



# International Bible Lesson

International Bible Study Commentary  
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## What is True Love? 1 John 4:13-21

*We love him, because he first loved us* (1 John 4:19—KJV).

*We love, because He first loved us* (1 John 4:19—NASB).

*We love because he first loved us* (1 John 4:19—NRSV).

Sometimes people wonder if love is real. We cannot see love, but we can certainly feel love. Love is real. We know love is real because 1 John 4:16 says, “God is love” and God is real. From the Bible, we learn that love comes from God and we love because God first loved us. But what is love? Some have said that love is a special way of feeling, and we know when we have that special way of feeling. We also know that love involves more than our feelings and we have different types of love. In the beginning, everyone loves themselves and everyone loves having their needs met. Unhappily, some people never get beyond loving themselves supremely and having their needs met. If someone loves themselves supremely, they will often feel attraction for those who satisfy their desires and meet their needs. Sometimes they “love” the other person only until they no longer satisfy their selfish desires. God’s love is not this selfish type of self-centered “love.” Self-centered love cannot give anyone ultimate happiness. Because God’s love is not self-centered, God unselfishly sent Jesus Christ into the world, and He became the supreme example of selfless love. But Jesus does more for us when He comes to live and love within those who love and follow Him. His followers have discovered that their ultimate happiness comes from loving others unselfishly and from allowing Jesus to love and help others through them. They no longer do everything based on a supreme love for themselves. Now they prayerfully do everything based on a supreme love

for God and the understanding that God wants them to love others unselfishly as God loves.

### Thinking Further

1. How does a follower of Jesus know that God is living within them?
2. What did John testify to? How could he testify to this truth?
3. Who does God abide (remain) in?
4. How did John describe God and how does a believer abide in God?
5. How are the followers of Jesus to be “in this world”?

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