

## Undying Love

1 Peter 1:22-25 - NCBC, April 15, 2018

Main Point: **God's salvation compels troubled souls to supernaturally love others.**

- **Your heart has been purified** (22)
  - By your faith and hope in God
  - For a real love
- **Your heart has been born again** (23-25)
  - By the living and abiding word of God
  - For a relentless love

Application: **Demonstrate your future hope by your undying love for others.**

### Opening Announcements:

- Pastor Scott's Ordination Next Weekend! All invited!
  - 9am Ordination Council, Sat Apr 21 – Intersection Bldg
  - 4pm Ordination Service, Sun Apr 22 – Family Center

<<You Alone Can Rescue>>



We gather to praise and worship the only God who is able to save us from death, and give us life!

So let's continue our worship now by opening our Bibles to **1 Peter chapter 1** as we focus on **verses 22-25** this morning.



If you don't have a Bible with you, simply raise your hand and we'd be delighted to give you one. You are welcome to take this Bible home as our gift to you, or just return it after our service by placing it on the table in the back of the room. **1 Peter chapter 1** is on page 1203 in the giveaway Bibles today.

Spring is coming, and there's lots happening in our New Castle family these days!



Next weekend **Pastor Jay Lennington** from Grace Community Church in Los Angeles, CA will be preaching in our morning services, as well as in our afternoon ordination service. Jay grew up locally in Morton, and is the son of our own Kyle and Kay Lennington!! Pastor Jay and our own Pastor Scott had the joy of working together while Scott was in seminary in California, so we're delighted he is able to spend next weekend with us for Pastor Scott Gnuse's ordination. Please come ready to dig into God's Word as we will be delightfully fed by Jay's ministry next Sunday.

Then the following Sunday, on April 29th **Pastor Darren Wiebe** will be leading our music and worship during our services. Pastor Darren serves as the Associate Pastor of Worship for Grace Bible Church in Bakersfield, CA, and will be spending the weekend with our worship leaders and volunteers to help encourage and strengthen our biblical understanding of worship.

As you know, we are inviting several different associate pastors of music and worship to come and share from their experiences in like-minded churches as we

anticipate hiring a new associate pastor of music and worship ourselves later this year.

In January Pastor Aaron Johnson from Mission Road Bible Church in Kansas City spent a great weekend with us! Now Pastor Darren will be the second visiting worship pastor to come and share with us.

Remember that these visiting worship pastors are NOT coming to candidate for a position here. (Although they do represent the kind of men that we'd like to hire!) We recognize their ministry in their churches may look a bit different from what the associate pastor of music and worship might look like here at New Castle in the future, but these pastors come from like-minded churches to help us better understand some of the benefits of moving from a worship leader to a worship pastor philosophy.

We've never had a full-time pastor in the role of leading our music ministry, and so our elders believe that these visiting pastors will help us all unite around our excitement for this upcoming change.

So on Sunday April 29<sup>th</sup>, I will be preaching, but Pastor Darren will be leading our worship in music, and then Darren will teach and hold a Q&A during the 9:30a hour for all of our church family. Please plan to attend this special time with Darren during the ABF hour on April 29th!

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<sup>1</sup> You can listen in to Tom Felix and me discussing our vision for this strategic hire at <https://vimeo.com/236126558>. Also I'd recommend listening to the 4-part sermon series I preached on Biblical Worship in September/October of 2017 to help introduce this concept to our church family.

There's a lot happening, but it's all exciting and strengthening for our church family, and so please continue to pray that God will give us the needed faith and humility to follow His leading in this important season of growth at New Castle Bible Church!



Now for those who are able, I'd invite you to stand in honor of the reading of God's Word as I read the **English Standard Translation of 1 Peter chapter 1**, starting in **verse 22**:

*Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, <sup>23</sup> since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; <sup>24</sup> for*

*“All flesh is like grass  
and all its glory like the flower of grass.  
The grass withers,  
and the flower falls,*

*<sup>25</sup> but the word of the Lord remains forever.”*

*And this word is the good news that was preached to you.*

You may be seated.

