

Daily Bible Study

“An Indispensable Mark of Genuine Christianity”

1 John 3:11-18

September 15–19, 2025

MONDAY – 1 John 3:11-18, *“For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother’s righteous. Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.”* The Bible scholar B. F. Westcott said, “Life reveals the children of God.” We understand how we live, act and react to “life” has much to say concerning our hearts condition. John has given us so much already in his letter which helps us evaluate our spiritual condition before God and here he continues with what might be arguably the strongest test of whether a person is a true child of God; do we love. Spurgeon said quite concisely, “Love is the essential mark of the true child of God. “God is Love”; therefore, he who is born of God, must love. Hatred, envy, malice, lack of charity—these are not the things to be found in the children of God. If they are found in you, you are not one of His children”. John has shown us how true Christians live (practice righteousness-vs. 10), now he shows us how true Christians love. Let us put ourselves to the test this week beloved by examining our love life.

(Meditate, Apply & Pray) Do I love like God does? How specifically do I, or don’t I? Ask God to help you see this week where you need to repent & change.

TUESDAY – 1 John 3:11-12: *“For this is the message that you heard from the*

beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother’s righteous.” John begins by reminding us that this is something we have heard before. Since we first heard the gospel message of God’s love for us, we have understood that Christianity commands us to love one another. It is fundamental to the Christian faith and John speaks of it often (**John 13:34, 15:12, 1 John 3:23**). This is not an afterthought in the mind of God. We go over Jesus words to His disciples every Maundy (Mandate, Commandment) Thursday. It was there that Jesus elaborated and laid down the clear principle that Christians would be known by their love. Love serves and gives and in contrast, hate destroys and kills. John mentions *Cain* and tells us without any details or qualification other than that he *was of the wicked one and murdered his brother*. John mentions Cain by name but not Abel showing us that Cain represents all those who are not children born of God but rather belong to the evil one. (**3:10, John 8:44**). Glenn Barker writes in The Bible Expositors Commentary, “It is not that Cain by murdering his brother became the child of the devil; but, being a child of the devil, his actions were evil and culminated in the murder of his brother.” Cain’s actions revealed what was already true about him; as we read in yesterdays study, “Life reveals the children of God.” We will look more at some details concerning this classic Old Testament story in tomorrow’s lesson where we will elaborate on Johns question, *And why did he murder him?*

(Meditate, Apply & Pray) Think about the command Jesus gave to His disciples and You as a professing follower of His, when He said we need to love one another as “I have loved you”. Do you love others the way Jesus loves You? Do you want to? Thank God for His love for us in Jesus and ask Him to help you be more like Christ and by His power live in obedience to His commandment.

WEDNESDAY – 1 John 3:12: *“...not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother’s righteous.”* We avoid a literal translation when the word *murdered* is used in this verse. The Actual Greek word is **sphazo** which is a word which means slaughter, kill by violence. It is the word used to describe the slaughter of animal sacrifices by the slitting of the throat. It could literally be translated that Cain cut his brothers throat. The first act of slaughtering

of a human being belongs to Cain. This is very important Beloved as we will see in more detail this Lord's Day. Cain was upset with the Lord's rebuke (**Genesis 4:5**) so defiantly and with ungodly, Satanic hatred slaughtered his brother. There is another word for murder in the Greek, *apothnesko*, but that is not what is used here. The word used helps to show the connection of Cain with Satan (**1 John 2:13, John 8:44**). He was not one of God's children. Instead of saying that because of hatred Cain killed Abel, John contrasts the deeds of Cain with those of Abel. Cain's actions were *evil* and *his brother's righteous*. The two adjectives provide the contrast. The Greek word *evil* is the same word John uses to describe Satan (**2:13, 14; 3:12; 5:18, 19**). The word *righteous*, however, is a term that refers to Jesus (**1:9; 2:1, 29, 3:7**). In other words, Cain belonged to Satan and Abel belonged to God.

(Meditate, Apply & Pray) Think about the expression of sinfulness that came from Cain in the slaughter of his brother Abel. The actions of his life came from a heart that was evil and lost in sin. Father, help me to heed the warnings You give, like the one You gave Cain. Give me power to obey You from the heart.

THURSDAY – 1 John 3:13-15: “Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.” John tells true believers to not be surprised *if the world hates you*. The world is filled with Cain's descendants who will express their hatred toward the children of God. John also lets them know he understands and experiences the hatred as well as he relates to them by calling them *my brethren*. John usually writes either “dear children” or “dear friends.” But in this verse, and only here, he uses the Greek word *adelphos* (from the same womb) *brothers*. These words echo Jesus' warning that Christians will be hated by the world. “*If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first*” (**John 15:18**). John now goes on to say we know we are Christians, assured as true believers, *because we love the brethren*. John does not say, “Because we love our brothers, we have passed from life to death.” He says that love for our brothers is the evidence, not the basis, for spiritual life.” Love for the brothers is really an expression of thankfulness to God for his gift of life and the mark of spiritual life. The word *murderer* applies to Satan (**John 8:44**) who instigated the murder of Abel.

John is dogmatic when he writes; *no murderer has eternal life abiding in him*. A murderer has no part in the kingdom of God (**Galatians 5:21, Revelation 21:8**) unless he repents and turns in faith to Jesus, he is eternally lost. In contrast, the true Christian, although hated here on earth already possesses eternal life.

(Meditate, Apply & Pray) Does the world hate me? Are there any specific examples I can look to in my life where I can see the hostility against Jesus taken out on me? Father, help me to bare patiently the persecution of those who are against You and all that is righteous. Help me to fix my eyes on Jesus.

FRIDAY– 1 John 3:16-18: “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.” There are many similarities between the Gospel of John and this letter. In his Gospel John records the following words of Jesus: “*Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends*” (**15:13**). And here, *He laid down His life for us*. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. John points to the supreme example of love, namely, to Jesus. Jesus' death on the cross was not a passive death like the sacrificial death of an animal. Jesus actively and purposefully laid His life down, and we should do the same in love for others. John explains one way in which a true Christian loves is by giving of himself and his possessions (*this world's goods*). He is not self-centered and his heart is not *shut up* and closed (**James 2:15-17**). John suggests, *how does the love of God abide in him*, it is impossible for the love of God to control a person who does not show love to others. John declares that if anyone says that he loves God but hates his brother, he is a liar (**4:20**). The command *love the Lord your God* can never be separated from the command *love your neighbor as yourself*. These two go together at all times. John concludes by saying the words we speak must correspond to our actions. Words find their counterpart in deeds and truth. John closes and reminds us of Jesus when he uses the word *truth*.

(Meditate, Apply & Pray) Father, thank You for Jesus giving His life and death in my place. Help me to serve and give to others like He did for me. Help my heart to be full and generous as Yours. Thank You Jesus for being The truth.