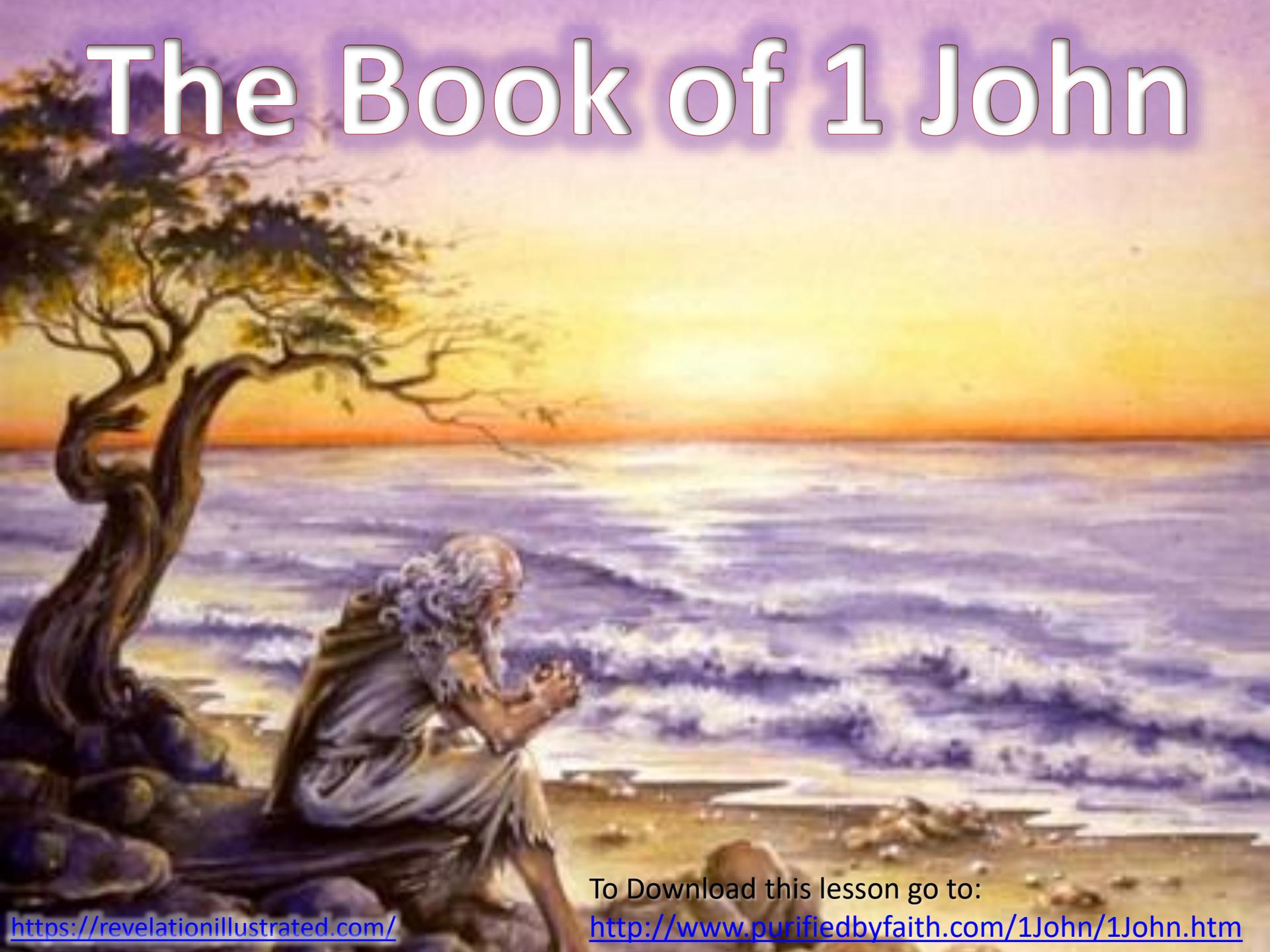


The Book of 1 John



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Outline of 1 John

- 1:1-4 - *Prologue: John Introduces the Major Theme of the Letter - FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD*
- 1:5-2:28 - *The First Presentation of the Three Tests of FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: RIGHTEOUSNESS, LOVE and BELIEF in Jesus*
- 2:29-4:6 - *The Second Presentation of the Three Tests of FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: RIGHTEOUSNESS, LOVE and BELIEF in Jesus*
- 4:7-5:21 - *The Third Presentation of the Three Tests of FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: RIGHTEOUSNESS, LOVE and BELIEF in Jesus*

