

1 John 3:15 Commentary

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FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND HIS CHILDREN
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Another Overview Chart - [1 John](#) - Charles Swindoll

From Talk Thru the Bible

1 John 3:15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him:

Greek - pas o mison (PAP) ton adelphon autou anthropoktonos estin (3SPAI) kai oidate (2PRAI) hoti pas anthropoktonos ouk echei (3PAI) zoen aionion en auto menousan (PAP)

GNT π α ς μ ι σ ν τ ν δ ε λ φ ν α τ ο ν θ ρ ω π ο κ τ ν ο ς σ τ ν , κ α ι ο ι δ α τ ε τ ι π α ς ν θ ρ ω π ο κ τ ν ο ς ο κ χ ε ι ζ ω ν α ν ι ο ν ν

α τ μ νοῦσαν.

Wuest - Everyone who habitually is hating his brother [Christian] is a manslayer. And you know absolutely that no manslayer has life eternal abiding in him.

NLT 1 John 3:15 Anyone who hates another brother or sister is really a murderer at heart. And you know that murderers don't have eternal life within them.

ESV 1 John 3:15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

NIV 1 John 3:15 Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.

KJV 1 John 3:15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

YLT 1 John 3:15 Every one who is hating his brother -- a man-killer he is, and ye have known that no man-killer hath life age-during in him remaining,

ASV 1 John 3:15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

CSB 1 John 3:15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

MIT 1 John 3:15 Everyone who hates his brother is an assassin; and you know that no assassin has eternal life remaining within him.

NKJ 1 John 3:15 Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

NRS 1 John 3:15 All who hate a brother or sister are murderers, and you know that murderers do not have eternal life abiding in them.

NAB 1 John 3:15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life remaining in him.

NJB 1 John 3:15 Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you are well aware that no murderer has eternal life remaining in him.

GWN 1 John 3:15 Everyone who hates another believer is a murderer, and you know that a murderer doesn't have eternal life.

BBE 1 John 3:15 Anyone who has hate for his brother is a taker of life, and you may be certain that no taker of life has eternal life in him.

- **Hates:** Ge 27:41 Lev 19:16-18 2Sa 13:22-28 Pr 26:24-26 Mt 5:21,22,28 Mk 6:19 Ac 23:12,14 Jas 1:15 Jas 4:1,2
- **has:** John 4:14 Ga 5:19-21 1Pe 1:23 Rev 21:8
- [1 John 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Leviticus 19:16-18+ 'You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people, and you are not to act against the life of your neighbor; I am the LORD. 17 **'You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart;** you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him. 18' You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD.

Mark 6:19+ [Herodias](#) had a grudge against him ([JOHN THE BAPTIST](#)) and wanted to put him to death and could not do so;

Galatians 5:19-21+ Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, **enmities**, strife, jealousy, **outbursts of anger**, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who (present tense - continually, habitually) practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God (aka "eternal life")

Revelation 21:8 "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and **murderers** and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

NOT LOVING IS HATING AND HATING IS MURDER

Everyone who (present tense - continually, habitually) **hates his brother** (present tense) **is a murderer; and you know** (perfect tense - state of knowing which is beyond a shadow of a doubt) **that no murderer has eternal life** (present tense) **abiding in him** - Before you read the notes below, take a moment and simply observe the text asking the Spirit to illuminate the words and the plain meaning. You could ask questions like what does "**everyone**" usually mean in plain English? How does John "define" **everyone** who is a **murderer**? In other words what is such a person's mindset or attitude toward others? How is the fate of a murderer described? Now what do you think the apostle John is saying in this passage? Is it clear and easy to understand or is it [abstruse](#)?

John has just given us **Cain's murder** of Abel as a picture of what the **world** wants to do to genuine believers today (1Jn 3:13+). Why? Because the fallen, devil-inspired world **hates righteousness** for it exposes their unrighteousness (John 3:18-19+). In 1Jn 3:14+ he explains that our love of the brethren is evidence that we have been born again. Now John continues the thought of **He who does not love abides in death**.

For another illustration of one who hated his brother see the story of [Absalom](#) and [Amnon](#) in 2Sa 13:22-28

Smalley adds "John picks up the content of the preceding phrase in 1Jn 3:14 ("**anyone who does not love remains in death**") and intensifies it in similarly negative terms: "**whoever hates his brother is a murderer**." The test of having crossed over from spiritual death to spiritual life is love for other people. Disobedience of the love command signifies exclusion from the blessings of eternal life, and therefore from God's family; but it also means that the person who "**hates his brother**" is liable to the same judgment as any murderer. The theological ideas in 1Jn 3:14 and 1Jn 3:15 are not simply placed in parallel. As Malatesta (Interiority, 260-61) points out, there is a progression of thought from 1Jn 3:14 to the present v, where the "interior" of the one who hates is penetrated. Such a person has not been changed inwardly (1Jn 3:14); and, as a result, God's life is not present in his heart (1Jn 3:15). Where life and love are absent the salvation of God in Christ cannot be enjoyed. ([1, 2, 3 John Word Biblical Commentary - Stephen S. Smalley](#))

