

Freddy Davis
321 Anton Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32312
freddy.davis@capitolcom.org
850-339-2679
www.capitolcom.org/florida

Capitol Commission Bible Study
Hate and Love
1 John 3:11 ~

You Will Be Hated - 3:11-15

John begins this section in verse 11 by expressing a key Christian concept which his readers had *heard from the beginning*. Way back when they first heard the gospel, love was expressed as a central guiding principle. John told his readers that *we should love one another*. There are several words in the Greek language which mean love, and the one used here is *agape*. It specifically refers to a love which thinks of the person being loved above self.

Then, in verse 12, John explains what this should not look like. To do that, he refers to the story of Cain and Able in Genesis 4:1-16. He said, don't act toward others *as Cain, who slew his brother*.

John explains that the lack of love Cain expressed *was of the evil one* – Satan – who is the root of hatred.

He goes on to talk about Cain's motivation. Cain killed his brother *because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous*. In other words, Cain's hatred for Able emerged from jealousy. When Able wouldn't go along with him, Cain became so angry that he could not contain himself, and he killed his brother out of that anger.

As tragic as that situation was, John recognized it as unsurprising. In fact, he warned his readers to be prepared to be attacked themselves. In verse 13, he said: *Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you*. The reason for this was the same as with Cain and Able. Hatred will flare against believers who live a godly lifestyle, because the ungodly don't like having their sin exposed.

But Christians should have an entirely different attitude. They are to show love. The motivation for that is seen in verse 14 where John said *we know that we have passed out of death into life*. This refers to passing from spiritual death (separation from God) to spiritual life (relationship with God). He indicates that this is particularly evident when we *love the brethren*. Thus, expressing love is an indication that one actually does have spiritual life, while *he who does not love abides in death*.

In verse 15, John makes the case even stronger by saying: *Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him*. Christ himself taught this in Matthew 5:21. This is not saying that murder/hatred cannot be forgiven. But as long as people hold hate in their heart, they are living in spiritual death.



love hate

You Are to Demonstrate Love No Matter What - 3:16-20

Beginning in verse 16, John points to the example of Jesus who showed his love when he *laid down His life for us*. Jesus wasn't forced to do that. He did it because he loved us so much he wanted to provide a way to solve our sin problem. By his sacrifice, he became the perfect example of what true love looks like. Likewise, we ought also be willing to *lay down our lives for the brethren*.

In verse 17, John gives another example – by sharing material resources with those in need. He said: *But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?*

Then, in verse 18, John spells out the principle that underlies this truth. He said: *let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth*. Just saying you love someone is not enough – it must also be demonstrated in life. The false teachers defined love as an expression of Gnostic teaching – word or tongue. John asserts that true love is demonstrated in life – in deed and truth.

Continuing in verse 19, John says: *We will know by this that we are of the truth*. Thus, when believers show love by their actions, they demonstrate they have salvation. Being *of the truth* represents those whose lifestyle aligns with God's ways. This lifestyle not only shows God's love to others, but will also *assure our heart before Him*. That is, it affirms God's love in our own lives.

John knows the struggles of the heart, and he is trying to help his readers grasp the depth of a life in relationship with God. The reason we often need this kind of assurance is because there are times when *our heart condemns us*. When we don't "feel" God's presence, it seems he is not with us. But, salvation is not determined by feelings. It is received in Christ by grace through faith. As John says: *for God is greater than our heart and knows all things*.

Why This Passage is Important Today

Perhaps one of the most difficult things humans face is figuring out how to respond rightly to those who show hate to us. The simple solution is that our hearts must be in tune with God. By that, we are able to live a lifestyle the corresponds with God's love.