

CONFIDENT LOVE

Bible Background – 1 JOHN 3:11-24; 2 John 1:4-11; 3 John 1:5-8

Printed Text – 1 JOHN 3:11-24

Love One Another

¹¹ This is the message you have heard from the beginning: We should love one another.

¹² We must not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and killed his brother. And why did he kill him? Because Cain had been doing what was evil, and his brother had been doing what was righteous.

¹³ So don't be surprised, dear brothers and sisters, if the world hates you.

¹⁴ If we love our brothers and sisters who are believers, it proves that we have passed from death to life. But a person who has no love is still dead.

¹⁵ Anyone who hates another brother or sister is really a murderer at heart. And you know that murderers don't have eternal life within them.

¹⁶ We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters.

¹⁷ If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—how can God's love be in that person?

Lesson Introduction

Jesus' command to love each other within the church was to show the world that His followers were an extension of Him—Christ like in love and devotion to one another. The “new commandment” by no means overrules the first two—to love God with everything you are and to love your neighbor even as you love yourself. But obedience to this commandment demonstrates without doubt, the strong human community that should be found in the body of Christ.

¹⁸ Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions.

¹⁹ Our actions will show that we belong to the truth, so we will be confident when we stand before God.

²⁰ Even if we feel guilty, God is greater than our feelings, and he knows everything.

²¹ Dear friends, if we don't feel guilty, we can come to God with bold confidence.

²² And we will receive from him whatever we ask because we obey him and do the things that please him.

²³ And this is his commandment: We must believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he commanded us.

²⁴ Those who obey God's commandments remain in fellowship with him, and he with them. And we know he lives in us because the Spirit he gave us lives in us.

-----New Living Translation

Background: In Jesus' day, many assumed that by obeying the commandments, they could show themselves worthy of God's blessings (Galatians 3:2). However, Jesus made it very clear that love was a natural result of God's blessings, not a pre-condition for it. This letter was written to members of the churches in Asia Minor. The epistle served as a reminder to the children of God to love one another. The apostle John is prepared to show the church how to put the love of God into action. The commandment to love is an expression of how Christ's disciples should act. This love has been shed abroad by the Holy Spirit in their hearts. Without showing love toward others, it is doubtful that one can really say that he or she loves.

-----*Precepts for Living*, the UMI Annual Commentary 2020-2021, p. 127

Love and Life and Death

1 John 3:11-16: This passage begins by clearly stating that anyone who accepts the Gospel message is expected to love as Jesus loved—the true test of discipleship. As an example of how *not* to be, John reminds us of Cain's evil act of murder against his brother, from Genesis 4:8-10. Cain was motivated by jealousy and hatred toward his brother Abel, certainly not love, when he murdered Abel. Just as jealousy promoted evil hatred in Cain, jealous hatred can also grow in us. These emotions may not lead to literal murder, but can easily lead to a hateful and "murderous" heart that can show in our behavior. God loves each of us and provides for each of us just what we need. Therefore, there is no need to begrudge other's blessings.

Those who practice acts of hate are spiritually dead (v. 14). And, in contrast, those who practice love as Jesus commands, abide in Him and have passed from death to spiritual life. Jesus showed us what real love is when He gave His life for us. Likewise, we show that we belong to Him when we willingly give sacrificially for our brothers and sisters in Christ (v.15-16). Love at this level is a stark contradiction to the world's standards.

◆ *What does John mean when he says "marvel not" if the world hates you? How does this apply to our lives today?*

Showing Our Love

1 John 3:17-20: What is the benefit of saying that we love, but neglect to show it? Love is not just a feeling and certainly should be much more than merely something we just "say." John exhorts believers to show that we love by the actions we take. We are called to sacrifice time, talents and treasure to help someone else for we cannot truly love others without doing something for others. Love is manifest in action.

God does not provide us material possessions just to satisfy our self-indulgent needs. We are to use our possessions to enable us to be obedient to his command to love. We must have deep down in our gut (Gr. *splanchnon*) compassion for others. Out of this compassionate love for brothers and sisters we can perform acts of tender mercy that help those who are in need. This world's goods can empower us to manifest our love to others. Moreover, our behavior of sacrificial love reinforces our confidence that we indeed belong to God. Even when we fall short, God's grace and

November 15, 2020 – Study Guide 11

mercy are bigger than our thoughts and feelings. He knows our hearts and understands the truth behind our efforts. In all things, He knows us better than we know ourselves (v. 20).

◆ *What does John mean in V. 20 “God is greater than our hearts?”*

Confidence in Love and Spirit

1 John 3:21-24: God’s grace allows us to live free in His presence. We are free from self-condemnation for He knows perfectly what is in our hearts. Because we are free and obey His command, we can approach Him with confidence, receiving what we ask of Him. And this is how we know that we abide in Him and Him in us, by keeping His command to love. God is love so we too, should be characterized by love. For, there is no greater witness to others than expressing the love of God in all that we do.

◆ *What is the proof that Christ abides in us?*

Conclusion

Love is more than a word. It is manifest in action, a repeated commandment from the Lord, and is evidence that we belong to the body of Christ. Regardless of what standards our current society lives by, we are commanded to love. Consider some things that we can do to demonstrate our love for other members of the church, our family, and for people that we don’t even know. Commit to performing some of these actions throughout the week.

Sources:

Banks, M. (Ed.). (2020). Love For One Another. *Precepts for Living*, 23(Fall Quarter), 123-133. The Urban Ministries, Inc. Annual Commentary 2020-2021.
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November 15, 2020 – Study Guide 11

Lesson for Next Week – November 22, 2020 – Study Guide 12

SHARING LOVE

Bible Background ♦ ACTS 4:32-5:11

Printed Text ♦ ACTS 4:32-5:11

Devotional Reading ♦ 2 CORINTHIANS 6:1-10

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

Preparing to Become a Deacon
(1 Timothy 3:8-13)

TUESDAY

Healing Ministry Grows the Church
(Acts 5:12-16)

WEDNESDAY

Church Sharing Plan Enlarged
(Acts 6:1-7)

THURSDAY

Stephen's Ministry Opposed
(Acts 6:8-15)

FRIDAY

Sharing All of Life Together
(Acts 2:42-47)

SATURDAY

Prayer for Boldness and Signs
(Acts 4:23-31)

SUNDAY

Sharing All Possessions Challenges the Church
(Acts 4:32-5:11)