

November 15, 2020

“Confident Love”
Lesson 3 of Unit

I John 3:11-24

Intro

Frequent objections to Christianity and Christians by non-Christians are that they are judgmental, hypocritical, and insincere friends. There are certainly people out there who are not living the Christian life as well as the world wants. But most of us also know many people who are not judgmental, whose lives are not hypocritical, and who deal sincerely with both believers and non-believers. And yet they get ridiculed as well. The reality here seems to be that no matter what we do, no matter how good we behave, we will not be able to earn the world’s universal love. So what do we do in what seems to be a no-win situation?

In the letters of the Apostle John, to quote our text, “John emphasized the interconnection of right belief, right actions, and right love. To put it another way, it is the right involvement of head, hands, and heart. The child of God must believe the truth, obey the commands, and love brothers and sisters in Christ.”

Read I John 3:11-24

1. What is the value and purpose of John saying in vs. 11 that this message is what “you heard from the beginning”? Why would this saying be a foundational element of Christian living?
2. Verse 12 tells us “not to be like Cain”. Since most of us don’t see ourselves as likely to murder another, especially a family member, what is the bigger point John is making here? Is there a way we might “murder” a family member, either at home or in the church?
3. In vs. 13, define what John means by “the world”. Based on that definition, why does the world hate believers (“you”)?
4. In vs.14a, what’s the connection between “passing from death to life” and “lov(ing) each other”?

5. What is the contrast John develops in vs.14b-15? What is his purpose in bringing this contrast out? How can we best use and apply these ideas to our own lives?

6. John says that “Jesus Christ laid down his life for us” in vs. 16. What was people’s relationship to and status with Jesus like when He did this? What was our relationship with Him like before becoming Christians?

7. Jesus’ sacrifice in vs. 16 is what John uses as an example for us. We “ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters”. In general terms, what does that mean that we should do for them?

8. Verse 17-18 give a practical example of what John means. What is that example, and how does it connect with what John says in vs. 18? What is something that occurs to you when reading and thinking about this verse that you could *do* to love others?

9. What is the test, the check, that we can use to verify if we belong to Christ and are abiding in Him and His truth, according to vs.19-21? What are the potential misreadings of this test that we should be aware of?

10. Look at John 13:16 (part of last week’s lesson) and compare it to vs. 22. What connections and similarities do you find?

11. What actions do vs, 23-24a call us to do as verification that we are “in Christ”?

12. What final verification does John offer in vs. 24b? What is the connection between the actions in vs.23-24a and the presence of the Spirit in us in 24b?

Application: Some good thoughts from our text:

“John asks if we love God. He insists we cannot make a credible claim to loving God if we hate other people. Furthermore, we cannot claim to love other people without evidence. Does the love of God in our hearts result in acts of kindness toward others?

What does the evidence of our lives reveal about the secrets of our hearts?”

Prayer: Father God, we desire to live our lives in such a way that the world takes notice of our love for each other, and for those who don't know you yet. We know that those who oppose You will hate us; help us love them anyways. Help our love to be in actions. In Jesus' name, Amen.