by Rachel, Corina, and David. How is everyone today?

[00:00:35] **Rachel:** Doing good.

[00:00:36] **Corina:** We are good. I liked the way you said it.

[00:00:39] **Adam:** Awesome. Oh yeah. Did it have a rhythm to it? That, you know, sometimes it helps me to remember things if I have a rhythm to it. And you know, like, previous episode we talked about songs about love, 'cause those were bouncing around our heads as we're talking about love. We're gonna be in 1 John chapter four today, still talking about love.

I've got another song in my head from, like—children's church is what we called it at my church growing up; now it's kids' church—but 1 John 4:7-8. It's, like, the song—we sang those verses. Is anyone familiar with that one?

[00:01:16] **Corina:** No.

[00:01:18] **David:** *[Singing]* Let us love one another...

[00:01:18] **Adam:** Yes, David.

[00:01:20] **Corina:** Oh, I don't know that one.

[00:01:20] **Adam:** *[Singing]* Love is of God... *[Speaking]* Yeah, it's basically straight Scripture, but it's to a rhythm and probably one of the first Scriptures I memorized because of that rhythm.

[00:01:30] **David:** Song.

[00:01:30] **Adam:** ...of that song. Yeah. So do you guys have anything like that? Children's church song that you remember, or a song that you have maybe taught your own child that still sticks with you?

[00:01:42] **Rachel:** I do. I was homeschooled for one year and stopped because I hated it.

[00:01:50] **Corina:** Oh no!

[00:01:50] **Rachel:** But I learned from that one year all the countries of Africa. Granted this was circa like 2000 maybe. So, yeah. So I can sing all the countries of Africa.

[00:02:03] **Corina:** Wow.

[00:02:04] **Rachel:** Yeah.

[00:02:04] **Corina:** Wow. I mean, that comes in handy occasionally.

[00:02:08] **Rachel:** It does actually.

[00:02:09] **Corina:** Homeschool is awesome. See? I think of “Father Abraham” off the top of my head, had many sons, many sons had Father Abraham. But I sing “The Goodness of God” to my son, and I realized it’s only when he’s upset. So now when I sing it and he’s not upset, it gets him upset.

[00:02:27] **Rachel:** Oh no!

[00:02:28] **Corina:** That’s really unfortunate because it’s such a good song. So I dunno, I need to do shock therapy with him.

[00:02:34] **David:** I can’t remember my childhood, but—it’s all blur. But my children’s—they had a—they all went to a Christian school and they had a rap of the books of the Bible. Yeah. And that was, yeah—and that was fun. I couldn’t do it for you, but that was—I do remember that that was—

[00:02:51] **Corina:** Yeah.

[00:02:52] **David:** ...had a good beat.

[00:02:53] **Adam:** Yeah. That’s good. Yeah. I memorized the presidents of the United States the same way, by putting a to rhythm. And so it’s helpful to have that to remember.

Well, like I said, today we’re in 1 John, chapter four. We’re gonna be reading the entire chapter. We talked about love being mentioned a lot of times in the previous chapter. It’s mentioned even more times in this one, so we’re excited to dig in. Who’s reading for us today?

[00:03:24] **Corina:** I can do it.

[00:03:26] **Adam:** All right, Corina, take it away.

[00:03:27] **Corina:** Okay. 1 John 4.

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the

world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 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.

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

[00:06:02] **Adam:** All right, so let's remember some of the context for why John is writing. He's responding to a rise in false teachers like we've been talking about. And so what test does John give for discerning the spirit of truth?

[00:06:18] **Rachel:** Yeah, he kind of seems—there seems to be almost two sections in this chapter: the first part where he is talking about these false teachers, these antichrists, and then he transitions into love. And I mean, what kind of stuck out to me was that one of the major tests is what they say about Jesus. You know, did He come in the flesh? Is He Christ?

[00:06:37] **David:** Yeah, it wouldn't be like the only test, you know, but it is one that you can't fail. If you fail this one test, you're not of the right spirit. And there's—and, you know, we know there's no chapter divisions in the original manuscripts. And so verse 24 just flows right into to four verse 1, 3:24 to 4:1. And you've got this Spirit who's abiding in us. And then he

wants to remind us though to test these spirits. And one of the tests, as Rachel just said, is what do they say about Jesus?

