

Keep Yourself in the Love of God

by Don Currin

This sermon delves into the urgent concern of apostasy and the great falling away from the faith, emphasizing the need to abide in the love of God to prevent spiritual decline. Through the exhortation from the book of Jude, the speaker highlights the importance of building oneself up in faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, and eagerly awaiting the mercy of Jesus Christ. The message stresses the significance of obedience to Christ's commandments, avoiding love for the world, caring for others, and loving one another as key aspects of abiding in God's love to combat apostasy.

Scripture: 1 Timothy 4:16, Jude 1:17, 1 John 2:5, 1 John 2:15, 1 John 3:17, 1 John 4:12

Topics: "Apostasy", "Abiding in God's Love"

Description

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Transcript

Well, it's a it's a great joy to be back again tonight and so thankful for your coming and presence is greatly encouraging to not only myself but also my dear wife. I mentioned something to you last night that is greatly perplexing and I don't take it lightly in traveling in recent days not only in your country but also in the US and then going to some other countries that we've been in before. It greatly troubles me to see the great falling away.

As I mentioned, I reiterate again, I never in my wildest imagination would ever think of some of the people that would deny the faith at this hour. I mean a total renunciation of the faith of Jesus Christ. So troubling.

Don't take it easily. Some along the way they've lost their marriages. Some have just utterly seen their ministry decimated and now they have no ministry and so it's a it's a deeply oppressive thing.

And so tonight we want to look at this subject as you know if you've been here the last two evenings we've been talking about the reality, the experiential nature of the love of God and tonight will be no exception. We'll look at another text and another aspect of this love and so if you would I want you to take your Bibles

with me please and turn once again that little epistle of Jude just prior to the book of Revelation, the book of Jude. Back last year in the fall I was asked to do another heart cry conference for our Eastern European missionaries.

So we have about 28 men and women in Romania, Moldova, Ukraine that we have two conferences a year and so I did the fall conference last year and Serene unlike times before you know he would give me assignments to speak on he said brother I just really feel like you just need to share what God's put on your heart and because this matter of apostasy has been weighing so heavily upon my heart this is what I chose to address and so I did a six-part series from one verse of Scripture really it was an overall exposition of 1st Timothy as I drew all my thoughts from various scriptures surrounding this one verse in verse 16 of chapter 4 where you recall that Paul said to Timothy take heed to yourself and to the teaching and continue therein persist in it for in so doing not only do you save yourself but those who hear you and so in a very real sense brethren while we are saved by grace through faith alone in Christ alone our assurance and ultimate glorification is contingent upon our perseverance in the faith and the only reason we persevere is because we're kept by the power of God so serene it was pretty hard-hitting it was very searching and and very engaging to our missionaries and he was a bit troubled about it and he said brother Don after we left the conference why were you like this he said it was a different dimension than what you normally share you were very direct and very at times hard and I gave him some stories true stories of people that are very close to me that have fallen away from the faith and he said I understand now it's sad friend that even in our small congregation tonight within five years some of you will depart from the faith of Jesus Christ so you need this message desperately and there are people that you know that need this message because if they don't take heed to what God says they will indeed depart from the faith so if you would follow with me as I'm just going to read a portion of this epistle and I'd like to begin reading in verse 17 for many of us it's a very familiar text but I want to draw some things out of tonight that perhaps will be a refreshing edification to you maybe you haven't thought about these things before but verse 17 but you must remember you must remember beloved their predictions of the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ they said to you in the last time there will be scoffers following their own ungodly passions it is these who cause divisions they are worldly people and behind it they are devoid of the Spirit but you beloved building yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit keep yourselves there it is again in the love of God to stop listen that is profoundly experiential you cannot say that this is exclusively relating to a theological understanding or concept this is something that goes beyond that keep yourselves in the love of God waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life and have mercy on those who doubt save others by snatching them out of the fire to others show mercy with fear hating even the garment stained by the flesh I love this what a glorious doxology now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy to the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord be glory majesty dominion and authority before all time now and forever let's pray together please help us please help us save us from ourselves you're so glorious in your rescue missions and how Lord you have arrested us and you've drawn us away from the systems of this world that can hold no water the point is to the true and living God and I would pray tonight show us things that will so warm our heart and give us such a sense of reality of this supernatural experiential love that God we would be so fortified and so insulated and so motivated to cast off all of these snares of the enemy that would seek to draw our attention away from Christ and lead us down the road to perdition Oh God we need you our loved ones need you help us to know that presumption is not assurance of salvation so many are presuming on God because they pray to prayer well they're even in a reformed church a solidly biblical church that this is going to be a guarantee that I'll be in heaven one day Oh God tonight encourage our hearts to give diligence to make our calling and

