1 John 3:16-18 | Sunday March 1, 2026

As we study through First John God’s desire for believers to abide in Him becomes abundantly clear. He wants us to walk in fellowship with Him in the light and to be honest about what breaks our fellowship with Him. Sin brings us back to the darkness and takes us out of fellowship with God. Yet, He desires a close real relationship with us and is willing to keep restoring us to this relationship as we confess our sin and walk in the light with Him. Through Jesus’ blood God has made all believers His children. God wants us to know what this abiding walk as His child should look like in our life.

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.

Being a child of God should be shown in our life by the love that God produces in us. **Love is to be a family trait** of being God’s child. God taught us what true love is through Jesus. He was willing to lay down His psyche, or soul, for us. The bread that we remember during the Lord’s Supper points to His life laid down for us. Jesus fully gave of His entire life and showed us true love. The command to love is a message that has been given from the beginning **and it is an eternal command that will never fade.**

1 Corinthians 13:8-13 ESV

> (8) **Love never ends**. **As for prophecies, they will pass away;** as for tongues, they will cease; **as for knowledge, it will pass away.**
> (9) For we know in part and we prophesy in part,
> (10) but when the perfect comes, **the partial will pass away.**
> (11) When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.
> (12) For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; **then I shall know fully**, even as I have been fully known.
> (13) So now **faith, hope, and love abide**, these three; **but the greatest of these is love.**

Love will never end, it is eternal and we will practice love in heaven. Prophecy and knowledge will pass way. This does not mean we will stop learning but it will look entirely different. As the church was being formed and the Word of God was being written the gifts of prophecy and knowledge looked different then they do today. Likewise these gift will look different in heaven because we will be in God's presence. Yet faith, hope and love will continue to abide in heaven. Then love is singled out as the greatest. I wonder how many of us would agree with this in principal but the real conviction comes when asked if it is reflected in our lives. Meaning, **do our lives show that love is the greatest?**

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 are **indebted, and under obligation** to lay down our souls for our fellow brother and sisters in Christ. **To truly love we are to lay down self**. To value and care for others instead of focusing on ourselves. This can be easy to claim.

John 13:36-38 ESV

> (36) Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but **you will follow afterward."**
> (37) Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You now? **I will lay down my life for You."**
> (38) Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow **till you have denied Me three times.**

Peter is confident that He will lay down His life for Jesus. He even makes an attempt at this in the garden by wildly swinging a sword. Jesus knew that **Peter did not understand the consistent giving of yourself that was required to truly lay down owns life**. Through an ongoing walk Peter will learn what it is to lay down one's life, and ultimately, He was martyred. **The ongoing denial of self is where true love is shown.** Sometimes it can be easier to claim we will die for someone, purely hypothetical of course, instead of denying self and loving them tangibly. We know this from the petty disputes and judgments that come in between us as believers. We are not different then the people in scripture. Paul spent a lot of time explaining to the Romans how to love each other by what they ate.

Romans 14:13; 15; 19-20; 15:2-3 ESV

> (13) Therefore let us not **pass judgment** on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance **in the way of a brother.**
>
> (15) For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, **you are no longer walking in love**. **By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died.**
>
> (19) So then let us pursue what makes for peace and **for mutual upbuilding.**
> (20) **Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God**. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats.
>
> (2) Let each of us please his neighbor **for his good, to build him up**.
> (3) **For Christ did not please Himself**, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on Me."

We can become so petty as believers that we are more focused on the food we eat, then on loving our fellow believer**. Paul is not talking about a clear sin issue. He is teaching on a conscience issue.** An issue where we are to grow and mature in truth, yet we tend to judge each other and not give each other the room to grow. The Romans were tearing each other down, **literally causing ruin and destruction in how they treated each other**. This is not walking in love as a believer. We are called to build each other up which literally means to construct. **As believers have we been focused on helping construct the walk of other believers around us, or are we tearing them down?** Jesus is our great example. He did not pursue His own pleasure but was willing to build others up. This kind of love is not theoretically, or just a slogan but needs to be very tangible.

1 John 3:16-17 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.**
> (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?**

John’s audience was about to experience real persecution. Under the Roman empire to refuse to worship the Ceaser was viewed as treason. **These believers needed to love each other considering the persecutions that lied ahead.** Notice that **brother in verse 17 is singular not plural**. Meaning we care called to lay down our life for fellow believers, yet we are to respond in love when we see a specific brother in need. Verse 17 makes love tangible and practical. **We can be tempted to love everyone in general and use it as an excuse not to love anyone in particular.**

There is a word play between verse 16 and 17. In verse 16 we are called to lay down **our life, which is psyche/soul.** Then in verse 17 we are told to care for our brother with the **bios or the worlds life** (material goods and resources).

