

# Love One Another

1 John 3:11-24

**MPS** Love from God gives life that becomes life-giving as we love one another.

**OBJ** Every person can understand true love from God by three blessings of love's power.

## READ 1 John 3:11-24

*For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. <sup>12</sup>We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. <sup>13</sup>Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. <sup>14</sup>We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. <sup>15</sup>Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.*

*<sup>16</sup>By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. <sup>17</sup>But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? <sup>18</sup>Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.*

*<sup>19</sup>By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; <sup>20</sup>for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. <sup>21</sup>Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; <sup>22</sup>and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. <sup>23</sup>And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. <sup>24</sup>Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us. **1 John 3:11-24***

Once John establishes the character of God as the foundation of our understanding for Him, and that our relationship with Him is due to His love for us to make us His children, what could be next for us to cover. I mean, "if we love God, then what more is there?" John moves to the next aspect of fellowship with God, to echo Jesus' teaching of the greatest commandment and its accompanying commandment in the law, love one another.

**Love for one another is central to God's greatest commandment.** It was never an after-thought, not an instruction given when the kids couldn't get along, not an answer to a theoretical question of debate, nor a preferred solution to a problem. The new command to love one another is as old as love for God because through it one demonstrates love for God. When we consider our love for God absent of how we love others, it is actually our lack of love for God that we reveal as we set forth a new command in place of God. When Jesus said, "And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.", He was saying that you can't have one without the other. **True love for God will always produce love for one another.**

**Love from God gives life that becomes life-giving as we love one another.**

Receiving God's love is the easy part of Christianity. Learning to love others like you have been loved by God is the sanctifying part of Christianity. John teaches us about the power of God's love and how it works within us to make us like Him.

**OBJ** Three Blessings of the power of love.

### 1. Love that gives life produces love, but death produces hate. .11-15

*<sup>12</sup>We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. <sup>13</sup>Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. <sup>14</sup>We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. <sup>15</sup>Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. **1 John 3:11-15***

Once John establishes the command to love one another, he contrasts it with what it looks like to not love one another. He uses the example of Cain and Able, the first two brothers. Cain killed Able because his sacrifice was righteous in God's



eyes, but Cain's was not. Most important for us to understand is that this is reference to the way they lived their lives, not merely a single action. John states that Cain murdered Able because he was of the evil one. And as we saw from the previous passage, as person always produces actions aligned with that which you fill your life. So in providing deeper insight he states that the real reason Cain murdered Able was not because of what Able did, but because of what Cain was full of, hate. Then he warns Christians to not be surprised when the world hates you. **Why does he say this?** Because the world is the realm of the Evil One. And while he is not sovereign, he is the prince of this world actively seeking to steal, kill, and destroy as many as possible by his hate. When the world is filled with the Evil One's hate, it will hate that which is filled with righteousness. However, we know that we passed out of death when we love one another. To fail to love is to abide in death, the opposite of what John has been teaching. And hate for our brother, that which motivated Cain to kill Able, makes us guilty of murder too. **But when we abide in Christ we will love because we are being filled with His love.**

God didn't say loving one another would be easy. Nor did He say to love those that are easy to love and don't worry about the rest. He said, *"just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."*(John13:34) And we know that God loved us while we were still His enemies.(Romans 5:10) **When we abide in God's love, we will love like we have been loved by God.**

**Loving others is hard, isn't it.** And here is the hard truth: the reason we fail to love others is not because of others, but because of evil that remains in our heart. And evil remains in our heart because of where we abide, with the evil one; aka consumed by the world. Finally, we come to know what is truly filling our heart by what comes out of our life, in our actions, attitudes, and our thoughts. You may be filled with love by the world, primarily determined by a feeling, but as long as love is worldly, it will produce hate. Hate is best recognized by the "cloaks" it wears, known as envy, bitterness, jealousy, greed, and lust. All these are produced by worldly love that is false, deceptive, and destructive. The love the world gives always masquerades as true, but only steals, deceives, and destroys because it is false.

