

November 17, 2019- Pastor Karl Payne, 1 John 3:10-18

(Truth/Relationship/Obedience—Three common themes in 1 John that tie directly together.)

(A Reminder: Being sinless regarding keeping God's commands and loving the brethren is not attainable in this life, **Rom.3:23; 1 Jn.1:7-2:2**, but obedience to God should have us sinning less in both areas.)

*Overview 11-18: This section begins (11) and ends (18) with the admonition and challenge to love one another. Sandwiched within these verses are **two illustrations**, one negative, Cain (12) whose hatred for his brother led to murder, and one positive, Jesus (16) whose love for mankind led to His sacrificial death. Just as hatred can lead to murder (15), so sacrificial love should lead to sacrificial service (17). In the process, it should come as no surprise to those who choose to obey God and love others sacrificially that the rulers and people of this world will hate you (13). **A question to ponder:** why do so many Christians assume the people of this world will embrace and accept them when they obey God and demonstrate love for their neighbors, when Jesus did both perfectly His entire life on earth, and they crucified Him?*

10 Is a transition between Obedience and love—John has just dealt with the priority of obedience to God's commands, **3:2-9**. He now turns to readdress the subject of loving the brethren, **11-18**. Both are a repetition of what he wrote in **2:3-11**, (keep God's commands, 3-4, and love the brethren, 7-11). Here both commands are stated negatively, as an admonition against the Gnostic heretics.

The commands for Righteousness and Love are inseparable in 1 John. Attempting to promote obedience and love as either/or is not biblical. They should be presented as both/and.

A relational church that is not obedient to God's word is a disobedient church. A church that is obedient to God's word, but not relational is disobedient. A relational Christian who is not obedient to God's word is disobedient. A Christian who is obedient to God's word but not relational is disobedient.

Physical birth comes with an old nature. Spiritual birth comes with a new nature. Both can be fed and either can be neglected. When physical food is withheld from our old nature there is physical atrophy. When spiritual food is withheld from our new nature there is spiritual atrophy. The nature we feed is the nature that will dominate the other, bearing fruit consistent with the nature being fed. **Matt.4:4**

Dirt can be washed off. Non-Christians can take a bath, and Christians can confess their sin. **1 John 1:9**

Non-X's naturally run back to the dirt. Christians are supposed to run to the light. **John 3:19-21**

Non-Christians have no choice regarding which nature they feed and serve; they have not been rebirthed, regenerated or born again. But Christians do have a choice; they have been rebirthed, regenerated and born again. Knowing better, as we do, can serve as a motivator to pursue righteous living and loving our brothers and sisters, or it can produce great guilt and regret. The answer to reducing guilt and increasing righteousness is really pretty simple to understand, but a daily challenge to do; feed the new nature, not the old nature. **A question to ponder:** Which nature do you consciously feed on a daily basis?

Practicing sin is the natural result of feeding the old nature, producing fruit consistent with the children of the devil. **Gal.5:19-21; John 8:44-47**

Practicing righteousness is the supernatural result of feeding the new nature, producing fruit consistent with the children of God. **Gal.5:22-23; 1 John 3:2-3; Eph. 4:11-15**

“Children of God” and “Children of the Devil”, Contrast **John 3:3 and John 8:44**—What do these verses say about the universal fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man? It is taught today as part of a lie, pluralism. But the bible does not teach this, nor the most kind and loving man who ever walked the face of the earth, the Lord Jesus Christ. **John 3:36** is as true today as it was when it was penned two-thousand years ago, regardless of the feelings or opinions of men and women in rebellion against God. **A question to ponder:** Why does the church/Christians try so hard to accommodate the feelings and opinions of man when it means disregarding and disobeying the commands of God? Do we fear man more than God or seek the approval of man more than God. Both are a mistake.

11 “Which you heard from the beginning”—John keeps bringing people back to the rock of Christ’s teaching rather than chase the sand of Gnostic heretical teaching/intimidation. You do not need hidden or secret knowledge or another anointing. You have everything in Christ, which you have heard from the beginning. Quit allowing liars, even religious teachers, to deceive you.

“Love one another”—The word for God’s sacrificial, divine love, not just friendship love between friends.

12 **3:12** points back to **3:8**. Murder (slew) meant to “butcher” or “slaughter”. Does John have John 8 in mind? Probably, but we do not know this for certain.

Cain decided to worship his own way rather than follow God’s instruction. He was religious and knew the sacrificial system, but disobedient and rebellious. Rather than confess his own sin for disobeying God, he decided to murder his brother who followed God’s instructions. Envy is a terrible sin!

Today, our culture would commend Cain for following his own heart, and find a way to blame Abel for causing his brother to commit murder. “The devil made me do it”—in this case, yes he did. Cain may have participated in the worship/sacrificial system; non-believers do it all the time, but he certainly fell short on loving his brother. 1 John indicates that God demands obedience and love, not obedience or love.

13 The hatred from the world implies persecution for righteous living (Cain/Abel), and motivates John’s changing his address of those he is writing from “my children”, to “my brethren”. External conflict is not wanted, but it has a way of bonding hearts and minds in the face of mutual opposition and growing us up. Locking arms and covering each other’s back builds loyalty and team comradery. Hatred against Christians is not expected when believers are blending into the culture. But it is guaranteed when Christians choose to stand in opposition to the culture. “I do not face trials” is not a praise for righteous living, it is an indictment for blending in. We honor the chameleon and discourage the saint. Not God! Hatred is to murder what bitterness is to malice.

