

The Love Test  
1 John 3:11 – 24  
The Laurel Center  
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**Main Idea:** Love is the key to Christian community and eternal life.

Introduction

one of the things that unbelievers will tell you when they enter a church is in everything feels so fake. They don't feel like people who say they care really do care. They don't feel like the pastor really does want to help them. And sometimes we give up that kind of impression to people. They say that first impressions last for a long time even beyond years of interaction.

But it's not just about first impressions with Christians. After all, we have been shown the greatest acts of love by God himself, the God of love. We need to be treated people away. God has treated us. This means that we focus on true love, not romantic love or love with strings attached. True love is agape love. This is the kind of love is unconditional. It is the kind of love the world does not regularly see. It is the kind of love that is worth more to them than anything else. And if we don't demonstrate it among ourselves then we have no chance to demonstrate it to among the world.

**Text – 1 John 3:11–24**

**11** For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. **12** 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. **13** Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. **14** We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. **15** Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. **16** By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. **17** 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? **18** Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. **19** By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; **20** for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. **21** Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; **22** and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. **23** 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. **24** 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.

**I.** The world hates brotherly love (vv. 11 – 14).

**A** Haters hate for the wrong reasons.

- 1 When John uses the words “from the beginning” in his letter he is referring to the very first section, and what she’s talking about Jesus and his teachings.
- 2 Jesus came to teach us the love of God, because we did not have any love for one another. Sin had destroyed the perfect society that Jesus wished to have made in the beginning of the world.
- 3 To prove his point. John goes to the beginning story of Cain and Abel. We can find the story in Genesis 4. We learn that Abel offered the kind of sacrifice that God desired while trying fell short of God’s expectations.
- 4 As we remember, Abel offered God from the first of the flock. While Kate offered from the first of his vegetables and garden. The story is not clear as to why God was unhappy with King sacrifice.
- 5 The two best theories are that came either offered a lesser sacrifice that was not the very best of his crop or the firstfruits of his crop. God expects sacrifices without blemish. The other theory is that because able offered a lamb while Kate offered vegetables, both new that God expected a blood sacrifice. Because Kate did not offer a blood sacrifice. He was in the wrong.
- 6 Despite what the theories may say, it is clear from Scripture that not only became offer a sacrifice that God found appropriate. It is also clear that came could have changed the way that he was offering the sacrifice.
- 7 Instead of conforming to God’s standards for his sacrifice, Cain instead turned to murder. The problem is that he murdered his brother. Even though it was not Abel’s fault. Cain murdered his brother in cold blood when Abel was not even at fault.
- 8 Cain’s evil act of murder was done out of spite for his brother, rather than offering a better sacrifice. It is the first sign of physical hate and it was played out through the act of murder. Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount pointed to murder as the outside at for the inside, feeling of hate
- 9 **Application:** murder is no longer only the physical act. We can murder people in our hearts by the way we feel about them. If we hate one another in our minds. We are already going there. Our imaginations can get quite creative with how to destroy some. Nowadays, we kill people’s reputations and character within our community. It is not the physical act of murder, but is still destroys that person socially. They must be careful to get rid of hate in our hearts and long love one another. Demonstrated both in our minds and in our deeds.

## B Hate and death cannot produce love and life

- 1 in the Old Testament, Cain demonstrated what he can do when it materializes. In the New Testament, Jesus confirmed with his internalizing of Old Testament law that hate materializes into death.
- 2 John is feeding off of that theological finding as he talks about brotherly love and hate in your brother. The story of Cain and Abel is a perfect example of showing that hate leads to death.
- 3 It tells the brothers and sisters to not be surprised with the world hates them. Jesus talked about being persecuted by the world. Hate leads to death. We should not be surprised by persecution. When we see that the world hates us.
- 4 We should also not be surprised that the world hates us because it hate it Jesus first. Because we strive to be conformed to Jesus' image, the world will hate us as well.
- 5 John, then refers to love in life. He says that we know that we are living, both physically and eternally, because we have learned to love from Jesus himself.
- 6 And the guarantee that we have learned to love is that we love the brothers and sisters in Christ. We are literally reversing the storyline from Adam and Eve's fall from grace demonstrated by Cains murder of Abel. We are turning the story from death to life, because we love instead of hate.
- 7 **Illustration:** Think about how impossible it is in our world today for so many people to gather together and have unity. Even within a nation the people do not get along. Let's get even smaller in a group. A political party does not have agreement within itself. Yet in the church, while there are so many different backgrounds, socioeconomic statuses, perspectives, and ideas, we still agree on Jesus! It is the one place where you can truly have diversity and unity together. Christ told us together by the power of his Holy Spirit! While we may not always get along on every issue, we still have a deep entering love for one another.
- 8 **Application:** we have something special in the church. When people follow Scripture and live in biblical fellowship together, there's nothing like the love we have for one another. We demonstrate it in so many different ways through using our gifts to serve each other, providing for the needs that we find out about, speaking the truth in love to those who are struggling, and a host of other ways that are so creative in nature. Let us continue to love, not just with words, but with our deeds.

