

1 John 3:1–24

God's love calling us to love

V. 1-3. This is a great message of assurance to believers. We are God's children because of God's great love for us (also Jn. 1:10ff). John confirms the present reality of being 'children of God' while acknowledging that there is even great fellowship with God which awaits the future. Only Jesus' death deals with sin, but we still have to resist sin.

V. 4-8. Sin is at its essence lawlessness – an active rebellion against God's will. Jesus is the sinless one who came 'to take away our sins' (paying the penalty and breaking the power of sin to control us, Jn. 1:29; 1 Pet. 2:24). The Son of God appeared 'to destroy the works of the devil', every act which opposes God's will, every failure to show love.

V. 9-12. (see V. 1:8; 2:1). Most probably John is dealing with two different views within the group who had left the church. i. denied the possibility of sinning because of their superior spiritual experiences and spiritual knowledge 1:8-10, ii claimed that their spiritual experiences and spiritual knowledge elevated them above having to live moral lives 2:3-4.

V. 13-18. Lack of love is a sign of a life still living under the power of sin and death. Jesus Christ shows us the true meaning of love, laying 'down his life for us' (the cross - God's love revealed Jn. 3:16ff; Phil.2:5-8).

V. 19-22. To belong to the truth (see Jn. 18:37) means our hearts (we) can be at peace in God's presence. But if our hearts condemn us, we can be confident in the grace of God. He knows everything about us and yet He forgives and loves us (1Jn. 1:9), He does not condemn us.

V. 23-24. God's command is to believe in His Son Jesus Christ, and to love one another. Those who keep God's commands show that they live in Him and that God lives in them. God's presence is assured by the presence of His Spirit He has given to us. The Spirit is the One who enables us to live as God's children.

Reflection/Response. How do our acts of love and generosity show we are God's children? How do we show that we know the seriousness of sin while also resting in God's grace, His forgiveness and love?

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