2:29-4:6

*The Second Presentation of the Three Tests of
DIVINE SONSHIP: RIGHTEOUSNESS, LOVE
and BELIEF in Jesus*

- 2:29-3:10a - *Divine Sonship* tested by **RIGHTEOUSNESS**
 - God is righteous therefore everyone who “*does what is right*” is “*born of Him*” (2:29)
 - The present status and future hope of the “*children of God*” (3:1-3)
 - Divine Sonship is utterly contrary to all sin (3:4-10a)
- 3:10b-24a - *Divine Sonship* tested by **LOVE**
 - Anyone who does not obey the command to “*love one another*” is not a child of God (3:10b-11)
 - Cain as the model of murder and hate - whose example is followed by the world (3:12-15)
 - Christ as the model of love – whose example we must follow in order to have confidence in our relationship with God (3:16-24a)
- 3:24b-4:6 - *Divine Sonship* tested by **BELIEF** in the Spirit’s Message

1 John 3:16-24a

Christ as the Model of Love

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. ¹⁹ By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; ²⁰ for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. ²¹ Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; ²² and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. ²³ And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. ^{24a} Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him.

1 John 3:16-24a

Christ as the Model of
Love

High Level Overview

- 3:16 – Points to Christ as the *ultimate* example of genuine love

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.*

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(1 John 3:16-24a)

- 3:16 – Points to Christ as the *ultimate* example of genuine love
- 3:17 – Gives an example of a *lack of* love

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- 3:16 – Points to Christ as the *ultimate* example of genuine love
- 3:17 – Gives an example of a *lack of* love
- 3:18 – **Exhorts** us to have a *genuine* love

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(1 John 3:16-24a)

- 3:16 – Points to Christ as the *ultimate* example of genuine love
- 3:17 – Gives an example of a *lack of* love
- 3:18 – *Exhorts* us to have a *genuine* love
- 3:19-20 – The *assurance* that comes with genuine love

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- 3:21-22 – The *confidence* that comes with that assurance
- 3:23-24a – The *benefit* of **obeying the God's command** to love

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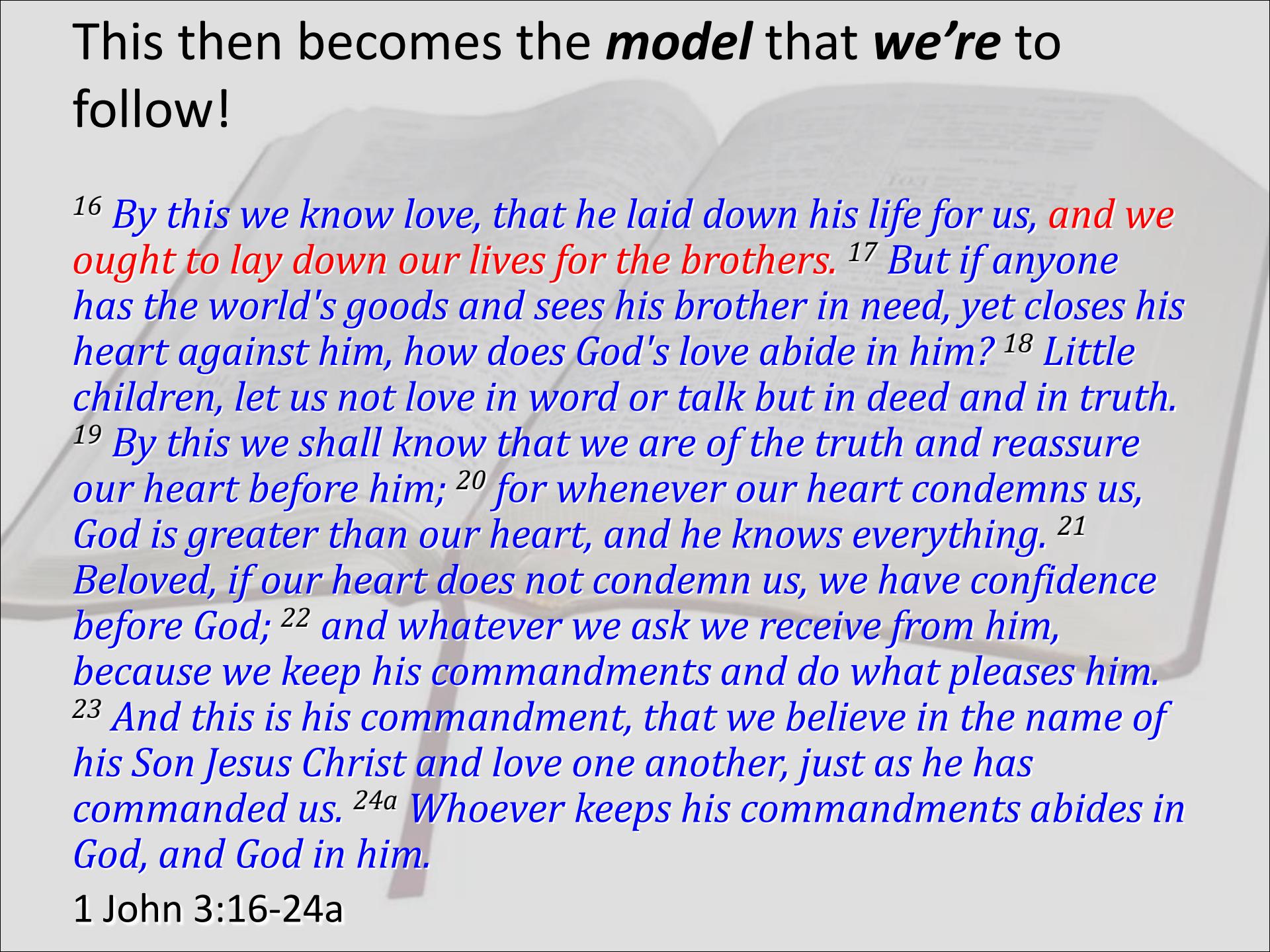
In describing genuine love, John begins with the example of **Jesus**, who made the **ultimate** sacrifice out of love for us.

