

4:11 Love One Another as God Has Loved Us

We Ought to Love One Another.

Oecumenius: The love we show to one another ought to be like the love which God has shown to us. I mean by that it should be sincere and pure, without ulterior motives or other hidden thoughts of the kind we normally associate with robbers and other evildoers. Commentary on 1 John.⁴⁶

4:12 God's Love Is Perfected

God Is Invisible.

Didymus the Blind: Since God is invisible, nobody has ever seen him, since bodily sight cannot see things which have no bodies. But there are some heretics who say that the Old Testament speaks of a visible God, because occasionally people are said to have seen him, whereas the New Testament makes him completely invisible. So we have to ask what substance he is supposed to have which would make him visible. They would have to answer, unless they are out of their minds, that God is a body, even though it is not made of any perceivable substance. If that is what they think, they ought to consider how incongruous and full of ungodliness their beliefs are. For how can there be a body if there is no way of defining what it is? Commentary on 1 John.⁴⁷

If We Love One Another.

Augustine: Why does John say so much about loving our brothers, but nothing at all about loving our enemies? Reaching out to our enemies does not exclude loving our brothers. Our love, like a fire, must first take hold of what is nearest and then spread to what is further off. Ten Homilies on 1 John 8.1.⁴⁸

God Abides in Us.

Andreas: This is how God's love works. God comes to dwell in us, though no one has ever seen him. Catena.⁴⁹

4:13 God Has Given Us His Own Spirit

God's Love at Work.

Oecumenius: Many things which are invisible in themselves we discover by the way in which they work inside us. Just as nobody has ever seen a soul, but we know it from the way it behaves in us, so we detect God's love from the fact that it is at work and bears fruit in us. Commentary on 1 John.⁵³

4:14 *The Father Has Sent His Son to Be Our Savior*

We Have Seen and Testify.

Oecumenius: Therefore since we have fellowship with him in pure love, it is also by love that we who saw him in the flesh have acknowledged him and bear witness that the Father sent him to be the Savior of the world. But above and beyond our testimony he has also taught us about this, leading us thereby to a more perfect understanding of him, as when he said: "I went out from the Father and came into the world." 55
Commentary on 1 John.56

4:15 *Confessing That Christ Is His Son*

Confessing His Humanity and Divinity.

Didymus the Blind: This needs to be properly understood. God will not dwell in anyone who does not obey his commandments, however much he may confess him with his lips. Some people are confused by the various names of Jesus, because they do not interpret the Scriptures correctly. They think that because he came out of the womb of Mary according to the flesh and was given the name Jesus at that time, he is not to be identified with the eternal Son of God, who did not think it robbery to be considered equal with God. They restrict themselves to the human form which the Word of God assumed, even though the being of the Word was never changed into humanity. To confess the one Lord Jesus Christ is to confess him as God and man, not as a man only. Commentary on 1 John.57

4:16 *The Person Who Abides in Love*

Of One Mind.

Cyprian: Those who have refused to be of one mind in the church of God cannot abide with God. On the Unity of the Catholic Church 14.59

One Who Has Love.

Basil the Great: If God is love, as John says, then it must be that the devil is hatred. As he who has love has God, so he who has hatred has the devil dwelling in him. Ascetical Discourses 2.60

Trinitarian Communion.

Augustine: The Holy Spirit is commonly shared in some way between the Father and the Son. But this communion is itself consubstantial and coeternal. If it can appropriately be described as friendship, let it be so called—but it is better to call it love. It is a substance, because God is a substance, and God is love. On the Trinity 6.5.7.61

The Lover, the Beloved and Love.

Augustine: When we come to the subject of love, which is what God is called in Scripture, the Trinity begins to dawn a little, for there is the Lover, the Beloved and Love. On the Trinity 15.10.⁶²

4.14. The Love God Has for Us.

4:17 Confidence for the Day of Judgment

How to Test the Progress of Love.

Augustine: This is how everyone ought to test the progress of love in himself, or rather his own progress in love, for if love is God there can be no progress or regress, and love is only said to make progress in you inasmuch as you make progress in love. Ten Homilies on 1 John 9.2.⁶⁷

Love Perfected in Us.

Hilary of Arles: In this world we must do our best to be generous, godly, merciful and patient, imitating God as closely as we can. Introductory Commentary on 1 John.⁶⁸

As He Is.

Andreas: Jesus said: "The ruler of this world is coming, and he shall find nothing in me."⁶⁹ We ought to be the same, so that nothing of this world may be found in us either. Catena.⁷⁰

4:18 One Who Feels Is Not Perfected in Love

Perfect Love Casts Out Fear.

Clement of Alexandria: The perfection of a faithful man is love. Adumbrations.⁷²

No Fear in Love.

Augustine: What John said is true. So if you do not want to have any fear, first of all see whether you have that perfect love which turns fear out of the door. But if fear is pushed out before such perfection is achieved, it is a matter of pride puffing up, not of charity building up. Sermons 348.1.⁷³

4:19 We Love Because God Loved Us First

Why We Love God.

Augustine: By God's grace we love him who first loved us, in order to believe in him, and by loving him we perform good works, but we have not performed the good works in order to love him. Letters 186.⁷⁷

God Exactly Understands Us.

Andreas: God loves us so much that even the hairs of our head are numbered, as it says in the Gospels.⁷⁸ It is not that God goes around numbering hairs but rather that he has exact understanding and complete foreknowledge of everything to do with us. Catena.⁷⁹

4:20 *No One Can Hate His Brother and Still Love God*

Not in Love, Not in God.

Augustine: He who does not love his brother is not in love, and he who is not in love is not in God, for God is love. On the Trinity 8.11.⁸²

Seeing with the Heart's Eye.

Augustine: Why does a man not see God? Because he has not love. He has not love because he does not love his brother, and it follows that the reason for his not seeing God is that he does not love. The heart's eye must be continually cleansed and strengthened by love, in order to see that changeless being in whose presence the lover may always delight and enjoy it in the company of the angels for all eternity. Ten Homilies on 1 John 9.10.⁸³

4:21 *Love God and Love Your Brother*

Also Fulfilling God's Commandments.

Andreas: The person who loves God keeps his commandments, and loving one's brother is the fulfillment of those commandments. The person who does not love his brother has not kept the commandments and by not keeping them has not loved God. The one who says he loves but does not do so is a liar. Catena.⁸⁵