

A Secure Identity coupled with Sacred Duty - I John 4:16b-21

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Certainty: Absolute Truths that Produce Joyful Assurance / Love; Certainty; Assurance

For people to feel secure, they need to have an identity that they are sure of. They need to know who they are. The problem is that most people look to themselves to find out who they are. Listen to this recent article/development, "Lego unveils first LGBTQ set ahead of Pride Month" written by Zamira Rahim, CNN:

Lego fans can build castles, jungles and entire town centers with the right set of bricks. But from June, the company will launch a brand new product -- its first ever LGBTQ-themed set, named "Everyone Is Awesome." The 346-piece set contains 11 figures, each with an assigned rainbow color. Lego said Thursday that the model was inspired by the classic rainbow flag, an enduring symbol of solidarity for the LGBTQ community. The new product will go on sale at the beginning of June to mark Pride Month. "I wanted to create a model that symbolizes inclusivity and celebrates everyone, no matter **how they identify** or who they love," the set's designer Matthew Ashton said in a statement Thursday.

[<https://www.cnn.com/style/article/lego-lgbtq-set-pride-intl-scli/index.html>. Accessed 05.23.21]

The real issue though is that there is a God before whom all of us will stand, and as our passage points out, that is a Day of Judgment. What He says is what is true and matters most.

The weight of this passage cannot be understood without an understanding of the Day of Judgment – *torment*:

1 John 4:17-18 KJV 1900

¹⁷ Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

Is it more fundamental to show the case for an actual Day of Judgment first?

The Common Ground

The common ground upon which all of us can agree is that there is love and hatred in the world. How does the real existence of love and hate in our world prove that there is an actual Day of Judgment?

Love/Hate is Undeniable

If we intuitively know that there is love/hate, then how do we know this? Why do we admit that this is real? We experience love/hate in our observations. We observe and participate in love/hate. We see love/hate. We witness love/hate. If there is love/hate, if there is moral right/wrong...is it plausible that there is a Person who created love/hate?

Plausibility of a Creator of Love/Hate

Is it plausible that there is someone who created right/wrong? If so, who is that? It would have to be Someone big enough to put love/hate detectors within every person born. There is only One Person who fits that bill — that is God.

Creator Presumes Standard & Judge

If God is the Creator of love/hate, then He is also the Standard for determining the lines of love/hate. He is the Judge between those who live according to the rule of love/hate. He is the Moderator.

If God is big enough to create love/hate, to put this sense within all people ever born, and to create the beings who can exercise love/hate; then, how powerful do you think God is? Should we not shudder at the thought of being Judged by a God this powerful? [Matthew 25:46](#) ([Matthew 25:31-46](#)) — It is in this passage of Matthew where we find the only other time in sacred scripture that the word for *torment* is used. In Matthew, it is translated as the word *punishment*.

Matthew 25:31-46 KJV 1900

³¹ When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: ³² And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats: ³³ And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

³⁴ Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ³⁵ For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: ³⁶ Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. ³⁷ Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink? ³⁸ When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*? ³⁹ Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? ⁴⁰ And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

⁴¹ Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: ⁴² For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: ⁴³ I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. ⁴⁴ Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? ⁴⁵ Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me. ⁴⁶ And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Kid's Pause: God is real, and you will stand before Him on the Day of Judgment.

Connecting to I John Context

If you were a Christian who believed that Jesus was the son of God and the One who made you right with God — made you secure with God — but a false teacher began to change the truth of Jesus, then your security would be shaken. Thus, John **maintains the reality of future Judgment but shows how those Christians could remain secure in the love of God and obediently love fellow Christians!**

For us today, the message is the same. **Be secure in your identity and obedient in your duty!** [**Be secure in the love of God and obedient in loving fellow Christians!**]

(1) **Identity**: Believe in the fullness of God's love! ([I John 4:16b-19](#))

It is a love characterized by real relationship with God ([I John 4:16](#))

It is a love characterized by [*future-looking, present-living*] confidence before God ([I John 4:17](#))

- It is a love that so secures the Christian because of the identity fixed in Jesus Christ. **It is this that gives me confidence for the Day of Judgment**, because as Jesus is, so am I in the world. — I am as secure in the love of God (while I am in this world), as Jesus was secure in the love of His Father ([John 17:23-24](#) — loved Jesus from the foundation of the world - *everlasting love*; [John 17:26](#) — “love may be IN them”).

It is a love characterized by fearlessness before God ([I John 4:18](#))

- When you know that you are loved by God, there is no fear of punishment. Perfect love casts out this idea of torment.

