

1 John 3:11-24 – Believe and Love

John said that God loves us and calls us “children of God”. What John said in the beginning of chapter 3 has similarities to what Jesus said in John 8:31, 32, 34, 44. Those who abide in Christ and keep God’s commands are the true children of God. Someone may claim to know God, but if they continue in sin and do not love the children of God, then they are not a child of God. As we saw in Galatians, we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, but a true faith in Jesus Christ will manifest itself in good works. In terms of 1 John, true faith manifests itself when we love one another and abide in Christ.

Read 1 John 3:11-12.

In 1 John 2:7-11, John talked about the old commandment which they had from the beginning and the new commandment which was true in them. In 1 John 3:11, John made it clear what the message was that they had heard from the beginning. What message had they heard from the beginning? (3:11)

In verse 12, John gave an example of someone who did not love his brother. Cain killed his brother Able. Was Cain a child of God or a child of the evil one? Why did Cain kill Able? (3:12)

Read 1 John 3:13-18.

John said not to be surprised if the world hates us. Why shouldn’t we be surprised? See verse 12. In John 15:18, Jesus said “if the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you”. (3:13)

How do we know if we have passed from death to life? The phrase “passed from death to life” is also used in John 5:24. What is true of someone who does not love? What did John mean by “whoever does not love”? (3:14)

In verse 15, John said that “everyone who hates his brother is a murderer”. What did John mean? Does this remind you of a famous sermon of Jesus? See Matthew 5:21-22. What is true of someone who is a murderer?

How do we know that Jesus loved us? John said that we should lay down our lives for the brothers. How is laying down our lives different from what Jesus did? How can it be similar? (3:16)

Loving one another is a very general statement which covers a lot of ground. Verse 17 gives a more specific way to show love to our brothers and sisters in Christ. What is one specific way we can show our love for one another? What do you think “the world’s goods” includes? Is this verse about anyone we meet or is it about our brothers and sisters in Christ? (3:17)

If John was living today, he might have said, “you can’t just talk the talk, you need to walk the walk.” What are some examples of loving in “word or talk” only? What are some examples of loving “in deed and in truth”? (3:18)

Read 1 John 3:19-24.

How do we know that we are “of the truth”? How are our hearts reassured? (3:19)

What should we remember if our hearts condemn us? (3:20)

What happens if our hearts do not condemn us? (3:21)

If we have confidence before God, we ask for requests in prayer. Based on verse 22, why do we receive from God whatever we ask?

Based on verse 23, what is God’s commandment? If we keep this commandment, we abide in God and God abides in us. How else do we know that God abides in us, based on verse 24?