

# 1 John 3:16 Commentary

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FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND HIS CHILDREN  
Click chart to enlarge

Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission  
Another Overview Chart - [1 John](#) - [Charles Swindoll](#)

BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP		BEHAVIOR OF FELLOWSHIP	
Conditions of Fellowship	Cautions of Fellowship	Fellowship Characteristics	Fellowship Consequences
Meaning of Fellowship 1 Jn 1:1-2:27		Manifestations of Fellowship 1 Jn 2:28-5:21	
Abiding in God's Light		Abiding in God's Love	
Written in Ephesus			
circa 90 AD			
From Talk Thru the Bible			

## STUDY GUIDE 1 JOHN 3

What is this? On the photograph of the Observation Worksheet for this chapter you will find handwritten 5W/H questions (Who?

What? Where? When? Why? How?) on each verse to help you either personally study or lead a discussion on this chapter. The questions are generally very simple and are stated in such a way as to stimulate you to observe the text to discern the answer. As a reminder, given the truth that your ultimate Teacher is the Holy Spirit, begin your time with God with prayer such as Psalm 119:12+ "Blessed are You, O LORD; Teach me Your statutes." (you can vary it with similar prayers - Ps 119:18, 26, 33, 64, 66, 68, 108, 124, 135, 171, etc) The questions are generally highlighted in yellow and the answers in green. Some questions have no answers and are left to your observations and the illuminating/teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. Some qualifying thoughts - (1) Use "As is" - these are handwritten and will include mistakes I made, etc. (2) They may not be the best question for a given verse and my guess is that on some verses you will think of a far superior 5W/H question and/or many other questions.

Dr Howard Hendricks once gave an assignment to his seminary students to list as many observations as they could from Acts 1:8. He said "So far they've come up with more than 600 different ones! Imagine what fun you could have with 600 observations on this passage. Would you like to see Scripture with eyes like that?" (P. 63 [Living by the Book](#) - borrow) With practice you can! And needless to say, you will likely make many more observations and related questions than I recorded on the pages below and in fact I pray that the Spirit would indeed lead you to discover a veritable treasure chest of observations and questions! In Jesus' Name. Amen

Why am I doing this? **Mortimer Adler** among others helped me develop a questioning mindset as I read, seeking to read actively rather than passively. Over the years I have discovered that as I have practiced reading with a 5W/H questioning mindset, it has yielded more accurate interpretation and the good fruit of meditation. In other words, consciously interacting with the inspired Holy Word of God and the illuminating Holy Spirit has honed my ability to meditate on the Scripture, and my prayer is that this tool will have the same impact in your spiritual life. The benefits of meditation are literally priceless in regard to their value in this life and in the life to come (cf discipline yourself for godliness in 1Ti 4:8+.) For some of the benefits - see Joshua 1:8+ and Psalm 1:2-3+. It will take diligence and mental effort to develop an "inductive" ([especially an "observational"](#)), interrogative mindset as you read God's Word, but it bears repeating that the benefits in this life and the rewards in the next will make it more than worth the effort you invest! Dear Christian reader let me encourage you to strongly consider learning the skills of [inductive Bible study](#) and spending the rest of your life practicing them on the Scriptures and living them out in your daily walk with Christ.

Although Mortimer Adler's advice is from a secular perspective, his words are worth pondering...

*Strictly, all reading is active. What we call passive is simply less active. Reading is better or worse according as it is more or less active. And one reader is better than another in proportion as he is capable of a greater range of activity in reading.* (Adler's classic book [How to Read a Book is free online](#))

[John Piper](#) adds that "Insight or understanding is the product of intensive, headache-producing meditation on two or three verses and how they fit together. This kind of reflection and rumination is provoked by asking questions of the text. And you cannot do it if you hurry. Therefore, we must resist the deceptive urge to carve notches in our bibliographic gun. Take two hours to ask ten questions of Galatians 2:20+ and you will gain one hundred times the insight you would have attained by reading thirty pages of the New Testament or any other book. Slow down. Query. Ponder. Chew.... (John Dewey rightly said) "People only truly think when they are confronted with a problem. Without some kind of dilemma to stimulate thought, behavior becomes habitual rather than thoughtful."

