

1 John 3: (10) 11—18; “Living Out the Love of Christ”

(1). Following In the Footsteps of Cain.

For the early church, *murder* was not colorful metaphor for hateful slights, *murder* was a painful reality of being persecuted in a hate-filled world.

For John’s readers it would have been startling to hear that strife within God’s family equated with the murderous hate of the world.

(Matthew 5: 21—22; John 8: 44)

Hate within the church has a uniquely blasphemous quality:
To hate the body of Christ is to hate Christ himself!

(John 7: 7; 15: 18—19; Matthew 5: 11—12)

Q: How are we to handle sin, error, and heresy within the church?

We are to encourage restoration instead of expressing rage.

(James 1: 20; 2 Corinthians 5: 17—20)

(2). Living Out the Love of Christ.

Q. How can a group of sinners to love their fellow sinners?

First, and foremost, new life in Christ produces the love of Christ.

Q. What should the love of Christ look like in a Christian?

Christ like love is the “holy [sacrificial] giving of oneself.” As opposed to using others for self-fulfillment.

(Peter Barns, *1,2,3 John: Knowing Where We Stand*, 1998, & 1 Corinthians 13)

True Christ-like love is demonstrated through actions, choices, and behavior; and, not through easy emotions, fickle feelings, Pollyanna platitudes, bland benevolence, passive pleasantries, or saccharine sentiments. (Paraphrased from Sarah Holiday, *Christian Post*, June 20, 2024)

Objection: Doesn’t this standard us into a bunch of religious doormats?

We are to love in truth, which means that we don’t seek to simply make people feel good, we seek their holy wellbeing. This means that people who love well are willing to do and say hard things for the good of others.

(Jude 17—23; 1 Corinthians 16: 13—14)

Objection: What if I only seem to making baby-steps in Christian love? Christ-like love that takes Baby-steps or mature strides can only come from the those who have new life in Christ; the dead don’t walk.