

## 1 John 3:14-16 | Sunday February 15, 2026

Usually we continue teaching verse by verse regardless of the holiday, with only a few exceptions. There are times that the passage and the holiday do not seem to fit well together. Then there are times, like today, when we are studying love the day after Valentine's Day. Instead of chocolate and candy hearts, John will be drawing us to the ultimate expression of love ever shown, Jesus' life and death on the cross. As believers, we are called to abide in Jesus. Our abiding relationship will be shown through the love it produces in us for His body, other believers. This is a love that is not mere emotions or sentiment but is practical and tangible. This is a love that only God can produce, and it is willing to sacrifice self because it flows from abiding in Jesus and His self-sacrifice.

### 1 John 3:10-18 ESV

(10) By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, **nor is the one who does not love his brother.**

(11) For this is the message that you have heard **from the beginning, that we should love one another.**

(12) We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous.

(13) Do not be surprised, brothers, **that the world hates you.**

(14) We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death.

(15) Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

(16) By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

(17) But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?

(18) Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

Last week we saw the need as believers to let our true nature show through. We are children of God, and that is to reflect in our lives. It should be seen in a holy obedience, as we look to Jesus. **Being God's child should also be reflected in the love we have for other believers.** Cain is held up as a negative example. He had a hatred for Abel and murdered him. This hatred stemmed from a self-focused jealousy of why Abel was accepted by God and he was not. Abel trusted in the blood and had faith that God would accept his offering **because of a future redeemer who was to come.** Cain refused to accept this and hated Abel for it. Often our command as believers to love each other is given within the context of the world hating us.

### John 15:17-18 ESV

(17) These things I command you, **so that you will love one another.**

(18) **"If the world hates you,** know that it has hated Me before it hated you.

We saw in our study of the Gospel of John how Jesus spent precious time at the Last Supper encouraging His disciples to love each other. The need for love within the body of Christ is so important because of the hatred and persecution believers will find in the world. The world will consistently hate Jesus and His grace that is offered through His sacrifice. This is why Cain hated Abel and also why Ishmael hated and persecuted Isaac.

### Galatians 4:28-29 ESV

(28) Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.

(29) But just as at that time **he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now.**

Ishmael was born out of the power of the flesh. He represented trying to accomplish God's will through our own power. The details of the story are different, but **it is the same heart as Cain** and his offering. **Humanity making an effort to be acceptable to God and accomplish God's will out of our own strength.** Our sin nature hates God's promise that can only be accomplished through the Spirit. Paul's point is simple: this hatred existed all the way back with Ishmael and Isaac and still continues today. This is why our need to love each other in the body of Christ is so important. **This natural desire to hate God's work and His grace is also why true biblical love is so unnatural to us.**

### 1 John 3:14 ESV

(14) **We know** that we have **passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers.** Whoever does not love abides in death.

Love is to be a major attribute of being in the family of God. Some people can be recognized as being part of a family because of a certain hair color, height, or overall look. **The attribute that should identify someone as being part of the body of Christ is their love for other believers.** Love is not the basis of why we are saved, but it is to be an ongoing result of our salvation. Love shows the amazing truth that as a believer we have gone from spiritually dead to spiritually alive. This transfer from death to life happened when we believed in Jesus for salvation.

### John 5:24 NASB

(24) "Truly, truly, I say to you, the one who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, **has eternal life,** and does not come into judgment, **but has passed out of death into life.**

The moment someone believes in Jesus to save them, they become spiritually alive. It is a tremendous moment, and yet absolutely **nothing changes immediately on the outside. Yet, everything changed on the spiritual side instantly.** God is clear in the gospel of John that the only way to go from death to life is through believing in Jesus. Then God is equally clear in John's letter that we can see that change through the love that He starts to produce in us. **True biblical love can only be accomplished through the work of God.** Biblical love does not come from the world or the sin nature. We can know that we have been made spiritually alive because of the love that God produces in us. Meaning when we see ourselves start to love other believers and care for them and their spiritual growth, we can know God is working in us and we have life in Him. His love in us is supposed to show how we are different.

### John 13:34-35 ESV

(34) A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: **just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.**

(35) **By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."**

I am always convicted about what we and all people are to be able to know through our love for each other. Personally, we are to know that we have new life because of a love that is not from us.

Then others are to know who believers are by the love we show to each other. **God's love reflected in us is supposed to be His stamp of ownership on us.** None of us show this love perfectly, and this is why John is encouraging us to abide in Jesus and to continue to show it.

#### 1 John 3:14 ESV

(14) We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers.

**Whoever does not love abides in death.**

Love is an expression of the life that we have, so when we do not love, we are abiding in the death that is found in sin. **The joy and love of our new life evaporates as we walk in sin.** This whole section has been consistent. Sin takes us out of fellowship with Jesus and brings us back into fellowship with death and the destruction of sin. The Corinthian church is an example of this.

#### 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 NAS95

(1) And I, brethren, **could not speak to you as to spiritual men**, but **as to men of flesh**, as to infants in Christ.

(2) I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, (3) for you are **still fleshly**. For since there is **jealousy and strife** among you, **are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?**

Paul started his letter to the Corinthian church by reminding these believers that they were “**sanctified in Christ Jesus**” and “**called to be saints together**” (1 Cor 1:2). Unfortunately, they were not acting like the spiritual children of God who they truly were. **Their jealousy and infighting were showing that they were abiding in the flesh, abiding in death.** They were acting like mere men and women and not as spiritual children of God. Each person in the Corinthian church had the opportunity to abide in Jesus individually. Then, if each believer would do that, they could corporately walk in the life and love He provides. God would produce a tremendous unity. Yet instead, they were destroying each other and not representing to themselves and to the world who they truly were. **Abiding in Jesus produces love, and abiding in our sin nature produces hatred and death.**

#### 1 John 3:15 ESV

(15) **Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer**, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

In true John fashion, love is compared to its exact opposite - hate. Then John carries it one step farther to connect hatred with murder. **Love is life-giving, and hatred is life-taking.** As extreme as this might feel, he is only repeating what Jesus taught.