election sure and to persevere in holiness without which no man shall see the Lord so please come and speak and glorify yourself father we pray in Jesus name Amen now the epistle of Jude is a timely word for a faithless age it is especially brothers and sisters relevant for the dark hour in which we live like Hebrews which as we mentioned last night is an epistle of warning so is this brief word this prophetic word from Jude it is an epistle of warning you see the letter serves as an appropriate wake-up call to those who are spiritually indifferent in our day and although it's an alarming word it's an unsettling word it reminds us that in wrath God remembers mercy always no matter how bleak the situation no matter how despairing the condition of an individual in wrath God remembers mercy think about it why because warnings in the Bible are tokens of mercy and overtures of love because God's concern for the souls of men this is glorious you find you'd admonishes those of his day to remember the Apostles prophetic warnings if they keep not in mind these cautions they would surely be led astray that's why he says back in verse 17 they must remember this is not negotiable it's an imperative remember the nature the evil nature of men you read on in verses 18 and 19 their lives the lives are characterized by ungodliness sensuality and dissension he sketches the character of these people and this is what he describes them as all of this because think about it they were devoid of the spirit love the words of JC Ryle where there is no holy living there is no holy ghost it is on Jews exhortation in verses 20 and 21 that will spend the bulk of our time tonight as it centers on once again the experiential nature of God's love look with me and use directive in the words keep yourselves in the love of God not negotiable not optional it's an injunction as a matter of fact the word or verb keep here is in the heiness middle imperative that's important it speaks brothers and sisters of maintaining a position a posture in other words it's an urgent word meaning to remain steadfast you must do it we don't like this but this is what we've called to do as Christians and that is to fight in faith the nature of saving faith is that it fights Piper's coming out of MacArthur's office there in California and he said as he rushed in that day to meet with dr. MacArthur he said I noticed out of the corner of my eye there was a statue and all I could see was the hands were raised the fists were clenched I didn't have time to read what was written there was an inscription at the base of this statue he said I went into the office but when I came out I had time to go over and look at this thing and the pain was etched in this guy's countenance he said I thought in my mind going into the office it basically it was a figurine depicting a sinner crying out before heaven God be merciful to me a sinner but he said when I came out of the office and I looked at it and I saw the pain etched in this man's face his eyes tilted toward heaven his fists were clenched down at the base of the statue were the words I will trust and that's the Christian life if you don't trust you'll perish also you find the verb is modified which means strengthened by three participles participles by the way are verbs that take on an adjective function therefore what Jude is saying here is that by building praying and waiting believers continue in Christ's love and therefore now listen therefore they protect themselves against false teaching note this if you would that the love of God in the text you've already seen this many of you but I remind you I stir up your mind away remembrance the love in the text is God's love for us once again as I've already said it is something subjective or experiential it is not something that is merely intellectually attain but felt it's a pervasive sense it's something no doubt that's supernatural you see the nature brothers and sisters of this love speaks of a a sphere or a place of blessing and although his love never changes toward us we may lose the sense of it we may lose a sense of what you just saying is keep yourself in the place where God's love can affirm and bless you I love the words of Matthew Henry here you love this he says quote take heed of throwing yourself out of the love of God for you of his delightful cheering strengthening manifestations keep yourself in the way of God listen if you would continue in his love now what does he mean by that keep yourself in the love of God you understand don't you in the New Testament that real Christianity is not moralistic it's not me making it happen my responsibility is in faith I subject myself to the agencies that God has laid down in his Word and as I do so the Spirit of God uses

