

Identifying True Love

1 John 3:11-24 (NIV)

¹¹This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. ¹²Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. ¹³Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you. ¹⁴We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. ¹⁵Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.

¹⁶This 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. ¹⁷If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? ¹⁸Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. ¹⁹This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence ²⁰whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

²¹Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God ²²and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. ²³And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. ²⁴Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

I. Loving One Another Has Been Preached from the Beginning. Jesus started this message.

¹¹This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.

- John 13:34 - John 13:35 (NIV)

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

A. Loving each other is a command, not a suggestion.

B. We must love each other in the same way He has loved us.

- John 15:9 – 12, 17 (NIV)

⁹"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. ¹¹I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹²My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹⁷This is my command: Love each other.

1. Remaining in his love is made possible by obeying His commands, especially the love command.
2. We are to obey His commands the same way Jesus obeyed the Father's commands.
3. Receiving this truth and obeying it releases the joy of Christ IN you. Your joy is complete! Not partial.

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C. We know we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers. (1 John 3:14)

1. When you don't love, you remain in death!

It doesn't matter how often you go to church, how much of the Bible you read, how much money you give, or how many committees you serve on. If you do not love the brothers YOU ARE DEAD! True life is revealed by true love.

II. True love is this:

1 John 3:16

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.

1. Laying down your life for your brothers and sisters in Christ!

a. Just like Jesus Christ did.

John 10:11, 14 (NIV)

¹¹"I am the good shepherd. **The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.**

¹⁴"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and **I lay down my life for the sheep.**

b. There is no greater love.

John 15:13-14

¹³Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command.

c. Other Examples:

- o A momma bird on a nest. She literally lays down her life for weeks to hatch the eggs.
- o The firemen, police and paramedics that entered the World Trade Center on 09/11/2001.
- o Soldiers in battle, to rescue one of their own.
- o Can you think of any examples?

2. True love functions in deed and in truth, not just words or tongue! (1 John 3:18)

i.e. Meeting seen needs! 1 John 3: 17

a. True love proves you belong to the truth.

b. True love sets our hearts at rest in His presence whenever our hearts condemn us.

- o Your heart will try to condemn you from time to time!
- o You can find rest from this in His presence when you walk in true love.
- o God is greater than your hearts! No matter how you feel! No matter what's going on in your life.

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- c. If our hearts do not condemn us (because we are walking in love and are at rest in His presence) we have confidence before God and receive anything we ask because we obey His commands and do what pleases Him.
 - o To believe in the Name of His Son Jesus Christ and to love one another.
- d. Obedience to His commands (c.) proves that we live in Him and He in us. It is the evidence of His Holy Spirit living in us.

III. Summary of True Love

1. True love reveals the presence of true life.
2. True love involves laying down your life.
3. True love is action, not words.
4. True love is brings rest for your heart.
5. True love is obedience.
6. True love reveals the presence of the Holy Spirit.

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