And we've been talking about, you know, could this be gnosticism heresy? Could it be the beginning of gnosticism? And the more I read about it, the more confused I get. But there is a sense in which there has always been this question mark over Jesus. How can He be God who is perfect and be man who is fragile, who is limited? And so that paradox, I think, is what causes this concern. And so that's where people have gone off one way or the other, but He says, here's the question. If they don't believe that Jesus came in the flesh and He's from God, then they're the wrong spirit. The Holy Spirit would not do that, so...

[00:07:51] **Corina:** Well, and it's interesting because, you know, especially coming off the heels of 3:24, like you said, the Spirit whom He has given us—he's talking about believers versus non-believers. This—those who have the Spirit of God versus those who have the spirit of—he says—the antichrist, and he does do a lot of work in 4:1-3. But he does bring back this sense of testing what is true or testing the spirit in verse 15, “whoever confesses”—you see that word again?—“whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he and God.” And so it makes me wonder whether the confession isn't a clue to something deeper. So it's not just about what we say.

We've pointed out again and again that John is very concerned with you not just saying something. So it's not just that they say the right thing about Jesus, but you've got all this love talk in between verse 3, and then when it comes back up again in verse 15, it's... does what you say about Jesus match your life? Those things are still very connected. And you saw in chapter 1 where “confess” came up and it was a believer confessing their sins and casting themselves on Christ for forgiveness. And so there's this idea of confession being more than saying the same thing, but like you said, it's “same speak” that changes our disposition, changes our heart attitude towards God.

So it's just interesting to me that he still doesn't let anyone off the hook with behavior. It's not just, here's how, you know, the test of the antichrist. Do they say the right thing? It's still, do they abide in love? Do they confess Jesus as the son of God? Does that mean that their life has changed?

[00:09:28] **Rachel:** Yeah.

[00:09:29] **David:** That's a great observation. Yeah, I hadn't even thought about that. That's really good.

[00:09:33] **Adam:** That is really good.

[00:09:34] **Rachel:** When I was poking around in Logos, I noticed that the verbs in verse—or verse 1—so “do not believe” and then “test” are plural verbs. And so that really struck me, that John is kind of envisioning that this testing, this kind of discernment is something we do within the context of other people. Not that we can't do it alone, right? We have the Spirit in us to help us with that, but maybe it's best done in the context of a community, a church, a relationship of some sort. And that I know in my own experience, that that can really help me as I'm trying to kind of discern things is to have wise counsel and people that I've been around.

[00:10:14] **Corina:** That's so helpful. I can't tell you how many times I've—well, I think I have this—the gift of discernment and my husband's like, "Well, I think you're wrong. I think you're wrong about this person." It does take some insight from others sometimes to keep us on the right track. Yeah, that's a great point.

[00:10:39] **Adam:** Okay, so how does John compare those who know God to those who don't know God? Perhaps we could make a list of those comparisons and contrasts.

[00:10:40] **Corina:** Yeah, verse 2 is the first one I pick up. The Spirit of God is the one who confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. Those who know God confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.

[00:10:51] **David:** Yeah, love verse 6: "We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error." So there's—it's not arrogance here, as if he's, you know—but he is obviously filled with the Holy Spirit. He is obviously an apostle. And so he is writing out of that authority, out of that position, you know, that God has—that Jesus has given him. So if, in other words, if in verse 6, if they are saying something, if they're not listening to us—and by translation they're saying the opposite of, or conflicting what we're saying—then you know they're not from us. So that would be—and it's kind of that Spirit of truth and error kind of going on in that verse. So there's—it's either-or. And so if they're speaking the truth they're from—they know God. If they're not speaking the truth, then obviously they don't know God.

[00:11:50] **Rachel:** Verse 8 stood out to me mainly 'cause it confuses me a little bit: "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love." So we see people who aren't practicing love, who don't love, don't know God. And I was kind of wondering—I don't know if y'all read *Harry Potter* growing up, but it's like...

[00:12:06] **Corina:** Yes.

[00:12:06] **Rachel:** "Not all Slytherins are bad wizards, but all wizards are bad Slytherins" kind of situation. So I'm kind of like one—this verse led me to wonder. I can understand that people who are not loving, who do not love, do not know God. But then I wonder about the non-believers in my life, who are some of the most loving people I know, you know, even compared to other believers I know, like, but they don't know God.

