

King James Bible Study Correspondence Course

An Outreach of Highway Evangelistic Ministries
5311 Windridge lane ~ Lockhart, Florida 32810 ~ USA

1 John Lesson 9

1 John 3:11-24

return pages 6 & 7 only

Genuine love is demonstrated by works, not by words.

Much of what we learn comes by imitating others around us and following their instructions. That is how we learn to walk, drive, sing, and play. We often can observe the distinctive influences that have shaped how people act and function.

Just as our physical skills reflect what we have observed in others, so the way we love reflects the examples that we follow. People who have grown up in dysfunctional families often find loving others difficult. Those who have formed their concept of love from what they have seen and heard in the media may well have a distorted conception. Those who suppose that love comes from doing what comes naturally will soon find how flawed that idea is.

One of John's major themes in 1 John is that Christians should be marked by their love for God and for one another. Instead of following the selfish example of Cain, we need to follow Christ's example of sacrificial love. This kind of love is not just talk; it is genuine love that produces active compassion for others.

This Christ-like love can be produced only by the Holy Spirit who indwells us the children of God. When love, obedience, and belief in Christ are evidenced in a life, those characteristics are a clear sign that the person is truly a Christian. This evidence gives us confidence in approaching God in prayer; we know that our Father delights in responding to the requests of His children.

How Not to Love

Although we learn many things by following positive examples, often a negative example is helpful to illustrate what not to do. In 1 John 3:11-15, John used the bad example of Cain to show why loving one another is so important. In Cain's life we see where the lack of love can take us. This is a lesson we need to learn and remember.

In verse 10 John had contrasted the children of God and the children of the devil. The children of God do righteousness and love others, the children of the devil, on the other hand, are not marked by obedience and love.

God's commandment for His people has always been to love one another. God is love, and He wants His love to characterize the lives of His children. For this reason, both the Old Testament and the New Testament include commandments to love God and to love one another. This was the old but new commandment that Jesus proclaimed to His disciples and that John emphasized in his epistle (2:7-1 1).

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The Bible teaches that all humans are born with a sin nature. Consequently, we are naturally inclined to adopt the values of Satan. Cain was certainly a clear and tragic example of a person's living by his natural inclinations rather than according to God's law of love (3:12).

The account in Genesis 4 implies that Cain was jealous of his brother Abel, because God had accepted Abel's sacrifice and rejected Cain's sacrifice. Instead of changing his ways to obey God, Cain, it seems, put his self-esteem ahead of doing what was just or loving. Since Abel's righteousness made Cain look bad, apparently Cain, in his hatred, murdered his brother. Cain's murderous action grew out of his lack of love, and his lack of love resulted from his relationship to Satan rather than to God. Cain's sinful character produced his sinful conduct.

We live in a world that contains many children of Satan like Cain. Most of them are not overt Satan worshipers, but in their attitudes and actions they are shaped by sinful values rather than by godly virtues. Christians, therefore, should not be surprised if the world hates them (1 John 3:13). Abel experienced that hostility; so did Jesus, John's readers, and genuine Christians in every generation. Our doing what is good makes the sinful world look bad. Christians are like a mirror that reveals to sinners their moral flaws. Instead of repenting and changing their ways, the world often makes Christians the object of ridicule, rejection, and outright hostility.

John wrote that all humans belong to one of two large groups. We are all born with a sin nature, so we all begin in the realm of spiritual death. Those who believe in Christ immediately pass out of death into the realm of spiritual life (John 5:24).



Scripture memorization

1 Jn 3:16

16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

(KJV)

- Love is learned from what GOD did
- Genuine love is self sacrificing, not self seeking
- Real love chooses to meet the needs of others

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How can we tell if a person belongs to God's realm of life or Satan's realm of death? One of the clearest evidences is the presence or absence of love. Those who follow Cain's example in not loving their brother evidence that they do not belong to God's family (1 John 3:15). They are functioning in the realm of spiritual death. On the other hand, those who love others demonstrate by their conduct that a spiritual transformation has changed their lives. They are living by Christ's values, and only those who have been born again can do that.

The Perfect Pattern for Love

Cain provides a particularly vivid example of what the absence of love can produce. When love is lacking, hatred leads to hostility and even murder. That is certainly not what God wants from His children.

In contrast to the negative example of Cain, John painted the portrait of love as GOD demonstrated it (1 John 3:16). If we want to see what love is, if we want a pattern of love to imitate, all we need to do is perceive what GOD did. GOD's love has set the standard for our love for one another.

Cain's hatred grew out of his self-centeredness. When Abel's righteousness made Cain jealous, he took the life of his innocent brother. Christ's love was characterized by His self-sacrifice. Instead of taking the lives of those who were innocent, Christ gave up His own perfect life for those who were guilty. He laid down His own sinless life on the cross as the perfect substitute for sinners like us, who deserve the wrath of God.

As Christians, we have been the unworthy recipients of GOD's love. Now we are obligated to love others in the same kind of way. Instead of insisting on our rights, we need to lay down our lives for others. Likely we will not be required to forfeit our physical lives. Sometimes Christians have had to do that, and even today in some parts of the world martyrdom for Christ may be necessary. Nevertheless, all of us are required to lay down what we prefer, what we desire, and what we possess so that we can minister to others. In this, we are following the example of love that Christ demonstrated for us.