14 Love is not the means to eternal life, but it is a fruit of it. The world hates Jesus and it will hate you too; and we are upset with other Christians over what? **John 15:18-19** **A question to ponder:** Isn’t it interesting how kind we can be to people we like, and critical of people we do not like? We are commanded to love them both, **Matt.5:43-47**

15 Murder is the extension of hatred in **Matt 5:21-22**, both display an absence of love for God and neighbor. What is the difference between what you want to do and what you actually do? From the world’s perspective there is not comparison. From Jesus’ perspective there is no difference. Hatred/murder; lust/immorality, **Matt.5:21-30**.

Scripture nowhere says that a murder cannot be saved and be transformed from the inside out. But it does indicate that someone who continues to murder is not a Christian. Can a person who is filled with hatred become a Christian? Yes! Should someone who is a Christian be continually filled with hatred? No! Hatred is the seed of murder; all it needs is time and opportunity. Hatred is to murder what bitterness is to malice.

16 True love is identified through sacrifice, demonstrated in Christ's death for humanity, including those who love Him and those who reject Him. If Jesus was willing to lay down his life for fallen mankind, who are we to refuse to love and forgive others? Christ is the standard for sacrificial love: to speak about loving others with the love of Christ that does not involve self-sacrifice misses the point of Christ's example and the meaning of this verse. John 15:12-13. The meaning of love is demonstrated in His example. "We know"—perfect tense.

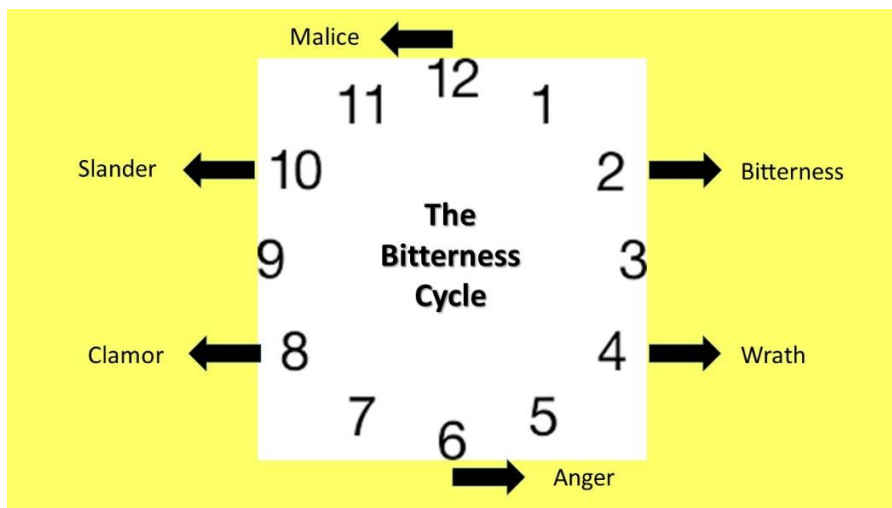
John does not command us to demonstrate our love by dying for our brother, but to understand the standard for true love. It is not merited or owed, but sacrificially given, **John 3:16; 1 John 3:16.**

17 How can we authentically declare our future love of others if we are failing to love them now? Indifference can hurt someone just as much as hatred. One is passive, one is active, but both are wrong. **James 2:15** is very similar and written by Jesus' half-brother.

18 John reassumes a fatherly teaching/exhorting tone for his children.

Loving in word, without deed, is not love. Loving with the tongue, but not in truth is not love. Negative, we are not to love with word or tongue, but with deed and truth. Talk is cheap!

The Bitterness Cycle, Ephesians 4:31-32.



At 2:00- Bitterness, represents a poke and can be illustrated by a balloon. If you don't take care of bitterness quickly, like a balloon poked on the thick latex end, the air will escape and functionality will be compromised. Bitterness is private.

At 4:00- Wrath, represents internal bubbling or brewing. Think of the underground rumbling of a geyser, volcano or boiling teapot. Wrath is private.

At 6:00- Anger, represents the top of a volcano blowing off with molten lava freely flowing. The bubbling wrath can no longer be restrained, killing and maiming everything in its pathway. Anger is public and it produces collateral damage to others.

At 8:00- Clamor, represents a bird making non-distinct and irritating noise. Clamor, in the context of a Christian who became angry and blew up, is verbal justification for blowing up, blaming others people or circumstances in general terms. Clamor is public, increasing the collateral damage.

At 10:00- Slander, represents distinct speech that is specific and purposely intended to hurt others. Slander is public, increasing the collateral damage done.

At 12:00- Malice; represents hatred for others, overtly or covertly declaring, "If I am going down, I will take the object of my malice with me." Malice is the predictable end of the bitterness cycle that began with a poke producing bitterness.

The longer the bitterness cycle runs the more public it becomes, and the more damage it does to others.

The cycle can be stopped at any point in the cycle by obeying verse 32. Rather than run the bitterness cycle from beginning to end, a poke to hatred, an obedient Christian will make a personal choice to be kind and tender hearted, forgiving others, just as God in Christ has also forgiven the person stuck on the bitterness cycle. The longer a person takes to deliberately and volitionally choose to be kind, tender hearted and forgiving, the more severe and public the damage will become. Dealing biblically with bitterness does not involve needing more prayer or time, it involves a deliberate choice to be obedient to God's command to forgive others, just as He through Jesus Christ has forgiven each Christian. Christian forgiveness does not demand the compliance of the offending person, but the obedience of the offended person. Romans 12:18 is a reminder that we have a responsibility to seek peace with all men. Our decision to be obedient does not guarantee an offending person will reciprocate in kind. But it does guarantee that if there are issues between Christians, it is in spite of the person choosing to be kind, tender hearted and forgiving, rather than because of them.