John Piper - John's argument for his last assertion in 1 Jn 3:14-note ("**He who does not love abides in death**") comes in 1Jn 3:15. "**Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer**." Now note the shift in terminology that takes place. In 1Jn 3:14-note John speaks about "**not loving**" and in 1Jn 3:15 he speaks about **hating**. It is very important for us to see how John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, equates the two. John is very black and white. He allows for no middle ground: **you either love someone or you hate them**. As much as you or I might like to try, we cannot sit on the fence and say, "I don't love that person, but I don't hate him either." John won't let us say that. Not loving is hating. And hate is tantamount to murder. "**Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer**". Now note the shift in terminology that takes place. In 1Jn 3:14-note John speaks about "**not loving**" and in 1Jn 3:15 he speaks about **hating**. It is very important for us to see how John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, equates the two. John is very black and white. He allows for no middle ground: you either love someone or you hate them. As much as you or I might like to try, we cannot sit on the fence and say, "I don't love that person, but I don't hate him either." John won't let us say that. Not loving is hating. And hate is tantamount to murder. "**Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer**". In equating the hater and the murderer John is faithfully reflecting the teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:21ff-note). This is no exaggeration. It shows Jesus' supreme concern for what goes on in the human heart. Hatred is the wish that another person was not there; it is the refusal to recognize his rights as a person; it is the longing to hurt or ultimately even to kill him. If I hate somebody, I am no different from a murderer in my attitude toward him. And with God it makes very little difference whether I actually have a chance to carry out the desires of my heart or not. People who hate are murderers according to Jesus and according to John and "**you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him**." John is not denying the possibility of repent

murder or not, the motivation is the same. Matt. 5:21-22: "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell." If a professing Christian is seething with hate towards another, he could commit murder. If the circumstances were right and the penalty could be avoided, he would murder if he could. All that holds him back is fear of reprisal from God or man. A murderer by act or by thought cannot have eternal life abiding in him. This does not mean that these sins cannot be forgiven, for Christ will forgive the vilest sinner, but the professing Christian who continues to hate as a habit pattern of life has never really been born again. Are there some Christians you just can't stand and are you carrying a grudge in your heart towards them? The Apostle John says, "Check your own heart to see if you have really ever been saved at all!"

Paul Apple outlines 1 Jn 3:14-15 - LOVE FOR THE BRETHREN PRODUCES SECURITY

I. (1Jn 3:14-15) LOVE FOR THE BRETHREN PROVES OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

A. (1Jn 3:14a) Loving Indicates Life

"We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren."

John Piper: "Positively: loving another person in deed and in truth is concrete, visible evidence that we are of the truth. This evidence reassures our heart before God that we do in fact know him. Negatively: when we consistently fail to love our brother or sister, any assurance that we had that we were right with God, is called into question."

B. (1Jn 3:14b-15) Hating Indicates Death

1. Statement of Fact - "He who does not love abides in death."

2. Illustration to Prove the Point

"Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him."

Henry Mahan - John now shows what true love is. For an understanding of perfect love, he sets before us the example of Christ. He laid down his life for those whom he loved. This is the mark to which he bids us advance. Our love is approved when we transfer the love of ourselves to our brethren, forgetting ourselves and seeking the good and welfare of others. It is certain that we are far from being equal to Christ, but John recommends that we imitate him (Philippians 2:3-5; Romans 15:1-3; Romans 12:10). ([1 John 3 Commentary](#))

Everyone (whoever) (cp 1Jn 3:3, 4, 6, 9, 10) - **Pas** is the Greek meaning **all** without exception. There is no middle ground for those who express continual hatred. Utley says it this way "The significance of this is that there are no exceptions to what John is saying. There are only two kinds of people, lovers and haters. John sees life in black or white terms, no pastels."

Here are all of John's uses (in his epistles) of the Greek word **'pas'** (all, every, everyone) - 1Jn 1:7, 9; 2:16, 19-21, 23, 27, 29; 3:3-4, 6, 9-10, 15, 20; 4:1-3, 7; 5:1, 4, 17-18; 2Jn 1:1, 9; 3Jn 1:2, 12;

Surprisingly some interpret this **everyone** as a Christian (Ray Stedman, Grant Richison, Thomas Constable, etc).

Adam Clarke - He has the same principle in him which was in Cain, and it may lead to the same consequences. **Eternal life** springs from an indwelling God; and God cannot dwell in the heart where hatred and malice dwell.

As stated above not loving (1Jn 3:14) is identified as hating! We see the same description (hates his brother) in Chapter 2...

The one who says he is in the light and [yet] **hates his brother** is in the darkness until now. The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him (**Ed**: description of a believer). But the one who hates

It is the thoughts of the heart that God searches and He accounts them as equivalent to the deeds they desire to carry out, in this case the deed of murder.

Burdick - Hatred is the desire to get rid of someone, whether or not one has the nerve or the occasion to perform the act.

John's words are similar to those of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount -

"You have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty [enough to go] into the fiery hell." (Mt 5:21-22+)

Jesus' declaration of angry men going into the **fiery hell** are the "amplification" of the the truth that haters do not have **eternal life** abiding in them.

John Stott - clearly anyone who hates his brother does not possess eternal life either, because to hate is to be a murderer. [The Letters of John by John R. W. Stott](#))

Barker - In the heart there is no difference; to hate is to despise, to cut off from relationship, and murder is simply the fulfillment of that attitude.

