

1 John 3:11-18

INTRODUCTION: A woman was surprised at church one day when another woman, who had often snubbed her, went out of her way to give her a big hug before the service.

She wondered what had initiated her change of heart.

She got her answer at the end of the service when the pastor instructed, “Your assignment for next week is the same as last week.

I want you to go out there and love somebody you just can’t stand” (adapted from *Reader’s Digest*, [4/02], p. 48).

If loving others were only as easy as giving a hug to someone you don’t like, we all could excel in love.

Just hug them and move on!

But, love is a bit more difficult than that!

It requires continual effort, because at the heart of loving others is putting the other person ahead of yourself, and that is always a huge battle.

For this reason, the New Testament as a whole and the apostle John in this letter never tire of exhorting us to love one another.

John had seen the love of Christ demonstrated that night in the Upper Room, when Jesus took the basin of water and washed the disciples' feet.

He then heard Jesus say (John 13:34-35), "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Then John saw the supreme demonstration of Christ's love when He willingly went to the cross to die for our sins.

And so the "son of thunder" became known as the "apostle of love."

In 2:7-11 - John has already reminded them of Jesus' "old" commandment.

John will devote a major portion of chapter 4, verses 7-21 to this theme.

In fact, six times in 1 & 2 John, he refers directly to Jesus' command that we love one another (1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11, 12; 2 John 5; plus the allusion in 1 John 2:7).

In our text, John is in the second cycle of applying the three tests of authentic Christianity:

- the moral test of obedience to Jesus Christ (2:28-3:10);

- the social test of love for one another (3:11-18); and, after a digression about assurance (3:19-24),
- the doctrinal test of believing the truth about Jesus Christ (4:1-7).

If we get weary of hearing over and over about the need to love one another, we should remember that John wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who knows our hearts.

We need to examine ourselves constantly because our default mode is to revert to selfishness, not to love.

In our text, John again gets out his black and white paint and does not mix them into shades of gray.

He wants to expose the errors of the heretics in the plainest of terms.

So, he makes yet another contrast between true believers and false professions.

This is another "either or" proposal.

- You either love the world or you love God.
- You either walk in light or you walk in darkness.
- You either know him and keep His word or you don't know him.
- You are either a child of the devil or a child of God. - determined by your relationship to sin.

Now he is going to make another contrast.

He is going to make a contrast between a child of God and a child of the devil.

His message is this:

The mark of the world is hatred, the mark of the church is love.

or

The mark of a Child of God is love but the mark of a child of the Devil is hatred.

For the points and thoughts of this sermon, I am indebted to Stephen Cole and John Stott, *The Epistles of John* [Eerdmans], p. 144).

TRANSITIONAL SENTENCE: Notice the contrast John gives between hatred and love.

I. Hatred is a Mark of A Child of The Devil

ARGUMENT: John is still contrasting a child of God with a child of the devil.

Last week we saw that a child of God practices righteousness but a child of the devil practices sin.

Now John teaches that a child of God practices love but a child of the devil practices hatred.

1. John already talked about the issue of love before now he returns to repeat this theme but he does so in a different way.

ILLUSTRATION: The Way of Negation

When systematic theologians try to teach about the knowledge and character of God they use a term called "via negationis."

Via - means way / negationis - means negation

Which means one way they seek to describe a God who is so great and incomprehensible is to say what He is NOT!

Therefore, they use terms like "infinite" meaning NOT finite.

or immutable - meaning not changing! Humans are mutable because they change, God is immutable because He does not change.

One way of describing someone or something that is difficult to describe is by contrasting it with something else.

The Bible does this.

The Bible not only uses metaphors and illustrations to teach us what God is like but it also tells us what God is not!

In this next cycle of repetition John will use this same method of contrast as a means to clarify the meaning of true Christian love.

One way to understand white is to look at black
We understand light by knowing darkness
We understand up by knowing down
We know what is right by knowing wrong.
We know righteousness by knowing sin

The same is true with love. One way for us to understand love is by telling us what it is NOT.

John will do this as he makes a contrast between love and hatred and the child of God and the child of the devil.

So John contrasts the love that we are to have for one another with Cain's murder of his brother, Abel (3:11-12).

Then, he states (3:13), "Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you."

By *the world*, John means the unbelieving world, which is under Satan's dominion in opposition to God.