It is a love characterized by initiation by God ([I John 4:19](#))

- God is the Source of this love, and thus we are made to know more about the very nature of God. God wants his children to be secure in His love. He is not a mean Judge who is trying to keep people in the dark about relationship, security, confidence, judgment...etc.

God could not, nor can, receive any additional good by our salvation. But it was love, mere love; it was free love that brought the Lord Jesus Christ into our world. - George Whitefield (1714–1770)

George Whitefield (Adapted from George Whitefield, “Sermon XVI,” in *The Works of the Reverend George Whitefield*, vol. 5 (London: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1772), 252.

Be ready for the Day of Judgment (real relationship)! Christians must live today with full faith in the reality of the future! Preparing for retirement is too short of a view. Picking what college you will go to is too short of a view. Believing in the fullness of God’s love means that you will daily consider who God says you are, and you will believe this. This kind of love changes your perspective on the here and now because of the certainty of the future.

Kid’s Pause: Believing God’s love is the way to have confidence now and in the future.

(2) **Duty**: Love fellow Christians in obedience to God’s love ([1 John 4:20-21](#))

10,000 Sermon Illustrations Judgment Day

The time was the 19th of May, 1780. The place was Hartford, Connecticut. The day has gone down in New England history as a terrible foretaste of Judgment Day. For at noon the skies turned from blue to gray and by mid-afternoon had blackened over so densely that, in that religious age, men fell on their knees and begged a final blessing before the end came. The Connecticut House of Representatives was in session. And as some men fell down and others clamored for an immediate adjournment, the Speaker of the House, one Colonel Davenport, came to his feet. He silenced them and said these words: “The Day of Judgment is either approaching or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause for adjournment. If it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. I wish, therefore, that candles may be brought.”

— *Winning the New Civil War*, Robert P. Dugan, Jr., p. 183

Galaxie Software. 10,000 Sermon Illustrations. Biblical Studies Press, 2002.

This kind of obedience is impossible for the liar. ([1 John 4:20](#))

The only way this kind of love is possible is by someone who has been truly changed by the love of Christ, received the indwelling Spirit of Christ, and who intentionally purposes to exercise this love towards other Christians. Intentionality is seen in the word John uses in verse 21 — *love*. This is a present, active, subjunctive verb which means that the subject is doing the action intentionally.

This kind of obedience is because of love for Jesus ([1 John 4:21](#)).

Why does John say that this is the commandment we have from him? This phrase is calling to mind when Jesus gave the disciples this commandment. It is found in [John 14:15](#).

Jesus Christ is worthy of our INTENTIONAL love toward our brethren.

People do not drift toward holiness. Apart from grace-driven effort, people do not gravitate toward godliness, prayer, obedience to Scripture, faith, and delight in the Lord. We drift toward compromise and call it tolerance; we drift toward disobedience and call it freedom; we drift toward superstition and call it faith. We cherish the indiscipline of lost self-control and call it relaxation; we slouch toward prayerlessness and delude ourselves into thinking we have escaped legalism; we slide toward godlessness and convince ourselves we have been liberated.

—D. A. Carson, *For the Love of God* (Crossway, 1999)

Larson, C. B., & Ten Elshof, P. (2008). 1001 illustrations that connect (p. 131). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

Kid's Pause: God has loved you on purpose so that you can love others on purpose.

Christians, some of you have to admit some difficult truths: *You may know people who are professing Christians who manifest a hatred for others.* God's

word is clear. Others may be living under the illusion that you are a Christian, but you cannot stand a brother/sister in Christ. Yet, others, your obedience to love those who are not like you shows that you love God. Teens, do you love God? What brother are you intentionally loving in the way God has loved you? Singles, when you take time to love those who are not at the same age/stage, you are showing a genuine love for God. Are you intentionally obeying the command to love your Christian brethren?

What the world is yearning for is to be included, but God makes it clear that you cannot be included on your own terms because it was the terms of mankind that made them to be excluded from oneness with God and with others. Only in Jesus Christ is the love of God experienced. This experience then commands us to intentionally love others as we have been loved.

What could the Lord Jesus Christ have done for you more than He has? Then do not abuse His mercy, but let your time be spent in thinking and talking of the love of Jesus, who was incarnate for us, who was born of a woman, and made under the law, to redeem us from the wrath to come. — George Whitefield (1714–1770)

George Whitefield (George Whitefield, “Sermon XVI,” in *The Works of the Reverend George Whitefield*, vol. 5 (London: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1772), 260–261.

Christians have a secure identity, but we also have a sacred duty.