Spurgeon - Every man who hates another has the venom of murder in his veins. He may never actually take the deadly weapons into his hand and destroy life; but if he wishes that his brother were out of the way, if he would be glad if no such person existed, that feeling amounts to murder in the judgment of God.

Matthew Henry - The hatred of our brethren is, on the contrary, a sign of our deadly state, of our continuance under the legal sentence of death: He that loves not his brother (his brother in Christ) abides in death, 1 John 3:14. He yet stands under the curse and condemnation of the law.

Brother (80)(see below on [adelphos](#) from **a** = denotes unity + **delphus** = a womb) literally means brother referring to a physical brother or figuratively can refer to a brother in the spiritual sense.

John Piper - Hatred is the wish that another person was not there; it is the refusal to recognize his rights as a person; it is the longing to hurt or ultimately even to kill him. If I hate somebody, I am no different from a murderer in my attitude toward him. And with God it makes very little difference whether I actually have a chance to carry out the desires of my heart or not. People who hate are murderers according to Jesus and according to John and "you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him." John is not denying the possibility of repentance and forgiveness for the sin of murder. The thief on the cross is an example that that can and does happen. What John is stating is the general principle that to take life is to forfeit life and no murderer has eternal life as a present and abiding possession. ([Love: A Matter of Life and Death](#))

H A Ironside has an excellent comment on this passage - . I heard a professed Christian woman speaking of another, and between her clenched teeth, she said, "I wish she were dead." That is murder! That is what sends men to the electric chair. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." "But," you say, "you heard a Christian woman say that?" Yes, but that was just for a moment, when she allowed the old nature to assert itself. She soon judged it and put it away. If Christians get out of touch with God, there may be a demonstration of the old flesh, or carnal mind. But they are indwelt by the Holy Ghost, and He will soon make them intensely miserable, and they will judge their sin and put it to death. No one who willfully goes on in these sins has any business calling himself a child of God. No one who is characterized by hatred has eternal life abiding in him. No murderer possesses eternal life, and hatred is the root of murder. This does not mean that an actual murderer cannot be saved. It does mean that if he is saved, he will no longer live in hatred. ([1 John 3 Commentary](#))

NET NOTE - Everyone who hates his fellow Christian is a murderer. On one level it is easy to see how the author could say this; the person who hates his brother is one and the same with the person who murders his brother. Behind the usage here, however, is John 8:44, the only other occurrence of the Greek word translated murderer ([anthropoktonos](#)) in the NT, where the [devil](#) is described as a "murderer from the beginning." John 8:44 refers to the devil's role in bringing death to Adam and Eve, but even more to his involvement (not directly mentioned in the Genesis account, but elaborated in the intertestamental literature, especially the writings of Philo) in [Cain's murder](#) of his [brother Abel](#). This was the first incident of [murder](#) in human history and also the first outward demonstration of the full implications of sin's entry into the world. Ultimately, then, the devil is behind murder

Lenski adds "**anthropoktonos** is the very word that Jesus used with reference to the devil in John 8:44; it applies to all the devil's children (1Jn 3:10b); included among these are the anti-Christians who have gone out from us (1Jn 2:19). John has called the latter liars (1Jn 1:6, 10; 2:22) and combines liar and man-murderer as Jesus does in John 8:44. Let the deniers of the deity and of the expiation of Jesus (1Jn 1:7; 2:2) read this double verdict on them!"

And you know (1492)(**eido**) means you know intuitively that this is true, knowing beyond a shadow of a doubt.

Smalley on you all know - John appeals to the common knowledge (literally, "and you know") which is shared by the members of his community, both as Christian believers (cf. 3:5) and as natural human beings. It requires "neither demonstration nor even reflection" to tell that eternal life cannot dwell permanently in one whose policy is to take life (cf. Law, Tests, 242, who refers to Rev 21:8). ([1, 2, 3 John Word Biblical Commentary - Stephen S. Smalley](#))

Hiebert adds that "Satan revealed his murderous spirit in the beginning of human history by leading Eve and Adam into sin, into destructive rebellion against the Word of God. Hatred and murder belong to the realm dominated by Satan. He who has such a spirit cannot belong to the realm of light and love of which God is the center and motivating power." ([1 John 3:13-24 Online](#))([The Epistles of John- An Expositional Commentary](#))

Akin - The driving force that motivates the hater to commit murder stems from Satan himself and is thus a distinguishing mark of his children... It is evident that the one who hates has the same inner nature as his diabolical father. ([1, 2, 3 John- An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture](#))

MacArthur - Murderer is the word here that just means that, someone who slays a man. **Nomurderer** has eternal life abiding in him. Are you saying that if someone commits a murder they can never be saved? No. I am saying that if someone continues with a murderous heart, they're not saved, right? Paul was a murderer, was he not? Didn't he persecute and kill Christians? He says, "I was a blasphemer and a murderer." But he repented and was forgiven. All sinners can be saved, that's not what we're talking about here. We're not talking about who **can be** saved, we're talking about who **is** saved. And people with murderous hearts have never been transformed. They're just like Cain, they are children of the evil one. ([True Christians Love One Another](#))

Salvato - John says here in 1Jn 3:14-15 Hatred un dealt with in the life of a person is evidence that they either do not know God or are not in fellowship w/ God. ([Ref](#))

Eternal (166)(**aionios** from **aion**) means existing at all times, perpetual, pertaining to an unlimited duration of time. **Akin** adds that "The adjective **eternal** is both qualitative and quantitative. It is a quality of life that stems from the very nature of God Himself; thus it is a present reality for the believer, not just a future hope. It is also **eternal** in that it is neither gained nor lost by physical death. It is **eternal** in its duration."