**Let's Pray.**

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Love is the distinctive mark of every Christian.<sup>2</sup> To be a follower of Christ necessarily requires that your life reflects God's supernatural love.<sup>3</sup>

Church leaders should be known for their sacrificial love for the flock.<sup>4</sup> Christian husbands and fathers are to lead their homes with love.<sup>5</sup> Older women are to train younger women to love their husbands and children,<sup>6</sup> while older men are to be known for their love.<sup>7</sup> Paul taught young believers to model love,<sup>8</sup> and promoted an undivided devotion of love for God and others for all single saints.<sup>9</sup>

Love is the action of the two greatest commands,<sup>10</sup> because love is the fulfillment of God's law.<sup>11</sup> Love is the

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<sup>2</sup> 1 John 3:14; 4:7-8

<sup>3</sup> John 13:34-35; 1 John 5:1-3

<sup>4</sup> Acts 20:27-35; 1 Timothy 1:5

<sup>5</sup> Ephesians 5:25-33

<sup>6</sup> Titus 2:4

<sup>7</sup> Titus 2:2

<sup>8</sup> 1 Timothy 4:11

<sup>9</sup> 1 Corinthians 7:35

<sup>10</sup> Matthew 22:37-40

<sup>11</sup> Galatians 5:14

greatest spiritual gift that God gives to His children,<sup>12</sup> and is the leading fruit of God's Spirit.<sup>13</sup>

Therefore, every soul who is resting in God's saving love<sup>14</sup> should be growing in the practice of this love for others.<sup>15</sup>

God's Word is clear – loved people love.<sup>16</sup>

But do you ever look at your life and wonder why your love for others seems so weak?

When you get honest about your relationships with other Christians or your family members...do you see more selfishness than sacrifice?

When you look at those relationships that are most difficult for you... and you see fearful self-protection,<sup>17</sup> or antagonistic ambition,<sup>18</sup> or unforgiving bitterness,<sup>19</sup> what's your plan? How can you practically pursue growth in God's kind of love towards others?

What gives you hope that next year your character will truly be more Christ-like in your love for others than you are today?

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<sup>12</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:31; 13:13

<sup>13</sup> Galatians 5:22-23

<sup>14</sup> John 3:16

<sup>15</sup> 1 John 3:16

<sup>16</sup> 1 John 4:19

<sup>17</sup> Proverbs 29:25; 1 Corinthians 4:3

<sup>18</sup> James 3:14-16

<sup>19</sup> Ephesians 4:31

This morning our Bibles are open to the last few verses in **1 Peter 1** where Peter is encouraging suffering saints with two dynamic truths that should power their love. Although these Christians are exiled and grieved by various trials, Peter wants them to know that,



**God's salvation compels troubled souls to supernaturally love others.**

Saving grace changes you. You will love others after you experience God's love for you. No one stays the same after receiving God's grace.

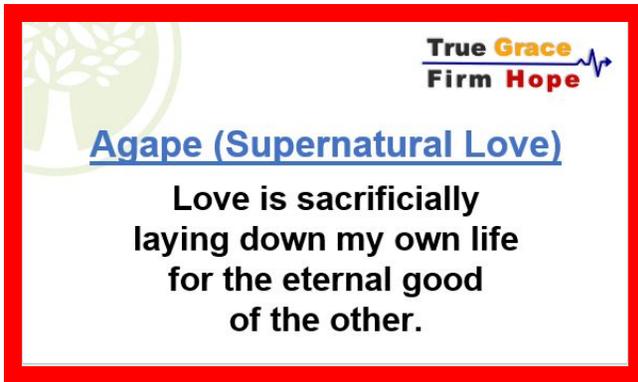
Since God is love,<sup>20</sup> God's children will love.<sup>21</sup> And these Scriptures unpack two powerful reasons why troubled hearts will still practice supernatural love towards others.

And just to clarify at the outset, the love that is commanded for us in **verse 22** is a special kind of love.

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<sup>20</sup> 1 John 4:16

<sup>21</sup> 1 John 4:17



The original word is *agape* – meaning the love of commitment, or the love of the will. Peter understands that troubled souls can't trust their feelings to power their relationships. So he commands us to *choose* to love – to choose to sacrifice for the eternal good of others. Just like God Himself has done for us.