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1 John 3:16-24a



This then becomes the *model* that **we're** to follow!

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1 John 3:16-24a

Such a high standard almost might almost seem **impossible**!
How can **we** ever **hope** to love others with the kind of love
that Christ has for **us**?

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Nevertheless, John insists that we **imitate** Christ's example, and even, should the occasion warrant it, be willing to **die** for our brothers, as Christ died for us. That is to say, we must be willing to make **whatever** sacrifice is necessary in order to love our brother in Christ.

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John then gives an example of someone who has **no** love:

- He has material possessions
- He sees his brother in need
- But he has no pity on him
- Conclusion: He does not have a genuine love!

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1 John 3:16-24a

In calling for “pity” on the brother in need, John is not just calling for a sympathetic attitude or even sympathetic words – but ***action!*** The situation described by John ***demands*** that the brother with material possessions ***share*** with the brother in need.

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James makes the same point, using a similar example:

- James 2:15-16 – *If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?*

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To love “*in truth*” here means to love *genuinely*, as opposed to loving in word only. John adds the idea of loving “*in truth*” because even deeds can be hypocritical. John wants our deeds to be genuine expressions of love.

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Summary of what John has said thus far:

- There is no limit to the extent which we must be willing sacrifice out of love for our brother – even to the point laying down our lives for them (cf. 3:16).
- If a brother is in need and we have the means to alleviate that need, it is not enough to sympathize or speak words of concern – we must act in genuine love to meet our brother's need (3:17-18)

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?

Observations:

- The “love test” as given by John speaks only of our obligation to love our **brother**.
- There are **other** scriptures that command us to love even our **enemy** (Mat.5:44), but love for **the family of God** is our **highest priority**:
 - **Galatians 6:10** – *So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.*
- The “love test” example given by John (and James) obligates us to meet our brother’s **needs**.
- The Apostle Paul defines our need in terms of **food and clothing**:
 - **1 Timothy 6:8** – *But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.*

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?

Additional Scriptural Considerations:

- The scriptures warn not to rescue someone who, due to their own sin or neglect, will end up in need soon after you have helped them:
 - **Proverbs 19:19** – *A hot-tempered man must pay the penalty; if you rescue him, you will have to do it again* (NIV)
- Therefore the loving response to someone who is in need due to **neglect** or **laziness**, may be to allow them to suffer the consequences of their neglect!
 - **2 Thessalonians 3:10** – *For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.*
 - **Proverbs 16:26** – *The laborer's appetite works for him; his hunger drives him on.* (NIV)

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?

