

What to Do with Love

I John 3:1-19

Many people focus on the evil in this world. That's understandable. There's so much of it, but unfortunately dwelling on the evil usually doesn't move us to do the right thing. In our reactions we can become a part of the problem instead of a part of the solution. Though we must be wise and understanding about sin and evil (Romans 16:17-19), we must look for the love of God and focus on it (John 16:33; Ephesians 3:14-19; Romans 5:1-11; 8:28-39; 12:17-21; I John 4:16,18).

Our text tells us that God's love will set us apart from the world.

It will give us a purifying hope. We will be set apart from the world by making righteousness our goal and continual practice. We will not tolerate and condone our sinful failures. We will not perform perfectly, but will strive towards living as Christ did and taking heed to His commands. We will make humble confession (agree with God) when we fail. See I John 1:5 – 2:6.

We also will be set apart from the world by the love which Christ gives us when He comes into hearts and makes us His new creation (John 13:34-35; II Corinthians 5:14-21; I John 4:7-21). Our text is teaching us to **respond** to God's love, rather than **react** to sin and evil (Romans 12:1-2,21).

We will now especially consider I John 3:16-18.

Look for God's Love. I John 3:16

It is God's action that made His love perceivable. He gave His Son for us (John 3:16; Romans 5:8). It is Christ's action that made His love perceivable. *"He laid down His life for us"* (John 15:12-13; 10:11,15). We need to *"perceive"* God's Love. Therefore be looking for it. I John 3:1 tells us to *"Behold"* the Father's love. When we do, it will change our lives and give us hope (I John 3:2-3). Ephesians 3:17-19 tells us to be grounded in love, seeking to comprehend Christ's love and be filled with God's fullness. We can see God's love through the gift of His Son (John 3:16; Romans 5:5-8; I John 3:16; 4:9,14,16). This comprehension causes us to dwell in an environment of God's love. We are to keep ourselves / preserve ourselves in this environment of love (Ephesians 3:14-19; Jude 20-21).

Live in God's Love. I John 3:17

I John 3:16 says that Christ *"laid down His life for us."* It is not just that He died for us. He left heavenly glory. He humbly took on the form of a servant. He made Himself of no reputation.

He emptied Himself of His divine rights and privileges. (cp. various translations of Philippians 2:6-8). So when we are told to *“lay down our lives for the brethren,”* we are not just going to wait for a dramatic moment to sacrifice our physical life to help save someone. It is daily laying down our lives, making ourselves humbly available to be like servants to others. See John 15:12-13.

The expression, *“bowels of compassion”* (I John 3:17 – KJV) is equivalent to saying, ***“heart of compassion.”*** As God’s love lives in us, we should have tender and compassionate hearts (I John 4:7-16 cp. Romans 15:5-7; Ephesians 4:30-32; I Peter 1:22).

God’s love is the cause / the reason / the motivation...

- for our love to God (I John 4:19)
- for our love to the brethren (I John 5:1-2)
- for our love of God’s Word and His Will (I John 5:3 cp. James 1:12,18-21; I Corinthians 13:4-8a; II Corinthians 5:14-15)
- for our ability to overcome the world (I John 2:15-17; 3:1; 5:4-5; Romans 8:35-39)

Let out God’s Love. I John 3:18

I John 3:9-15 shows us that God’s love, through Christ and the gospel, will cause us to have a life of good works and of love (Ephesians 2:8-10; 5:1-2; Hebrews 6:10-12). This love will empower us to reach out and to share with others (Romans 5:5 cp. II Corinthians 5:14-15,18; II Timothy 2:10,22,24-26). The world’s hatred, pride, and lust must not contaminate or stop us (Romans 12:1-2,21; Galatians 1:3-5; 6:14; James 1:26-27; 3:8-18; I John 2:15-17; 3:13; 4:4-6,18; 5:4-5,18-20).

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Concerning Memorial Day and the response we should have towards our blood-bought freedoms that we enjoy in this nation:

Look for...

We need to take time to appreciate the dedication and sacrifice of others who lived before us.

Live in...

Let us live a thankful life, using our liberties wisely.

Let out...

Let us not be silent and allow those liberties to be taken away from the next generation.