*"Asking questions is the key to understanding."*

--Jonathan Edwards

That said, below are the [5W/H questions](#) for each verse in this chapter (click page to enlarge). This is not neatly typed but is handwritten and was used for leading a class discussion on this chapter, so you are welcome to use it in this "as is" condition...



### 1 John 3:16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren:

**Greek:** en touto egnokamen (1PRAI) ten agapen hoti ekeinos huper hemon ten psuchen autou etheken (3SAAI) kai hemeis opheilomen (1PPAI) huper ton adelphon tas psuchas theinai (AAN).

KJV 1 John 3:16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

BGT 1 John 3:16 ν το τ γν καμεν τ ν γ πην, τι κε νος π ρ μ ν τ ν ψυχ ν α το θηκεν· κα με ς φε λομεν π ρ τ ν δε λφ ν τ ς ψυχ ς θε ναι.

NET 1 John 3:16 We have come to know love by this: that Jesus laid down his life for us; thus we ought to lay down our lives for our fellow Christians.

CSB 1 John 3:16 This is how we have come to know love: He laid down His life for us. We should also lay down our lives for our brothers.

ESV 1 John 3:16 By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

NIV 1 John 3:16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

NLT 1 John 3:16 We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters.

NRS 1 John 3:16 We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us-- and we ought to lay down our lives for one another.

NJB 1 John 3:16 This is the proof of love, that he laid down his life for us, and we too ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

NAB 1 John 3:16 The way we came to know love was that he laid down his life for us; so we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

YLT 1 John 3:16 in this we have known the love, because he for us his life did lay down, and we ought for the brethren the lives to lay down;

MIT 1 John 3:16 Here is the basis on which we know the nature of love: He on our behalf placed his life on the line; and we ought to place our lives on the line for the brothers.

GWN 1 John 3:16 We understand what love is when we realize that Christ gave his life for us. That means we must give our lives for other believers.

BBE 1 John 3:16 In this we see what love is, because he gave his life for us; and it is right for us to give our lives for the brothers.

RSV 1 John 3:16 By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

NKJ 1 John 3:16 By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

ASV 1 John 3:16 Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

**Wuest** - In this we have come to know by experience the aforementioned love, because that One on behalf of us laid down His soul. And, as for us, we have a moral obligation on behalf of our brethren to lay down our souls. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

- **Know** - 1Jn 4:9,10 Mt 20:28 John 3:16 10:15 15:13 Ac 20:28 Ro 5:8 Eph 5:2,25 Titus 2:13 1Pe 1:18 2:24 3:18 Rev 1:5 5:9
- **and we:** 1Jn 2:6 1Jn 4:11 John 13:34 15:12,13 Ro 16:4 Php 2:17,30
- [1 John 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 John 2:6+ the one who says he abides in Him **ought** himself to walk in the same manner as He walked. (See [Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#))

1 John 4:11+ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also **ought** to love one another.

### OUR EXAMPLE OF LOVE: THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST

**By this** (hereby) (en touto) - This phrase is first in the Greek and literally means "in this" and is used a number of times by John (Jn 13:35, 15:8, 16:30, 1Jn 2:5, 3:24, 4:13, 5:2, 3:16, 3:19, 4:2) When you encounter "**by this**" pause and ask "**By what?**" In this passage John is pointing to what follows, although some feel he is also pointing back to the negative example of Cain to highlight

the positive example of Christ. If Cain is the prototype of hate, Christ is the perfect example of love. Cain was the supreme example of hate; Christ is the perfect picture of love. One took a life, the other laid down His life

*"Christ is the archetype of self-sacrificing love, as Cain is of brother-sacrificing hate! Love and hate are known by their works.*  
--Plummer