Thinking more broadly:

- In our affluent society with its myriad of safety nets, we far less likely to encounter a believer in our local church who is starving to death or can't afford to buy basic clothing than the Apostle John would have in his day.
- But we need to remember, there are **many** other ways of loving our brother besides giving financial aid:
 - Spending time with or for the benefit of fellow believers
 - Showing undeserved kindness to those who do not treat us well
 - Taking an interest in a brother or sister
 - Fervent prayer for your brothers and sisters

When we act in love towards our brother, we will know that we are acting in accordance with God's truth.

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1 John 3:16-24a

As a result, it will “*reassure our heart*”.

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1 John 3:16-24a

“*heart*” καρδία *kardia*

- **Burdick** (commenting on 1 John 3:19, p.272):
 - “Heart” is not to be viewed, as current English commonly does, as primarily the seat of emotions. In Greek parlance, it was the seat of emotions, instincts, passions, thought and will.
 - John uses the term [here in 1 John 3:19] to refer to the inner man with special emphasis on the conscience and the feelings.

“reassure” πείθω *peitho*

- **Barclay-Newman Greek Dictionary:**
 - Persuade, convince, win over;
 - Conciliate, satisfy (Mt 28.14);
 - Seek favor or approval from (Ga 1.10);
 - Reassure (1 Jn 3.19);
- **Burdick p.272**
 - The usual meaning of *peitho* is “persuade.”
 - There is however another meaning for *peitho* that yields an even more natural rendering of the statement [in 1 John 3:19]. *Peitho* can mean “pacify, set at ease, conciliate, assure.” For another instance of this usage see:
 - **Matthew 28:14** – *And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.*

When we love a brother in Christ in accordance with God's truth, it will "*reassure our heart before Him*" that is to say, our otherwise condemning conscience will be set at ease in the very presence of God Himself.

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If, after showing love for your brother in Christ, an overly-sensitive conscience still leaves you feeling guilty, you can be sure of this: God knows better than your conscience – your love in action is **evidence** that you have a genuine Christian faith.

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1 John 3:16-24a

And if our conscience does **not** condemn us, we will feel free to come boldly into the very presence of God and make our requests known to Him.

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Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; ²² *and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.*

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1 John 3:16-24a

And when we do we will know that: “*whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.*”

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²³ *And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.* ^{24a} *Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him.*

1 John 3:16-24a

...whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.

- On the surface, “*whatever we ask [from God] we receive from him*” almost sounds like a **guarantee** that God will unconditionally give us **anything** and everything that we ask for.
- A quick examination of the immediate context and any number of other scriptural examples (not to mention our own experience!) will show us, of course, that is not what John has in mind.
- This simple and unqualified promise must, first of all, be interpreted in light of the conditions given in other parts of scripture where God promises to grant his people’s requests.

...whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.

- If prayer is to be answered, it must be:
 - According to His will:
 - 1 John 5:14 – *And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.*
 - For God's glory rather than your own pleasure:
 - James 4:2b-3 – *You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.*
- And the one asking:
 - Must not harbor unconfessed sins:
 - Proverbs 15:29 – *The LORD is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous.*
 - James 5:16 – *Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.*
 - Must not doubt that God is able to answer
 - James 1:5-7 – *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;*

...whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.

- Clearly there are many times when godly men have made earnest petition of God, but were **denied** their request:
 - **2 Samuel 12:15-18** – *Then Nathan went to his house. And the LORD afflicted the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and he became sick.¹⁶ David therefore sought God on behalf of the child. And David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground.¹⁷ And the elders of his house stood beside him, to raise him from the ground, but he would not, nor did he eat food with them.¹⁸ On the seventh day the child died...*
 - **2 Corinthians 12:7-9** – *So to keep me [the apostle Paul] from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me.⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*
 - **Matthew 26:39** – *And going a little farther he [Jesus] fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."*

...whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.

- God does whatever He pleases, and will not make Himself a slave to **anyone**, regardless of what conditions are met!
 - Daniel 4:35 – *All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: "What have you done?"* (NIV)
 - Psalm 115:3 – *Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.*
- Furthermore, all that God does must **ultimately** be for **His glory** and for the (ultimate) good of His people :
 - Romans 11:36 – *For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.*
 - Romans 8:28 – *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*
- Therefore, if our request does not ultimately glorify God or result in what is ultimately best for us as Christians, God will not grant it!

...whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.

