

# Joyful, unbroken love from God is through his Spirit.

John gives us two reasons we can experience and believe the love God has for us now - his Spirit and his revelation of himself.

**1 John 4:13-16a:** After saying that loving our brothers is the fruit of God's love in us, the Apostle John explores what is the root of this love, namely, the joyful, unbroken love of God for me. We have this intimacy with him because the Holy Spirit is a gift from God inside the confessors, those who have seen and testify that the Father has sent his own Son to restore and remake the broken world.

**We KNOW something that is 100% true.** What is it that we know in verse 13? We know that we continually have a non-stop relationship intimately with God, and he with us. That is "abide."

**"God's Spirit (v. 13) gives impetus for and assurance in the high calling of mutual love."**  
-ESV Study Notes

We can know this for certain. John Calvin describes this as our union with Christ, united with him.<sup>1</sup>

**WHY can we know THIS for certain - BY what?** This is too much! It is almost too good to be true that I can have this type of relationship with God, so how do I know it is true? HOW do I know God is IN me, and I have adoption and sonship with him as my Father (v14) not as employer? To what does the "By this" in verse 13 point? The

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| <b>Headline:</b> We know God's Love personally in abiding.  |
| [13] By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.    |
| [14] And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. |
| [15] Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.            |
| [16] So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us.                         |

pronoun "this" points to TWO key answers to this question HOW I can know this fellowship is NOT too good to be true:

ANSWER 1 - I have the Holy Spirit. When Jesus had his last meal with his disciples the night before he died, he told them something perplexing. He said that it is good he will be resurrected and go to heaven and leave them SO that they each may have his Spirit dwelling in them (John 16:7). Paul says that we feel and know "God's

love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Romans 5:5). And HOW did we get the Holy Spirit? We did not earn him, but God gave him to us (verse 13 and Romans 5).

ANSWER 2 - We have seen something and testify to it. John saw Jesus love others, obey his Father perfectly, die, and be

raised. He saw Jesus transfigured having his glory shine through as if he were "unzipped" and heard God say from the overshadowing cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him" (Mark 9:7). By faith we now see it too as faith is conviction of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1).

**WHAT specifically is it that have we seen (this idea is explained)?** John tells us what he means when he said he saw and testified to something. He specifically means in v14 that the Father is the one who sent Jesus, his own son. In flesh he is the very words of God, his ultimate revelation of himself (John 1).

**WHAT is Jesus' purpose, his mission, his job description, his role document?** John says that Jesus' purpose is to be the savior of the world v14. We need to be saved from the right anger and ensuing judgement of the holy God against us for loving

our own glory more than his, not being dependent on him, and being our own god. We need to be saved from the empty prison that our sin leaves us. We need to be saved out of the broken effects of the fall on relationships, ourselves, and the material scattered world.

**HOW do you get this Savior to actually save you?** Confess what you believe v15. This is the action in the text. If you want union with Christ, fellowship with the Father, this unfailing love of God for you to be real and true, then confess.

**WHAT is it that we confess that we believe (this idea is explained)?** John tells us in verse 15 what specifically we confess. We believe there is a God, Jesus is his Son, Jesus is God, and that is who the world's savior is. And this is true for me that I need to be saved.

**WHAT is the RESULT of this ACTION of belief?** This takes us back to where we started: God abides in me and me in God - ongoing, never-ending intimate relationship in love. That is the beautiful result of

confessing what I believe to be true.

**What is the summary of all of this?** Answer: I know and believe the love of God that he has for me. After John has said all this he uses an inference clause to summarize the main point: “[16] So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us.” It is not just the idea of love in general, but John specifically calls out God's personal love for me, for us!

WHY is this true? Why can I know God's love? Because this experience and knowledge of God's love for me is rooted or grounded in abiding, vs13-15.

This verse 16 is the inference at the end of the passage stating a summary fact (God's love for me) is grounded or true because of something (two-way abiding).

Here is the logical flow from the order and

grammar of the passage:

Because I abide in God and he in me which happens because of his Spirit and what I have seen and testify, I CAN know and feel and understand and bank-on this love of God directed to me personally.

Said another way as if these verses were written in reverse order, “HOW can I know that I am loved by God? How can I be assured of that, experience that, savor that like good food settling over me?” Answer: Because I abide in God and he in me which happens because of his Spirit, and what I have seen and testify. That is joyful, unbroken love!

End Notes: 1. Calvin, John, *Commentary on 1 John* (Michigan: Baker Book House, 2005)

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*Arcing Table:* The nearby table shows how each proposition or thought from John's argument connects to another in his logical flow of what he means to say. In this study methodology which traces an argument, we put one clause on one line which has a subject and a verb (underlined below). There are 18 common ways that two propositions or clauses in language can connect to each other and the larger argument (see [Blicksblog.org/arcing](http://Blicksblog.org/arcing) for a one page summary PDF). In this passage, John uses 5 of the 18 types: Idea / Explanation, Series, Ground, Action / Result, and Inference (see color pairs below). Read notes right to left to go from each proposition to the big picture of the argument.

| Arcing Table: 1 John 4:13-16a  |  |  | Headline: We know God's Love personally in abiding.                                     |  |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| Main 1: Because of two-way abiding, we know God's love for us (Inference 1). | Main 2: Two-way abiding is real because of two reasons (Ground 1):           | Idea: We know.                                   | [13] By this <u>we know</u>   |  |
|  |  | Explain: What do we know? Two-way abiding.       | that <u>we abide</u> in him and he in us,   |  |
|  | Ground 2: because A. we have his Spirit and B. we see / testify.             | Series 1: God's spirit is in us.                 |   | because <u>he has given</u> us of his Spirit.                          |
|  |  | Series 2: we believe and speak.                  | Idea: We see and testify.   | [14] And <u>we have seen and testify</u>                               |
|  | Action 1: When we confess in belief, something results from that (Result 1). | Result 1: the result is two-way abiding.         | Explain: What do we see and testify? God sent Jesus.                                    | that the <u>Father has sent</u> his Son to be the Savior of the world. |
|  |  |  | Idea: Confess.  | [15] <u>Whoever confesses</u>  |
| Inference 1: We can know and have known God's love for us. WHY? (Main 1)     |  | Explain: What do we confess? Jesus is God's son. | that <u>Jesus is</u> the Son of God,  |  |
|  |  | Idea: Love                                       | <u>God abides</u> in him, and he in God.  |  |
|  |  | Explain: Who's love? God's for us.               | [16] So <u>we have come</u> to know and to believe the love that <u>God has</u> for us. |  |