

## *The Contrast between Love and Hate*

### *1 John 3:11-18*

*“At no point is the contrast between one of John’s tests and its opposite more important for contemporary men and women than the contrast between love and hate. This is so simply because the meaning of love has become so debased in modern culture that practically anyone will claim to have love, according to his own definition. A popular song says, ‘Everybody loves somebody sometime.’ If this is correct and the meaning given to love in this song is John’s meaning, then everyone can claim to have met John’s test and be a Christian.*

*This is not the kind of love about which John is speaking, of course. Consequently, it is of great importance to follow his reasoning in this section of the letter as he contrasts love with hate and works out the origins, nature, and practical consequences of both. On the one hand, **hate** originates with the devil and **indicates the existence of a bond with him**. It expresses itself in jealousy and ends in murder. On the other hand, **love** originates with God and **indicates the existence of a bond with God**. It expresses itself in self-sacrifice and in many practical demonstrations of concern for those in need. These two points of emphasis—the origin and nature of hate and origin and nature of love—form the two main sections in this passage.” Boice*

**3:11** If John is writing to believers, which he is, then why does he exhort us to love one another? After all, part of the fruit of the Spirit is love, so shouldn’t that be a natural, intuitive part of who we are when it comes to how we treat others, especially those in the body of Christ?

**“from the beginning”** Refers to both the beginning of our Christian walk and also when God first commanded that we love both Him and our neighbor (Deut. 6:5; Leviticus 19:18; Mt. 22:36-40). To do otherwise is to sin against God and our neighbor.

**John 13:34-35** *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

*“This passage reveals the mark that Jesus gives to label a Christian not just in one era or in one locality but at all times and all places until Jesus returns.” MacArthur/Francis Shaeffer.*

**1 Thess. 4:9** *Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been **taught by God** to love one another,*

**1 Peter 1:22** *Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.*

- The kind of love John, Peter, Paul, and Jesus referred to is **agape love**.

*The type of love that characterizes God is not a sappy, sentimental feeling such as we often hear portrayed. God loves because that is His nature and the expression of His being. He*

loves the unlovable and the unlovely, not because we deserve to be loved or because of any excellence we possess, but because it is His nature to love and He must be true to His nature. We are to love others with agape love, whether they are fellow believers (John 13:34) or bitter enemies (Matthew 5:44). Jesus gave the parable of the Good Samaritan as an example of sacrifice for the sake of others, even for those who may care nothing at all for us. Agape love as modeled by Christ is not based on a feeling; rather, it is a determined act of the will, a joyful resolve to put the welfare of others above our own.

Agape love does not come naturally to us. Because of our fallen nature, we are incapable of producing such a love. If we are to love as God loves, that love—that agape—can only come from its Source. This is the love that “has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us” when we became His children (Romans 5:5; cf. Galatians 5:22). “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters” (1 John 3:16). Because of God’s love toward us, we are able to love one another. [gotquestions.org](http://gotquestions.org)

**3:12** The opposite of love is having hatred toward someone. Is not liking someone the same as feeling hatred toward them? Can you love someone and still not like them? Is not liking someone equivalent to Cain’s hatred toward his brother Abel? What kind of hatred is John referring to?

- The kind of hatred John is referring to is having a hatred toward being righteous as well as toward those who are righteous, i.e., who walk in the light. In Cain’s example, he hated Abel being righteous and he hated the favor God gave him for his heartfelt sacrificial act of righteousness before Him.

*“John’s rhetorical question, **And for what reason did he slay him?** It is easily answered in a general characterization of Cain: **Because his deeds were evil, and his brother’s were righteous.** It is as simple as that. Cain was evil and hated righteousness so greatly that he even killed his own brother, **whose righteous deeds had rebuked him.***

*Like Cain, the ungodly resent the righteous because, through their righteous actions, they expose the false beliefs and wicked practices of those who are evil (cf. Matt. 14:3-5; Acts 6:8-14; 7:51-60).” MacArthur*

**Gen 4:5-9** but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.” Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.” And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. [First recorded murder] Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?” “I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

- What an attitude! The ultimate act of murder grew out of a heart attitude of hate and jealousy. It is apparent that Cain’s spiritual father was Satan. John said, “Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one.” In other words, we are to have nothing to do with Satan’s hatred toward righteousness, which means that we are to have nothing to do with the world’s hatred toward the righteousness of God.

**Matt. 5:21-22** 21 “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ 22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.

To call someone “Raca” expressed contempt for their intelligence. Calling someone a fool showed contempt for their character. Either one broke the heart of the law against murder, even if it did not commit murder. Commentators have translated the idea behind Raca as “nitwit, blockhead, numbskull, bonehead, brainless idiot.” “Raca is an almost untranslatable word, because it describes a tone of voice more than anything else. Its whole accent is the accent of contempt...It is the word of one who despises another with an arrogant contempt.” (Barclay) Guzik

**3:13** The contrast between hate and love centers on God’s righteousness, our imputed righteousness and the hatred of the world toward it. Like with Cain, the world’s father is Satan, the father of lies. He deceptively conditions the world to adopt his hatred toward righteousness, so it should be of no surprise then that the world adamantly opposes what we stand for.

- Having and maintaining a biblical worldview is the only option on the table for believers to strive for.
- Could it be that to not work hard at having a biblical worldview is, in actuality, having a subtle hatred toward righteousness?

“As Matthew Henry notes, ‘The great serpent himself reigns as the God of this world. Wonder not then that the serpentine world hates and hisses at you who belong to that seed of the woman who is to bruise the serpent’s head.’” Boice

**3:14-15** An incredible transformation of the heart takes place upon salvation. God removes the world’s hatred toward anything, or anyone having to do with righteousness and replaces it with His love for everything and everyone who is righteous.

**1<sup>st</sup>**, death means being spiritually dead in sin.

**Eph. 2:1-3** As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

**2<sup>nd</sup>**, a new birth had to take place in order for the heart to be made alive to the righteous love of God.

**Eph. 2:4-5** 3. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

*“...the love of Christians is seen not merely in a general love for all mankind, though they have that also, but rather in a particular love for the brethren. If Christians really do love one another, then they will not spend so much time criticizing one another, as is often the case. They will not abandon the assembling of themselves together while substituting some kind of private religion. They will not neglect one another’s needs. Instead, they will find themselves uniting together in a spiritual fellowship in which the Lord is worshiped and they themselves are mutually encouraged in the Christian life.” Boice*

**3:16** Jesus would not ask us to do anything that He Himself would not be willing to do. He gives us the perfect example of what agape love is to mean in the family of God. It starts at the cross.

**John 15:9-13** *“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.*

**Romans 5:8** *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

**Gal. 2:20** *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

**1 John 4:10** *This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*

**3:17-18** Agape love is an active love. It’s not a dormant fuzzy warm thought that stays in the head, instead it looks to be expressed through action.

- Indifference is not giving a rip about anyone. It’s not caring if people are hurting or struggling or are in a bad way. We may say, wait a minute I do care. But John says, wait a minute, I hear you, but what do your actions say. To God, our actions are the deciding factor. It is difficult to know where to draw the line. But it is important that there be a willingness on our part with a sensitivity toward the needs of those around us. God is saying, “Open your eyes and take action when necessary.” The needs are great, and realistically we can’t fulfill them all, but that shouldn’t stop us from at least taking care of the needs that we’ve been given the means to address. It’s a matter of asking God for wisdom and discernment in those matters.

**James 2:14-18** *14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? 17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

- As with faith and deeds, love and putting it into action cannot exist independent of one another. They are not mutually exclusive.

**Gal 6:10** *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.*