those things to act upon me and conforming to the image of Christ such as grace such as the Holy Spirit such as the promises of God's Word such as the Word of God itself as a sure word of prophecy so as I keep myself subjected to these agencies what Matthew Henry is saying I keep myself in the way and this is how I abide in God's love former pastor of mine in North Carolina told me one day he said you know brother Don I'm convinced that the cloud of blessing what you were talking about the love of God is still attainable it's still accessible in this hour so God's love is like a rain coming but the problem is the reason we don't sense it and we don't know anything of the reality of operating within it is because we've stepped out from underneath the cloud we don't come to the prayer meetings we neglect family worship we conform to the world we don't read the scripture we don't internalize truth therefore we've stepped out from underneath the cloud therefore we have no sense of the love of God and we set ourself up for spiritual declension unfortunately many professing believers do not remain or keep themselves in this love now please listen carefully they neglect those means of grace that Jude tells us affirm the sense of it they are edification prayer and eager anticipation said of their indifference and compromise brethren lead to this condition a condition by the way that Puritan Thomas Manton refers to as how about this a decaying sense of the love of God a decaying I like that the decaying sense of the love of God when decay sets into a tooth it's painful if it's left unattended the tooth dies knowing the pain from not abiding in God's love is a good thing but you can ill afford to neglect it in Matton's commentary on Jude he lists the effects of this decaying sense followed by the evidence of its immediate loss and he says a few of the eroding effects when this love begins to dissipate is first of all he said in the life of this professor the heart grows cold and careless cold and careless in other words complacency abounds other things take precedence over the things that God has given us to preserve us from apostasy there is a diminishing desire for God revealed by a weakening reference we're flippant about the things of God there's a greater contempt toward those things that matter most those things that we according to the Word of God assess as sacred there is a decreased caution to offend him and then Matton proceeds it's interesting brethren I'm going to go through this quickly but he proceeds to warn the nominal believer by sharing a list of those things that indicate the immediate loss of this sense of God's love things like when this is happening in a professor and they're moving down the road drifting away from the Lord God is forgotten duty is neglected sin is left unchecked it is not mortified any longer there is indifference or no frequency for private communion with God there's no sweet thoughts of God no concern for glorifying God no planning on how we can be most useful for our Savior no longer do we mourn over our sin we're insensitive to offending God there's there's no melting of the heart one of my spiritual fathers in the ministry was a man by the name of Bill McCloud so you may recognize the name because the association with Ralph and Lucitara the Satara twins we were all a part of the Canadian revival fellowship and Bill McCloud was a spiritual father to me but I heard him say on two different occasions our heart ought to be so tender and so impressionable if a leaf were to fall on it it would leave an impression but we're not concerned any longer man goes in to say there's no care to avoid all occasions of grieving God there's a how about this one there's an absence of watchfulness we don't watch against temptation we don't watch against the ploys of the enemy we're oblivious to those things Roy Hessian who wrote the book the Calvary Road and we would see Jesus he said when he had those five dear black brothers come in from Uganda where the revival was happening to testify in his conference on revival in England he said I picked him up at the airport I transported them to the conference but in route I stopped by my office to speak to my secretary they came into the office I introduced him to my secretary I took care of some business with her and then we got in the car went over the conference and Roy Hessian says every morning I was chair a devotional in the conference from the book of Hebrews just unveiling the beauties of Christ our high priest and he said I didn't realize until after the third morning that these black brothers that were sitting behind me on the platform were weeping their eyes out I was academic but they