**William Barclay** - 'If you want to see what this love is, look at Jesus Christ. In his death for us on the cross, it is fully displayed.' In other words, the Christian life is the imitation of Christ. 'Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus' (Philippians 2:5+). 'Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps' (1Peter 2:21+). No one can look at Christ and then claim not to know what the Christian life is. ([1 John 3 Commentary - Daily Study Bible](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** makes a great point - Every Christian knows John 3:16, but how many of us pay much attention to 1 John 3:16? It is wonderful to experience the blessing of John 3:16; but it is even more wonderful to share that experience by obeying 1 John 3:16: Christ laid down life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. Christian love involves sacrifice and service. Christ did not simply talk about His love; He died to prove it (Rom. 5:6-10). ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**We know** (1097)(**ginosko**) often means to know by experience (some think **ginosko** and **eido** are used interchangeably by John but I think there are definite shades of difference depending on the context). **Ginosko** is in the perfect tense which means that we came to **know** at a point in time and that we still **know**, to acquire and possess this knowledge. It speaks of permanence of this knowledge. "We have learnt and now hold the lesson forever." (Westcott) And what was it they had experienced? They had experienced the love of God in Christ laying down His life that they might become recipients of His payment of the price of redemption (from slavery to sin and Satan) and forgiveness of their sins. And such a permanent knowledge should serve to motivate believers to do as their Savior did, to love as He loved, laying down their lives as He laid down His.

**THOUGHT** - Have you prayerfully (asking the Spirit to open the eyes of your heart) meditated recently on what Jesus did for you when He laid down His life for you? What might a revived experiential knowledge of His sacrifice do for your spiritual life, particularly in the area of sacrificial love (you might want to read Jesus' words in Rev 2:4-5+)!

**Steven Cole** - If you're running short on love, stop and meditate on what Jesus did for you. If the servant who had been forgiven the huge debt had stopped to think about it, he would have forgiven his fellow servant the lesser debt (Mt. 18:23-35). Or, as John states (1Jn 4:11), "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." ([1 John 3:11-18 Hatred or Love?](#))

**Hiebert** adds this comment on the **perfect tense** of **ginosko** - The perfect-tense verb "we perceive" (**egnōkamen**) indicates a knowledge that has been gained through diligent contemplation of the significance of that historical event. Having come to know this love through our past encounter with it, we now know the true nature of this love.

In 1Jn 2:3+ John used **ginosko** in perfect tense - "And by this we know (**ginosko** - present tense) that we have come to know (**ginosko** - perfect tense) Him, if we keep (present tense - as the general direction of our life - in short not lawless but law abiding) His commandments." If we claim to know Jesus and do not keep His commandments, we are lying (to ourselves and everyone around us and will be exposed as a fraud and hypocrite on the day of judgment!).

*Christ sacrificial death thus distinguishes agapē love from all other loves by its costliness, its unconditional acceptance of another, and its "accomplishment."*

**Love** (26)(**agape**) is the selfless, supernatural love that God is and God gives us via His indwelling Spirit (Ro 5:5+, Gal 5:22+). In context Christ's **love** is clearly demonstrated by the costliness of His sacrifice. His love was costly and so should our love be for the brethren. This Christ-like love is not love that is felt as much as it is a love that is demonstrated, the ultimate demonstration being by what He did = **He laid down His life for us!** Love is in a sense saying "No" to our life that others may live.

*The kind of love John is talking about is not native to the human heart.*

-- [Hiebert](#)

**Love** is literally "the love" which David Smith terms "the thing called love. The love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord is the perfect type. Till the world saw that, it never knew what love is!" ([Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

**Steven Cole** makes an interesting statement - There is hardly a passage in the New Testament that speaks of God's love that does not also speak of the cross. ([1 John 3:11-18 Hatred or Love?](#))

*Love is denial of self for another's gain.*

*It is doing what Jesus himself would do*

-- Glenn Barker

**Boice:** "What is it that gives the love of God as seen at the cross its special character? Primarily it is the element of self-sacrifice on behalf of those who are totally undeserving and even undesirous of the sacrifice." (Borrow [The Epistles of John Expository Commentary page 116](#))