But, in particular, John was targeting those who had left the church and were promoting false teaching about the person and work of Christ.

In 2:19, he said, “They went out from us, but they were not really of us....” In the doctrinal section that follows our text, he says that these false prophets have gone out into the world (4:1).

They are the spirit of antichrist, which “is already in the world” (4:3).

“They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them” (4:5).

2. A Definition of Love

When John speaks of *love*, he points us to the supreme example of Jesus laying down His life for us in 3:16.

Thus a helpful definition of biblical love is: *a self-sacrificing, caring commitment that shows itself in seeking the highest good of the one loved.*

Jesus sacrificed Himself because He cared for us and He is committed to seek our highest good, namely, that ultimately we might share His glory.

3. A Definition of Hate

Since hatred is the opposite of love, we may define it as, *a selfish, insensitive attitude that shows itself in disregarding others' good as I seek my own interests.*

The essence of hatred is the self-centered bent of fallen human nature that says, “I’ll help you if it helps me or if it’s not too much of a hassle.

But if it comes down to you or me, I’m looking out for me!”

The world is motivated by self-interest. Self-sacrifice, to the world, is crazy.

4. Some Love You see is a result of God’s Common Grace

ARGUMENT: “But,” you may be thinking, “what about examples of genuine love on the part of unbelievers?”

We often see examples of unbelievers who sacrifice themselves on behalf of others.

We see unbelieving parents who give themselves selflessly on behalf of their children.

We hear of those who donate a kidney so that a family member, or even a perfect stranger, might live.

We hear of soldiers who willingly die to protect their comrades.

Don’t these examples contradict John’s words about the world’s hatred?

I believe that such examples may be explained by the fact of God’s common grace.

Jesus said (Matt. 5:45) that the Father “causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

Love is one of God’s gifts of His common grace that He has not withdrawn completely from unregenerate people.

It should serve as a witness to them, to point them to the source of it, because, as John will point out in 4:7, “love is from God.”

But, the fact that God has not completely withdrawn His grace from this rebellious world does not contradict John’s general truth, that the world is marked by hatred (see Rom. 1:29-31; 2 Tim. 3:1-2).

John says five things about hatred that are in direct contrast with God's love.

A. Hatred is Demonstrated in Cain. 3:12

If you want to know what love is NOT - Just look at Cain.

His life is typified by hatred. Why does John use Cain as an example of what love is not?

He was the first person born on this earth under the curse of sin.

His hatred toward his brother typifies the self-centered, evil bent of the fallen human heart.

Notice: Genesis 4:1-8

This is the story of the first murder in the Bible.

1. A Definite Place of Worship.

v. 3 "Cain brought fruit of ground... Abel brought..." Brought where?

This implies a definite place..."

It is also supported by v. 16 "Cain went out from the presence of the Lord..." God is everywhere.

The idea is that God had a central place of worship that He established. There was an altar God established and a place.

We don't know where this place was located for certain.

There is ground however for believing that it was at the east of the Garden of Eden.

QUOTE: A.W. Pink "... Genesis 3:24 would seem to signify that having expelled man from the garden, God established a mercy-seat protected by the Cherubim...."

So God dwelt at a certain place and He established an altar between He and man and whoever would worship God must come by way of the altar and by way of sacrifice.

2. A Definite Time for Worship

v. 3 - "In the process of time"
process - qates - "at the end of"

time - yom - day plural form. We could translate it "and the end of days." I think means at the end of a week.

God had established a certain day for worship!

C. A Definite Manner of Worship. vv. 3-4

God could be approached and worshipped only by means of sacrifice.

All this implies that the children of Adam and Eve had been definitely instructed that there was a place where God could be found, there was a time in which they could come before Him and a certain manner in which they could approach Him.

Neither Cain nor Abel would have known anything about sacrifices unless someone had taught them.

God taught Adam and Eve and they taught their children.

I believe God taught them what He expected and it was to be a blood sacrifice and it was to be offered on the altar.

ARGUMENT: I have read commentaries that said Cain's offering of vegetables was fine it was his attitude that was wrong and God didn't accept his attitude.

Now the attitude is important to be sure. God looks upon the heart of the worshipper and He wants obedience. That is more desirable than sacrifice.

But the Bible says Cain didn't cop an attitude until God first rejected his offering.