## II. Brotherly love brings life to everyone (vv. 15 – 18).

### A Brotherly love leads to sacrifice.

- 1 John continues to argue the point about hate and murder. As Jesus would have done in his Sermon on the Mount, John attaches hate to murder, but does it within the community of faith and love.
- 2 In verse 15, John makes another connection about those who are supposed to doubt to have eternal life. In the community of faith. Those who hate their brothers and sisters in Christ do not have eternal life.
- 3 John's approach may appear to be black and white, but he is showing us how the community of faith is supposed to dwell together. Fellowship cannot happen when sin enters the Because sin separates us from one another and from God.
- 4 Now we know that the church is not like this. We know that you have to look for someone you can trust. If we could really have that kind of fellowship. But John knows this as well. He is not starry eyed about the church.
- 5 Remember that it is John who has brought up the sin issue. He is the one teaching else what it takes to have true Christian Fellowship. He also knows what it is like for sin to enter that Fellowship and destroy it from within.
- 6 Benjamin highlights what true Christian love really means. Jesus is our example in all things. He showed his true love, when he laid his life down for each of us.
- 7 That same example remains the common bond between all of us. We should be willing to lay our lifestyle for one another if need be. Sadly, this camaraderie cannot be found in most of the church.
- 8 That kind of love is very hard to find even within the Fellowship. But John is setting a very high standard for Christian Fellowship. He is showing perhaps by hyperbole, the type of love that we should share with each other.
- 9 **Application:** we should so love one another that we would be willing to die for each other. Unconditional love itself is hard to find, but the kind of love that creates that type of love is also hard to find. How much do we truly love one another? Words are not enough. Love is not just a word: it is an action. What keeps us from loving one another with that kind of love?

#### B Brotherly love leads to charity.

- 1 In verse 17, John presents the same type of situation that. James presents in James chapter 2. When we have worldly goods as John puts it or wealth or any kind of physical means, but do not share of those in need, we do not have love.

- 2 It has been a long-delayed principle in the Bible from the time of Abraham that God blesses people so that they can be a blessing to those around them.
- 3 How much more for a brother in Christ should we sacrifice worldly wealth? This would be less than John's requirement for us to sacrifice her life from another.
- 4 Christian charity has always been at the center of unconditional love for one another. If we can help each other out in any way. We should be willing to do so because of our great love for each other.
- 5 Jesus taught us to be ready to give anything that we had or to lend a helping hand. It is he who said that if you see someone in need of a cup of cold water and give it to them, you're giving it to him.
- 6 John hits his point home and by presenting a principle concerning love. As I said before, love is active. John tells us that we do not really love in word only. Talk's cheap.
- 7 The true test of love is not what someone says to you, but what they do to back it up. John presents two ways in which we can backup the love that we speak to others.
- 8 The first is simply by action. Actions speak louder than words. There is a reason that we have such clichés around us all the time. They really speak the truth.
- 9 We can say whatever we want. But until we back it up with actions nobody really listens. Sometimes actions are so strong that they can allow any words, even hurtful words, to be ignored.
- 10 Certainly words have their power that actions segment that power. It is not always true. Actions that we can love one another, but also in truth. Loving the truth is important. We were loved and truth by Christ. He gave his life for us and we learned of arson in the process. In the same way, we must learn to love in truth. We must speak the truth, but do it in love.