were seeing something in my message that I wasn't seeing they were seeing Jesus and my message and they were weeping profusely they shared their testimony in the conference and he said I was so stressed and I was so disconnected from the Lord in those days here I am hosting a revival conference and if there was anybody the revival it was me and these precious brothers came over to me and formed a circle around me and said brother Hessian can we have a word with you and he said certainly is there a problem and he said one guy spoke up and said well we don't think there's a problem brother but we sense that there's something not right in your spirit there's something that you need to attend to that you need to repent of and Roy Hessian says I immediately recalled and defended myself well well where in do I need to repent much like those in Malachi where do I need to repent and one of these precious brothers looked at him and said brother we don't know exactly but the other day when you picked us up at the airport and took us by your office you went in introduced us to your secretary and then we watched you by the way you talked to your secretary we couldn't tell if she was your secretary or your wife we suggest that you begin there no longer watchful if there's one word that characterizes the Church of Jesus Christ these days is the word indiscretion so most men at church you can talk so lovingly to another man's wife and you talk to your wife like a dog you might begin there there's a neglect of keeping the heart met and says you're indifferent to temptation and carnal thoughts the work of God is a dull routinism how about this one there's a neglect of the bridling of the tongue friend of mine down south he's an evangelist he's a striper bass fisherman he's got his own boat doesn't get to go fishing very often but one day I was passing through he had the time off he took me out striper bass fishing like normally when I go fishing they ain't biting and that day was no exception so it's very conducive for fellowship and we're talking there in the boat and he said what do you think about preachers so-and-so and at that time being the cynical critical person that I tended to be I share with him my quote-unquote about this preacher and he pitched in he added his criticism and finally I looked at him I said well brother I won't say anymore I'll just say this that one of these days that man's going to have to give an account of himself to God and when I said that he looked at me and he said and you and I gonna have to give an account for everything that we just said about him conversations mr. Matlin says with others are idle at times they're corrupt and profane we're more prone to anger and envy public worship is performed and ritualistic not heartfelt sin is confessed without any remorse and a sense of wrong done to God we mouth prayers for spiritual help without any expectation we intercede for others without any sympathy or compassion for their soul when things is given we give thanks without any esteem of the benefits what am I saying here tonight we move quickly where there is a felt sense of God's love brothers and sisters we will have an intuitive sense of the Father's love I know that from experience this is what I believe that Frances have a gal minute in her song take my life and let it be I love this lyric she said take my hands and let them move at the impulse of the there it is love is that possible for you and I to have a sense of God's love in our life when we respond in a positive faith-filled way to what God wants this is the kind of love that he's talking about so the sense of the love of God here is a preservative against apostasy but it has been terribly overlooked in our day sadly there's not a few brothers and sisters who are drifting into the waters remember last night we use the word perdition and irrecoverable fates but someone might ask what is apostasy let me define it very quickly apostasy can be defined as a falling away from the faith of falling backward and abandoning of the truth a departure from the faith of Jesus Christ you see an apostate is one who profess faith in Christ but in time drift into a state of ungodliness this may or may not lead to an open renunciation of the faith as I mentioned last night I'll say again there are apostates performing in the pulpit they have a very successful ministry in the eyes of men but like Ravi Zacharias they live a hypocritical lifestyle behind the scenes pornography day in day out but they can suck it up for the sake of their reputation an apostate is one who has an intellectual understanding of the gospel having professed faith in Jesus he or she evidences a change for a season