There is a definite contrast between the offerings.

ARGUMENT: It is not that God despises fruit but blood must come first. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.

Had Cain brought a blood sacrifice then said, "God I love you so much I want to offer you a basket of beautiful fruit God would have accepted it. But you can't bypass the blood.

D.G. Barnhouse, "He attempted to have a religion of beauty without the recognition of the holiness and justice of God."

Cain was stubborn and wanted to do things his own way. He resisted God's way.

Cain's offering:

1.) was bloodless - Hebrews 9:22 "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin."

2.) it was the fruit of his own works or labor - it was the works of his own hands.

3.) It was the fruit of the ground - He ignored the divine curse given in Genesis 3:17 "cursed is the ground"

Abel's offering was:

1.) best of his flock -

2.) blood sacrifice - there had to be life taken. The imagery is of someone innocent who had to die for sin. Life had to be taken, blood had to be shed.

3.) It was without Abel's labor of works -

Hebrews 11:4 - "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain."

It didn't say Abel was more excellent but his sacrifice was more excellent.

It wasn't personal, it wasn't that God liked Abel more than Cain, it was that God had prescribed a definite means and manner of sacrifice and expected it to be obeyed!

4. A Definite Acceptance of Worship vv. 4-5

God had respect unto Abel and his offering but not unto Cain.

How did they know God accepted Abel's offering but not Cain's?

God demonstrated that in some definite way!

How? I think it was by fire coming down and consuming the sacrifice.

KJV Leviticus 9:24 And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.

Gideon prepared an offering:

KJV Judges 6:21 Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight.

KJV 1 Kings 18:24 And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.

KJV 1 Kings 18:38 Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

KJV 1 Chronicles 21:26 And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called upon the LORD; and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering.

KJV 2 Chronicles 7:1 Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house.

EXPLANATION: So I think what happens is Abel comes with a lamb best of flock, throat is cut blood is shed.

Fire comes down and consumes the sacrifice because God accepts it. It points to the innocent one who would come to die for sin.

The fire speaks of the wrath of God that would fall upon that innocent one who would shed His blood for the sins of the world.

Cain comes with his offering - I think Cain's offering was very beautiful.

He no doubt takes the choicest fruits and vegetables he could find. His offering no doubt cost him considerable toil and labor!

It took much sweat and work to produce such good fruit and produce! When he brought His offering he was very proud of the produce.

He was very happy with himself at what he had produced and how well the he had done!

He lays his offering on the altar and guess what happened?

Nothing! No fire came and consumed it!

No heavenly approval! There was no visible token of divine approval!

God did not respect Cain's offering!

Despite what God specifically asked regarding offering Cain continued to offer his own sacrifice his own way, which was his own works.

Pride kept him from doing it God's way!

God wanted an animal sacrifice to be an object lesson of His plan of redemption. The lamb pointed to His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ who would take away the sins of the world!

Cain and Abel both knew what God required and Abel obeyed the Word of God and Cain refused. Abel came in obedient faith.

Cain wanted to be accepted by God based on His own works.

This is the beginning of the two religions!

ARGUMENT: There are really only two religions in the whole world, man and God's. Any religion based on man's works is represented here in Cain's offering!

You do not find acceptance based on your own works!

Depraved sinners can do no spiritual works acceptable to God regarding one's salvation and forgiveness of sin!

Pride says do your best, be sincere and your works are good enough!

God says there is only one way to find acceptance it is through the shed blood of the sinless one my Son!

God didn't accept Abel's offering out of arbitrary unfairness.

Nor did he accept it because it was Abel's best effort. Abel was, by nature, just as much a sinner as Cain was.

God accepted it because Abel offered it in faith in response to God's word.

It had nothing to do with Cain's efforts or Abel's efforts.

It had everything to do with God's just requirement for a blood sacrifice to be the only means of approaching Him.

Cain gets angry and refuses to do it God's way. Anger leads to resentment, which leads to more anger.

vv. 5-6 – Cain's countenance fallen and very wroth.

Hebrew – reads "nose burns" idiom for anger.

v. 6 – Cain was scowling. One can see anger in a person's face.

v. 7 - "Sin" is likened to an animal "crouching" or "lurking" (NRSV) at the "door," meaning the animal's resting place, ready to stir if incited.