To practice biblical **love is sacrificially laying down my own life for the eternal good of others.**

God knows that it hurts to love.<sup>22</sup> To truly love others is to put your own soul in a place of danger. I appreciate how C.S. Lewis said, quote:

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<sup>22</sup> Even before sin entered the world in the garden of Eden, love required sacrifice. God restricted Adam and Eve from one tree (Gen 2:17) so that they would have a way to practically communicate their love for Him. Their obedience to God's single prohibition was a sacrifice to their independent wills, and thereby demonstrated that their love for their Creator was greater than their love for self. Apart from this self-sacrifice, Adam and Eve couldn't fully demonstrate their love for God. Agape love, by definition, requires sacrifice.

*To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin or your selfishness. But in that casket--safe, dark, motionless, airless—[your heart] will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable...The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers...of love, is Hell.<sup>23</sup>*

End quote.

So take courage fellow Christian this morning, for God's salvation compels you to supernaturally love others first, because,



**Your heart has been purified (22)**

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<sup>23</sup> C.S. Lewis, The Four Loves, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1960, p.169.

**Verse 22** is not telling us to purify our souls. Instead the verb is reminding us that we have already been purified or cleansed. Our souls, or the real you – your desires, your affections, your mind, your spirit, your strength, your heart has been purified.

Something happened to your soul in the past that has an ongoing affect on you today. Your soul was purified. Your hard heart of rebellion was replaced with a soft heart of submission to God.<sup>24</sup> God cleansed you by the washing of regeneration and the renewal of His Holy Spirit.<sup>25</sup>

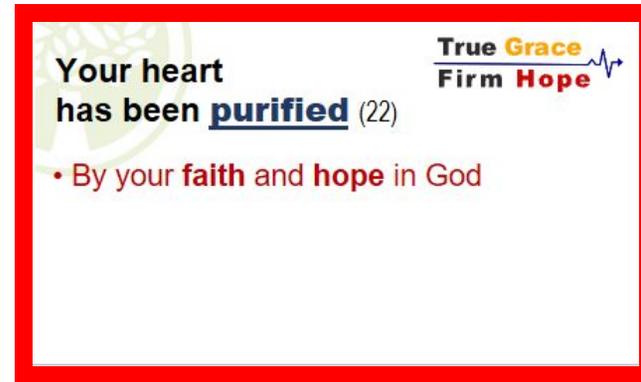
Dear chosen refugee – you are no longer the same person who you used to be! The real you has been made new!<sup>26</sup>

How is this possible, you ask? Well look at the verse right before.

**Verse 21,**

*...through [Christ] you are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.*

God purified your heart through Christ's finished work,



By your faith and hope in God

How does **verse 22** say it?

*Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth.*

“Obedience to the truth” is a synonym for faith.<sup>27</sup> Whoever believes God, obeys His Word; whoever obeys God, believes God.<sup>28</sup> This is the obedience that comes from the faith and hope of **verse 21**.<sup>29</sup>

Peter loved this truth: Your heart was purified and cleansed simply by believing in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ!!

Remember the Jerusalem Council back in **Acts 15**? All the apostles and elders gathered together in Jerusalem to answer the question of whether Gentile believers needed to be circumcised according to the Mosaic law to become God's children.

<sup>24</sup> Ezekiel 36:26-27; Jeremiah 31:31-34

<sup>25</sup> Titus 3:5; c.f. 1 Peter 1:2

<sup>26</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:17

<sup>27</sup> C.f. 1 Peter 4:17

<sup>28</sup> John 3:36; 14:15, 21

<sup>29</sup> “obedience of faith” – Romans 1:5; 16:26

Well after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to everyone,

**Your heart has been purified** (22)

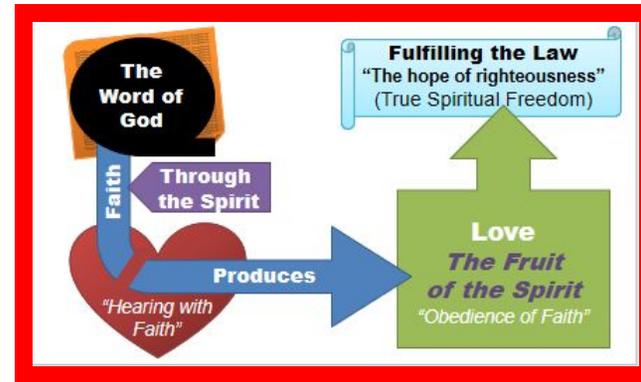
**True Grace**  
**Firm Hope**

- By your **faith** and **hope** in God

*God [gave Gentile believers] the Holy Spirit just as He did to us, and He made no distinction between us and them, **having cleansed their hearts by faith**. ~ Peter, Acts 15:8-9*

*God [gave Gentile believers] the Holy Spirit just as He did to us, and He made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith.*<sup>30</sup>

Peter loved this truth. Sinful hearts are cleansed and purified as the Spirit gives us faith<sup>31</sup> in God's good news of Jesus' death and resurrection for sinners.