which could last for many years or even a lifetime but after a season of faithfulness to God they begin to neglect Scripture and the way of holiness their indifference leads to increased ungodliness and he or she may continue to attend church but they take on the role of a hypocrite listen to these words pregnant with conviction breath brethren by Charles Spurgeon the making of a devil was an angel the making of a son of perdition was an apostle the making of an apostate is a professing Christian and I want to tell you what I told our staff at heart crowd the other morning and I say it with great compassion don't think it can't happen to you if you neglect the means of grace and don't keep yourself in the love of God you're doomed for destruction you see although the word apostate is not found in most Bible translations the scripture is full of warnings against it as a matter of fact I also said this last night I reiterate entire books such as Hebrews 2nd Peter and here in the book of Jude the entire is devoted as a warning against apostasy let me give you an illustration it's a tragic story many years ago there was a young boy who grew up in what seemed to be a stable home he was taught the importance of having high morals and Christian character professing Jesus Christ as Savior as a teenager he began living for him he wrote Christian literature that possessed a wealth of biblical substance and inspiration in his first written work entitled the union of the faithful with Christ we read these beautiful words quote through love of Christ we turn our hearts at the same time toward our brethren who are inwardly bound to us and for whom he gave himself as sacrifice in another part of this work the same young man wrote union with Christ could give an inner elevation comfort in sorrow calm trust and a heart susceptible to human love to everything noble and great not for the sake of ambition and glory but only for the sake of Christ he later writes a thesis entitled considerations of a young man on choosing a career he says quote religion itself teaches us that the ideal referring to a person toward which all strive sacrificed himself for humanity and who share shall dare contradict such claims if we have chosen the position in which we can accomplish the most for him then we can never be crushed by burdens because they are only sacrifices made for the sake of all listen now when this young man finished high school the following was written on his graduation certificate under the heading religious knowledge the faculty said his knowledge of the Christian faith and morals is fairly clear and well grounded he knows also to some extent the history of the Christian Church great promise his life but I want you to listen to what happened not long after mysteriously the young man began to change his writings took on an evil slant he wrote a thesis where he speaks of people as human trash and uses the word destroy six times this earned him the nickname destroyer he went on to write that no man visits me and I like this because present mankind may and then he uses an obscenity he said they are a bunch of rascals not long after this he becomes profoundly and passionately anti religious the young man writes in a poem quote I wish to avenge myself against the one who rules above and another of his poems entitled the pale maiden he writes thus heaven I forfeited I know it for well my soul once true to God is chosen for hell one of his biographers said that there is strong evidence that indicates that he was becoming involved in the occult sandy has changed loyalties resulted in spiritual and moral tragedy he became a heavy drinker lust and immorality characterized his life he lived most of his adult life as a pauper three of his children died of malnutrition two daughters and one son-in-law committed suicide his wife abandoned him twice and after she died he would not attend her funeral he led a strong campaign against capitalism he ultimately authored the Communist Manifesto his name Karl Marx apostate apostate he said preacher this this frightens me what you're you're telling me about this subject tonight once again friend I find themes of this nature are good awakening agents to awaken us but what will really drive us God's impetus his best impetus in us being motivated to live our life for his joy and for his glory his finding our great affection in the beauties of Jesus Christ the gospel so think about this for a moment why are the implications that come from these things that Jude has laid down in the way of discipline so important and what all do they entail well now I'll begin to wind down the discipline of building yourself up in this most holy faith means to

subject yourself to those biblical agents that nurture faith I'm convinced of this is very simple friend you don't have to go to seminary to understand this faith is the victory that overcomes the world you must subject your life to these agents such as the Word of God and prayer and meditation and grace in order to be acted upon and the result is you function and you live your life with a pervasive sense that you're abiding in the love of God think about it like the local church never minimize the importance of faithful interaction with God's people and I'm not talking about just coming on Sunday or coming to the prayer meeting I'm talking about hanging around with the redeemed throughout the week you need each other you see to be strengthened in the love of God calls for body life the exchange of love encouragement prayers and ministry in the word within the local church serve to strengthen faith and the tear apostasy all serve all these things serve as guardrails to preserve your soul don't take the Word of God for granted. Please listen.

Iain Byrne made this statement you don't have to deny the scriptures for apostasy to begin all that needs to begin is when the scriptures take second place so you regulate it. Well I read the Bible you know when I feel like it. Can I tell you there are times in my life even as a minister of the gospel as much as I do love the Word of God there are times that I don't feel like reading the Bible but I stay the course every day I choose to do my systematic Bible reading and my meditation and without exception when I do that as I go through the motions the emotions come.

What am I saying when I say I still choose to read the Bible even though I don't feel anything we're talking about faith again I choose to obey God regardless of how I feel. So quickly here are the three admonitions that Jude gives us to abide in the love of God. First of all he says you to build yourself up in this most holy faith and it's by subjecting yourself to these agents of grace that God has given to preserve the soul.