Life (2222)(**zoe**) state of one who is possessed of vitality.

Smalley on eternal life refers to " quality of spiritual life, made available to the believer now through Christ, cf. 1Jn 1:2; 2:25; 5:11, 13, 20. Here it is the equivalent of the "life" (ten **zoen**) into which the believer crosses over (1Jn 3:14). Ultimately **eternal life** is synonymous with Jesus Himself, as John declares at 1Jn 5:20. Thus hatred means the refusal to accept Christ as the decisive revelation of God's love to us (1Jn 4:9), and as the means of our love toward the brotherhood (1Jn 4:19-21). ([1, 2, 3 John Word Biblical Commentary - Stephen S. Smalley](#))

Eternal life in John's epistle - As a descriptive Name of Jesus (1Jn 1:2), a promise to believers (1Jn 2:25), a warning to haters (1Jn 3:15), a gift from God as a witness (1Jn 5:11), a promise we can know we possess (1Jn 5:13), and realization in

eternal life. (NIV = **He** is the true God and eternal life.)

Eternal life - 41x in 41v - Mt 19:16, 29; 25:46; Mark 10:17, 30; Luke 10:25; 18:18, 30; John 3:15-16, 36; 4:14; 5:24, 39; 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 68; 10:28; 12:50; 17:2-3; Acts 13:46, 48; Ro 2:7; 5:21; 6:22f; Gal 6:8; 1Ti 1:16; 6:12; Titus 1:2; 3:7; 1 John 1:2; 2:25; 3:15; 5:11, 13, 20; Jude 1:21

Related Resources:

- [What is eternal life?](#)
- [Got Eternal Life? Do you know for sure that you will have eternal life in Heaven with God?](#)

Paul gave a similar warning

"Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, **outbursts of anger**, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (Gal 5:19-21)

Note his "qualifier" is "those who practice such things" because all of us have been guilty of most if not all of these sins, but the distinction is that they are not our lifestyle, our habitual practice. Those who continually abide in this lifestyle will continually abide in eternal death, eternally separated from the Lord!

Akin - The one who is governed by a spirit of hate does not possess **eternal life**. This does not mean that the **murderer** cannot be transferred from the sphere of death to the realm of **eternal life**. Indeed, forgiveness is available to all who repent, including those who murder. This statement is one of present reality. No murderer possesses the **eternal life** that comes from "abiding in him." ([1, 2, 3 John- An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture](#))

John Kistemaker - The consequence of being a murderer is that the person forfeits eternal life... That is, a murderer has no part in the kingdom of God. Unless he repents and turns in faith to Christ, he is eternally lost. ([Epistles of John- Simon J. Kistemaker](#))

Abiding ([3306](#)) (**meno**) remaining in him ever for **meno** is in the **present tense** which signifies continuance.

NET Note (and W Hall Harris) on **abiding** - The verb *menō* in 1 Jn 3:15 refers to a spiritual reality (eternal life) **which in this case does not reside in the person in question**. To speak in terms of eternal life not "residing" in such an individual is not to imply that at some time in the past this person did possess eternal life and subsequently lost it, however. The previous verse (1Jn 3:14) makes it clear that the individual under discussion here has "*remained*" in death (the realm of spiritual death) and so has never possessed **eternal life** to begin with, no matter what he may have claimed. Taken together with the use of *meno* in 1Jn 3:14, the use here implies that the opponents have "*remained*" in death all along, and have not ever been genuine believers. (Bolding added)

Jesus used **meno** in His pronouncement - "And you do not have **His word abiding** in you, for (**term of explanation** = explaining the implications of not having His word abiding) you do not believe Him whom He sent." (John 5:38)

MacArthur on **no murderer has eternal life abiding in him** - That does not mean that a believer could never commit an act of murder, or that someone who has committed murder can never be saved. But it does mean that those who are characterized by hateful attitudes and who regularly harbor murderous thoughts evidence an unregenerate heart and will perish eternally (cf. Rev. 21:7-8; 2

Utleigh on **no murderer has eternal life abiding in him** - This is not saying someone who commits murder cannot be a Christian. Sin is forgivable, but lifestyle actions reveal the heart. It is saying that one who habitually hates cannot be a Christian. Love and hate are mutually exclusive! Hate takes a life, but love gives its life. ([Commentary](#))

Vine - The destroyer of physical life is set in contrast with the possessor of spiritual life. The statement is parallel to that at the end of v. 14; the murderer is "he that loveth not," and, not having eternal life, he "abideth in death." While there is forgiveness in this life for the murderer, yet, for the destiny of him who remains in his guilt, see Revelation 21:8.