Just like we learned in our study of **Galatians** last year, when the Spirit of God moves on the heart, we are then able to hear the Word of God with faith. And when a heart is so cleansed or purified by faith in the Gospel, the result is love which is the experience of true freedom or the fulfilling of God's law.

To use Peter's language from **verse 22**,

*Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love...*

In other words, your faith and hope in God has cleansed your heart,

<sup>30</sup> Acts 15:8-9

<sup>31</sup> Romans 10:17; 1 Corinthians 2:12-14; Titus 3:5



### For a real love

Peter uses the word *sincere* brotherly love. This is opposite from the malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of **chapter 2, verse 1**.

Once your heart has been purified by hope in God, your love for others can be genuine and sincere.<sup>32</sup>

Let's take a moment to unpack this.

An unsaved heart is darkened and without spiritual understanding,<sup>33</sup> enslaved to foolish and deceptive desires.<sup>34</sup> Therefore such a soul can only ever know the hypocritical "love" of self-centered lusts.<sup>35</sup>

In other words, a sinner's love is never sincerely sacrificial – because it is limited to "the ethic of repayment." I'll love you as long as you give me reason to love you. I'll scratch your back, as long as you scratch

<sup>32</sup> Romans 12:9

<sup>33</sup> Ephesians 4:18

<sup>34</sup> Romans 1:21, 28-32; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Peter 1:14, 18

<sup>35</sup> 2 Timothy 3:2-9

mine. But if you betray my love, and don't sufficiently reward me for the sacrifices that I make for you – then I will take my love away and invest it on someone or something else which will provide a greater return on my investment.

Unpurified souls can only love at this level of temporary reciprocal exchange. Too long in a relationship without sufficient payback, and hypocritical love says, "This relationship isn't worth my time or my sacrifice. Move on!"

But now listen carefully - Peter is saying this is how hope – faith's future-oriented twin – makes all the difference! Our faith cleanses our hearts from all self-serving bondage, and our hope purifies our purpose for loving from just the here and now.

We have been born again to a living hope! Our hope of life after death is now alive and kept guarded by God's power. Living hope purifies souls from the deceptive limitations of living for only what is seen or felt in the present. Our living hope and confident assurance of the outcome of our faith powers our ability to love others unconditionally and sacrificially through the present storm...because hope says the return for love's sacrifice is found to be praise, and glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ!<sup>36</sup> Our hope is no longer based on how you will respond to me – but in Christ our hope is set fully on the grace that will be brought to us when Jesus returns!<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> 1 Peter 1:7-8

<sup>37</sup> 1 Peter 1:13

Do you understand now how future hope powers real love? Without confident assurance of your future rewards and blessings with Christ, you will only live for today's comfort, today's pleasure, and today's benefits. You will use people selfishly for your own utilitarian advantages, and your claims of love for others will ring shallow – only as deep as their sacrifice returns back to you.

But when your hope is set fully on God's future grace, your heart has been purified from such selfish and temporary values. Your treasure is no longer contained in this world – but you value knowing Jesus Christ – and the fellowship of His suffering and the power of His resurrection more than anything else in your life!<sup>38</sup>

Hope in God's future grace is what powers a wife to sacrificially care for her infirmed husband long after others counsel her to walk away. Hope in God's future grace is what powers a friend to forgive their betrayer ... again. Only hope in God's future grace can empower mercy to stop and sacrifice time and money and energy to love a stranger alongside the road.<sup>39</sup>

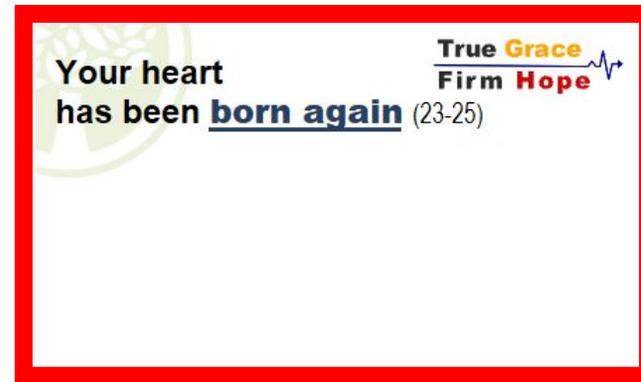
So the first way God compels troubled souls to supernaturally love others is by purifying their souls by their faith and hope in God for a sincere love towards other Christians.

