

## Discussion Questions: Love Practically (in Action) 1 John 3:11-24

Drawn from the October 1, 2023 sermon by Dr. Jeff Chandler

Opener: Think back to a time when someone's practical acts of love made a significant impact on your life or faith. What was the situation, and how did their actions demonstrate love to you? How did this experience shape your understanding of love in action?

### I. A Demonstration to the World

*For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.*

1 John 3:11

1. Why do you think love is such a defining mark of the true disciple of Jesus? What does the presence or absence of love communicate about our faith?
2. In what ways did the early church's love for one another set them apart from the surrounding culture? How can love lived out in Sequim have a similar transformative effect?

### II. A Demonstration to the Church

*This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.* 1 John 3:16-18

3. Why do you think laying down our lives is linked with Christ's death as well as giving and compassion?

4. Have you ever experienced this kind of sacrificial love personally, where you saw truth demonstrated by action?

*This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. 1 John 3:19-22*

5. Often people are afraid that they don't love others as they should? How do these verses help us to get God's perspective?

6. How is answered prayer connected to doing what pleases God?

### **III. Demonstration to the Lord**

*And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.*  
1 John 3:23-24

7. How does our love for one another relate to our belief in Jesus Christ? Why is this command so central to our faith?
8. Discuss how knowing Jesus, the author and perfecter of love, influences the way we love others. How does the indwelling of the Holy Spirit enable us to live out this love commandment?

9. This passage gives several ways to know we are in fellowship with Jesus. When you read these verses does it inspire confidence or do you feel a lack somewhere? How should we balance feeling confident with humility about our failings?

**Group Prayer Time:** This section provides an excellent description of what love in action looks like. John does not want us to miss out on the truth that love requires sacrifice. Pray for one another that you would continue to be open to God's leading in this area. Also pray for any needs people are facing in the group.

**For Personal Reflection on your own:**

Do you have any bitterness or jealousy toward another Christian that is weighing you down right now?

How would you like to consciously practice truth in your actions this week?

**We will not be covering the verses of 1 John 3:1-10, 12-15 in this series. You may want to read it and work through the following questions this week.**

**Read 1 John 3:1-10**

A. What does it mean to see yourself as a child of God?

B. Verse 3:2-3 tells us who we are and who we are becoming. How might these realities motivate our choices and behavior?

- C. In verse 7 John says “don’t let anyone deceive you.” What is John referring to? Why do you think people get confused about this point –especially given our tendency to emphasize God’s love and grace?

**Read 1 John 3:12-15**

Cain is an example of hatred which led all the way to murder (see Genesis chapter 4). That hatred took the form of jealousy. Cain brought a mediocre offering to God, while his brother Abel brought an offering of the very best. God was pleased with Abel, which led to Cain becoming angry. Despite further warning, Cain killed his brother.

- D. The people to whom John is writing are probably not in the habit of murdering others. What is the point John is making so forcefully here?

- E. Have you ever experienced the hatred of the world? If so, in what form, and why do you think it happened?

- F. Why is love for fellow Christians so basic to our assurance of eternal life?

**Coming up:**

**October 8: Love is the Theme (1 John 4:7-16)**

**October 15: Love to Change the World (1 John 5)**