John Phillips - hatred—which is the root of the sin of murder—likewise proves that the person who entertains this murderous spirit is devoid of eternal life. Both the fruit and the root reveal the unregenerate nature of such a person.

Wuest - All of which means that the one who habitually hates his fellow-man to the exclusion, of course, of any good attitude towards him, is a potential murderer. Should occasion arise, his hate would issue in action like that of Cain. A person like that, John says, does not have eternal life abiding in him. In short, he is unsaved.

David Smith - Eternal life, which abides in God's children, which is the living growth of the seed of God in them, is evidenced by love: if the very crown and issue of hate, homicide, be present, it is utterly impossible that this germ of life can be coexistent with it; can be firmly implanted and abiding (cf. John 5:38) in the man. ([Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

Marshall - Hatred is the wish that the other person was not there; it is the refusal to recognize his rights as a person, the longing that he might be dead. We may not like to put the point quite so frankly, but it is good that the real character of hatred should be so unambiguously displayed, so as to warn us against it. If I hate somebody, I am no different from a murderer in my attitude toward him. Such a person shares the nature of the devil, the archetypal murderer, and therefore it should come as no surprise that such a person cannot possibly possess eternal life. Hatred is incompatible with spiritual life. Put otherwise, the person who hates another wants to deprive him of life; such a person clearly does not belong to the realm of life. ([The Epistles of John \(The New International Commentary on the New Testament- I. Howard Marshall\)](#))

Steven Cole - A person whose life is marked by selfish hatred of others shows no evidence of new life in Christ. That is the meaning of John's words in verses 14 & 15. He is not saying that no murderer may be saved. Paul was a murderer before he was saved, and both David and Moses murdered men after they were saved. As in 1Jn 3:9, here John uses present tense verbs that point to the overall direction of a person's life. A person whose life is marked by a pattern of selfishness, envy, jealousy, strife, and hatred gives evidence that he remains in spiritual death. While John's words are an evidential test of a person's spiritual condition, they are also an exhortation to those that profess to believe in Christ. As believers, we have to battle the hatred that stems from our own selfishness. While on the one hand, spiritual growth results inevitably from spiritual life, on the other hand it does not happen without our constant effort. Whenever the deeds of the flesh rear their ugly heads, we must put them to death and replace them with the fruit of the Spirit (Ro. 8:13; Gal. 5:19-23). ([1 John 3:11-18 Hatred or Love?](#))

William MacDonald - When John says that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him, he does not mean that a murderer cannot be saved. He simply means that a man who characteristically hates his fellows is a potential murderer and is not saved. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

John Gill on **no murderer has eternal life abiding in him** - he has not the grace of life, or the beginning of eternal life in him; he has no meetness for it, being unregenerate; and no right unto it, being unrighteous; nor has he the earnest and pledge of it, being destitute of the Spirit of God; all which a regenerate man has, and has them abiding in him: not but that the sin of murder may be forgiven; a man guilty of it may truly repent, and have pardoning grace applied unto him, and enjoy eternal life, through the grace of the Spirit, and the blood and righteousness of Christ; but without these he is so far from having eternal life, that he is not only punishable with a corporeal death, according to the laws of God and man; but he is exposed unto, and will die the second, or an eternal death.

David Guzik - There are many people for whom being a Christian is a "none of the above" sort of thing. They consider themselves Christians because they are not Moslems, or Jewish, or Buddhists, or atheists. But being a Christian is never a "none of the above" kind of thing. Being a Christian is more than saying, "I am a Christian." There are in fact some who claim to be Christians who are not. How can we know if we are one of these? John's reply has been constant

hater is potentially a murderer. A murderer is a hater who expresses his hatred in the most emphatic way. A hater who does not murder abstains for various reasons from this extreme way of expressing his hate. But the temper of the two men is the same; and it is obvious (οἱ ὄντες "ye know what needs no evidence") that every murderer is incapable of possessing eternal life. It is the murderous temper, not the act of homicide, that excludes from eternal life. St. John, of course, does not mean that murder is an unpardonable sin; but he shows that hate and death go together, as love and life, and that the two pairs are mutually exclusive. How can life and the desire to extinguish life be compatible? ([1 John 3 Commentary](#))

S Lewis Johnson (former professor at Dallas Theological Seminary) says "Christian love is designed to characterize the church. Hatred characterizes the world. The prototype is Cain. It originates in the devil. It issues in murder. **The evidence is spiritual death.**" ([Divine Love and Its Inevitable Truth](#))

Andreas Kostenberger - John asserts that the Christian community is the company of those who love one another, echoing the pervasive theme of the gospel's Farewell Discourse (John 13–17). This love is congruent with eternal life (1 John 3:14; cf. 1Jn 2:25), just as lack of love indicates that a person **remains in a state of spiritual death**. In fact, hatred is equivalent to spiritual murder, and no murderer will be granted access to God's presence in heaven (1Jn 3:15). ()

Lenski - So much for the hating that is murder in God's judgment. It is the evidential mark of the world, of all those who remain in death, who have not eternal life as an abiding possession, and who, like Cain, hate us who have stepped over out of their death into life and want to rob us of this life and often, therefore, persecute or even kill us physically.

