



## “Loving in Truth – Not Just in Word”

*1 John 3:11-18*

**Theme:** The ability to genuinely love others is partial proof of being born again.

### I. It Is Extrinsic to the World – *3:11-13*

#### A. THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS – *v. 11*

1. In the previous section, we noticed how incompatible sin and Christ were – that it wasn’t appropriate to consider mixing the two.
2. As children of God, we are called to portray the same nature that God possesses – a nature we were given when we were born again.
3. There is a correspondence between “practicing righteousness” and “loving his brother.”
4. John now reminds us that *“this is the message which you have heard from the beginning”* – that is, from the time when we first heard of the love of God exhibited at the cross – *John 3:16*
5. This message is “that we should love one another” – cp. *John 13:34-35; 15:12; Galatians 6:2.*

#### B. THE MALICE OF THE WORLD – *vv. 12-13*

1. However, the ability to love those who are committed to righteousness is not a natural thing.
2. Rather, man naturally feels antipathy toward those who are given to righteously obeying the voice of God.
3. John illustrates what we are talking about through the reference to the animosity built up by Cain in

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reaction to Abel's righteousness.

4. The reason Cain slew Abel was "because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous."
5. All those who are "*of the evil one*" will likewise despise those who work righteousness – cp. v. 13
6. Therefore, "*do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.*" – it is natural for the world to possess malice toward those who pursue what is right.

## II. It Is Evidence of Being Born Again – 3:14-15

### A. THE PROOF OF REGENERATION – v. 14a

1. Hence, when a person does not naturally hate the Christ, but loves him instead, it serves as evidence or proof that that person has been born again – "*We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren.*"
2. "*Passing out of death into life*" describes what happens in regeneration when we are born again and given eternal life.
3. To "*love the brethren*" is so foreign to what we once were, that it serves as proof of what we are now.

### B. THE PREDISPOSITION OF HATRED – vv. 14b-15

1. John continues to contrast here what we once were – people filled with hate – "*he who does not love abides in death.*"
2. Even as begin born again produces love, hatred is produced by the old way of living – the way of death.
3. In other words, people wrestle with hatred and murder because they have not been born again from

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above – *“everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.”* – they have no eternal life.

### III. It Is Expressed through Activity – **3:16-18**

#### A. THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE SAVIOR’S ACTIVITY – **v. 16**

1. John then reminds us of how we learned about love – *“that He laid down His life for us.”*
2. His supreme example serves as what is the characteristic of those who are found in Christ – *“and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”*
3. Since this is the characteristic of Christ, and we are being conformed to the image of Christ; we ought to follow His example.

#### B. THE EXHORTATION TO ENGAGE IN LOVE – **vv. 17-18**

1. He then provides an illustration of how believers must be engaged in loving each other – a demonstration as to whether *“the love of God abides in him”*
2. However, notice that the example that he gives is not one of martyrdom or death, but only one of benevolence.
3. To withhold help from a brother in need, to shut off compassionate action, is to deny the presence of God’s love in one’s own heart.
4. Do you “close your heart” to those you see in need when you have the resources to provide for their need – what would Jesus do?
5. Love requires more than just idle talk and exalted

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theology - It demands action, which can be seen, that meets the needs of other – cp. *James 2:15; 1 Corinthians 13:1.*

6. He then challenges them with the responsibility to so reflect Christ Jesus by *“not lov[ing] in word or with tongue [only, but in deed and truth.]”*