So what does that say about their love? Anyway, I don't know if I have the answer to that, but it was something that was getting me thinking, 'cause I have a hard time thinking that they're not truly loving because that doesn't square with my experience of them in reality. And maybe it's just that, yeah, they are loving. And that's a benefit of living in a world where there is love because there is God. What an amazing gift and a grace to us. I don't know if anybody has any thoughts about that, but...

[00:13:02] **David:** I wonder if, you know, remember when Paul, in 1 Corinthians 13, he's talking about love and he kind of goes through these conditional statements and he says, if you do this, but you don't have love, it's not worth anything. And one of those is if you're a martyr. So I would say from a human perspective, that looks like love, right? To give myself, give my life literally over, it looks like love, but Paul's gonna say, that's not what he's talking about. So there must be some kind of distinction between a worldly love and a divinely

driven love, or a divinely given love. You know, later on in this chapter, verse 19, he's gonna say, we love simply because He first loved us, which tells us the initiator of our love is not ourselves. It's Him. So I think it might be a different kind of love that he's talking about other than, "Okay..." You know, I don't want to name anything because I don't wanna get anybody upset, but there are some religion—cultish, religious people that are very what seemed to be loving. But I wonder if in the scheme of things here he's talking about, that's not the kinda love that he's talking about. I probably just made that more confusing.

[00:14:22] **Rachel:** Yeah, it helped but it also didn't because I'm like, is it only *agape* love from God?

[00:14:27] **David:** Yeah.

[00:14:27] **Rachel:** Yeah, yeah. But I get what you're coming from. Like, what's the motivation behind that? Yeah, I don't know.

[00:14:33] **Corina:** I think motive is key. And that's a super helpful verse to show that, right? If I give my body to be burned, if I give away all my possessions, right? A lot of people we would—I think of Taylor Swift, you know, constantly giving to charities. People applaud her for that because it's a loving thing to do. We don't know what her motive is, and Paul says it's possible to do those types of acts of charity, those acts of love without love, to your point.

But I'm with you, Rachel, that I think there is something. There is something really disconcerting about somebody enjoying the gifts of God and yet not knowing God. And one of those gifts is love. Like, I know a lot of believers who have walked away from faith or struggled with faith because the people that they know who are not Christians, their lives are just as good as people who are Christians, in some cases better. And the argument is, well, you know, if I—what's the draw to be a Christian? If their marriage is fine, their, you know, outreach is fine, everything's fine without God. And that, of course, from a Christian worldview is a testament to God's grace and God's love. And this world we live in where God showers His grace on believers and non-believers alike. So I hesitate like you to automatically discredit the love. I would lean towards saying this is just more of God's love in action. Certainly it's a convicting thought that if they can do it, we'd better be able to do it.

[00:16:06] **Rachel:** Yeah, exactly.

[00:16:06] **David:** But I think if you stay into the immediate context, you read verse 8, right, Rachel? And we get that if you don't love, then you don't know God, we get that. It's the opposite of that. So if you go to verse 7: "Beloved, let us love one another." Why? "For love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God." So the love he's talking about is a love that comes from God.

[00:16:38] **Corina:** Hmm.

[00:16:38] **David:** So it's, it's gotta be a "God" love, not a—not just a general "being nice to others" kind of love. Does that make sense?

[00:16:47] **Rachel:** Yeah. I think that helps, right? Like, there's a love that is rooted in the love of God. But I mean, when I think about my non-Christian friends, like, their love isn't just nice, you know? Like, it's true, like, I would consider true love, but yeah. I get what you're saying. It's like, where is my source of love coming from? Is it rooted in who God is? And that can make a huge difference in the impact maybe that that love can have in the world. Yeah. Sorry, didn't *[inaudible]* throw us for a loop there...

[00:17:17] **David:** No, no. It's a great question! I've heard a statement that says, if one loves God, he's gonna love what God loves. So my love for God is directly tied to what God loves. So if that principle's at play here, then he's saying if you—this is one of the ways you know you're of God, if you love others. Why? Because love is from God and God is love. You know, so I think that's the tight connection.

