

The Depth, Color and Form of Love (1 John 3:11-24)

Because of my art major, my eye was trained to see things I previously overlooked. The depth, color and form of an object came alive to me. The Apostle John sets love and hate in bold contrast – it's his way of bringing to life the message of love. By describing what love isn't, contrasting that with what love is and making sure we know what love produces, John brings out the depth, color and form of the love we're called to walk in.

1. What love isn't (1 John 3:11-15)

The message about Jesus (the gospel) is about God's love for humanity.

John uses the ancient story about Cain to illustrate what love isn't. Genesis 4:3-10; Hebrews 11:4

Your sincere devotion to the Lord will irritate and instigate others in a way that will lead them to all kinds of hateful action against you. John 15:18-20; 16:33

V15 He's not exaggerating! Hate is the ROOT of murder. Matthew 5:21-26

2. What love is (1 John 3:16-18)

Jesus is *the* model / example of love. Romans 5:6-10

We're to lay down our lives in practical ways = for our neighbor, family member, coworker and friend BUT start right here w/ your brother and sister in Christ.

We're not just to admire his love from a distance; we're to follow his example.

VV17-18 Are you willing to surrender whatever has value in your own life?

CS Lewis: "*Loving everybody in general may be an excuse for loving nobody in particular.*" James 2:15

3. What love produces (1 John 3:19-24)

How do you battle doubt? Where do you go when your "heart condemns" you?

Look at God's powerful work in our life (what his love has produced) – he's greater!

AND look to God's verdict over our life (what his love has produced) – he's greater!

God knows more about us than we know about ourselves. Romans 8:31-39

V22 Love produces confidence in God's provision (prayer). Hebrews 10:11-25

V24 Love produces confidence in God's presence.

QUESTIONS (Pray, read the passage and pick 4-5 questions to discuss. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide.)

1. Read 1 John 3:11-24. John uses the story of Cain to illustrate what love isn't. Cain's hatred took the form of jealousy and eventually produced murder. The people John was writing to were probably not in the habit of physically murdering others – and I imagine you aren't either. So what is the extremely forceful point John is making?
2. Cain's hatred took the form of jealousy. What are other ways hatred can be shown?
3. By now we're seeing that love is not an optional add-on to the gospel but it's the very center. How does John define what love is? 1 John 3:16-18; Romans 5:6-10
4. John says the opposite of love and hatred is showing love by saving the life of another. According to John what is a very practical way you can lay down your life for a brother and sister in Christ?
5. In 1 John 3:18 John basically says, "*don't love in word but with action and in truth*". Think about a time someone loved you with a self-giving sacrificial love. What kind of impact did it have?
6. John knows every follower of Jesus will struggle with doubts and feelings like they don't belong or haven't done enough. He says, "*whenever our heart condemns, God is greater than our hearts.*" What does he mean and how are we to find comfort and assurance in that? Why is it absolutely critical we know what to do with our doubt and feelings of condemnation?
7. Read 1 John 3:19-24. What is the connection between assurance and forgiveness? If the love of God produces confidence in prayer *and* confidence in God's presence, what then should we be continually fixing our thoughts on?

If you are a follower of Jesus, give thanks for the Spirit abiding in you. Since you can approach God boldly and with complete confidence, what would you ask him to do for you and others?