#### Matthew 5:21-22 NLT

(21) “You have heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must **not murder**. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.’

(22) But I say, **if you are even angry with someone**, you are subject to judgment! **If you call someone an idiot**, you are in danger of being brought before the court. **And if you curse someone**, you are in danger of the fires of hell.

Jesus is elevating the law and teaching that we will be judged based on our hearts, not simply on our external actions. It is fairly easy not to murder someone, but it is another thing entirely not to sin against them in our head by calling them an idiot; **the word literally means empty-headed.** Jesus is pointing out mental attitude sins against people and how they reflect a lack of love. When

we walk this way, we are not abiding in eternal life.

We cannot stop reading verse 15, a few words short. It does not stop with the phrase “**no murderer has eternal life**” but continues on to say “**abiding in him.**” As a believer, we can stop abiding, and **hatred will take us out of the life Jesus desires for us.** King David is an example of this.

### **2 Samuel 11:14-15 ESV**

(14) In the morning **David wrote a letter** to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah.

(15) In the letter he wrote, “Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, **that he may be struck down, and die.**”

**David is not abiding**, but walking in His flesh as He sinned with Bathsheba. He then went to great lengths to cover it up. He tried multiple times to manipulate Uriah to go home and be intimate with Bathsheba, yet Uriah was an honorable, loyal soldier and refused. So David decides to have Uriah murdered to cover up the P.R. nightmare that Bathsheba’s pregnancy would be. **These are not actions of a man abiding in eternal life.** These are the actions of a believer who was refusing to walk in the Spirit. David is reaping the death and destruction that sin brings. God convicted David, and he was broken over what he had done.

### **Psalms 51:10-14 ESV**

(10) Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

(11) Cast me not away from Your presence, and **take not Your Holy Spirit from me.**

(12) **Restore to me the joy of Your salvation**, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

(13) Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners will return to You.

(14) **Deliver me from bloodguiltiness**, O God, O God of my salvation, and **my tongue will sing aloud of Your righteousness.**

David was a murderer and was saved. He had not been walking in the abundant life that Jesus desired for him. With a broken heart, David is pleading for God to restore His joy, to restore their relationship. He wants to abide and walk in that life again. He wants to be delivered from the guilt of shed blood on his hands. He is trusting in God’s righteousness. Unfortunately, **there are not any sins that are out of reach for a believer.** If we walk in them, **we will be abiding in death** and **will not have eternal life abiding in us.** David knew firsthand how costly this is. As believers, our sin is so damaging. We do not lose our salvation, but we lose fellowship with the life Jesus died for us to experience. Jesus is our example of love that we are to reflect.

### **1 John 3:16 ESV**

(16) By this **we know love**, that **He laid down his life** for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

We can define and know what true love is by looking to Jesus. He was willing to lay down His **psyche, or what we usually translate as soul**, for us. This involves His death on the cross but is much broader than that. He laid down His whole life. This involves His perfect obedience and active humility to take on flesh. There was a real moment in the throne room of God when God the Son stepped off His throne, and then the next thing the angels knew, He was inside of Mary’s womb. Then He was born as a baby and started growing and maturing. He lived in a daily patient obedience as He walked streets of dirt. **He laid down His entire life for us.** This was not forced on Him, but He willingly gave it.

### **John 10:11; 17-18 ESV**

(11) I am the good shepherd. **The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.**

(17) For this reason the Father loves me, **because I lay down my life** that I may take it up again.

(18) **No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.** I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from My Father.”

We are the helpless sheep who needed our shepherd to lay down His life to save ours. **This incredible act of love even deepened the love God the Father had for God the Son.** That should make us marvel at how incredible it truly was. He was called to this role by God the Father, but He had to be willing. He had to lay His life down. Please notice that it is personal. **He laid it down for us.** It is the greatest act of love we will know, and it teaches us what love truly is. Listen to Paul’s definition of love in 1 Corinthians 13 and think about how Jesus exemplifies each part of this love.

### 1 Corinthians 13:2-7 NLT

(2) If I had the gift of prophecy, and **if I understood all of God’s secret plans and possessed all knowledge**, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, **but didn’t love others, I would be nothing.**

(3) **If I gave everything** I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; **but if I didn’t love others, I would have gained nothing.**

(4) Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud

(5) or rude. **It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged.**

(6) It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out.

(7) Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

We could understand God’s secret plans and even know the details of what the tribulation would be like and be filled with all knowledge, but without love we would gain nothing. **As much as we aim to know Christ through His Word, I so hope we never lose sight of how meaningless it all will be if we do not have love!** Jesus was patient and kind; He was not jealous or proud. Jesus did not demand His own way. He did not demand another option instead of the cross. So, when we reflect His love, we are to reflect this humility and kindness. Jesus did not keep a record of wrong but was giving the payment so we can be forgiven. As we are called to love, we are to show this same forgiveness. **We are not to calculate and keep record of each other’s wrongs.** As He laid down His life for us, we are to love each other and lay down our lives for one another. Next week we will see how immensely practical and tangible this love is to be.