*Reduced to the absolute minimum,  
love gives and hate takes.*

-- Hawley

**What is agape love?** "Agape love a love that denies self for the benefit of the object loved. **Agape** describes the love of the Spirit-filled husband, purified and made heavenly in character. **Agape** is the love which the Holy Spirit sheds abroad in the heart of the yielded believer (Ro 5:5+) The saint is to order his behavior or manner of life within the sphere of this divine, supernatural (agape) love produced in his heart by the Holy Spirit. When this love becomes the deciding factor in his choices and the motivating power in his actions, he will be walking in love. He will be exemplifying in his life the self-sacrificial love shown at Calvary and the Christian graces mentioned in 1Co 13:4-7 - see notes 1Co 13:4; 13:5 ; 13:6 , 13:7 . **(It is) a love that is willing to sacrifice one's self for the benefit of that brother, a love that causes one to be long suffering toward him, a love that makes one treat him kindly, a love that so causes one to rejoice in the welfare of another that there is no room for envy in the heart, a love that is not jealous, a love that keeps one from boasting of one's self, a love that keeps one from bearing one's self in a lofty manner, a love that keeps one from acting unbecomingly, a love that keeps one from seeking one's own rights, a love that keeps one from becoming angry, a love that does not impute evil, a love that does not rejoice in iniquity but in the truth, a love that bears up against all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. That is the kind of love which God says one Christian should have for another.**" (Agape love) speaks of a love which is awakened by a sense of value in an object which causes one to prize it. It springs from an apprehension of the preciousness of an object. It is a love of esteem and approbation. The quality of this love is determined by the character of the one who loves, and that of the object loved. (In Jn 3:16) God's love for a sinful and lost race springs from His heart in response to the high value He places upon each human soul. Every sinner is exceedingly precious in His sight... each sinner is most precious to God, first, because he bears the image of his Creator even though that image be marred by sin, and second, because through redemption, that sinner can be conformed into the very image of God's dear Son. This preciousness of each member of the human race to the heart of God is the constituent element of the love that gave His Son to die on the Cross. The degree of the preciousness is measured by the infinite sacrifice which God made. The love in Jn 3:16 therefore is a love whose essence is that of self-sacrifice for the benefit of the one loved, this love based upon an evaluation of the preciousness of the one loved, this love based upon an evaluation of the preciousness of the one loved. (Compiled from Wuest's Word Studies [Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

Amazing love, How can it be,  
That you my King, should die for me?  
Amazing love, I know it's true.  
It's my joy to honor You,  
in all I do, I honor you."

-- Chris Tomlin

**David Guzik** adds that agape "described a love that loves without changing. It is a self-giving love that gives without demanding or expecting re-payment. It is love so great that it can be given to the unlovable or unappealing. It is love that loves even when it is rejected. Agape love gives and loves because it wants to; it does not demand or expect repayment from the love given - it gives because it loves, it does not love in order to receive... It isn't the death of Jesus in itself that is the ultimate demonstration of love; it is the death of Jesus together with what it does for us that shows the epitome of love (See Denney's description below).

**James Denney** - If I were sitting on the end of the pier on a summer day enjoying the sunshine and the air, and some one came along and jumped into the water and got drowned "to prove his love for me", I should find it quite unintelligible. I might be much in need of love, but an act in no rational relation to any of my necessities could not prove it. But if I had fallen over the pier and were drowning, and some one sprang into the water, and at the cost of making my peril, or what but for him would be my fate, his own, saved me from death, then I should say, "Greater love hath no man than this." I should say it intelligibly, because there would be an intelligent relation between the sacrifice which love made and the necessity from which it redeemed. ([Death of Christ - Christian Classics Ethereal Library](#))

**Steven Cole** - John will state this directly in 1Jn 4:7, but it is implicit in our text. Love in the believer comes from God. In 3:10b, John said that the one who does not love is not of God, implying that the one who loves is of God. In 3:17, he says that if we do not demonstrate practical love for those in need, the love of God does not abide in us. If you lack love for someone, first make sure that

you are born of God. Then, ask Him for it. ([1 John 3:11-18 Hatred or Love?](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** - the test of Christian love is not simply failure to do evil to others. Love also involves doing them good. Christian love is both positive and negative. "Cease to do evil; learn to do well" (Isa. 1:16–17). Cain is our example of false love; Christ is the example of true Christian love. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

*"Self-preservation" is the first law of physical life,  
but "self-sacrifice" is the first law of spiritual life.*

