

4:7 The Person Who Loves

Let Us Love One Another.

Didymus the Blind: Just as the person who does not choose what he ought to choose has done wrong and does not love what he ought to love, so those who love only those who are worthy of love receive only that level of praise due to them. Commentary on 1 John.²⁸

Basing Life on Love.

Augustine: To practice righteousness and judgment means to live virtuously, and to live virtuously means to obey God's law, the purpose of which is to help us to base our lives on the principle of love. This is the love which comes from God, as John says. The City of God 17.4.²⁹

Love Is from God.

Augustine: Love is from God, as have declared those whom he has made not only his great lovers but also his great preachers. On the Gift of Perseverance 21.56.³⁰

Loved and Called to Love.

Andreas: What does it mean to say that love is from God? Surely this refers to the man who came from God, who was revealed according to the image and likeness of the one who made him? For when this man appeared, he was revealed as the beloved and as worthy of being loved. Now since this Savior has been sent into the world because of the Father's great love for the things which he has made, those who have received this blessing and who are thus beloved ought to love one another. For each of us is loved and is called to love, having the command that we should love our neighbor. Catena.³¹

4:8 God Is Love

What Kind of Love?

Chrysostom: What kind of love are we talking about here? It is the true love and not simply what people use this word to mean. It comes from our attitude and knowledge and must proceed from a pure heart. For there is also a love of evil things. Robbers love other robbers, and murderers love each other too, not out of love which comes from a good conscience but from a bad one. Catena.³³

The Increase of Love.

Augustine: If God is love, it follows that the more companions and partners in the faith whom we see being born, in addition to ourselves, the more effusive will be the love in which we rejoice, since it is the possession of this love which is being set before us. Sermons 260c.1.34

The Gift of God.

Augustine: Love is so much the gift of God that it is called God. Letters 186.35

Our Common Love.

Augustine: Although your course of action is different from ours, our common love has made both courses necessary for the salvation of our brother, for one God has done it all, and God is love. Letters 219.36

Breathing the Air of Resurrection.

Isaac the Syrian: "God is love." Wherefore, the man who lives in love reaps the fruit of life from God, and while yet in this world, he even now breathes the air of the resurrection. Ascetical Homilies 46.37

4:9 So That We Might Live

God Sent His Only Son.

Oecumenius: God is love because he sent his only-begotten Son to die for us. Commentary on 1 John.40

4:10 To Pay the Price for Our Sins

In This Is Love.

John Cassian: The perfect love with which God first loved us will come into our hearts, for our faith tells us that this prayer of our Savior will not be in vain. Conference 10.7.41

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