

The Love and Hate Barometer

Online Sermon: [McKees Mills Baptist Church » Sermons](#)
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A new command Christ has given to us born of the water and the Spirit and that is to “love one another” so that the will “know that you are My disciplines” (John 13:34)! As Christ’s ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20) we are called to not curse human beings made in God’s image (James 3:9) but instead to do good unto them (Luke 6:27) so that the comfort and love we have received (2 Corinthians 1:3-5) from the Father might be apparent and a witness of His grace and mercy. If God commands us to love our enemies, then how much more ought we love and seek unity and peace with our spiritual brothers¹ within the same body of Christ?² While the command to love one another is clearly to be a priority for God’s own it is difficult to put into practice because it invites intense persecution! Jesus warns us that while obeying His command to love results in our light shining amongst the lost it at the same time

¹ Gary W. Derickson, *First, Second, and Third John*, ed. H. Wayne House, W. Hall Harris III, and Andrew W. Pitts, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), 347.

² Tony Evans, *“The Family of Fellowship,”* in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Jn 3:11–17.

³ Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans Pub.; Apollos, 2000), 136.

⁴ Gary W. Derickson, *First, Second, and Third John*, ed. H. Wayne House, W. Hall Harris III, and Andrew W. Pitts, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), 343–344.

invites hatred amongst those who don’t want to approach the light because their evil deeds will be exposed (John 3:20, 15:18). While it is painful to be persecuted by non-Christians who have not passed



from death to life (1 John 3:14),³ how much more so when indifference or “active antagonism”⁴ comes from within the body of

believers? This was the situation that Apostle John wrote about in 1 John 3:11-18. The Johanne community were “experiencing a pattern of prejudicial treatment and resentment”⁵ from two God-fearing bodies. First, the Jews were putting them out of the synagogue and killing them (John 16:2, 9:34)⁶ due to their belief in the Messiah dying once and for all, and second, they faced intense persecution from a group of heretics, followers of Cerinthus,⁷ that

⁵ Gary W. Derickson, *First, Second, and Third John*, ed. H. Wayne House, W. Hall Harris III, and Andrew W. Pitts, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), 343.

⁶ Thomas F. Johnson, *1, 2, and 3 John*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 80.

⁷ John R. W. Stott, *The Letters of John: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 19, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 141.

were spreading false teaching.⁸ The incredibly sad part is that these secessionists used to belong to their church!⁹ Today's sermon is going review the reasons John gave as to why it is not ok to be indifferent or outright hate those created in God's image, especially when they belong to the same body of Christ because such negative emotions often demonstrates your bond is with Satan and you in fact are not born again!

The Message From the Beginning

John begins by stating that he is “not giving the church a message they have never heard”¹⁰ but instead one that was given from the beginning! The command to love was Christ's command given to His disciples¹¹ “likely dependent of the Last Supper discourse.”¹² Jesus said, “a new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so must you love one another. By this everyone will know you are my disciples if you love one another” (John 13:34-35). This is not meant to be some “academic, theological, doctrinal statement,”¹³ but one of the litmus tests one

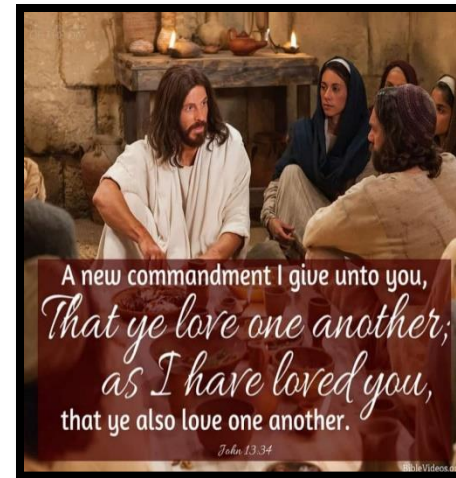
⁸ John R. W. Stott, *The Letters of John: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 19, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 141.

⁹ Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans Pub.; Apollos, 2000), 134.

¹⁰ Chris Benfield, “[Putting Our Love into Action # 10 \(1 John 3:11–17\)](#),” in *Pulpit Pages: New Testament Sermons* (Mount Airy, NC: Chris Benfield, 2015), 1594.

¹¹ James Montgomery Boice, *The Epistles of John: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 92.

can use to determine if one has indeed “passed from death to life” (1 John 3:14)! “As the knowledge of God is tested by conduct—



whether one walks in the light (1:5–2:11)—so being “born of God” (2:29) is tested by righteous action and love of the brethren.”¹⁴ While the definition of “love” by the world is incredibly broad and often self-gratifying, the kind of love John is referring to, agape love, is the

“responsibility to demonstrate selfless concern for our brothers and sisters in Christ as our response to the grace God has given us!”¹⁵ Agape love is crucial for “living for Jesus and

¹² Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans Pub.; Apollos, 2000), 133.

