

1 John 3:11-12
“Loving one another”

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I. Intro

John’s letter of 1st John has a circular nature to it as **he continues writing about “fellowship with God” from three things that are keys to maintaining it: Obedience, Love, and Truth!**

Each time John returns to one of these topics he does so from a different perspective. We left off with John’s words defining the two differences between the **Child of God** and the **Child of the devil** in verse 10 where he wrote, **“Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother”**. So, the distinctions between these two children with different fathers is to be seen in both **Vertical Love** and **Horizontal Love**:

1. **Vertical Love: The practice of righteousness, in the life of the Child of God and the absence of the practice of righteousness in the child of the devil.**
2. **Horizontal Love: The practice of loving his brother, in the life of the Child of God and the absence of this in the child of the devil.**

John had just mentioned the differences between the child of God and the child of the devil as it relates to these three areas. As he moves back around towards writing about “love” and his perspective is not **“Vertical Love”** towards God but what this transformative love of God will produce through the Child of God towards God’s other children or **“Horizontal Love”**. There is a visible difference between the children of these two fathers and it’s the difference between love and hate. I think it’s important to realize that John’s words on **“Horizontal Love”** has two important points before we look at the verses:

1. **First**, these words come after the defining truth that as a child of God, Jesus has destroyed the “root of sin”. Jesus has changed our nature from death to life! He has

broken down the walls of separation making from two one body! (Eph 2:14-18)

Humanity longs for peace and the Prince of Peace having destroyed the root of sin which is our problem of getting along with our brothers and sisters has been abolished making it possible to “LOVE” our brothers and sisters in Christ.

2. **Second**, the Greek words as well as the context, makes it clear that **what John is writing is specific in relating to loving our fellow children of God and NOT a universal love of all humanity**. Though that is pointed out in other places in the bible like Luke 6:27-36 where Jesus says, “***But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.***” In his gospels John had much to say on what the Love of God should change in regard to our love of those whom His love has been lavished upon:

- a. In John 13:34 Jesus said to His disciples, “*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.*” There was a clear expectation that a person who has encounter God’s “**Horizontal Love**” will now love one another like He had loved them.
- b. Then in John 15:12-17 Jesus further clarifies and defines this “love” by saying, “*This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the*

Father in My name He may give you. These things I command you, that you love one another.”

It is apparent that John wants his readers to know exactly what Jesus had told him 70 years earlier in John 13:35, “**By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**” John had remembered the type of love that Jesus had in mind when he said that Jesus was the example and definition of this love that had as its traits: “**lay down one’s life for his friends**”.

II. Vs. 11 Transformed by love

Vs. 11 The words in 1st John aren’t new as I just said by quoting the above verses which shows that those who have been transformed by God’s love can understand that all that was expected of the Child of God has not changed, **it did not need an advanced course**, it did need to be rekindled and remembered as **the expectation had NOT changed** in 70 years and it won’t in 70,000 years if Jesus should tarry. The Christian life and profession carries with it the action to love God’s fellow Christians as He has loved us. **If the Child of God doesn’t love one another, as defined by Jesus’ example towards us, then we “cannot walk in the light as He is in the light” no matter what their profession is!**

As we see after the command is remembered it is now given 12-24 four clear examples the remainder of this section verses 12-24. We could refer to these **four examples as “types of human relationships”**. But as we look at them it is clear from the examples that only one of these is compatible to the example laid forth by Jesus towards us. The four examples are:

1. Vs. 12 Murder
2. Vs. 13-15 Hatred
3. Vs. 16-17 Indifference
4. Vs. 18-24 Compassion

Though not given the first three can be looked at as defining what ought not be seen in the commandment of Jesus for the child of God. For instance, Cain murdered his righteous brother Jesus laid down His life for those who were His murders; and in this we can see the contrast even better.

III. Vs. 12 Self-centered love

Vs. 12 **Murder**: Cain is used as an illustration of what can be defined as a “**self-centered love**”. This is how the children of the devil loves! The murder shows the outcome of such “**self-centered love**” but the motive behind it was clearly that Cain was more in love with himself than he was with anyone else. What is even more important to realize is that the example that John uses is **NOT of an atheist as Cain was a worshiper**. According to Gen 4:1-16 both he and Able shared the same family, they were brothers born of Adam and Eve. They had the same access to the instruction in righteousness, both were trained and understood the concept of stewardship that all the blessings and gifts they had received had been given to them by a gracious loving God. They attended the same religious gatherings and brought offerings that represented the understanding of their dependence upon the grace of God to enjoy life’s blessings. And personally believe that Cain had most likely offered the right gifts to God as Able did in times past. But all that he had done in the past couldn’t mask what Cain was as the proof was in his actions of hatred and murder of his brother Able. Cain’s attitude revealed his heart which look more like the devil. The difference between the gift showed that as well as Able offered in accordance with obedience and faith where Cain offered what to offer in accordance with his work and effort. Offering in faith is always based upon the revelation that God has given, and God had given clear instructions that Cain at this time refused to obey and even when given the opportunity to get it right chose to kill his brother instead. Cain rejected God’s word and

worshiped in his own way. Able left the altar of God with the peace and presence of God in his heart and Cain went away angry and disappointed and was even warned that if he didn't deal with his own heart sin was crouching at the door ready to strike. But even after the mercy of warning and the opportunity to offer again so that he too could enjoy the peace that Able had Cain chose to listen to his father's voice the devil and kill his brothers. Cain proved what angered him that he was evil, and his brother was righteous and instead of repenting he chose to kill his brother. **When Self-love comes face to face with truth and reality it has a decision: Repent and change or destroy the person exposing it!** Far too often even in the Church people try to cover up their true nature with religious activity. But their hatred of their fellow brothers and sisters reveals that they are not children of God. It never ceases to amaze me how folks do this as I hear them say things like: **"Now, don't say anything to so and so but..."** These folks fail to realize that true brothers and sisters don't do that, they also fail to realize that those conversations and gossip in which mean hateful and hurtful things are that said inevitably get back to the person they are attacking behind their back. That is what children of the devil do they are accusers of the brethren just like their father the devil does. This kind of stuff should not be tolerated in the body of Christ, and it is an indication that the person who practices such things is not a Child of God. If this brings conviction to you then you should hear the words of God towards Cain, ***"If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."***

We will take up the other **three examples as "types of human relationships"**.

1. Vs. 13-15 Hatred
2. Vs. 16-17 Indifference
3. Vs. 18-24 Compassion

Next week as we continue to examine the difference between the child of God and the child of the devil.