The question you're asking is really good, 'cause I know there are some people that I would say they're not Christians. And yet they're very sacrificial. They're very generous. And yet Paul would say, doesn't work—it doesn't amount when you add it up, it's for nothing if it doesn't have love.

And so there's gotta be some kind of “God” love or “love from God” connection to make it actually legit or to make it actually what it's supposed to be, you know. So... but, I mean, that's a great a conundrum. That's a tough point, I think. Yeah. Yeah. That's a good question.

[00:18:32] **Adam:** What do versus 7-12 show us about how we can experience love?

[00:18:38] **Corina:** Hmm. I think the—there's this point in any relationship or friendship where you're wondering who's gonna show their cards first. You know, who's going to show a deeper interest, who's gonna express, “Hey, you're my best friend,” or, “I love you.” You know, there's this little bit, maybe that's just me, but there's a little bit of push and pull where you're trying to not give too much of yourself away and show all your cards.

And it's interesting that we learned that God didn't have any qualms about showing His cards about going first. He initiates this love that He gives us. And I just was struck by every single verse in this section saying something about the love of God. It is heavy on the love of God. Love is from God. God is love, the love of God. He loved us. He loved us so. You know, it's just over and over again. And so it does tell us a lot about, about the love of God and specifically how He loves, which is through sending His Son to be the sacrifice for our sins. So, yeah, I love this section.

[00:19:46] **Rachel:** Yeah, me too. This is where I really camped out when reading this chapter for sure. And I really love how our experience of love is our experience of God. John takes something here that's kind of—I don't know—intangible, in many ways. Love. It's like a... what even is it? You know, it's fleeting, it's whatever. Like, how do—what do—how do we really grasp what love is? And he says, oh, that's easy. God is love. And he—this love is now becoming tangible. You know, in verse 9, it was made manifest through Jesus. This was a tangible, in the flesh manifestation of God's love. And today, maybe we can't touch and look at Jesus, but we can love one another. Verse 12, no one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected.

So he takes something that's invisible and makes it tangible for us, which is such a gift. I know, at least for me.

[00:20:46] **Corina:** It gives you a deeper appreciation of Jesus's parable in Matthew 25 of, you know, if you do these things, you're doing them to Me. There's a sense in which, okay, John got to touch and taste and hear and all of these things with Jesus. We don't, and we're back to this, okay, no one has seen God. But the love that we have for each other can—we can be Jesus to other people and they can be Jesus to us. Yeah.

[00:21:13] **David:** Verse 9, it got my attention. This—how can I experience it? It was—the love of God was made manifest. How was it made manifest? Well, it was Him sending His Son, His only Son into the world. And then look at why, so that we might live. And this preposition is so mind-boggling, “through him.” His love was manifested in the sending of His Son. And the result is, how do I experience it? I get to live through Jesus.

I mean, what are the implications of that preposition “through”? Like, what, what is he talking about here? What does it mean to live through, to experience the manifested love of God in Jesus, and then to be able to have life? You know, *about* Him. You know, He teaches me how to live. He was a good example for me to live. Yeah, those are all true. But that's not what he says here. It says that so that I might live through Jesus.

You know, and I don't know if he's talking about the doctrine of the union of Christ and that mysterious way of how my life is no longer mine. Paul would say It's no longer me who lives, but it's Christ who lives in me—he'll say, you know, in Galatians. So there's a sense of, wow, I mean, how do I experience it? Well, I experience it somehow in connection through Jesus, that love that the Father has shown to us and through Jesus. So I think that's—obviously I haven't wrestled that down to the ground and figured out the details, 'cause I'm still standing in awe of, wow, this is not just Jesus telling me—God telling me about Jesus, Jesus just being a good teacher, Jesus being a good example. Those are all true. This is something mysterious of, my life is truly experiencing the love of God through His Son.

[00:23:10] **Rachel:** And I think that's the point, David, that we are to just stand in awe, you know?

[00:23:15] **David:** Yeah.

[00:23:15] **Rachel:** We can wrestle all the details and think through all the details and maybe we'll figure some of it out. But at the end of the day, I don't know if we could ever figure it all out, and that's not the point. The point is to stand in awe. Yeah.