The **Easy English Bible commentary** summarizes this passage in easy to understand language...

The *Lord Jesus taught that anger with no cause is the same as murder (Matthew 5:21-22). So here, John says that hate is the same in its effects as murder. Hate is often the first step to murder. Those who hate could go on to kill. That is what Cain did. Even if they do not kill, the attitude of mind is the same. Someone who murders does not have life with God. Those who hate have the same attitude in their mind. They do not have *eternal life. ([Ref](#))

Charles Haddon Spurgeon - What a warning this is against the evil spirit of hate, revenge, and all that kind of feeling! These things are not compatible with the possession of the life of God. Where hatred lives, there is no life of God in the soul. That evil must be shot to the very heart, by the arrows of almighty grace, or else we are not free from the dominion of the devil. Every man who hates another has the venom of murder in his veins. He may never actually take the deadly weapons into his hand and destroy life; but if he wishes that his brother were out of the way, if he would be glad if no such person existed, that feeling amounts to murder in the judgment of God. It is not the lifting of the dagger, nor the mixing of the poison, that is the essence of the grime of murder, it is the hate that prompts the commission of the deadly deed; so, if we never commit the crime, yet, if the hate be in our heart, we are guilty of murder in the sight of God, and eternal life cannot be abiding in us. ([God's Love to the Saints](#))

For completeness it should be noted not everyone interprets this verse as discussed above. Some consider this to be a regenerate person! One of the more prominent individuals that espouse this interpretation is Zane Hodges. If you are interested here is a link that discusses [The Unusual Teachings of Zane Hodges](#). The reader is advised to Be a Berean when using any commentaries authored by Zane Hodges! For more discussion see first entry under [1 John 3 Resources](#).

Hatred's Bitter Fruit - One of the worst cases of hatred I have ever come across is found in a will written in 1935 by a Mr. Donohoe. It says, "Unto my two daughters, Frances Marie and Denise Victoria, by reason of their unfilial attitude toward a doting father,... I leave the sum of \$1.00 to each and a father's curse. May their lives be fraught with misery, unhappiness, and poignant sorrow. May their deaths be soon and of a lingering malignant and torturous nature." The last line of the will is so vicious I shudder to quote it. It reads, "May their souls rest in hell and suffer the torments of the condemned for eternity." ([Read the original article - Spokane Daily Chronicle](#))

Such utter contempt didn't develop in a day. It had to grow over a long period of time. We should never allow our minds to become fertile soil for the seeds of hatred. We would do ourselves a world of good by heeding the words of Paul, "Do not let the sun go down on your wrath" (Eph. 4:26). And James gave wise counsel when he told us to "be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God" (James 1:19-20).

Hate, like acid, damages the vessel in which it is stored and the object on which it is poured.

Oswald Chambers said: “The right of life is insisted on all through the Bible. As long as I do not murder anyone outright the law cannot touch me, but is there someone dependent on me to whom in the tiniest way I am not giving the right to live? Someone for whom I am cherishing an unforgiving dislike? ‘Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer’ (1 John 3:15).” Our hearts become hard through repeated refusals to yield to God. But they can be softened by obedience. When we say “yes” to God, the result is relief and life-giving release for our families, colleagues, and friends. What’s my frame of mind today?

In Defense Of Life - Read: 1 John 3:10-23 | You shall not murder. —Exodus 20:13

The Jews clearly understood that God’s commandment not to kill refers to murder—the malicious taking of human life. It doesn’t forbid governments to use the death penalty or to wage war. This commandment deals solely with private morality.

Exodus 20:13 is based on the divine truth that human life is sacred and that we must protect and preserve it. Every human being bears God’s image. Even an embryo is marked with a unique identity from the moment of conception. Life is God’s most precious gift, and only He has the right to take it. Abortion, euthanasia, and physician-assisted suicide must all be viewed in the light of God’s right to our life.

Jesus brought this commandment to everyone’s doorstep when He said that to be angry at someone without cause makes us guilty of murder (Matthew 5:21-22). And John wrote, “Whoever hates his brother is a murderer” (1 John 3:15). This makes us all murderers in desperate need of God’s forgiveness and mercy.

Thank You, Lord, for Your love and forgiveness. Help us by Your Holy Spirit to love others as You have loved us, and in so doing to value life, protect life, and enrich life as a gift from You. By Dennis J. De Haan

Points To Ponder

What did John mean when he said that if we hate someone we are murderers? (1 John 3:15).

How does this truth help us to forgive those who hurt us?

Anger is just one letter short of danger.

Question - [What is eternal life?](#)

Answer: When the Bible speaks of eternal life, it refers to a gift of God that comes only “through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23). This gift is in contrast to the “death” that is the natural result of sin.

The gift of eternal life comes to those who believe in Jesus Christ, who is Himself “the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25). The fact that this life is “eternal” indicates that it is perpetual life—it goes on and on and on, with no end.

It is a mistake, however, to view eternal life as simply an unending progression of years. A common New Testament word for “eternal” is *aiónios*, which carries the idea of quality as well as quantity. In fact, eternal life is not really associated with “years” at all, as it is independent of time. Eternal life can function outside of and beyond time, as well as within time.