In verse 17 John became uncomfortably practical in describing the kind of love that Christians should practice. It is easy to speak of love in general, abstract terms, but here John made love very specific and practical. He explained that if we have a possession that someone else genuinely needs, as Christians we must show love by giving that possession to him. Not to give would show an absence of compassionate love. The practice of love, however, is an evidence that a person belongs to God. Failure to love is a denial of all that God seeks to accomplish in the lives of His children.

In our society, people speak frequently of love. Real love is not measured in what we say, but in how we live. Words of love must be matched by works of love (v. 18). Many people have been burned and bruised by the

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deficient kind of "love" that is just talk. They are looking for genuine love that is demonstrated in deed and in truth. By following Christ's example of selfless sacrifice, we can show the world that real love exists and that it comes through a vital relationship with Jesus Christ.

Dealing with Doubt

One of Satan's strategies to undermine Christians is to bombard them with doubts. If he can get us to doubt our salvation or the wisdom of God's way, we will lose our confidence in God. Satan cannot take away our salvation, but he does all he can to get us to compromise our effectiveness in living as God's children. He seeks to thwart God's purpose in every way he can. We need to be careful about how we deal with doubt.

Doubt in itself is not sin; it is a lack of assurance or confidence in what is true (1 John 3:19). Satan and his agents, like the false teachers in John's day, will plant the seeds of doubt in our hearts and minds. These fears may raise questions about the reality of our relationship with God. Even mature godly people have these feelings from time to time.

Although we are all afflicted by doubt at times, God is able to counteract its effect (v. 20). God knows who His children are, and He wants us to be confident that we indeed belong to Him. To overcome our feelings of doubt, 1 John reminds us of the facts. The three marks of the Christian truth, obedience, and love are evidence that a person truly is God's child. When doubts arise in our hearts, and they certainly will arise sometimes, we need to evaluate those feelings in the light of the facts of God's Word. Do we believe the truth about Jesus Christ, the Son of God? Are we living in obedience to God's commandments? Are we loving one another as Christ commanded?

We do not deal with doubt successfully by ignoring it or denying it. We certainly must not yield to it so that it causes us to despair. Rather, we need to face it squarely and answer it by God's truth.

Confidence before God

By evaluating our feelings of doubt in the light of the facts of God's truth we are able to have confidence toward God (1 John 3:21). Confidence means that we are open to present our requests to God in prayer (v. 22).

Loving parents welcome their children's requests. We may not be able to do all that our children ask, and sometimes we have to say no to requests that we know are not in their best interest. Nevertheless, we want our children to feel free to tell us openly what they would like us to do for them. If they are afraid to bring their true needs to us, we realize that something has gone wrong in the relationship. Their requests are indications of their trust and confidence in our love.

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In the same way, we express confidence toward God by asking Him to meet our needs. We cannot approach Him confidently, if we know that we have been displeasing Him by disobeying His commandments. Openness with God builds upon obedience to God. When we are doing what pleases Him, we will ask the Lord for what He pleases to give.

What commandments does God want His children to obey? In 1 John 3:23 John summarized them in a single twofold command.

This belief and behavior is at the heart of what God requires from us. In fact, they form a good self-check for us. Each day we should ask ourselves, "Am I truly trusting Christ?" And "Am I truly demonstrating love for others?" If we are to approach God confidently, we need to be able to answer yes to these fundamental questions. John was not suggesting that human efforts alone can make us confident before God. The Spirit of God comes to dwell in the heart of each person who has accepted Christ as Savior. He works within us to transform our lives from the inside out. According to Galatians 5:22 two of the aspects that He produces in us are love and faith. Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, humans cannot keep God's commandment of belief and love. Those who keep God's command have reliable evidence that God dwells in them. In that knowledge, they can come boldly to Him in prayer.

notes

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Name _____

Related reading:

Genesis 4; Galatians 5; James 2; Isa. 29:13;

1. Read Genesis 4 and summarize Cain's story.
2. According to 1 John 3:16 who laid down his life for us ?
3. How does doubt become part of you?
4. What is the key verse in this lesson?
5. What does it mean when you say "we shall know them by their fruits"?
6. Can Satan take away your salvation? explain!
7. Define the term "lip service"
8. Why did Cain kill his brother?
9. What correlation can we show with Eph. 5:25 and Col. 3:19 and this Lessons' theme?
10. Why is it so important to GOD for us to serve one another?
11. According to 1 John 3:14, what two realms exist in the spiritual world?
12. What commandments does God want His children to obey?
13. What, according to 1 John 3:24, produces belief and love?
14. Other than yourself, is there anyone else who gets hurt if you are unloving?
15. If we are unloving and mean spirited it is evidence that we are, What?

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16. Explain how Heb 4:16 and 1 John 3:21 relate to this Lesson?
17. What was the purpose of this Lesson?

True/false

- The expression that talk is cheap, which certainly is true when it comes to love.
- Actions do speak louder than words.
- Reasons such as we are busy, preoccupied, tired, or stressed out, are OK to excuse yourself from unloving attitudes and actions
- We need to acknowledge our lack of love as sin, confess it, and cooperate with the Holy Spirit in expressing love to others.
- Our confidence in prayer is directly related to our commitment to obedience. Because our requests are in tune with God's priorities, we can bring them confidently to our Father in Heaven.



Scripture memorization Write out these verses on the back of this page: I John 3:16; Heb. 4:16; Isa. 29:13 (must be in KJV)

Any questions?