- So what does John mean when he says that we receive from God “**whatever we ask**”?
- If we examine the context we find:
 - We are exhorted to give to our brothers who are in need, just as Christ provided for our need in a sacrificial way (3:16)
 - John tells us that if we are confident that we have been faithful to love our brothers in this way, then we will be confident that God will meet **our** needs when we ask Him to because:
 - We know that He loves and cares for us in the same way that we love and care for our brothers, since, in giving to our brothers, we bear the fruit of God’s Spirit.
 - We know that God has **already** made the **ultimate** sacrifice in giving us His Son. Providing for our other needs is **easy** in comparison (cf. Romans 8:32)

...whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.

- Bear in mind also:
 - While God may deny us *some* of the things we request of Him – He *does* give us *many* of the things that we ask for and often in the most astonishing ways!
 - When God does not *immediately* give us what we ask for, remember:
 - He is all-wise and knows what is best – we don't!
 - He may be delaying for reasons unknown to us.

To “*believe in the name*” is the same as believing in the person. To believe in the name of Jesus Christ involves total commitment and obedience to him and this always involves doing what he commanded, “*to love one another*.”

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1 John 3:16-24a

Those who believe in God's Son and love one another as he commanded are those who truly remain in God and, in turn, God remains them:

- James 4:8 *Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.*

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1 John 3:16-24a

Paraphrastic Commentary on 1 John 3:10b-24a by Donald W. Burdick

- ▶ (IOb) It is likewise true that the person who does not habitually exercise love for his fellow believer is a member, not of God's family, but of the devil's.
(11) My ground for saying this is Christ's command-which you have known ever since you first heard the gospel - that we are to manifest the distinctive mark of His disciples, namely; love for each other.

Paraphrastic Commentary on 1 John 3:10b-24a by Donald W. Burdick

- ▶ (12) We are not to be like Cain who was a member of the devil's family and who butchered his brother, Abel. And what moved him to commit such a crime? It was hatred, because Abel's obedience was a rebuke to Cain and his rebelliousness. (13) Consider another example of hatred. You are surprised that the people of this evil world are treating you hatefully. Don't wonder at it any longer, for this is to be expected. (14) As for us, we have assurance that, whereas we were once spiritually dead, now we are spiritually alive. We are sure of this because our lives are characterized by love for God's people. The person who does not have such continuing love remains right where he has always been - in the sphere of spiritual death. (15) To hate a Christian is the same as murdering him, and anyone knows that a person who is eternally saved does not commit murder.

Paraphrastic Commentary
on 1 John 3:10b-24a
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- ▶ (16) Here is how we know what genuine love is. It was demonstrated by Christ when He voluntarily sacrificed His life for us. In the same way, we should be willing to die for the sake of fellow believers. (17) But suppose that someone who has an adequate income to live on should be aware over some period of time that a fellow Christian is in financial need, and suppose that he responds by slamming shut the door of his heart. How could he possibly be indwelt by God's love? (18) Dear children, let's make sure that love does not merely consist of words or of empty talk, but of action that is an unhypocritical expression of love.

Paraphrastic Commentary on 1 John 3:10b-24a by Donald W. Burdick

- ▶ (19) And it is by this kind of love in action that we will be able to ascertain that we are vitally related to God's truth, and our consciences will be set at ease in the very presence of God Himself, (20) This is true because, if an overly-sensitive conscience makes us feel guilty, we can be sure that God knows better than our conscience that our love in action is proof that we have eternal life. (21) Dear friends, if our conscience does not make us feel guilty, we have perfect freedom to come into the very presence of God, (22) and He will give us anything that we ask for because we are habitually obeying Him and doing those things that make Him happy. (23) And He commands us to do two things: to place our faith in the person of His Son Jesus Christ and to show love continually to one another just as He told us to do. (24a) And the one who habitually obeys God's will shows that God is dwelling in him and he in Him.

Class Discussion Time



*Class Discussion Time

- In order to meet a brother's need, we must first understand what is a "need" versus a "want". In our society, we have come to think of many things as "needs" that **may** be more wants than needs. Do you think it's overly simplistic to define "need" as food and clothing based on Paul's statement: **1 Timothy 6:8 – *But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.***?
- What about a nice house? A car? Electricity and running water? Access to medical care?
- When I say that the loving response to someone who is in need due to **neglect** or **laziness**, may be to allow them to suffer the consequences of their neglect – do you think I'm being overly harsh?
- I listed a number of ways (in addition to financial assistance) that we can love our brother in Christ:
 - Spending time with or for the benefit of fellow believers
 - Showing undeserved kindness to those who do not treat us well
 - Taking an interest in a brother or sister
 - Fervent prayer for your brothers and sisters
- Can you think of other examples?