-- Warren Wiersbe

**He laid down His life** ([psuche](#)) **for us** - Clearly refers to the crucifixion of Christ. **Laid down** is aorist tense, active voice, indicative mood indicating Jesus accomplished this act deliberately, actively and volitionally (voluntarily - a choice of His will) at a given time in history for the interest of others. His death was not passive like the thousands of sacrificial animals that had been laid on the altars, none having a choice in the matter. No, Jesus "died actively and purposefully" (Kistemaker). The verb (tithemi) is used in the sense of laying aside in the classics, as to lay aside war, shields, etc. Compare Jesus' words in Mt 20:28 (to give His life). We see this sacrificial love in many NT passages - Gal 1:4, Eph 5:2, 1Pe 2:24, 1Pe 3:18.

**David Allen** on Christ's voluntary laying down - John essentially says three things about Jesus' death on the cross: it was voluntary, it was vicarious, and it was victorious... Most people consider the first law of life to be self-preservation. Jesus teaches us that the first law of spiritual life is self-sacrifice... As if speaking directly to the Savior himself, Spurgeon said in his sermon on this passage, "Ah, Lord Jesus! I never knew Thy love till I understood the meaning of Thy death." The most astounding thing in all the world is the fact that Jesus was willing, out of love for us, to die in our place as our substitute. There is a famous picture by a great artist of an angel standing by the cross of Christ. With his fingers he is feeling the sharp points of the thorns that had pierced the Savior's brow, and on his face is a great look of wonder and astonishment. The angel cannot understand the marvel of that love. In fact, no one can fully fathom such love. During his only visit to the United States, the eminent Swiss theologian Karl Barth lectured at Union Seminary in Richmond, Virginia. After his formal address he engaged in some informal conversation with the students. One young man asked Barth if he could state the core of what he believed. Barth took a moment to light his pipe, and then, as the smoke drifted away, he replied, "Yes, I think I can summarize my theology in these words: 'Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.'" (See [1-3 John: Fellowship in God's Family](#)) **C H Spurgeon The Death of Christ for His People**

This same idiomatic description (**laid down His life**) was used by Jesus in the Gospel of John:

I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd **lays down His life** for the sheep. (Jn 10:11+)

For this reason the Father loves Me, because I **lay down My life** that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I **lay it down** on My own initiative. I have authority to **lay it down**, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father. (John 10:17, 18+)

"**Greater love** has no one than this, that one **lay down his life** for his **friends** (in context of 1John = brothers). (John 15:13+)

**John Piper** on **Three Reasons Jesus Death Is the Supreme Example of Love** - Now I would like to suggest to you three reasons why Jesus' death on the cross should serve as the supreme example of love for us.

**1. It Involved the Greatest Possible Sacrifice** - First of all, it involved the greatest possible sacrifice. Christ gave up his very life for us. Love takes so much joy in another person's welfare that it is willing, eager, delighted to sacrifice one's own personal well-being for the good of the other person. Now a person's life is his most precious possession. To rob him of it, which is murder, is the greatest possible sin you could ever commit against him. By the same token, to give one's own life for the sake of another's is the greatest possible expression of love for him. You remember what Jesus said in John 15:13: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." It is a sharp contrast that John paints for us. Cain's hatred issued forth in murder. Jesus' love issued forth in self-sacrifice, even to the point of giving up his very life for us.

**2. It Meets Our Deepest Needs** - Second, and more importantly, Christ's death on the cross is the supreme example of love in that it meets our needs in a way that nothing else ever could. It is not only the greatest possible sacrifice, it also does the greatest possible good for us. The key words in v. 16 are "he laid down his life for us." You see, self-sacrifice in and of itself is not intrinsically valuable. Self-sacrifice becomes love only to the extent that it is positively related to human need. Only insofar as self-sacrifice works for the good of another does it have any value in the eyes of God. I think that is what Paul was getting at in 1 Corinthians 13:3, "If I give away all that I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned [there's self-sacrifice to be sure] but have not love [that is, the self-sacrifice is not directed to meeting the needs of anyone else], I gain nothing."