And then in **verses 23-25**, Peter tells us the second reason believers should love one another earnestly, since,

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<sup>38</sup> Philippians 3:10

<sup>39</sup> Luke 10:25-37



Your heart has been born again (23-25)

The Scripture is pretty clear on this point, right? Choose to love another earnestly from a pure heart **verse 23** ... *since you have been born again.*

Your heart has been purified and cleansed by faith in Jesus Christ. You have been adopted by your Heavenly Father – and given His very nature – you have been born again,

*Not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.*

Your heart has been born again,

**Your heart  
has been born again** (23-25)

**True Grace  
Firm Hope**

- By the **living** and **abiding** Word of God

By the living and abiding word of God

The source of your spiritual life is not something you have done. The source of your spiritual life is not an emotion that will fade over time, or a fickle fad, or parental or peer pressure.

The source of your new life in Christ is imperishable – constant – eternal – and permanent. The seed which brought life in you is eternally living, and abiding or remaining forever.

To make sure you don't miss Peter's point here, let me ask you a question. If you plant a pumpkin seed in the ground, what produce will you get? Pumpkins right? If you plant corn, you get corn. If you plant beans, you get beans.

Follow Peter's logic. You have been born again by the imperishable, living, and abiding word of God. That means that your new life is forever!

The point is this: you now possess is an invincible hope in an eternal future!

Peter quotes from **Isaiah 40, verses 6 and 8** to make his point – the glory of flesh passes after time just like wilting flowers. All the human glories of perfect health, or wealth, or friends in high places, or powerful influence in this world will eventually fade. As it's been said, "No hearse ever pulls a U-haul." Because you can't take earthly glories with you!!

*But the word of the Lord remains forever, right? And this word – these Gospel promises that declare Christ's death and resurrection for the salvation of sinners who believe on Him – **this word is the good news that was preached to you.***

Since you have been born again by such a permanent and enduring power, you have been born again,

**Your heart  
has been born again** (23-25)

**True Grace  
Firm Hope**

- By the **living** and **abiding** Word of God
- For a **relentless** love

For a **relentless** love

That's what that word *earnestly* means in **verse 22**. Unrelenting. Undying. Stretched to the limit, and then

going a little farther still. Love one another to the uttermost!!<sup>40</sup>

This is how hope loves! This is how living hope forgives! This is how hope powers sincere and unrelenting personal sacrifice for the eternal good of others.

It's supernatural. It's the fruit of the Spirit after all. But it's the progressive lifestyle of all those who have been born again and who have received purified souls by faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ on their behalf.

Truly,

**Main Point**



**God's salvation compels troubled souls to supernaturally love others.**

God's salvation compels troubled souls to supernaturally love others.

Now think about the person who is most difficult for you to "like" right now. You can love that person earnestly and sincerely since your soul has been purified with a

living hope. Since you have been born again through the living and abiding word of God that remains forever.

So let me ask you,

Is your hope in Christ powerful enough to compel your troubled heart to supernaturally keep loving others?

Because,

**Application**



**Demonstrate your future hope by your undying love for others.**

You demonstrate your future hope by your undying love for others.

The eternal word produces eternal life which gives you an eternal hope that powers an eternal love.

Peter is going to call these troubled saints to keep loving one another even while they are experiencing horrific fiery trials. He knows that nothing in this world is strong enough to power perseverance with such love. Only souls that have been purified and cleansed from the deception of earthly treasures by their obedience to the truth will ever possess the energy and desire to love one another to the fullest possible extent.