¹³ Tony Evans, “[The Family of Fellowship](#),” in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Jn 3:11–17.

¹⁴ Glenn W. Barker, “[1 John](#),” in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 334.

¹⁵ Tony Evans, “[The Family of Fellowship](#),” in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Jn 3:11–17.

for advancing God's kingdom"¹⁶ because it is by considering others better than ourselves and looking out for their best interests (Philippians 2:3) that one demonstrates one has indeed received and is now able to pass the comfort one has received from the Father onto His children! It is not by carrying Bibles, singing worship songs, theological astuteness, or even the size of our church that others see God's light but instead by our sacrificial love for them!¹⁷

While we are called to love all humans because they are created in God's image, John stresses how important it is to show those who have a bond with the Devil and are filled with jealousy, hatred and strife that when you chose a bond with God¹⁸ through belief in the atoning sacrifice of His Son (John 3:16) you receive the opposite: unity, peace and love for both God and one another.

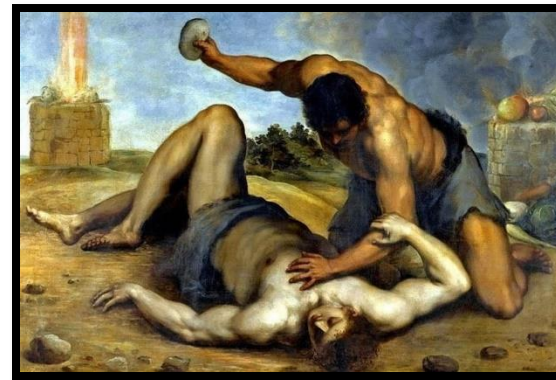
It is this testimony of love that a believer can point the lost sheep to the Good Shepherd to be found, loved, and redeemed by His blood!

¹⁶ Gary W. Derickson, *First, Second, and Third John*, ed. H. Wayne House, W. Hall Harris III, and Andrew W. Pitts, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), 335.

¹⁷ Tony Evans, "[The Family of Fellowship](#)," in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Jn 3:11–17.

Hatred as a Sign of Death

Before John tells his audience more about the love believers are to emulate, he begins by using Cain as an example of the opposite of love, hated!¹⁹ We are told in Genesis chapter four that "in the course of time" (4:3) both Cain and Abel brought offerings unto the Lord. While "Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil" Abel brought "fat portions from some of the firstborn of the flock"



(4:3-4). We are told that the Lord looked favorably on Abel's offering and rejected Cain's (4:4-5). "Cain became very angry; his face was downcast" (4:5) so the Lord said

to Cain, "if you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it" (4:7). In a fit of jealousy and anger we are told that Cain invited his brother Abel to go out into the field where he proceeded to butcher him like one would an

¹⁸ James Montgomery Boice, *The Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 92.

¹⁹ John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 896.

animal!²⁰ The issue here is not that Cain brought an inferior sacrifice, a grain instead of animal sacrifice as some commentaries suggest,²¹ but that Cain lacked faith (Hebrews 11:4) to give God his very best and was filled with hatred in the sight of his brother's righteousness!²² Despite both brothers being raised in the same environment and by the same parents,²³ unlike Abel, Cain chose to reject God as the Master of his destiny and tried to control his own future. Cain did not "become a child of the Devil (1 John 3:12) by murdering his brother. Rather, he murders his brother because he is already a child of the Devil!"²⁴ The "evil character of Cain is universally assumed in both biblical and extrabiblical sources"²⁵ and the murder of Abel constantly reminds us that every person has a choice between "hatred and love, life and death, murder and self-sacrifice"²⁶ that comes from either having faith in self or in God!

With the story of Cain in mind John boldly warns the successionists, the Jewish people and his own flock that what one

²⁰ Gary W. Derickson, *First, Second, and Third John*, ed. H. Wayne House, W. Hall Harris III, and Andrew W. Pitts, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), 339.

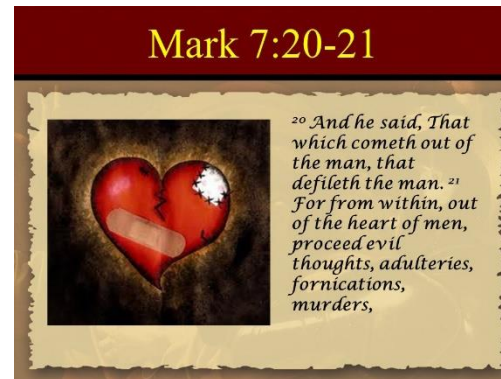
²¹ Gary W. Derickson, *First, Second, and Third John*, ed. H. Wayne House, W. Hall Harris III, and Andrew W. Pitts, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), 340–341.

