

Love In Deed (1John 3:11-24)

Introduction: *What is "true love?"*

It's a chronic sin of men and women, including Christians, to misunderstand the meaning of the word love—to say and think that they have love for their brothers when, in deed and in truth, they do not. So it's important that we have clear in our mind exactly what love *is* and exactly what love *involves*.

1. The old commandment of brotherly love (v. 11)

"Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. ... He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him" (2:7, 10).

2. The negative demonstration of brotherly love (v. 12-15)

Cain murdered Abel (the first brothers), and the Son of God was murdered by *his* brothers, because, Jesus says, men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil (John 3:19-20).

3. The positive demonstration of brotherly love (v. 16-18)

This is what love is. This is how we know love, that Christ laid down his life for us. This is how we show love, in laying down our lives. Therefore, not loving is hating. Compare verse 14, "He who does *not love* ... abides in death," and verse 15, "Whoever *hates* ... has [no] eternal life."

[In verse 17] "The shift is deliberate and significant. It is easier to be enthusiastic about Humanity with a capital "H" than it is to love individual men and women, especially those who are uninteresting, exasperating, depraved, or otherwise unattractive. Loving everybody in general may be an excuse for loving nobody in particular" (C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*).

It's possible to *do* and to *give* without *love* (1Cor 13:3). But it's not possible to *love* without *doing* and *giving*.

4. The blessed assurance of brotherly love (v. 14, 19-24)

This is objective grounds for assurance. We love the *same people* that God loves, even our brethren. And we also love in the *same way* that God loves, even by laying down our lives. By this, we can overcome a condemning heart (v. 20), and prevail in prayer (v. 22). "The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil" (1Peter 3:12).

Application: *How can we learn to grow in such love?*

Don't turn an example (v. 17) an example into the thing itself. How are you going to make this your life, to take what you have and to give it to the people whom you love, whether it's time (our most valuable resource), or assistance or material help—to make it your *very life*.