

***How to Look More Like Jesus***  
***1 John 4:7-19***

Possibly the most important and consequential descriptive statement about God in all of Scripture is this: “God is love.” It is a testament to Who God is, not just what He does. He loves, of course, but He loves because love is Who He is. Love is His nature.

John says we can verify his assertion about God by looking at what He has done. “He sent His Son into the world as an atoning sacrifice for our sins that we might live through Him.” Jesus’ action perfectly depicts real love. It isn’t a mere feeling or sentiment. Nor is it a self-serving activity. It is self-sacrificing--done purely for the benefit of the thing loved.

John penned this phrase to address a pressing problem. People who once claimed faith in Jesus had walked away from Jesus and John’s church (see **1 John 2:19**). Those still in the church were fearful that maybe they too were not truly saved. After all, the people who left said they had received Jesus. What evidence could they look for to see if they were really born of God and knew God? John’s answer: “let us love one another, for love comes from God. Like Jesus, Christians are repeatedly called to lay down their lives for one another by meeting the physical needs of others through sharing with one another and by meeting the emotional and spiritual needs of others by bearing with one another and forgiving one another.

But being born of God and knowing God doesn’t make love automatic. It enables us to love as He loves. We must be intentional about our love for one another. It must be cultivated.

As Christ-followers, we are called to a self-giving, self-denying love for one another. Since God is love, love is God’s nature, but it isn’t in our nature. Enabled by God’s Spirit within us, however, we can practice loving one another, helping, forgiving, building up one another, until His kind of love becomes 2<sup>nd</sup> nature to us.