If you continue to stubbornly resist you are giving place to sin and it will have a devastating effect and destroying effect in your life!

ARGUMENT: If you do not do what is right, you haven't seen anything yet. "Sin is crouching at the door."

And sin is depicted like a beast of prey, like a rapacious lion: "... And its desire is for you, and you must master it."

He says: You've got a choice. You can do what's right -- which means acknowledge your sin, acknowledge your self-righteousness, acknowledge your wretched hypocrisy, acknowledge that you have not been willing to see yourself as a sinner -- and then obey what I told you and bring a proper sacrifice to Me.

And you do that, and your face will be lifted up in joy.

But if you don't do that, "Sin is crouching at the door" like a predatory lion, and it's going to rip and shred you, and you're going to have to spend the rest of your life trying to control it.

Reminds us, doesn't it, of 1st Peter 5:8? Satan goes about "like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour."

You better master your sin or it will master you, it will rule over you. Give sin an inch it will take a mile!

v. 8 - Cain slew his brother.

slew - harag - murder out of hand. With his hand he murdered him.

I think that Cain cut his throat just as he saw Abel when he offered a sacrifice.

The only way they knew death was by sacrifice.

Cain only really knew one way to kill something because before this there had been no death! The idea is this.

God instituted a pattern of sacrifice to bring men to himself, but Cain became the first to pervert it and turn it into murder.

The human race learned to murder when it was taught to worship.

The Greek word used to describe the murder in 1 John 3:12 is "sphazo" a word meaning to slaughter a victim for sacrifice, to slit the throat.

Okay God you want a blood sacrifice here I'll give you one!

THIS IS THE EPITOME OF HATRED! THIS IS HATRED AT IT'S WORST!

Cain typifies the hatred of the fallen human race.

A. Hatred is Demonstrated in Cain

B. Hatred Originates with the Devil

Notice 3:12 - "who was of that wicked one..."

The Greek word translated "wicked one" is poneros. It is stronger than kakos, the usual Greek word for evil.

A man who is kakos is willing to be evil and perish in his own corruption, but the person who is poneros seeks to drag everyone else down with him.

Who is the evil one? Satan.

Cain was a child of Satan. That is made evident because he was a murderer.

John 8:44 says Satan has been a murderer from the beginning.

Hatred finds its source in the devil, whereas love originates with God.

This is not to blame the devil and absolve sinful people of responsibility for their sin.

But, to harbor hatred is to oppose God and put yourself in league with the devil!

Therefore, we need to be quick to judge our own hearts when we see these selfish attitudes rearing their ugly head.

- A. Hatred is Demonstrated in Cain
- B. Hatred Originates with the Devil

C. Hatred Divides People and May Result in the Taking of Life

Notice 3:15, 17

Hatred at it's best is indifference - you just don't care about others.

v. 17 - You see someone who has a need and you do nothing about it. You have no compassion.

You avoid others with a need and it ultimately causes separation and division.

Hatred at it's worst results in murder, the taking of a life.

Just as we saw in Cain murdering Abel.

ARGUMENT: You might be thinking, "I have never murdered anyone."

"Yes, but remember what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount. To be angry and hate someone in your heart is the same as murder" (1 John 3:15; cf. Matt. 5:22).

The only difference between Level 1 and Level 2 is the outward act of taking life. The inward intent is the same.

ILLUSTRATION: A visitor at the zoo was chatting with the keeper of the lion house.

"I have a cat at home," said the visitor, "and your lions act just like my cat. Look at them sleeping so peacefully! It seems a shame that you have to put those beautiful creatures behind bars."

"My friend," the keeper laughed, "these may *look* like your cat, but their disposition is radically different. There's murder in their hearts. You'd better be glad the bars are there."

The only reason some people have never actually murdered anyone is because of the "bars" that have been put up: the fear of arrest and shame, the penalties of the law, and the possibility of death.

But we are going to be judged by “the law of liberty” (James 2:12).

The question is not so much, “What did you *do*?” but “What did you *want* to do?”

What would you have done if you had been at liberty to do as you pleased?”

This is why Jesus equates hatred with murder (Matt. 5:21–26) and lust with adultery (Matt. 5:27–30). [Warren W. Wiersbe, [*The Bible Exposition Commentary*](#), vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 510–511.]