For this reason, eternal life can be thought of as something that Christians experience now. Believers don’t have to “wait” for eternal life, because it’s not something that starts when they die. Rather, eternal life begins the moment a person exercises faith in Christ. It is our current possession. John 3:36 says, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.” Note that the believer “has” (present tense) this life (the verb is present tense in the Greek, too). We find similar present-tense constructions in John 5:24 and John 6:47. The focus of eternal life is not on our future, but on our current standing in Christ.

The Bible inextricably links eternal life with the Person of Jesus Christ. John 17:3 is an important passage in this regard, as Jesus prays, “Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” Here, Jesus equates “eternal life” with a knowledge of God and of the Son. There is no knowledge of God without the Son, for it is through the Son that the Father reveals Himself to the elect (John 17:6; 14:9).

This life-giving knowledge of the Father and the Son is a true, personal knowledge, not just an academic awareness. There will be some on Judgment Day who had claimed to be followers of Christ but never really had a relationship with Him. To those false professors, Jesus will say, “I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!” (Matthew 7:23). The apostle Paul made it his goal to know the Lord, and he linked that knowledge to resurrection from the dead: “I want to know Christ—yes

In the [New Jerusalem](#), the apostle John sees a river flowing from "the throne of God and of the Lamb," and "on each side of the river stood the [tree of life](#). . . . And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:1-2). In Eden, we rebelled against God and were banished from the tree of life (Genesis 3:24). In the end, God graciously restores our access to the tree of life. This access is provided through Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

Right now, every sinner is invited to know Christ and to receive eternal life: "Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life" (Revelation 22:17).

How can you [know that you have eternal life](#)? First of all, confess your sin before our holy God. Then accept God's provision of a Savior on your behalf. "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13). Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for your sins, and He rose again the third day. Believe this good news; trust the Lord Jesus as your Savior, and you will be saved (Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9-10).

John puts it so simply: "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life" (1 John 5:11-12). [GotQuestions.org](#)

Question: [Got Eternal Life? Do you know for sure that you will have eternal life in Heaven with God?](#)

Answer: The Bible presents a clear path to eternal life. First, we must recognize that we have sinned against God: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). We have all done things that are displeasing to God, which makes us deserving of punishment. Since all our sins are ultimately against an eternal God, only an eternal punishment is sufficient. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).



[Click here to watch the video](#)

However, Jesus Christ, the sinless (1 Peter 2:22), eternal Son of God became a man (John 1:1,14) and died to pay our penalty. "God demonstrates His love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Jesus Christ died on the cross (John 19:31-42), taking the punishment that we deserve (2 Corinthians 5:21). Three days later He rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:1-4), proving His victory over sin and death. "In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3).

By faith, we must change our mindset regarding Christ - who He is, what He did, and why - for salvation (Acts 3:19). If we place our faith in Him, trusting His death on the cross to pay for our sins, we will be forgiven and receive the promise of eternal life in heaven. "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son so that anyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9). Faith alone in the finished work of Christ on the cross is the only true path to eternal life! "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not of yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

If you want to accept Jesus Christ as your Savior, here is a sample prayer. Remember, saying this prayer or any other prayer will not save you. It is only trusting in Christ that can save you from sin. This prayer is simply a way to express to God your faith in Him and thank Him for providing for your salvation. "God, I know that I have sinned against you and deserve punishment. But Jesus Christ took the punishment that I deserve so that through faith in Him I could be forgiven. I place my trust in You for salvation. Thank You

for Your wonderful grace and forgiveness - the gift of eternal life! Amen!"

Have you made a decision for Christ because of what you have read here? If so, please click on the "I have accepted Christ today" button below.

[I have accepted Christ today](#)

If you have any questions, please use the question form on our [Bible Questions Answered](#) page. [GotQuestions.org](#)

Related Resources:

- [How can I gain an eternal perspective on life? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Is there life after death? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What does John 3:16 mean? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What things in this world have a true eternal value? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the river of life? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What did Jesus mean when He promised an abundant life? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Can Christians live their best life now? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is eternal death? | GotQuestions.org](#)

GREEK WORD STUDIES

Brother (80)(**adelphos** from **a** = denotes unity + **delphus** = a womb) means brother or near kinsman. "Adelphós generally denotes a fellowship of life based on identity of origin, e.g., members of the same family (Mt. 1:2; Lk 3:1, 19; 6:14); members of the same tribe, countrymen, and so forth (Acts 3:22; 7:23; Ro 9:3)." (Zodhiates) Figuratively, **adelphos** describes members of the Christian community, spiritual brother, fellow Christian, fellow believer (Ro 8:29). Jews used adelphos to describe fellow countrymen (Acts 3:22).

One of the same nature, a fellow man was regarded as a brother (Mt. 5:22–24, 47).

Adelphós also came to designate a fellowship of love equivalent to or bringing with it a community of life (Matt. 12:50; Mark 3:35; 10:29, 30; Acts 12:17).

In this manner Jesus speaks of His brethren (Mt. 25:40; 28:10; John 20:17; Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:11, 17).

The members of the same Christian community are called brothers (Jn 21:23; Acts 9:30; Rom. 16:14; 1 Cor. 7:12).

