

## WHY SHOULD IT SURPRISE US?

### 1 JOHN 3:11-24

We've all been exposed to family feuds.

Family feud—hatred & anger between members of same family.

An ugly—& unnatural—picture!

How can kids of 1 family, descended from 1 father, harbor hatred against one another?

Cain & Abel show that children of same *earthly* father may have a different *spiritual* father.

That *WILL* produce animosity between them!

Children of the same heavenly Father, *characterized by love*, ought to love one another.

Feuding, fighting, & anger is even uglier in *God's* family!

This thought fits John's theme:

**Amos 3:3** "*Can two walk together unless they agree?*"

*To enjoy fellowship with God, we must be like Him.*

### **GOD'S HOLINESS 1:5-3:10**

**Description of God 1:5**

*"God is Light"* => **God is HOLY.**

**Implications for God's children 1:6-3:10**

*To enjoy fellowship with a holy God, we must be holy!*

### **GOD'S LOVE 3:11-5:10**

By a brief transition (3:10), John passes to **2<sup>nd</sup> characteristic of God, required to enjoy fellowship with God: LOVE**

*"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.**"*

People *characterized by* lifestyle of not loving their

brothers or sisters in Christ, haven't come from God.

**God is love. 4:8**

**SUMMARY 3:11** *"This is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another."*

Since God is love, our life, as His children should be marked by love for His family!

**Love among brethren 3:14-24**

**One of the clearest evidences that we walk with God is love for God's children. 14**

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

Worldly people *don't* love God's children.

The only people who love God's children are members of His family.

That's how we can tell that we're walking in fellowship with Him!

Just as **Christ loved us & showed it by His death**  
**16** *"By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, & we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers."*

**So we should love one another & show it by our actions (3:16-18).**

**Evidence of our salvation 14-15**

**14** **When we love our brothers, we know it's because we've already been transformed.**

We don't love our brothers to *become* God's children.

We love our brothers because we *already are* God's children

Our love for our brothers shows that we've *already* passed from death to life –that's the evidence.

It gives us assurance!

**People characterized by a lifestyle of not loving  
=people abiding in death**

They draw the juices that sustain them from the realm of death.

They're still living there!

They haven't been changed!

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

Misunderstanding this verse causes people to fear that because we have a quarrel with a brother we can't be saved.

We don't even LIKE somebody very much!

That's not what John says.

He isn't talking about a one-time episode—a single angry reaction.

He's talking about a life characteristic!

If we're characterized by hatred for God's children, we're joining forces with the devil

To act that way is to act like *HIS* children!

**People characterized by a lifestyle of hating our brothers = murderers**

**= people who don't have eternal life abiding in them!**

New life isn't residing in them.

They're not getting their life from there!

Being a “murderer” [in *either* sense! & having eternal life are contradictory!

This doesn't mean that a murderer; nor a person-hater can't be saved!

But people who are drawing their life from the God of love don't go around hating & killing people!

**Example of Christ 16** *“By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, & we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.”*

This is how we know what the real thing looks like!

**Jesus gave His life for us.**

**Therefore, we ought to give our life for our brothers**

If HE was willing to do that for us, how much more should WE be willing to do that for a brother?

**Demonstration by our deeds 17-18**

**17** *“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?”*

**You can't have God's love abiding in you & refuse to care about a brother in need at the same time!**

You can't be drawing your life from His love and not care about the rest of His family!

For the early church this meant that when they saw a brother in Christ facing a time of need, they were to come alongside & help.

*So should we!*

How can we be drawing the essence of our life from His love & *NOT* want to DO something about a brother's need?!!

**18** *“Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed & in truth.”*

**If we want to enjoy fellowship with the God Who is love, we ought to love each other & show it by our actions.**

This isn't just saying I love you!

The true test of love isn't a verbal profession of it, it's *action* driven by our love for the other person.

### **HOW SHOULD WE THEN LIVE?**

God's love for us ought to motivate us to love one another, & to care about each other's needs.

When we see a brother in need, we ought to be motivated to help.

If we're characterized by lack of concern for our brothers & sisters, there's cause for concern whether we really know Him.

If we're in fellowship with the God characterized by love, we'll respond to people in need as He does!

*“By this, all will know that you are my disciples.”*

### **CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S PRESENCE 3:19-24**

Why do so many people struggle with the issue of the certainty of our salvation?

Does God intend for His children to spend so much time wondering if we're really members of His family?