[00:23:26] **Adam:** Yeah. God in many ways can be un-figure-actable.

[00:23:31] **Rachel:** Yeah.

[00:23:32] **Adam:** But let's try to figure out at least some practical things, some application points. How can abiding in love reshape the way we handle, whether it's confusion or doubt, disagreement even things like disunity. Are there ways that abiding in love can help us in those areas?

[00:23:54] **Rachel:** Well, it's interesting because that's probably what this church was going through. We've touched on this in this series, right? With these false teachers, these people that had kind of created maybe some division, these people that John was writing to, were probably going through some of that. And so I find it really interesting that he kind of throughout this letter talks about, you know, false teachings, these antichrists, how to see them, and, but then also, like, huge interspersing that with huge sections of love and kind of, like, combining those two things together.

And I know in my own experience with confusion and doubt and disagreement and disunity, like, love makes all the difference, because I think about that verse you brought up, David, 1 Corinthians 13. You know, love is patient. It's kind. It doesn't insist on its own way. It isn't resentful. It believes all things, bears all things.

So, I mean, when you think about the context of tension, disagreement, whether that's in a church or just in a relationship, love is what is going to bind that together. Love is what's gonna bring about restoration and healing. And if you're struggling to understand where somebody's coming from. I heard a quote one time, once, you can't understand anything if you start with a no, with a closed off heart, with a rejection. You can't understand anything if that's your starting point. But we see that that's not what love does. Love's starting point is an open heart, an open mind, an open hand. Doesn't mean you can't use a no still, but if that's our starting point is this open hand and open heart instead of rejection, then that's gonna go miles and miles in the context of disunity and tension.

And I've seen it work in my own life in the context of just personal relationships, but also in the context of church life. I've seen that work so...

[00:25:49] **David:** Yeah, that's a good principle.

And the way I answered this question, y'all, is I went and just marked the keyword abide and I see it beginning in verse 12, all the way through the end of verse 16. I see it one, two, three, four, five, six, seven times. So, wow. Okay. So there's something going on here. So I just went to—looked at each one, asked the text, how can abiding in love reshape me? So in 12 the answer seems to be if I'm abide—if God abides in me, His love is perfected. I think somebody said it earlier, it's completed, it's maxed out, it's the goal. So that's cool.

Then in verse 13, "By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit." Now note what he's doing here in 13 is he is—it's another assurance. We've been talking about this a lot. Another evidence that I, you know, that I'm actually His and I—so we can know that we abide in Him. We know that we are born again. We know that we are believers because of the gift of the Spirit. And so how can abiding in love reshape me? Well, one of the means by which He would do that then would be through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in my life. A gift He has given to us. Remember, He told the disciples, remember He is about to leave, and He says, "It's better for Me to go than to stay."

And, like, what? How could that be better? "Because I'm giving you, I'm leaving you, My Spirit"... was better. That's better than being with Jesus on earth. I mean, I still—every time I say it out loud, I'm like, really? Oh my gosh, how can that...? Yeah. I have something better than those guys did, the twelve apostles? Yeah. Here's what he says. We've got it better because we have the Holy Spirit, so...

We just kind of went down and just kind of looked at each “abide.”

[00:27:42] **Rachel:** Yeah.

[00:27:42] **David:** And, and kind of made a list out of that, so...

[00:27:46] **Adam:** Yeah, that’s good practice.

I immediately jumped down to verse 18, which says, “There is no fear in love.” And when I think about these things that we’re trying to figure out, ways to handle confusion, doubt, disagreement, disunity. You get to the base of those things and often it’s fear that has induced those things.

[00:28:12] **David:** Yeah.

[00:28:12] **Adam:** I can’t figure things out. I don’t know the way forward, or I don’t know how to get into agreement with this person ‘cause I think they’re gonna take advantage of me. All these kinda fears can be the groundwork that makes these issues worse. But if we have love that casts out fear—and I love the way that is stated, “But perfect love casts out fear.” Just that visual of, it’s banished from here. It’s encouraging for me when dealing with any of these kinds of issues with other people. It’s like, let that be our foundation. Perfect love.