²² John R. W. Stott, *The Letters of John: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 19, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 142.

²³ Tony Evans, "[The Family of Fellowship](#)," in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Jn 3:11–17.

²⁴ Gary W. Derickson, *First, Second, and Third John*, ed. H. Wayne House, W. Hall Harris III, and Andrew W. Pitts, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), 339.

possesses within one's heart, either good or evil, is a sign of whether one has passed from death to life (1 John 3:14)! From



Cain's murder of Abel, we learn that an absence of love means living in an atmosphere of death!²⁷ Being right in the eyes of God will draw hatred from others who cannot tolerate the light, morality,²⁸ selfless,

sacrificial righteousness of those who rely on God's grace and mercy. Since "genuine love cannot be fabricated or imitated, it is either present within our hearts from Christ or not."²⁹ Love and fellowship with God are an amazing barometer to determine if one

²⁵ Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans Pub.; Apollos, 2000), 133.

²⁶ Glenn W. Barker, "[1 John](#)," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 334.

²⁷ H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *1 John*, The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 74.

²⁸ Glenn W. Barker, "[1 John](#)," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 335.

²⁹ Chris Benfield, "[Putting Our Love into Action # 10 \(1 John 3:11–17\)](#)," in *Pulpit Pages: New Testament Sermons* (Mount Airy, NC: Chris Benfield, 2015), 1595.

is saved or not!³⁰ In Mark 7:21-23 Jesus said that true murder is that which conceived in the heart. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man unclean!³¹ An absence of evil within one's heart or having love for others "will not cause spiritual life to occur but will give evidence of it. Conversely, to be unable to love means that a person is without life from the Father and remains in death."³²

For John when a believer is either indifferent³³ or outright hates other believers this is the "spiritual equivalent of murder" (Matthew 5:21-22), as a lustful eye is the spiritual equivalent of adultery (Matthew 5:28).³⁴

³⁰ Gary W. Derickson, [First, Second, and Third John](#), ed. H. Wayne House, W. Hall Harris III, and Andrew W. Pitts, *Evangelical Exegetical Commentary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), 348–349.

³¹ James Montgomery Boice, [The Epistles of John: An Expositional Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 93.

³² Glenn W. Barker, "[1 John](#)," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 335.

³³ H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., [1 John](#), *The Pulpit Commentary* (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 74.

³⁴ John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, Dallas Theological Seminary, [The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures](#), vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 896.

John is not saying that any person who hates is unsaved or have committed an unpardonable sin³⁵ but merely that since "hate and death go together" as evil from the Devil, these are signs one either has not passed from death to life or at the very least are not abiding in the new life in Christ³⁶ and therefore stand outside of the fellowship of God!³⁷ To the secessionists who rejected both faith in Jesus (2:22–23; 4:2–3) and love for one's brothers and sisters (2:9–11; 3:11–15) John point blank states you are not saved³⁸ but to those inside his flock he is saying that since by your fruit you will be known make every effort to not hate but love those within the family of God!

Love as a Sign of Life

When it comes to knowing exactly what love is, John says we are to emulate Jesus who laid down His life for us (1 John 3:16)!

³⁵ H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., [1 John](#), *The Pulpit Commentary* (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 74.

³⁶ Gary W. Derickson, [First, Second, and Third John](#), ed. H. Wayne House, W. Hall Harris III, and Andrew W. Pitts, *Evangelical Exegetical Commentary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), 351.

³⁷ Gary W. Derickson, [First, Second, and Third John](#), ed. H. Wayne House, W. Hall Harris III, and Andrew W. Pitts, *Evangelical Exegetical Commentary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), 346.

³⁸ Thomas F. Johnson, [1, 2, and 3 John](#), *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 83.

