

1 John 3:11-24 Love Actively and Genuinely

1. The simple message (1 Jn. 3:11-15)

- a. The simple message delivered to the believers John is writing to is that of love (v.11)
- b. Cain and Abel – This story shows us what *not* to do (1 Jn. 3:12, Gen 4:1-12, Heb. 11:4) Cain did not trust God and only gave “some of the fruits” he harvested. (Gen. 4:3) The serious issue: Cain’s inner state not only manifested itself in murder, but also marked him as one “who belonged to the evil one.” (1 Jn. 3:12) Cain let jealousy, an aspect of his flesh, get in the way of him loving his brother – This is hatred, as John defines it.
Matt. 5:22-24: even if we are angry we are guilty of murder
- c. World and Christ-followers – a spherical divide (1 Jn. 3:13-15) John basically says, “Hey guys, don’t be taken back if the world hates you! They are in a totally different sphere than you and act out the condition of their hearts.” (v.15)
Sphere 1: the world - Metaphorically this is Cain – characterized by hatred and death
Sphere 2: Christ-followers - As we will see in the next set of verses, this sphere is characterized by Christ, love, and eternal life.

2. The application (1 Jn. 3:16-18)

- a. The call in vv. 11-15 is for us to love one another; vv. 16-18 give us insight as to how to carry out such a call.
- b. Instruction manual
- c. Obtain the *whatever-it takes* mindset (v. 16) Jesus demonstrated how this is done perfectly; he abandoned what *He* wanted to do and suffered for our good. (v. 16) This is a self-denying, others-seeking kind of love; seeking the benefit of others even at the expense of your own good.
- d. Ask God to renew your mind; we cannot genuinely transform our thinking by ourselves – *Oh Lord that You would shape and re-shape the way we view others! Break us apart!*
“Oh Jesus friend of sinners / Open our eyes to the world at the end of our pointing fingers / Let our hearts be led by mercy / Help us reach with open hearts and open doors / Oh Jesus friend of sinners break our hearts for what breaks yours” *Casting Crowns, “Jesus, Friend of Sinners”*
- e. Apply the new mindset *with actions and in truth* (vv. 17-18)
Actions: My pastor once stressed to me that practicality is key to an applicable message. John ought to work for Nike: just *do it!* After you have considered the love of God and have consciously decided to

follow His lead, *just do it!* – but there is more to it than just doing. Notice the switch from *brothers* (v. 16) to *brother [singular]* (v. 17) G.P. Luis states that “Loving everybody in general may be an excuse for loving nobody in particular” (Stott, 147) The two verbs in v. 17 **See KJV. Has & Sees → together present an “inescapable responsibility” (Stott, 144) Now see KJV v. 17 → As Dr. Daniel Akin states, we are erecting, or building up a wall and closing off ourselves from loving others. We are to consciously show people the compassion and the *laying-down life* love of Jesus → Dare we not shut up our hearts of compassion

Truth Why in truth? “The quality of truth was added because even our actions can be hypocritical” (Akins, 161) *Aletheia* is the word for truth here and comes from a word meaning “not concealing” to act out love *genuinely* and *transparently*. People ought to see right through your actions and see love. Transparent actions of love – Matt. 6:2-4 – No one needs to know.

3. The sweet assurance (1 Jn. 3:19-24)

- a. John sums this chapter with a word of assurance v. 19-20a **See KJV and ESV Loving with action and in truth is how we know that we are of the truth and thus belong to God. Loving with action and in truth is also how we set our hearts at rest in His presence when we feel guilty, or condemned. Why? Because when we are acting in genuine love we are doing what he commands us to do “For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.” v. 20 Many times I condemn myself / bang my head against the table. How great it is to have assurance that it is not about what I say, but what God says about me – that if I simply love the way He instructed through John, I am doing what He wanted all along.
- b. vv. 21-22 With our hearts being cleared of condemnation, we enter into a new realm of confidence, obedience, and intimacy with God. v. 22 is a causal statement (because this, then this) Akin notes the distinction between obedience to His commands and pleasing Him (166) Could these be two separate events or two intertwined events? Stott writes that obeying His commands is specific and doing what pleases Him is general. Stott may be right: “because we [obey] His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight” (v. 22 KJV) Commandments are specifically outlined in the Bible that *which is pleasing to God* could be in essence leading a life of active and transparent love. “Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of The Law.” Rom 13:10
- c. v. 23 The one, singular command encompasses two important truths: believe in the “Son [of God], Jesus Christ, and love one another as He commanded us” God wants true relationships with His people – He sent Jesus to die for us and by believing in Jesus we can receive salvation and fellowship with God (See Rom 10: 9-11) If love is the fulfillment of the law, we ought to love actively and genuinely as we have seen earlier in this section.

- d. v. 24 Think about the phrase “live in Him.” We live inside the vessel, so to speak, of Jesus, and thus should be in step with His Spirit if we are obeying His commands. He also lives in us by His Spirit when we receive salvation

Conclusion: Can you see how responding to John’s alarm clock is so important? By waking up to this alarm, we see that our mission is to love people actively and transparently. We have dug through some examples such as when people give a person rides to places and people who buy food for the homeless. But did you know that here at the BCM we have another practical way? My friend Nate is going to come up and tell you all about it. We are supporting to children through Compassion International and have helped build a school through Mocha Club. It is so awesome that we can show love in such practical ways. We need to do something with our compassion.

There is one last aspect to John’s message here, however, and it is that of assurance. Do you have assurance and confidence before God that you are going to Heaven? If you died tonight, where will you go? The Bible says Jesus died for you and me to take away our condemnation.

If you have this assurance then are you living the lifestyle of active and genuine love?