[00:28:52] **David:** Yeah. It’s that beautiful picture of—fear has nothing to do with punishment, by the way. So he defines fear. So this is not reverence, this is not all, this is being scared of getting punished. It’s that feeling of, if you have a relationship in your life, could be a parent or a spouse or a really close friend, where you know you’re completely safe. Like, they got your back no matter what because they love you. I think that’s the image here is that, you know, if you’ve got love, how does it reshape me? It gives me confidence because I know who loves me. I know how much He loves me, and it doesn’t matter what else is out there. There’s no fear of Him going, “Ah, you messed up. I’m done with you. You’re out.”

It’s not because—we know that—not because we earned that love, we acquired that love. We were given that love, as we said time and time again, while we were yet sinners. Right? We were dead in our trespasses and sins, Paul would say, but we’ve been made alive in Christ. We’ve been given that love.

And so, punishment, you know, it doesn’t matter. There is no punishment. Right? I’m—He loved me so much, He gave me—He gave His Son to die for me. So there’s nothing that can separate me—Paul would say—from the love of God in Christ.

[00:30:10] **Corina:** And I think that that’s key. That’s the connecting point to what you were saying, Adam, is when there is no fear in love, you’re not afraid of any punishment of God because as He is, so also are you in the world. His loving you has made you a loving person and you love Him and it just keeps going in this beautiful cycle. Then you can’t be, and you won’t be, afraid of man. I mean, how many times does God tell us in the Gospels through Christ, like, there’s one person you should be afraid of who can truly, has any power over your eternal soul. And that’s Me. And if there’s no fear in our relationship, then there’s no

fear of anything else or anyone else. And so I do think that would solve a lot of problems if we didn't have fear in—when we're facing relational conflict.

[00:30:55] **David:** Yeah. And verse 4, y'all, I've used verse 4 so many times in my life of, you know what? I feel the enemy. I remind myself, greater is He who's in me than he who's in the world. And that's what casts out fear, doesn't it? That's, you know, that is an antidote to, I'm vulnerable and I'm destroyed by my enemy. He's like, "No, you're not. He's got you."

[00:31:20] **Corina:** Right.

[00:31:20] **David:** You know, not to be lackadaisical about it, but you know, to be, you know, to see assurance from that promise.

[00:31:28] **Adam:** All right. Well, you may have answered my next question, David, with that answer, but what does it look like to abide in love in your day-to-day life?

[00:31:38] **Corina:** Yeah, I think it's what we've been talking about for me. When I think about the fact that these verses are so God-heavy, that it's just—his point is just to emphasize over and over; he doesn't get tired of saying, "God is love. God loves you." And he's the disciple whom Jesus loved. I mean, this is—you could just see how that upper room moment with Jesus was like, this is—this changed his life.

And I think that speaking of fear, you look at the Garden of Eden, you look at Eve and Adam disobeying God. And I think fear played a role in their choice to disobey. Right? Eve was afraid that, sounds like the serpent is suggesting that God is holding out on me, that God is stingy. And this whole book is just a counter-argument to, God is not stingy. He's generous. He is lavishing, bestowing love on us, and when I am focused on the love that God has for me, then I can love other people.

If God—verse 7-12—loves, loves, loves, loves, loves, loves all the way down, seven, in those verses, then I can love other people and it's only in resting in that love though, that I'm gonna be able to love others. So I just think it's interesting how those thoughts are connected. What you believe about God and His love directly affects always how you view yourself, but also how you love others.

[00:33:04] **Rachel:** Yeah. I love that you used the word "focus" and—'cause that to me, like, that's part of, like, when I look at the word "abiding" and what it means, it's to dwell, right? It's to remain and to stay there. And that can be hard to do in the context of our just, like, busy schedules and everyday lives. Because there are so many other things to focus on and not that we, I, shouldn't focus on those things. So a practice that really helps me is to create space at least once in my day, to dwell, like truly dwell and create space for my mind to focus and dwell. Whether it's a moment or a minute or five minutes, whatever it is that day, but to just like sit there in silence and stillness in the presence of the Holy Spirit, acknowledging Him with me so that my mind can dwell and truly be aware because I feel like the, "oh, God loves me"—especially those of us who grew up in church, that can become just something so rote that we say sometimes. But to take, and this probably won't work for everybody, but to take time out of my day, to just quiet my mind and when it starts to wander about my responsibilities or random things, pulling it back to the love of God in me and around me, and His presence with me. Even if it's just for a minute in the morning, I find that

that really helps the rest of my day, despite the distractions and responsibilities. I find myself better rooted and grounded in that love so that I can act in love.

