

**Built to Last**  
1 John 4:15-18  
Dr. Paul Cannings

**A. The Foundation (v. 15):**

1. Confess – To confess means that someone emphatically agrees and proclaims as fact, an inward conviction, that Jesus was begotten of God and is fully man and fully God.
  - a) Key verse is chapter 4:1-3 – It is impossible to love a person forever if you are not saved (4:7-8).
2. Abides in God – Anyone who makes such a declaration vividly demonstrates that they are steadfastly standing firm, despite whatever troubles they may be experiencing, in the conviction of the totality of who God is based on the Word of God.
3. And he is in God – Because this believer willfully chooses to hold to the Word of God, no matter what, this person will continuously function under the authority of the Lord God.

**B. The Framework (v. 16):**

1. We have come to know – John says, over a period of time, he has grown to a full understanding or realization of the love of God so that he now functions productively because of God's love.
2. And have believed – Those who live in God have a complete unreserved trust and confidence in the promises of God so that no matter what they may experience they would “look beyond all difficulties to God and His promises”.
3. Love which God has for us – The direct object of God's love is to provide to us what we need which is portrayed in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. His love is the central focus of what love is all about (1 John 2:5; 4:7-9, 19).
4. God is love - The totality of who God is finds its full description in the manner God directs His will towards caring for our needs. This process is continuous, meaning it never ends.
  - a) For John, all true believers in Jesus have the Spirit, who moves them to love (see comment on 4:11–12) and prophetically endows them

to testify the truth about Christ (see comment on 4:1). <sup>[1]</sup> Therefore, a person who hates does not know God (2:9-10).

5. Abides in love – The believer who chooses to remain steadfast in however God chooses to supply their needs remains in the will of God and as a result continuously experience God’s divine agape love.
6. Abides in God - A believer that remains faithful to God’s Word, no matter what they may have encountered, trust God to care for them and remains in the sphere of God’s love, constantly being loved by God. John said this in John 15:9-10; *“Just as the Father has loved Me, I have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.”*
7. God abides in Him - The totality of all that God is, continuously and steadfastly dwells in the believer who faithfully trust in God’s Word which is demonstrated by their willingness to obey the Lord each day no matter who maybe hateful towards them.

### **C. Perfected (vs. 17-18):**

1. Love is perfected in us – A believer who willfully and consistently obeys God’s Word, because God is love, this believer completely experiences the character of God. This empowers them to love anyone, even an enemy (Romans 12:4-16). This believer can love even an enemy because God’s love is completely who they are.
2. Love is perfected in us – When love is keeping God’s Word and a believer faithfully does So, that same believer, who is surrendered to God’s Word, “no longer lives” (Galatians 2:20). The nature of Christ is who they are, and the nature of Christ is love, so this believer, being controlled by the Spirit of God, loves everyone they encounter. Therefore, the love of God is completely displayed in and through them (1 John 2:3-6).
3. We have confidence - This believer can cling to knowing that before God there is no need for fear or anxiety of what God would do to them because they have unhesitating confidence that their relationship is in good standing.
  - a) A believer who experiences perfecting love grows in his confidence toward God. He has a reverential fear of God, not a tormenting fear. He is a son who respects his Father, not a prisoner who cringes before a judge (Romans 8:14-17).
4. In the day of judgment – At the time of the rapture and the Beamer Seat of Christ this

believer remains in fellowship with the Lord because they were willing to deny themselves and live in the very nature of Christ. In Philippians 2:21 Paul talks about what he would gain as a blessing in heaven, not punishment.

a) In the [Old Testament \(e.g., Amos 5:18–20\)](#) and Judaism, “the day of judgment” was something to be feared by the disobedient (2:28). But those who continued in love can be confident of acquittal before God’s tribunal in that day, for they are agents of his unselfish love. <sup>[2]</sup>

6. No fear in love – There is no need to be terrified of God when our heart is to love Him by keeping His Word (1 John 2:5), because by so doing we allow Him to transform us into His nature (Romans 12:2).
7. No fear in love – To willfully choose to walk in God’s Word means that we decided, no matter our troubles, no matter who hates us, to remain steadfastly committed to the work of God in us (Philippians 2:13). This obedience is an expression of our love for Him because He first loved us. Since we remain in His love there is no need to be in terror of God.
8. Perfected love – The love that causes no fear completely becomes who the believer is. This is the purpose of all that Christ is seeking to accomplish in us. Loving anyone is in His strength so we can love anybody.
9. Cast out all fear – This kind of love aggressively (‘to hurl with a lot of force’), decisively removes any or all anxiety, guilt, or nervousness when the believer comes before God in prayer and trust God to change their circumstances.
10. The one who fears is not perfected – The believer who is terrified of God will be so distracted; their experience of the Lord will be limited. The development of the nature of Christ in them will not reach its perfection.
11. Not perfected in love – The person who lives in fear live terrified of God rather than focus on growing in Christ. Growing in Christ, by abiding in His Word, leads to experiencing the love of God towards us (John 15;1-11).
12. Not perfected in love – When we abide in God’s Word we experience more and more of His love (His promises become a daily experience). We grow spiritually. The fruit of that growth is to become more like Him which means we can always love anyone (Matthew 22:36-40), because love is directed by His Spirit through His Word.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Keener, C. S. (1993). [The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament](#) (1 Jn 4:17). InterVarsity Press.

[Old Testament](#) \*Old Testament. The common modern term for the Hebrew Bible (including Aramaic portions) as defined by the Jewish and Protestant Christian canons; Jewish readers generally call this the Tenach.

<sup>[2]</sup> Keener, C. S. (1993). [The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament](#) (1 Jn 4:17). InterVarsity Press.