**APPL** **Have you noticed what is coming out of your heart lately?** What is being produced in you is because of what is filling you, which reveals where you are abiding. Ultimately, death that masquerades as life will produce something that looks like love for a time, but it will be an imitation and will not last. You can't simply change your actions. You have to relocate! You need a new spiritual "address" to fill your life with God's love. Only life produces true love that remains. And true love from God always produces the fruit of His righteousness. As Christians, where we fail to love others should set-off warning flags and sirens of danger because of what is within us. **Love that gives life produces love, but death produces hate.**

**TRANS** In contrast to hate, true love from God produces something completely different.

## **2. Love that gives eternal life motivates regular expressions of love to bless others. .16-18**

*<sup>16</sup>By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. <sup>17</sup>But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? <sup>18</sup>Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. **1 John 3:16-18***

John turns away from false love by reminding us of how we know true love; he points us to Jesus Christ. Christ demonstrated true love when He laid down his life for us. And in response to this love, John immediately states that this kind of love should motivate us to lay down our lives for others. This does not mean that we put ourselves in a place to die for others. Our physical death would mean nothing for them. Instead, we represent Christ's ultimate sacrifice for us in the way we live by our tangible sacrifice for others. So John appeals to us to let our love not be only in words, but in deeds and in truth that matter.

How can we, who were helpless and hopeless but received mercy from God, look upon others in their state and not be moved to help. Love that is received always motivates a similar love to be expressed. John makes this point by asking, **"how can we look on others in need and close our heart when God looked on us in our need and opened his completely?"** When God's love abides in us, it stirs compassion in the same way Jesus was moved with compassion when he looked upon the crowds who were like sheep without a shepherd.(Matthew 9:36) The key here is not to consume ourselves with looking at all the help that is needed in the world, and busying ourselves with trying to alleviate every problem. Rather, **John calls us to consume ourselves with God's love in Jesus Christ as we abide, so to be ready to meet needs that we encounter from the**



resource of our life that God has given to us.

Tangible blessings will never solve people's ultimate problem of sin and separation from God. But love tangibly expressed can alleviate suffering from hopelessness and helplessness in this world just long enough for a person to see the love that motivated the immediate act. And in those moments, God works in the heart to bring hope and peace, and sometimes healing, even if only for an instance, in His Name. And sometimes from that instance, their eternity is changed. We demonstrate Jesus' ultimate sacrifice of love for us every time we sacrifice from what is ours in this world to show love toward others. [Love that gives eternal life motivates regular expressions of love to bless others.](#)

TRANS But the biggest change from our expressions of love is still not the biggest change of love's power.

### 3. [Love that gives life to love one another holds a purifying effect within us.](#) .19-24

*<sup>19</sup>By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; <sup>20</sup>for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. <sup>21</sup>Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; <sup>22</sup>and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. <sup>23</sup>And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. <sup>24</sup>Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us. 1 John 3:19-24*

In the end of recognizing what fills us, John concludes with some encouragement to help us. The fact is, we all see areas and moments when our heart is not full of God's love, and is actually filled with something other than. And this third blessing strengthens us to understand those moments in light of the gospel too!

When we see those moments of hate in our heart, there is a condemnation and guilt that threatens. But instead of giving in to the threat, we are reminded of God's promise, which is greater! We are not confirmed in our faith because of how we perform, but because of how He loves in Jesus Christ. We need not question God's love when we fail to see it in ourselves, because we know we are not the source of it, but He is. So, we run to Him in confidence of His work in us. His love provides boldness and confidence in our prayers to ask of anything and all that we need from Him, knowing He will supply. And the confidence we have from Him gives us strength to obey His commands. [When we turn to God, no matter where from, the power of His love works in us to produce within us what is only from Him.](#)

**God renews our hearts as we seek Him.** As He renews us, He changes us by purging out the evil, hate, and darkness, and replacing it with His light, love, and life. And here we find His command before us, to believe and love one another. This is not ours to accomplish in our own strength. Rather, having been filled by His love, we are encouraged and motivated, strengthened in heart, mind, and soul, to trust Him and obey. This is where we learn, where it is revealed to us, that this is God's plan for us. [The life God wills for us to live is sourced by the life that He puts within us!](#)

Loving one another is not easy, and it doesn't take long to learn this. Maybe the best practical counsel I have ever heard on loving others came from a pastor's prayer on learning to love those we'd rather not. He stated, "When you find that you do not and cannot love another, simply pray, 'Lord, love them through me until I learn to love them as you love me.'" The more you live to love others, the more you realize how difficult and challenging it truly is. But you also recognize something else, how live-giving it becomes by its purifying effect within you. [Love that gives life to love one another holds a purifying effect within us.](#)

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