While Cain is a great example of hate, He who emptied Himself and became the suffering servant for even His enemies³⁹ is a holy and perfect example of agape love! The kind of love we are to have for



our brothers and sisters in Christ is one that goes beyond self to focus on the well being of all others. When John speaks of Christ laying down His life this makes us think of the passage

where Jesus talks about being the Good Shepherd who voluntarily lays down His life for the sheep (John 10:11, 15-18).⁴⁰ Agape “love is denial of self for another’s gain.”⁴¹ It is doing what Jesus Himself already did and continues to do. It is becoming like Apostle Paul who said, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but

Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).⁴²

“The effacement of another’s rights and perhaps existence for one’s own sake is the essence of hatred; the effacement of oneself for another’s sake is the essence of agape love!”⁴³

Being angry, envious, and holding grudges⁴⁴ against those born again and created in the image of God drives a wedge between us and Him for God above all is pure love! While loving all people, especially those with different dreams, goals, hobbies, and yes even different theology is impossible for our sinful natures to accept, those born of the water and Spirit (John 3:5) can do so for they have been given a new heart to replace their one of stone (Ezekiel 36:26)!

While we “are unlikely to have opportunities to literally die for others”⁴⁵ we are to walk in Christ’s footsteps and voluntarily (John 10:18)⁴⁶ “sacrifice our own self-interests” so that the vertical

³⁹ H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., [1 John](#), The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 74.

⁴⁰ Colin G. Kruse, [The Letters of John](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans Pub.; Apollos, 2000), 137.

⁴¹ Glenn W. Barker, “[1 John](#),” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 336.

⁴² James Montgomery Boice, [The Epistles of John: An Expositional Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 95.

⁴³ H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., [1 John](#), The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 74.

⁴⁴ Chris Benfield, “[Putting Our Love into Action # 10 \(1 John 3:11–17\)](#),” in *Pulpit Pages: New Testament Sermons* (Mount Airy, NC: Chris Benfield, 2015), 1596.

⁴⁵ James Montgomery Boice, [The Epistles of John: An Expositional Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 96.

⁴⁶ Tony Evans, “[The Family of Fellowship](#),” in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Jn 3:11–17.

relationship of love⁴⁷ between us and the Father might horizontally be known amongst our fellow believers!⁴⁸ It is through this kind of sacrificial other focused love that the world and we too see ourselves as true children of God!

To keep the Secessionists, Jews, and members of his own church from enthusiastically speaking with the tongue the kind of



love that is not in their hearts; above all, John says, agape love "must be practical, visible, and active" (see 1 John 3:17-18)!⁴⁹ How easy it is to say I love all of humanity while at

the same time being indifferent or hateful towards those who are

"uninteresting, exasperating, depraved, or otherwise unattractive!"⁵⁰ To follow in Jesus' footsteps one must be willing to seek and acknowledge the needs of others by practically meeting them when possible.⁵¹ What would have happened to us if Christ had not emptied Himself of the glory He had with the Father but instead chose not to lift a finger to help us "sinful, ungodly, unrighteous folks?"⁵² Without His grace and mercy would we not remain lost sheep looking for our Master? "Actions speak louder than words"⁵³ for it is precisely in putting other's interests above our own that we demonstrate we have learned much from the Lord who is our Shepherd! Since "love that fails to take form of action on behalf of others is nothing more than religious rhetoric,"⁵⁴ with unspeakable joy in the presence of He who voluntarily atoned for our sins may we emulate His love for all by offering those around us whatever we can to reduce their burdens. Since we have more material possessions than even the children of Israel when they entered the Promised Land,⁵⁵ let us give sacrificially, not with the expectation of reciprocity but with thankful hearts that what God has entrusted to us we get to share with His own!

⁴⁷ Tony Evans, "[The Family of Fellowship](#)," in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Jn 3:11–17.

⁴⁸ Tony Evans, "[The Family of Fellowship](#)," in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Jn 3:11–17.

⁴⁹ Thomas F. Johnson, [1, 2, and 3 John](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 85.

⁵⁰ John R. W. Stott, [The Letters of John: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 19, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 145.

⁵¹ Gary M. Burge, [Letters of John](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 162.

⁵² Tony Evans, "[The Family of Fellowship](#)," in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), 1 Jn 3:11–17.

⁵³ John R. W. Stott, [The Letters of John: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 19, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 146.

⁵⁴ Gary M. Burge, [Letters of John](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 163.

⁵⁵ Chris Benfield, "[Putting Our Love into Action # 10 \(1 John 3:11–17\)](#)," in *Pulpit Pages: New Testament Sermons* (Mount Airy, NC: Chris Benfield, 2015), 1597.

Let us not give up meeting together (Hebrews 10:25),⁵⁶ become indifferent to some and infatuated by others, but instead let us share with one another, unified as one body in Christ who share the same Spirit and glorious hope of one day going home to be with Jesus!

Lord Jesus the love and comfort You have given me help me to share it with my brothers and sisters for Your honor and glory, amen!

⁵⁶ John R. W. Stott, [*The Letters of John: An Introduction and Commentary*](#), vol. 19, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 143–144.