Vine -

- (1) male children of the same parents, Mt. 1:2; 14:3; Jn 1:41
- (2) male descendants of the same parents, Acts 7:23, 26; Heb 7:5;
- (3) male children of the same mother, Mt 13:55; 1Cor 9:5; Gal. 1:19;
- (4) people of the same nationality, Acts 3:17, 22; Ro 9:3. With "men" (aner, "male"), prefixed, it is used in addresses only, Acts 2:29, 37, etc.;
- (5) any man, a neighbor, Lk 10:29; Mt. 5:22; 7:3;
- (6) persons united by a common interest, Mt. 5:47;
- (7) persons united by a common calling, Rev. 22:9;
- (8) mankind, Mt. 25:40; Heb 2:17;
- (9) the disciples, and so, by implication, all believers, Mt. 28:10; John 20:17;
- (10) believers, apart from sex, Mt 23:8; Acts 1:15; Ro 1:13; 1Th 1:4; Rev. 19:10 (the word "sisters" is used of believers, only in 1 Tim. 5:2);
- (11) believers, with aner, "male," prefixed, and with "or sister" added, 1Cor 7:14 (RV), 15; Jas. 2:15, male as distinct from female, Acts 1:16; 15:7, 13, but not Acts 6:3. ([Brother, Brethren, Brotherhood, Brotherly - Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words](#))

1. Physical Brotherhood. There are references to the physical brothers of Judah in Mt. 1:2, to brothers among the disciples in Mk. 1:16, 19, to the brother of Mary and Martha in Jn. 11:2ff., to Paul's sister in Acts 23:16, to brothers of Jesus in Mk. 3:31ff., and to various other brothers, e.g., in Mk. 12:19–20; Lk. 15:27; Lk. 16:28; Lk. 12:13; and Mk. 10:29–30.

2. Spiritual Brotherhood. adelphós also refers to fellow believers some 30 times in Acts and 130 in Paul. This usage has an OT and Jewish basis (cf. Acts 3:22; Mt. 5:22–23; Acts 2:29; 3:17, etc.). Jesus uses the term in Mt. 23:8; 25:40. Christians are his brethren (Rom. 8:29) and are to love one another as such (1 Jn. 2–3). adelphótēs denotes the brotherhood (1 Pet. 2:17) and means brotherly disposition in Hermas (Mandates 8.10).

Adelphos in the **Septuagint** - brother Ge 4,2; brother (metaphorically) Job 30,29; kinsman Gen 13,8; other, fellow man Lev 19:17; (metaphorically) Job 41,9; neighbor, friend Ge 43,33;

Gilbrant - Adelphos in Classical Greek - Properly adelphos in classical Greek denotes a “brother,” that is, “the son of the same mother.” Other meanings, however, are equally apparent. It might indicate an ethnic relationship, such as a “fellow-kinsman, compatriot.” Also it might be used of a “colleague” or “associate.” As a term of affection it could even be used by a wife of her husband (Liddell-Scott). Grammatically, adelphos is also an adjective meaning “brotherly” (or “sisterly” for that matter). In general terms it describes anything paired or related (ibid.; cf. Moulton-Milligan). There is evidence that “**brother**” was used in the sense of a fellow-member in a religious fraternity or guild; that use, however, was probably imported from the East. Participants in Baal worship and initiates in the Mithras cult were called “brothers” (Günther, “Brother, Neighbour, Friend,” Colin Brown, 1:254). Josephus wrote that the Essenes referred to one another as “brother” (Wars of the Jews 2.8.3). In speaking of the relationship between things of the world, Plotinus (Enneads 2.9.18.20) said that they were all adelphoi, “brothers” (von Soden, “adelphos,” Kittel, 1:146).

The Septuagint reflects a broad understanding of **adelphos**. It is relied upon to translate 11 Hebrew terms and it is especially used to translate 'āch, “brother” (of the physical type) in such places as Genesis 4:2,8,9,10,11. The senses of “close relative” (Genesis 14:14) and “fellow citizen or fellow countryman” (Exodus 2:11; cf. 1 Maccabees 2:40; 5:13) are also present. The parallelism at Leviticus 19:17 attests to a close relationship between “brother” and “neighbor” (Hebrew, rēa'), in other words, another person (cf. Genesis 43:33). The Qumran community expected love of fellow members (brothers) of its community, but “brother” or “neighbor” applied only to those within the community. The distinction between brother and neighbor was a burning issue in later Judaism, as is reflected in the legal expert's questioning of Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” (plēsion [3999]; Luke 10:29). (The Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

Adelphos - 343x in 317v - believing husband(1), brethren(170), brethren*(13), brother(111), brother's(8), brothers(40).

Matt 1:2, 11; 4:18, 21; 5:22ff, 47; 7:3ff; 10:2, 21; 12:46ff; 13:55; 14:3; 17:1; 18:15, 21, 35; 19:29; 20:24; 22:24f; 23:8; 25:40; 28:10; Mark 1:16, 19; 3:17, 31ff; 5:37; 6:

Related Resources:

- [Is Jesus our brother?](#)
- [Brother - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [Brother - Fausset's Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Brother - American Tract Society Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Brother - Bridgeway Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Brothers - Holman Bible Dictionary](#)