At least from a—kinda like, you know, they say you can't pour from an empty cup. I feel like that's something that helps me kind of fill up my cup of love so that I can pour it out to others.

[00:34:45] **David:** Yeah. Wouldn't it be cool if the Spirit had recorded all those prayers Jesus did in the early mornings? You know, we don't have 'em. We have John 17 prayer, which is the longest recorded prayer of Jesus. And there's just a real connection, intimacy. It's not about task. It's not about protection necessarily. It's a heart, right? So I think that—I love that you do that. I think it's a great exercise. I need to do it myself, but I think that's—if that early morning or whenever you do it—but if that early morning for me is how I start the day off, I should expect good things. Not successful things, not things that make me comfortable, but I should expect "God" good things. And I love that. So it's kind of like a centering, right? A realignment each day to those things. That's good. That's good.

[00:35:47] **Adam:** Yeah. And that takes practice to do that, especially, you know, to kind of take some points you both made. David, you said it's not so much task-oriented and it's hard sometimes to get out of the task-oriented mindset. And then, Rachel, you were talking about not chasing every thought when you do try to quiet your mind, and so, I know for me that does take some intentionality for sure to get to that place. And yeah, it may not come easy at first, but I love the practice of focusing on Him and giving everything to Him.

[00:36:26] **David:** Yeah. I had read a guy who said, before you get outta bed, you ought to do these prayers. And I tried it.

[00:36:32] **Rachel:** Did you fall back asleep?

[00:36:32] **David:** I fell asleep every time. Like, okay, that's—now I gotta get up.

[00:36:36] **Adam:** Right? Yeah. All right, so let's bring this conversation down to a personal takeaway. It's time for "So What?" What's your big takeaway from studying 1 John chapter four?

[00:36:50] **Corina:** Yeah. Verses 20. Well, I guess just verse 20 is mine: "If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen." And I think just from a fleshly standpoint, I am a person who's very aware of how people might perceive me. What message does this send from a spiritual standpoint? I think that's also because I'm concerned about witness. I'm concerned about how does this make God look? John MacArthur has a quote that I've always loved; he said your testimony either tells the truth about God or tells a lie. I think that's what John is saying, that, you know, people are gonna ask you that question that James challenges his readers with, where he says you're gonna say, "I have faith." Well, show me your faith. Without your works, you can't do it. You say you love an invisible God. You and God have got this thing going. Prove it.

And I think this is just such a heart check for me of remembering that, yeah, ultimately God knows what's in my heart, and that's reassuring. And God is the one who loves me and whose love is flowing out of me. But it just, it can't ever escape my focus and my concern

that it has to go out. Like, it has to make it be made visible or what are we doing? You know? So I dunno if that made sense, but yeah. This verse is the one that I'm taking with me.

[00:38:19] **Adam:** Yeah, that's great. Yeah. That visible, actionable love is kind of the track I'm on as well.

And Rachel had highlighted verse 12 earlier about, "No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us." And that "no one has ever seen God" part reminded me of when Philip was asking Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father and it is enough for us." And Jesus, frustrated or offended—or we're not sure exactly what His emotions were, but He was like, so...

[00:38:53] **Corina:** Tired, just tired.

[00:38:53] **Adam:** Yeah, I've been with you so long, you still don't know Me, Philip. You don't know Me. You don't see the Father in Me. And He's like, how could you even ask, "Show us the Father"? I've been showing you. And so that's, you know—we wanna follow that model as believers too, right? We wanna show people the Father through His love.

And so, yeah, my big takeaway is let my actions display that.

[00:39:24] **Rachel:** That's good. I think my takeaway is similar to everything y'all are talking about, and what strikes me is just, like, the practicality of love. It is not just something to talk about, to make us sound righteous or to make us feel good. No, it has, like, purpose. We see that it helps us discern who's lying, you know. And it helps—it casts out fear. And ultimately that's what's manifesting God both to us and to those around us. There's—and like you were saying, Corina, like—which is ultimately our witness. You know, like, there's real practical, like, purpose in love. It's not just something to talk about because it sounds really nice to talk about. It's... yeah.