This love is tangible. When we see out brother or sister in Christ in need and have the resources of life to help we are called to be compassionate to them. **The first step is to see our brother in need.** This word see means **to observe something with sustained attention.** This is not a casual glance but is being apart of someone’s life close enough to see what the need truly is. This is only possible if we are involved and connected into each other’s life in the body of Christ. This is why being a part of the body is so much more then just going to church. **We are called to be close enough together to know how to care for each other’s needs.** We need to let the body be the body and let each other in so we can care for one another. This requires a vulnerability because we are so prone to hurt each other.

Then when we see the true needs we are not to close our heart, which literally means **to shut, or lock up our gut, sympathy, or affections.** The uncompassionate believer is not abiding and is not reflecting God’s love. **To be uncompassionate as a believer means you are shutting up and blocking God’s love that He is trying to produce in you to care for that person as He does.** An Abiding walk with Jesus is to be shown through the love He produces in us.

James 2:14-18 NAS95

> (14) **What use is it**, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? **Can that faith save him?**
> (15) **If a brother or sister** is without clothing and in need of daily food,

(16) and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, **what use is that?**
(17) Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.
(18) But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and **I will show you my faith by my works."**

James is so practical, **He is talking about the earthly good of our faith**. What good is it if we claim to have faith and pronounce blessings over our brother and sister in Christ if we are not willing to tangibly care for them? **James is literally asking how can that blessing, fill their stomach?** He is not commenting on what is necessary for salvation. Later in His letter He makes this clear (James 5:20). Our faith is to draw us to an abiding walk with Jesus that can be seen. The closer we are to Jesus the more His love should be seen in our lives. Moses is a great example of this.

Exodus 34:29 ESV

(29) When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, **Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God**.

Moses had spent time on the mountain drawing close to God. His face was glowing with God's glory and He did not even know it. This is what love should be in a believers life. **When we draw close to Jesus, we will radiate His tangible self-sacrificial love.** If we stop abiding, we will stop showing His love. As sin increases in the world this will continually become a greater danger.

Matthew 24:6-8; 12 ESV

(6) And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, **but the end is not yet.**
(7) **For nation will rise against nation**, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places.
(8) All these **are but the beginning of the birth pains.**

(12) **And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.**

As the end draws near the world will get increasingly tumultuous. The birth pains will come quicker and be more intense. **Yet Jesus' caution is so important to us**. As the world heads into more sin and lawlessness, we will have a natural tendency to stop loving. We will be prone to close our hearts, and not reflect His compassion. **As we watch the news, and see the lawlessness all around us, we will be tempted for our love to grow cold.** We can become callused. To guard against this hardening we are called to abide. We are to look to Jesus and draw near to Him. **His love is real, tangible and based on truth.**

1 John 3:18 ESV

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

We can give lip service to love but it is our actions that show it. How many professions of love were given by husbands on valentines day, and now by the end of the month is it being shown by doing the dishes, picking the kids up from school, or cooking dinner? **Jesus did not love us in word only, but was willing to take on human flesh and daily lay down His life for us**. This Godly love is very different then what the world practices, because **Godly love is rooted in truth.** Sometimes the most loving and compassionate thing is to say no, or not to help in the way the

person is asking for help. There can be a lot of false ideas of what would be loving. We can see this when Mary anointed Jesus with very expensive perfume.

John 12:4-6 ESV

> (4) But **Judas Iscariot**, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said,
> (5) "**Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?"**
> (6) He said this, **not because he cared about the poor,** but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it.

Judas acted piously, and pretended He was truly trying to help the poor but it was all fake. We are called to love with actions that use a Godly wisdom and discernment in how to show it. This kind of love can be very hard to practice at times but is absolutely what we are called to. **Judas was pretending to love with actions but it was not based on truth**. Godly love does not undue God's holy standard. His truth should guide us in how we are to truly show biblical love.

Galatians 5:13-16 ESV

> (13) For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, **but through love serve one another.**
> (14) **For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."**
> (15) But if you **bite and devour one another**, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.
> (16) But I say, **walk by the Spirit**, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

The law is fulfilled in true biblical love. **This is a love that is not accepting of sin, and even requires a payment for it.** It is a love that was willing to give the ultimate payment so that our sin could be dealt with. We will only know how to walk in this love as we abide and walk in the Spirit. If we walk in the flesh, we will bite and devour each other.

Most of the passages we have looked at today have specifically been talking about our love we are to have for other **believers**. This does not negate **the love we are to have for our neighbor**. Jesus famously answered this question of who is our neighbor.

Luke 10:36-37 ESV

> (36) Which of these three, do you think, **proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?"**
> (37) He said, "**The one who showed him mercy**." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

The Samaritan, not the priest of Levite, was willing to take time and see the real needs of the man and care for Him. It was the Samaritan who was his neighbor. Meaning **our neighbor is anyone who God brings into our path for us to show His love**. Biblical love is not natural to us, and will stand out to the world. It will cross barriers, and also hold lines of truth that the world does not care about.

Galatians 6:10 ESV

> (10) So then, as we have opportunity, **let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.**