<sup>40</sup> John 13:1

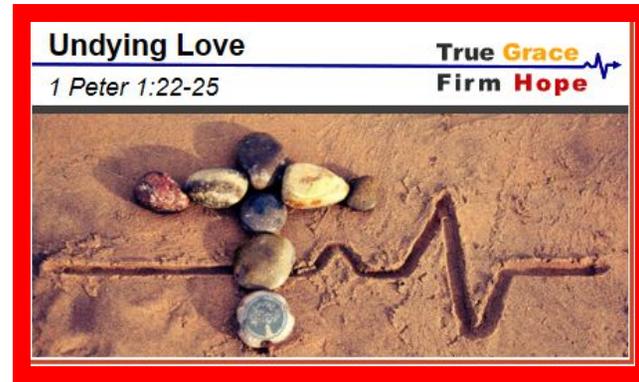
So has your soul been cleansed by faith in Christ? Do you love Christ more than anything else in this world? Is your hope set fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ, or is your hope fixed on something you are really wanting here in this life?

Have the Scriptures reminded you this morning that your soul is eternal, and your new life in Christ is forever and ever, and ever?! Your hope is undying dear Christian – so therefore your love can be as well!

Have you taken up an offense against another brother or sister? Someone in your church, or someone in your family? Demonstrate your future hope in Christ by your undying love for them – and forgive them just as God in Christ has forgiven you.<sup>41</sup>

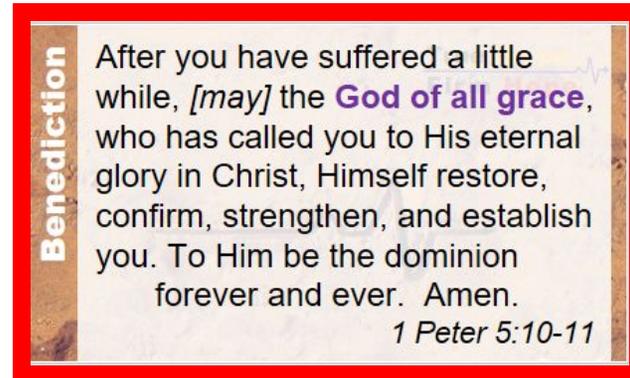
Is someone weak, or lacking, or inconveniencing you again with their needs? Demonstrate your living hope with your undying love as you seek to sacrificially serve their eternal good.

For after all, hope in God's future grace always empowers loved people to love.



**Let's pray together as we dismiss.**

<<Love lifted me>>



*And after you have suffered a little while, [may] the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. <sup>11</sup> To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. **1 Peter 5:10-11***

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<sup>41</sup> Ephesians 4:32  
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### **Recommended Resources on *Undying Love*:**

- Isaiah 40:6-8
- John 5:42; 13:34-35; 14:21
- Acts 15:8-9
- Romans 5:5; 6:3-4; 10:17; 12:9-10
- 1 Corinthians 10:31-33; 13:1-13
- 2 Corinthians 5:14, 6:6; 8:8
- Galatians 5:6, 14-6:2
- Philippians 1:9
- 1 Thessalonians 3:12; 4:9
- 2 Thessalonians 1:3
- James 1:18
- 1 John 2:5, 10-11; 3:2-3, 10-11, 14-17; 4:7-8, 12, 16, 19-21; 5:1-2
  
- <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/how-does-the-spirit-produce-love>
- <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/62-28/true-christians-love-one-another>
- <https://biblicaleldership.com/effective-shepherding-172/leading-gods-flock-0/leading-love/>
  
- How to Overcome Evil, Jay Adams
- Love Gives Life, Evan May
- The Four Loves, C.S. Lewis

### **Growing Deeper: Life Group Questions**

1. Compare 1 Corinthians 13:13 and 1 John 3:2-3 with 1 Peter 1:21-22. What is the relationship between hope and love? How does a confident hope in God's future empower practical love to others now?
2. Read Isaiah 40:6-8. What point is Peter making by quoting this passage in 1 Peter 1:24-25? How does the eternal nature of God's Word give hope to those who have received new life from it?
3. Read Romans 12:9. How could love be insincere or hypocritical? What beliefs or convictions are necessary to believe for a heart to genuinely love others sacrificially?
4. Read 1 Peter 1:22; 2:17; 3:8; 4:8-9; 5:14. Note how Peter emphasizes love to these troubled exiles all throughout this letter. Is this emphasis on love surprising to you in this letter? Why or why not?
5. Compare Galatians 5:13-14, 22-24 with 1 John 4:7-8. What is the source of *agape* love? How does Peter teach the same thing as Paul and John? How then can you really grow in your love for others?