[00:40:07] **David:** I was also in 12, Adam, but the second part of 12 for me. "If we love one another, God abides in us"—and here's what got me—"and his love is perfected in us."

What I hear in that is hope. What I hear in that is growth. There's a future, so it's—there is possibility, you know, in that statement. So I know that as I abide in Him and as I love one another, if I love others, then He is gonna do something with that love in me. And—perfect it, grow it, whatever that word—the implications of that word are. But it's just—it's bigger and it's better and it's in the future. And so I love that. It's not a—you know, I'm a legalist at heart, doggone it. And so I wanna try to earn, I always try to earn God's love. And this is another, you know, spike in my heart. No, you don't. He—you abide in Me and I'll grow your love. You don't grow your love and then I'll abide in you. It's the exact opposite. So yeah. That's my takeaway.

[00:41:21] **Adam:** All right. Well, listeners, we hope that this conversation has been an encouragement to you to continue to walk in love and not be weighed down by task-oriented, "trying to earn it" type of love, but that the love that you display and walk in has a practical purpose and a foundation for your faith and your lives. So stick with us and we have a quick break and we'll be right back with "Take It or Leave It."



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[00:42:25] **Adam:** Okay, we are back. It's time for "Take It or Leave It." Rachel, what do you have for us today?

[00:42:30] **Rachel:** Okay, so yesterday was a bit of a chore day for me after work, and one of those chores was watering the many many plants I have. And so my "Take It or Leave It" is fake plants for decor around the house, take it or leave it?

I might have shown my hand there. I'm leaving it. They are a bit of a pet peeve of mine. I think they usually look fake, although I will say they're getting better. They're getting better. Some of them...

[00:42:53] **Corina:** They're so expensive when they look good though.

[00:42:55] **Rachel:** Yeah. Yeah. What do you think, Corina?

[00:42:58] **Corina:** Oh, I have one or two, but I also have three or four real ones that have not died. So I'm, you know, I think one day I would love to keep all my alive plants alive and then be like you, but until they stop dying, I have to say the fake ones can add something, you know, when it comes to decor. So I have to take the fake plants. Yeah.

[00:43:25] **Rachel:** Fair enough.

[00:43:27] **David:** Yeah, I married an interior designer, so I don't get a say either way.

[00:43:34] **Rachel:** What would she say?

[00:43:36] **David:** But she has—I was just looking around. She has nothing but natural plants. But she takes care of 'em and I don't, so yeah. I think if I were a bachelor, they would be all fake for sure.

[00:43:47] **Corina:** Tell-tale bachelor sign.



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[00:43:50] **Adam:** Well, I actually have quite a few real plants. I only have one fake one, and that's because it's in a bathroom with no window and I just needed something in there. But yeah, I'd like real plants because if you are a single man that wants to decorate his house, it seems like the options are either very girly or man cave decor and there's no in between, but plants seem pretty neutral and give you a little bit of color. And so yeah, I've got seven or eight real plants. And so far they're all staying...

[00:44:25] **David:** What's your favorite? What's your favorite plant?

[00:44:27] **Adam:** Favorite? That's the reason I'm single. I can't pick a favorite. The—I don't know. I've got a fiddle leaf fig, I guess is probably the most prominent one in the living room.

[00:44:38] **David:** Yes, really big?

[00:44:41] **Adam:** It's not huge. It's not like a floor to ceiling one. It's about three feet or so, I guess.

[00:44:46] **David:** We've got one of those that goes to the ceiling and across the main window, it's humongous. Yeah. I'm not allowed to water it though. Apparently they're ficky, ficky.

[00:44:57] **Adam:** They can be, yeah—finicky, yeah. One of those things.

[00:44:59] **David:** Finicky, that's the word.

[00:45:02] **Adam:** Yeah. Well, that's a mouthful. A tongue twister there. A finicky fiddle leaf fig. I can't believe I actually got that out in one go, but that's great.

Well, we still have more episodes to go, folks. Well, at least one more episode to go in 1 John, and so we hope you'll join us then. We'll see you.

[00:45:28] **Corina:** Thank you for listening to Know God Deeply from Precept, a nonprofit Bible study ministry.

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