Why does Satan find it so easy to send us on a guilt trip about our relationship with God?

John gives us insight into such questions as he describes the relationship between loving one another & *enjoying* fellowship with God.

### **Results of demonstrating love 19-24**

Here's another way we know we have the real thing.

Showing love leads to 3 results:

#### **Certainty of salvation 19-21**

*“By this we shall know that we are of the truth & reassure our heart before him; <sup>20</sup>for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, & he knows everything. <sup>21</sup>Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God”*

**When we act in love towards our brothers & sisters in Christ, it results in confidence before God.**

**When our heart doesn't condemn us, we have confidence before God.**

**Even when our heart *DOES* condemn us, . . .**

When we're struggling, . . .

Perhaps we haven't done as much as we could have, . .

When Satan sends us on a guilt trip over how little we've done...

#### **God's greater than our heart**

He knows all about us.

He knows the truth. –We can rest in that!

He understands our motives and intentions, our failures.

He can still give us confidence.

Doubts about the *certainty* of our salvation don't affect the

*REALITY* of our salvation!

Those who trust Christ *ARE* secure, whether we *FEEL* like it or not!

When we aren't *ACTING* like family, we're not always *SURE* we're really part of the family.

But that will never cause us to *LOSE* our salvation, if we're truly *TRUSTING* Christ.

The issue is what we're *trusting* in –ourselves & our accomplishments, or Jesus & what HE's done!

[2<sup>nd</sup> result of loving one another:]

**Effective prayer 22-23 21-23** When our heart *doesn't* condemn us... “*we have confidence before God;*<sup>22</sup> **&** *whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments & do what pleases him.*<sup>23</sup> **&** *this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ & love one another, just as he has commanded us.*”

**When we obey His commands by loving one another,**

i.e., when we do what we know pleases Him=>love one another,

**it gives confidence that He'll give us what we ask.**

(Otherwise we doubt that God would do what WE want!) This assurance is related to our priorities: we're committed to obeying & pleasing Him **FIRST!**

When our priority is to please Him, our requests focus on pleasing Him—**WE WANT WHAT HE WANTS!** That gives us confidence that He will give us what we ask! When my priority is *MY* will, I'm not so sure.

When my priority is *God's* will, I have confidence He will do it! It's all about HIM!

Also, our love for one another affects the kinds of things we ask for! We're not just concerned about our own interests;

Our prayers become focused on the welfare of others.

When we're more concerned about our brother, than about ourselves, it affects our confidence that God will pay attention to our requests!

John concludes with a reminder of what He has commanded.

As we obey His command, we gain assurance.

2 parts to the command:

It begins with trusting Him! –that comes 1<sup>st</sup>.

We'll never love our brother as we should unless we're trusting Him!

If we trust Him, that leads to the second part,

We'll love one another

–love members of the family!

[3<sup>rd</sup> result of loving one another:]

**Fellowship with God** 24 *“Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, & God in him & by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.”*

**When we obey His commands by loving one another, we know that we're abiding in Him & He in us.**

That's *fellowship!*

We're abiding in Him—drawing from Him all we need to sustain our

life--and He's abiding in us, supplying all we need.  
The Holy Spirit He has given us re-enforces that confidence.

His Spirit interacts with ours and gives us confidence

**Rom. 8:15-16** *"You received the Spirit of sonship. And by Him we cry 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children."*

We don't have that sense of sonship when we're fighting with His children. We wonder if we're really part of the same family!

**When we obey His commands by loving one another, we know that we're abiding in Him & He in us.**

### **HOW SHOULD WE THEN LIVE?**

**If we want to enjoy fellow-ship with God, we well love one another, & seek oppor-tunities to show that love by our actions.**

Keep in mind that *love is the fruit of the Spirit.*

Only He can create genuine love for one another –love that seeks my brother's welfare, instead of my rights– **He** produces that in us.

This doesn't come naturally.

He's the source of genuine, God-pleasing, love for one another.

**We submit our desires to Him & allow HIM to control our life.**

**When we submit to His control, He produces love in us.**

**That love for others results in:**

- Certainty of our salvation
- Effective prayer
- Fellowship with God

So we're back where we started.

***It we want to enjoy fellow-ship with the Father—the God of love—we must be controlled by His Spirit. His control will produce love for His children. That love for the family will give us assurance that we belong to the family & that we're in fellowship with Him!***