### **III.** Our confidence is in loving God (vv. 19 – 24).

#### **A** Condemnation is not from the Lord.

- 1 John talks about our heart and the condemnation that lays on to us. Sometimes we are very hard on ourselves. Sometimes the doubletalk that we have in our own mind is worse than anything that would come from the Lord.
- 2 Our heart can condemn us, because we know ourselves very well. Sometimes we are so honest with ourselves that there is no grace in our mind.

- 3 Condemnation comes from our own heart, because we forget the grace of our Lord. It also comes from the devil, because he would love to accuse us of everything.
- 4 This is not to say that we don't deserve to listen to our hearts, for sometimes we allow very sinful things into our lives. But condemnation does not come from the Lord.
- 5 While judgment may come and while his Holy Spirit may convict us of sin, the Lord does not condemn us. Condemnation is the passing of judgment and punishment for what we do. Accusation and condemnation come from the devil.
- 6 When we do not listen to the devil and his condemnation of us, or our hearts. When they wrongly condemn us, we can have peace with God, and open the floodgates of his blessing.
- 7 John tells us that when we do not have condemnation before God, and there is no sin to block it, we can ask for anything. And God will give it to us.
- 8 Now, we must be careful to realize that Jesus said this very same thing, and he added the qualifier, "in my name." This means that we cannot ask for things that are outside Jesus' character. The same is true for when John eludes to this promise.
- 9 John tells us that when we follow Jesus' commandments. We will see this kind of open communication between God and us. As John is already explained, following Jesus' commandments means that we love him.
- 10 The relationship we have with God must be current and vibrant. John has spoken before about abiding or remaining in his love. We must do what pleases him so that he can bless us within his will.

**B Our love for the Lord provides for all our needs.**

- 1 When we properly demonstrate our love for Jesus by following his commands and pleasing him, we experience a peace with him that prospers us so that we may bless others.
- 2 John reveals to us the commandment of the Lord. It has two parts. The first is that we believe in the name of his son Jesus Christ. What does it mean to believe in Jesus' name?
- 3 To believe this to trust with absolute dependence upon the name of Jesus. The name of a person in the Bible is not just a designation to separate them from someone else in a conversation or group.
- 4 The name of a person represents their character. This shows the reputation in the community and beyond. A person's name represents who they really

are. It tells you about the type of person they are in the things they expect from others.

- 5 The second part of Jesus' command is that we love one another. The kind of love. Here is still unconditional. We are each other's' brother keepers. We take care of one another in this world.
- 6 We provide for each other based on what we can materially. But even more than that this community of faith allows us to unique opportunity to help each other live for Jesus in front of the world as best we can.
- 7 This means that at times being our brother's keeper means that we have to tell the truth in love. If one of our brothers or sisters is caught in sin or is leading a sinful life style, it is up to us to express the dangers we see ahead.
- 8 But this must be done, not only in truth, but in love. All of us have seen others act without love, but with a lot of truth. The truth pill is easier to swallow when it is done with love.
- 9 We know that we abide in God, and he in us because of the witness of the Holy Spirit in us. The Holy Spirit testifies about Jesus and to the truth. He will let us know if we are in the wrong, grieving him, or upsetting God in any way.
- 10 As we follow his commandments and listen to the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. We can know for sure that we are on the right track. These two testimonies lie within us and are given to us by God.

## Conclusion

unconditional love is a guarantee of Christian Fellowship. We must be very careful not to root this love with sin or lies. We must band together in this world because the world will not help us. You can only trust in the love of believers. This kind of love is not only done in Word but in deed. It is demonstrated to us by charity, and by taking care of each other's needs. If we continue to follow Jesus' commands. We will be just fine in our relationship with God and each other. By the testimony of our love for one another and of the power of the Holy Spirit in us, we will be able to fulfill Jesus' commandments. We will have peace with God, and we will see his unfettered favor upon us. And then when God blesses us. We can bless others who need his help. This is why we are here. This is why Fellowship is so important. But we must do it without allowing sin to enter our hearts. While sin separates and causes death and hatred Christian love causes life and goodness and peace. Christian love maintains our connection to one another through Fellowship.