

Message #13**I John 3:10-14**

The real proof of who is right with God and who isn't, is not determined by what one says, but by what one does. No one is right with God who hates his brother or sister in the church.

ONE WHO HAS A REAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND REAL FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD IS ONE WHO CONTINUALLY LOVES HIS BROTHER IN THE CHURCH FAMILY.

Now the primary emphasis of the love described in these verses is love of those within your church family. This is grammatically established by the fact that there is an article before "brother" (3:10b, 14) referring to a specific brother as opposed to any brother; by the word "another" (v. 11), which refers to another of the same kind and family, and by the illustration of Cain and Abel (3:12). This is not a reference to loving any person who claims to be a brother; this is a discussion about loving those within your own church family.

THOUGHT #1 – One who does not continually love his brother is not of God. **3:10b**

The word for love is agape, which refers to the love of choice and reason rather than emotion. The tense of the participle is present, meaning the continual, habitual type of love.

The point is this one who does not continually choose to love his brother in the context of the church family is not out of God.

THOUGHT #2 – The message that one should continually love one another is not new. **3:11**

Ever since these believers had first heard the Gospel and had first become part of the fellowship of the church, they had been challenged to love each other in the church.

There are some grammatical things worth noting. The verb "you have heard" points back to a moment in time when probably they heard the Gospel and were saved and became part of the church. The phrase "from the beginning" does not have the article "the." John is not referring to a specific beginning, but to the character and quality of their beginning in the context of the church. From the moment they were saved and involved in the church, they heard that they should strive to continually love each other in the body.

They can say whatever they want, but they cannot be right with God. They do not have real fellowship with God because they do not really care about or love their brother and sister in the context of the church. They care more about people down the street and this is not right.

THOUGHT #3 – The continual love that we are to have is not like the illustration of Cain. **3:12**

Cain was a real brother to Abel. He was in the family and he killed his brother because his brother was righteous and he was evil.

There will be times when you will be hated and verbally murdered because you are right with God and someone else isn't. Obviously if one asked Cain if he loved his brother he would say yes; but the fact is he killed his brother. The reason Cain did this is that he was controlled by the evil one. The word "slay" is a violent Greek word which means to slit one's throat or to butcher one.

There are some observations I want to make:

1. Sometimes you will suffer a verbal attack because you are righteous and the one attacking you isn't.
2. One who verbally murders you may actually be in the family.
3. One who continually verbally murders you is not of God.
4. We should try and build each other up in the Lord. That does not mean a lack of loving confrontation, but it does mean a lack of verbal butchering and verbal murder.

THOUGHT #4 – We should not be surprised if we are hated. **3:13**

The Greek text is written in such a way that the action needed to be stopped. John says stop continually being surprised if you are hated because those who are wicked will always hate those who are righteous. Jesus Christ Himself taught this very thing (John 15:18-20).

THOUGHT #5 – There is proof that we know God and are right with God. **3:14**

One who continually loves the people within the fellowship can know he is right with God. One who doesn't continually love doesn't know he is right with God.

In I John 2:7-11, loving our brother is a matter of light and darkness.

In I John 3:14, loving our brother is a matter of life and death.

Take a look around the auditorium this morning and ask yourself this question—do I continually love my brothers and sisters in Christ or do I continually hate them? The true, honest answer to this question determines, in part, whether you are in fellowship with God.