- A. Hatred is Demonstrated in Cain
- B. Hatred Originates with the Devil
- C. Hatred Divides People and May Result in the Taking of Life

D. Hatred is Motivated by Personal Sin

Notice 3:12 - John asks why did he murder him?

Was it because Abel was some kind of scoundrel doing evil?
NO!

It was because Cain's works were evil. Greek word, "poneros" same word for the "wicked one" in verse 12.

The root of Cain's slaughter of his brother was that Cain was in rebellion against God.

So, while hatred may be directed at other people, the hateful person is at odds with God.

He needs to confront his own sinful heart.

E. Hatred is the Evidence of Spiritual Death.

Notice 3:14-15

A person whose life is marked by selfish hatred of others shows no evidence of new life in Christ.

That is what John means in verses 14 & 15.

He is not saying that no murderer may be saved.

Paul was a murderer before he was saved, and both David and Moses murdered men after they were saved.

EXPLANATION: Just like in 3:9, here John uses present tense verbs that point to the overall direction of a person's life.

A person whose life is marked by a pattern of selfishness, envy, jealousy, strife, and hatred gives evidence that he remains in spiritual death.

APPLICATION: While John's words are evidence of a person's salvation, they are also an exhortation to those that profess to believe in Christ.

As believers, we have to battle the hatred that stems from our own selfishness.

Spiritual growth does not happen without our constant effort.

Whenever the deeds of the flesh rear their ugly heads, we must put them to death and replace them with the fruit of the Spirit (Rom. 8:13; Gal. 5:19-23).

I. Hatred is a Mark of A Child of The Devil

But notice the contrast:

II. Love is a Mark of A Child of God

John draws a sharp point for point contrast between the hatred that marks the child of the devil and love that marks the child of God.

Whereas Hatred is Demonstrated in Cain

A. Love is Demonstrated in Christ

Notice 3:16

perceive - comes from a Greek word "ginosko" which means "to know experientially."

It literally reads, "By this we have experientially come to know love, that That One laid down His life for us."

ILLUSTRATION: A 10 yr old boy was failing math - parents did everything - hired tutors - finally last option send him to Catholic school.

Right on the first day of school he began to spend every night pouring over his books. When the 1st report card came back, he had an A for math.

So, the parents were curious "what made the difference." they asked. "The nuns, textbooks?"

"Well, I never took math seriously but the 1st day I walked into math class I saw this guy nailed to a plus sign. I knew then they meant business."

Jesus meant business when he showed us what love is.

The cross is the supreme demonstration of what real love—God's love—is.

There is hardly a passage in the New Testament that speaks of God's love that does not also speak of the cross.

The most familiar is another 3:16, John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Romans 5:8 (KJV 1900) — 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

If you want to know what God's love is like, look at Jesus, the Righteous One, who willingly sacrificed Himself on behalf of the ungodly.

Whereas Hatred is Demonstrated in Cain

A. Love is Demonstrated in Christ

Whereas Hatred Originates With The Devil

B. Love Originates With God.

Love in the believer comes from God.

John implies this in our text. He will come right out and say it in 1 John 4:7.

In 3:10b, John said that the one who does not love is not of God, implying that the one who loves is of God.

In 3:17, he says that if we do not demonstrate practical love for those in need, the love of God does not abide in us.

If you lack love for someone, first make sure that you are born of God. Then, ask Him for it.

Whereas hatred divides people and may result in murder, ...

C. Love unites people and results in laying down our lives for others.

Notice 3:16-17

Jesus showed His love by laying down His life for us.
Therefore, “we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

That is a hard saying!

Be honest—would you lay down your life for the people in this room?

You can easily sit here and say, “Yes, I’d die for my fellow Christians.”

But, the urge to save your own skin is pretty strong. Who can *truly* say in advance, “I’d die for my brothers?”

Laying down your life for others doesn't necessarily mean to take a bullet for someone or to give your life in one act.

That is certainly part of it.

But more practically it means to daily commit yourself to do sacrificial acts of service on the behalf of someone else.

He brings it down to everyday living in 3:17.

“But whoever has the world’s goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?”

Ouch!

It's easy to say that you would lay down your life for the brethren.

But if you aren't doing it inch by inch, in the little details of setting aside your selfishness to serve others, beginning at home (Eph. 5:25), it's empty talk to say, "I'd die for my brothers in Christ!"