Secondly is pray in the Holy Spirit. Listen friend I don't know what church you've come from tonight but this is not a foundation that advocates praying in tongues. It has nothing to do with praying in tongues whatsoever.

Praying in the Holy Spirit speaks of praying according to God's purposes and promises. You see the Spirit exerts his influence upon us by directing and reminding us of those noble pursuits of holiness we should pray for. So what does this call for? Word, sin, and praying.

Word, sin, and praying. I bring the promises of God into focus. I bring the person the attributes of my father into focus.

These things give me greater incentive to pray and to believe God not to mention listen they breed faith because faith comes by hearing and hearing by these very promises. And then furthermore the third thing he says is the discipline of waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. Don't miss this now listen carefully.

This waiting speaks of aggression. It's not a passive waiting where I'm just sitting back waiting for something to happen, waiting for Jesus to return. No friend, it denotes an expectation.

Other translations use the word here look which speaks of an earnest expectation. But the implications of this do not exclusively entail an anticipation of the Lord's coming. They also entail a pursuit of the merciful overtures of God's help in all things.

And I'll be honest with you one of the greatest things that has helped me spiritually and sustained me supernaturally these days is I see God in everything. Everything. Providence rules.

No matter what you're going through right now whether it's the pinnacle of joy or the depths of despair or some affliction in your life, God has ordained everything. He's not the author of temptation. He's not the author of sin.

But I'm telling you friends circumstantially everything is appointed. As Tozer says, we walk in a pointed way. Watch God at work.

These three directives afford a sense of God's love that enables the believer to endure temptations to eternal life. Now here's something that I find very interesting. I touched on last night.

You find in the life of the Apostle John that he refers to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved. Five times at the end of his gospel, the gospel of John, he speaks of himself as the gospel whom Jesus loved. Think about this.

When John records this of himself, he is not implying once again that the Lord had favorites. His love extends to all his elect as you see in such passages as, listen, John 5 11, Jesus loved Mary and Martha and Lazarus. It wasn't just John.

And John 13 verse 1 that says, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. He loved many people. John 15 9, Jesus said, as the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.

All of his disciples. It wasn't just John. Although he felt that way.

But I've often wondered why John says that he was a disciple that Jesus loved. I love to read. I've been helped immensely by spiritually gifted men and women, how they cast light upon these texts.

And let me just draw in passing from John Piper. Piper says in the way of insight here, what did John mean when he says the disciple whom Jesus loved? Listen, quote, perhaps this is John's way of saying, my most important identity is not my name, but my being loved by Jesus, the Son of God. He is not trying to rob anybody else of this privilege, Piper says.

He is simply exalting in it. I'm loved, John says. I'm loved.

I'm loved. That's who I am. I'm loved by Jesus.

And the knowledge and the reality of that consciousness preserved and perpetuated his life and his ministry, and it will yours. It will yours. It is mine.

So this opens up a whole different dimension of sensitivity to the Savior's love. All right, now I close. Listen, because John possesses his conscious sense of Christ's love, it makes one wonder if this is the reason that he says things about his walk with God that no one else in the New Testament says.

Now, are you interested? David Miller, you know, he's a quadriplegic. He sits back in his wheelchair. He's got a little motion with some fingers to operate his wheelchair, and his eyes roll from one side to the other, but he's a walking Bible.

And sometimes he'll make a point, and then he'll press upon the congregation the need to respond to what God says, and then he'll say this, are you interested? That's what I ask you tonight. Are you interested in walking in the love of God, abiding in this love? Here be four things from the epistle, 1st John. Four things here, don't miss it.

All speak of this love, this abiding sense of God's love. First of all, you know the preserving effect of the love of God by obeying Christ's commandments. By obeying Christ's commandments.

Listen to what he says in 1st John chapter 2 and verse 5. But whosoever keeps his word in him, listen, is truly the love of God perfected. It means completed or brought to maturity. By this we may know that we are in Him.

It gives assurance of salvation. I'm assured that I'm in Him. Because by keeping His commandments, I abide in His love.

