

## Eternity Daily Bible Study

# The Importance Of Love

**Number: 03**

**Verses: 1 John 3:14-24**

**Topic: Loving One Another Demonstrates That We Have Eternal Life**

**Date: 20<sup>th</sup> July 2011**

**1 John 3:14-24** *We know that we have passed over from death to life, because we love the brothers. He who does not love his brother 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 have come to know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives in behalf of our brothers. (17) But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother having need, and shuts off his compassion towards him, how does the love of God abide in him? (18) My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. (19) And in this we know that we are from the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. (20) Because if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and He knows all things. (21) Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. (22) And whatever we should ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and we do the things pleasing before Him. (23) And this is His commandment: that we should believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ and should love one another, just as He gave commandment. (24) And the one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, from the Spirit whom He gave us.*

The bible passage above is one of the most radical passages in the entire New Testament, because it states that:

1. We know we have passed from death to life if we love the brethren
2. On the other hand, if we don't love the brethren we abide in death.
3. If we hate our brethren we are a murderer and are without eternal life
4. We know love because Jesus laid down His life for us.
5. We should lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters in Christ.
6. This includes laying down the good things of this life that others may have need of.
7. If we refuse to help the needy (with our goods) and have no compassion, we do not have God's love
8. Love is to be active and practical not just verbal.
9. If we demonstrate this practical agape love we will assure our hearts before God.
10. We will also have our prayers answered because we are doing what is pleasing to God.
11. God's commandment is that we should believe in the name of Jesus and should love one another.
12. If we do these two things, which are one thing, we abide in God and He in us and have eternal life.

Many Western Christians are terrified of beholding human needs and/or being asked for money. We do not see generosity as a means of sanctification or of greater heavenly reward or of having the love of God in our hearts. We may even feel that the poor are trying to steal our hard-earned money "to spend on alcohol and drugs". However we are talking about the saints here! About people who will not spend the money on drugs, but on food for their families, or on rent, or on essential bills.

We are talking about people with real needs, not just wants, or addictions. These people are among us, especially in today's economy.

Now I am not asking you to give to every panhandler, or to every advertisement on Christian TV, or to give to every cause that sends a mail-out or email to you! However I do believe that God wants you to have genuine human connection and compassionate interaction with your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Lets just take on common example where such compassion is both justified and worthy – supporting those who go out for the sake of the gospel:

**3 John 1:5-8** *Dear friend, you are faithful in whatever you do for the brothers, especially when they are strangers (itinerant gospel workers). (6) They have testified before the church about your love. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. (7) After all, they went on their trip for the sake of Christ's name, accepting no support from the Gentiles. (8) Therefore, we ought to support such people so that we can become their helpers in spreading the truth.*

However the reaction of some power-hungry and selfish Christians (such as Diotrephes in the NT) is to deny such workers even their most basic needs:

**3 John 1:9-11** *I wrote a letter to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be in charge, will not accept us. (10) For this reason, when I come I will call attention to what he is doing in spreading false charges against us. And not content with that, he refuses to accept the brothers. He even tries to stop those who want to accept them and throws them out of the church. (11) Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The person who does what is good is from God. The person who does what is evil has never seen God.*

Diotrephes threw the missionaries out of church and was hostile to those who wanted to be kind to them! This still goes on today and in my 30+ years of missionary work I have seen it many times both to myself and toward many other missionaries. The hardness of heart toward gospel workers is only increasing as “the love of many grows cold” and missions support is down 70-80% from even five years ago.

Now I am not saying this to get you to support me (or any other missionary) but rather to make you aware of the terrible thing that is happening in the hearts of many Christians. Practical love of the brothers is vanishing and is being replaced by mere politeness and mawkish sentimentality. There is even great cruelty and rudeness to those in need, reminiscent of the rich man / man-in-rags situation in James chapter 2 and Luke chapter 16!

We cannot delegate our clear Christian duty to love one another to the Government and /or to major social institutions. We cannot take the New Commandment and toss it out the window just because it is financially inconvenient.

Loving one another means meeting their practical, real human needs (as much as we can within our resources) and standing with them through the trials of life instead of running away.

Are you prepared to bless others and to help those in need in your fellowship / circle of Christian friends? Or do you deliberately go to a church that is at your income level so you won't meet any very needy people who might ask you for money?

If we really have true faith in Jesus Christ we will obey His two commandments to believe in Him and love one another. Our faith, and our eternal life will be revealed by our demonstration of practical humanity.

