

**We Should Love One Another**

**Lesson 6 (1 John 3:11-24)**

Perhaps as Christians we hear so much about love that we become apathetic. But the language John uses is startling if we let it simply say what it is saying.

# I. Love is the distinguishing mark of the believer (3:11-18).

John continues his discussion of the importance of love by comparing those of the world with those who have passed from death to life.

1. **The world is characterized by hatred (3:11-13).**

Cain functions as a picture of the world, of all those who are under the power and influence of Satan (cf Ephesians 2:2).

The world’s hatred will be directed at Christians. This should not surprise believers or cause them to despair, but rather realize that this is what we signed up for when we decided to follow Jesus.

1. **The believer is characterized by love (3:14-18).**

One way that we know we have been truly born again is by a love that moves us to act just as it moved God to act.

1. **Love demonstrates our conversion (3:14-15).**

We frequently see the phrase “by this we know” (2:3, 5; 3:14, 16, 19, 24; 4:2, 6, 13). These normally give a test of something that should be true of us and demonstrates true salvation.

Once again, John is uncomfortably blunt. If we have truly been saved, it will show in the way we love other Christians.

1. **Love is demonstrated by our actions (3:16-18).**

For John, love is defined by meeting the needs of another. This love was first demonstrated by God, and we now must act in merciful and compassionate ways.

His goal was not that the church walk away feeling like a failure, but rather to give some standards so that we can know where we stand.

# II. Love brings confidence to the believer (3:19-24).

We get this confident knowledge by keeping God’s command to love.

1. **Our confidence before God: loving others (3:19-20).**

When someone is able to look at their life and recognize what can only be described as the work of God in their hearts, it gives them confidence that they truly have been born again and are now part of God’s family.

Balancing between looking for fruit and trusting the ultimate judgment of the God is important for the believer. When we’ve done our best, we can rest in the fact that our relationship with God doesn’t rest on our judgment, it rests on God’s.

1. **Our confidence before God: keeping God’s commands (3:21-24)**

God wants us to be in a place of confidence, where we have dealt with every known sin and are seeking to live righteously before God (cf Acts 24:16). Obviously, no one will do this perfectly, but with God’s help we can live in such a way that we are as a general principle obeying God.

Loving other believers should be the distinguishing characteristic of the child of God, because the one who loves God ought to love the people God has a special relationship with. When we live this way, we find a boldness and a confidence that assures us that we are God’s children and empowers us in prayer.

**Next Week: Testing the Spirits (1 John 4:1-6)**

*How do we know who is telling us the truth and who is lying?*

*How can we keep from debilitating fear that false teaching will deceive us in the end?*