But we're living in an age of anarchy. Look at our governments in our countries. Look at the people with no respect toward God-delegated authority.

And even in the church today, people have such a disdain, such a contempt for the commandments of God. Listen, friend, grace drives us, but you can't negate your responsibility to obey His commandments. And John would tell us in chapter 5 and verse 3 of 1st John, for this is the love of God that we keep His commandments.

And it's interesting that he would say this, and his commandments are not grievous. They're not encumbering. They're not burdensome.

Don't you dare look at God's commandments and see them as something contemptible, friend. They are given to us as a life preserver. Secondly, another way you can abide in His love that proves to be a deterrent to apostasy is not loving the world.

Look at 1st John chapter 2 and verse 15. Do not love the world or the things in the world. Watch it now.

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. He didn't say the Father wasn't in you. He didn't say God wasn't in you.

He said the love of the Father is not in you if you conform, if you love the things of this world. I've lost my interest in sports to a great degree. Not because I'm an old man now.

It's because I feel like I have a few more steps before I enter glory, and I really at my age don't want to waste my life. We talk about the young people, you know, they're wasting their life on this, that, and the other, you know, and old people wasting their life on retirement. I used to love sports.

It dominated my time. And now I'm not only finding my encouragement, my strength and consolation in Christ, but I'm finding my very entertainment. Thirdly, you also abide in this love that deters apostasy by seeing and caring for the needs of others around you.

Listen to what John says again. 1st John chapter 3 verse 17. Note the term the love of God again.

But if anyone has this world's good and sees his brother in need and yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? So I challenge you tonight, when you look around you, are you so oblivious

with number one, yourself? Are you so absorbed with that, that you're oblivious to people's needs around you? Some of you, God's made you privy to a certain person in your family, or maybe outside your family, maybe your faith family, someone you work with. He's made you privy to a need that if you obey him in ministering to that need and helping that person, you have no idea how this sense of the love of God would flourish in your life. God becomes real and faith grows.

But then finally, there's a fourth thing that John directs us to concerning this abiding sense of his love, and that's in 1st John 4 verse 12. No one has ever seen God. If we love one another, if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected.

There's the word again, completed, growing up into maturity in him, in us. In other words, we love people. I know as sure as I say this, this will be the next test.

But I can honestly say I have great liberty in loving people that are not very lovely. Really going out of my way to minister to people that are not the most likable people in the world. But friend, what accompanies that, but God's grace for his glory is such a sense of God.

Because I think of just how unlovely, how unlikable I was in the eyes of the Savior, and yet God had such mercy on me. So think about this. Interestingly, these things speak to the reality of a sense of God's love.

Don't miss this now. I have no doubt that he enjoyed a dimension of it, John did, that authenticated his salvation, but also preserved his soul through all the temptations and tribulations that he would be called on to endure. Likewise, listen brethren, let us guard against a decaying sense of God's love by building ourselves up in our most holy faith, praying always in the Holy Spirit, and eagerly anticipating the culmination of the Lord's mercy at his coming.

For it will be worth it all. When we see Jesus, I'm strengthened, not because I pull myself up by my own bootstraps and try to make things happen. Daily I subject myself to this word and the good devotional supplements that complement this word and secret prayer and worship, and by subjecting myself to those things and being willing to let God produce within me propensities to obey him and then following through in obedience, I have such a sense of God's approval and his love for my life, which is the greatest deterrent in your life and my life from falling away from the faith.

Let's pray together. Father in heaven, we're grateful, so grateful, Father. This is no formality, this is no performance, Lord.

Tonight I pray that your people would know the reality of your kindness. You're such a good God, full of great mercy. What love as we said the first night, I pray that, Lord, we would not only think much and study much, meditate much on God commending his love toward us, and that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

But, Lord, through the meditation and revelation of that, may we know and taste and grow in this experiential aspect of Christ's love. May we know the heartbeat of the Savior, what pleases him and what grieves him, and encourage your people tonight. Oh, God, please encourage them to keep themselves in the love of God, for Christ's sake and for his glory.

Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/z-gvQOmBcq0.mp4>

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