Ephesians 2:8-10 (below) tells us that there are two kinds of 'works' in the New Testament, religious works and good works. *Religious works*, known as 'works of the Law' are done to earn righteousness, these are man-centered, religious and unnecessary and we are not obliged to do them at all. On the other hand *good works* are our works done out of love for others, they are absolutely necessary, are a sign of true living faith, and are what we are made to do as new creations in Christ:

**Ephesians 2:8-10** *For by such grace you have been saved through faith. This does not come from you; it is the gift of God (9) and not the result of (religious) works, lest anyone boast. (10) For we are his masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared long ago to be our way of life.*

Indeed faith without good works, done out of love, is not true faith at all:

**Galatians 5:6** *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision matters. What matters is faith that is active through love.*

**James 2:14-26** *What good does it do, my brothers, if someone claims to have faith but does not have any works? This kind of faith cannot save him, can it? (15) Suppose a brother or sister does not have any clothes or daily food (16) and one of you tells them, "Go in peace! Stay warm and eat heartily." If you do not provide for their bodily needs, what good does it do? (17) In the same way, faith by itself, if it does not have any works, is dead. (18) But someone may say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without any works, and I will show you my faith by my works. (19) You believe that there is one God. That's fine! Even the demons believe that and tremble with fear. (20) Do you want proof, you foolish person, that faith without works is worthless? .... For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead.*

In fact faith and love are mentioned together, as partners in the same verse, at least 21 times in the New Testament. Some examples:

**2 Timothy 1:13** *Hold on to the pattern of healthy teachings that you have heard from me, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.*

**2 Thessalonians 1:3** *At all times we are obligated to thank God for you, brothers. It is right to do this because your faith is growing all the time and the love of every one of you for each other is increasing.*

There is simply no such thing as true Christian faith without practical Christian love. This especially applies to how we help out members of our own family who may be in financial distress:

**1 Timothy 5:8** *If anyone does not take care of his own relatives, especially his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

In other words Christian faith and practical agape love go together so completely that if you do not show practical love for your family you have denied Christ and are worse than an unbeliever!

You cannot be saved and selfish. You can be religious and selfish but you cannot be genuinely saved and selfish. Selfishness is Christ-denial and is a deep and grievous sin against the very Holy Spirit of Love who is supposed to dominate our whole lives and fill us each day! Every single Christian must repent of selfishness.

A close relative of selfishness is self-indulgence which is the urge to have “fulfillment” of self at almost any cost. Self-indulgence is what sends your credit card over the limit. It also can bankrupt you spiritually. When self-indulgence leads to sexual self-indulgence it can destroy lives, families and marriages. Agape love is never self-indulgent, rather it considers the needs of others as well as our own wants and interests.

**Philippians 2:4** *Do not be concerned about your own interests, but also be concerned about the interests of others.*

What I have written today may sound harsh, strident or even (to some) heretical. In fact I myself have never heard it taught (quite like this) by anyone. Practical Christian love is often derided as “salvation by works”. This is nothing of the kind. No one is saved by works. We are saved by grace through faith as a gift of God. I take the Protestant position on that all the way. My own testimony is that of a very selfish and hard person who was stopped in his tracks one afternoon when God appeared to me as a light and saved me. I was a very wicked person before I was saved but God still saved me.

These days Minda and I support missionaries, have an extensive ministry of generosity and hospitality, and even grow vegetables to give away to others. This is not because we are especially good or because we are trying to earn our salvation but because God's love is in our hearts and we know these things are the right things, things that should and must be done for others.

If God has changed your heart then that will reflect in generous, kind, merciful acts of practical agape love especially towards your family and your brothers and sisters in Christ. These good works are a true sign that you have eternal life, that you know God, and that you truly love God and that you believe in His Son Jesus Christ.

Blessings,

John Edmiston ([johned@aibi.ph](mailto:johned@aibi.ph))

Chairman/ CEO

AIBI/Cybermissions

[www.globalchristians.org](http://www.globalchristians.org)

[www.cybermissions.org](http://www.cybermissions.org)

[www.eternitychristian.com](http://www.eternitychristian.com)

[www.newtestamentprayer.org](http://www.newtestamentprayer.org)

[Donate to Cybermissions Via PayPal](#)

**TO GET JOHN EDMISTON'S PRAYER NEWS:** send a blank email to [jednews-subscribe@yahogroups.com](mailto:jednews-subscribe@yahogroups.com)

You are receiving this email because you either subscribed on the website, or sent an email to the subscribe address. We do not subscribe people without their consent.

**To subscribe** - send a blank email to:

[eternity-dbs-subscribe@globalchristians.org](mailto:eternity-dbs-subscribe@globalchristians.org)

**To unsubscribe** - send a blank email to:

[eternity-dbs-unsubscribe@globalchristians.org](mailto:eternity-dbs-unsubscribe@globalchristians.org)