Self-sacrifice is *never* convenient. It's always more of a hassle to meet someone's needs than to ignore him.

But, John's point is the same as Jesus' point in the parable of the Good Samaritan: We must not ignore others' needs, but rather, sacrifice our time, energy, and money to help them out.

Whereas Hatred is Demonstrated in Cain

A. Love is Demonstrated in Christ

Whereas Hatred Originates With The Devil

B. Love Originates With God.

Whereas hatred divides people and may result in murder, ...

C. Love unites people and results in laying down our lives for others.

Whereas hatred is motivated by personal sin, ...

D. Love is motivated by God's love in Christ.

That's the point of verse 16.

If God's love as shown on the cross abides in your heart, it will flow through you to others.

If you're running short on love, stop and meditate on what Jesus did for you.

If you have any understanding of God's love for you, it will motivate you to love others.

Or, as John states it in 4:11, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."

Whereas hatred is the evidence of spiritual death.

E. Love is the evidence of spiritual life.

Notice 3:14

John goes back to giving the test of true salvation.

A sure way to know that you are a Christian and have passed from death unto life is love for the brethren.

Love – is a present tense – continuous habitual love.

You can know you have passed from death to life if you have a continuous and habitual love for Christians.

Love is the surest test of divine life. Where there is no love, there is spiritual death.

Examine your heart.

Do you love other Christians?

Do you seek the fellowship of Christians?

If you do, you have passed from death to life. If you do not, you're still dead.

If you say that you know Christ, but continue to live for yourself, if you're unwilling to be inconvenienced or sacrifice yourself and your possessions to meet the needs of others, you need to examine whether or not you've truly passed out of death into life.

If you have tasted God's love in Christ at the cross, the new direction of your life will be to grow in love for others.

CONCLUSION:

I. Hatred is a Mark of A Child of The Devil

But in contrast

II. Love is a Mark of A Child of God

Whereas Hatred is Demonstrated in Cain

A. Love is Demonstrated in Christ

Whereas Hatred Originates With The Devil

B. Love Originates With God.

Whereas hatred divides people and may result in murder, ...

C. Love unites people and results in laying down our lives for others.

Whereas hatred is motivated by personal sin, ...

D. Love is motivated by God's love in Christ.

Whereas hatred is the evidence of spiritual death.

E. Love is the evidence of spiritual life.

In verse 11, John says, "This is the message which you have heard from the beginning."

He means, from the beginning of your Christian life you were taught to love one another.

It's a basic truth that you should start to learn and practice from the first day of your Christian experience.

God's love flowing through us to one another should so mark the church that it draws a sharp contrast between us and the world.

ILLUSTRATION: Ray Stedman (*Expository Studies in 1 John* [Word], pp. 264-265) tells the story of a Jewish man named Art, who was raised as an atheist. Early in life, he became a committed Marxist.

At the close of World War II, he was in Germany with the American army and saw the gas chambers at the concentration camps.

It filled him with hatred, first toward the Germans and then, as he realized that this went deeper than nationality, at the whole human race.

He came back to Berkeley and gave himself to education, but he came to see that it was not the answer. Education could not change hearts.

Finally, he resigned his position. His wife lost her mind and was put in a mental institution.

Divorced, and without ties, he went out to wander. One rainy day in Greece, grubby and dirty, he was hitchhiking.

No one wanted to pick up a seedy looking character like him. He had stood in the rain for hours when a Cadillac stopped.

To Art's amazement, the driver did not just gesture for him to get in.

He got out of the car, came around and began to pump his hand and welcome him warmly.

He took Art's dirty rucksack and threw it on the clean upholstery.

Then he drove Art to a hotel, rented him a room, and gave him some food.

Finally, he asked Art what he was doing and where he was going.

All the pent-up heartache, misery, and resentment of a lifetime came pouring out of this young Jewish atheist, while the man sat and listened.

When Art was through, the man said, "You know what this world needs?

Those who are willing to wash one another's feet."

Art said, "I never heard anything so beautiful. Why do you say that?"

The man said, "Because that's what my Lord did."

For the first time in his life, this young atheist heard a clear presentation of the gospel.

He became a Christian and went on to devote his life to serving the Lord.

That unnamed man, quietly going about *being* a Christian, demonstrated what John says to us (3:18),

“Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.”