But Christ's love for us is exceedingly positive. (True love always is.) It moved him to lay down his life for us. Again there is a sharp contrast. In Genesis 4:8 we read, "Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him." In 1 John 3:16 we read, "[Jesus Christ] laid down his life for us." And in those prepositions, the "against" of Genesis 4:8 as compared to the "for" of 1 John 3:16, we find the difference between love and hate, between life and death. The death of Jesus Christ is the supreme example of love because it meets our deepest needs—it brings us peace with God, forgiveness, a clear conscience, hope for the future, power to love in the present, etc., etc. It does the greatest possible good for us.

**3. It Had the Greatest Possible Motive** - But not only does Jesus' death embody love because it was the greatest possible sacrifice done for the greatest possible good. It was also done for the greatest possible motive. According to John 12:28 Jesus went to the cross in order to glorify the name of his heavenly Father. And the writer of Hebrews tells us that Jesus endured the cross "for the joy set before him" (Hebrews 12:2). These two inextricably linked goals—the glory of God and our own delight and joy in it—are to be the supreme motive for any act of love. They were for Jesus, and they are to be for us. ([Love: A Matter of Life and Death](#))

**Life (5590)(psuche)** is the the word for soul. Yes, the Cross cost Christ His physical life but there was also a cost to His **soul**, for when at the ninth hour (time of the evening offering) Jesus cried out from the Cross "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Mt 27:46, Mk 15:34). Here we see the Triune God speaking of being forsaken by His Father. O the depth of the mystery surrounding the profound cost of Jesus laying down His life for us!

*As Cain took his brother's life to benefit self,  
Christ laid down His life to benefit His enemies*  
--Ro 5:10+

**For (huper) us** (ekeinos huper) - The idea is that He did this "in our place," or "on our behalf", His death as our example. John uses this preposition (huper) in John 10:11, 15, John 11:50. He died that we might live and love like He did in His death!

**Hiebert** on **for (huper) us** - Although the preposition "for" ([huper](#)) may be used to present the message of Christ's substitutionary atonement (cf. John 11:50; 1Cor. 15:3; 2Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13), that does not seem to be the intended message here; rather John is stressing one aspect of Christ's death, His being an example. Since one's own life is an individual's most precious possession, Christ's willingness to lay down that life on behalf of others constituted the greatest possible expression of love (Jn 15:13; Ro 5:6–10). " 'Self-preservation' is the first law of physical life; but 'self-sacrifice' is the first law of spiritual life." Such a love is the very opposite of hatred, which is destructive of the welfare of others.

## OUR PRACTICE OF LOVE: IMITATION OF CHRIST

**And (kai)** - John clearly and quickly connects Christ's example with a call for us to imitate His example.

**Hiebert** - In 1Jn 2:6 John has already stated the obligation of believers to follow the example of Christ; now he indicates how sweeping that obligation is.

**Daniel Akin** - The Bible says that if you want to see love, look at the cross! The Bible says that if you want to show love, look at the cross! The Bible says that if you want to know love, look at the cross! The Bible says that if you want to live love, look at the cross! (See [Exalting Jesus in 1,2,3 John - Page 78](#))

**We** - This pronoun is emphatic emphasizing that "We on our part..." Christ's self-sacrifice is not just a revelation to be admired, but an example to be imitated (1Pe 2:21+). Notice how John does not say YOU are to do this, but as a master teacher, he places himself on the same level as his readers stating **WE** ought to lay down our lives! Good point for all us teachers!

**Smalley** notes that "The idea of the **'imitation of Christ'**, which this verse presents, appears with some frequency in First John (cf. 1Jn 2:6+; also 1Jn 2:29+; 1Jn 3:2+, 1Jn 3:3+, 1Jn 3:7+; 1Jn 4:11, 17). The concept is also deeply embedded in the theology of the NT generally (cf. 1Cor 11:1; Phil 2:5–8+; 1Th 1:6+ "imitators... of the Lord"; 1Ti 6:13–14; Heb 12:2–3+; 1Pet 2:21+)." (Borrow [1, 2, 3 John Word Biblical Commentary page 194](#))

Paul alluded to believers emulating Christ's example explaining...

For **the love of Christ** (His love for us including that demonstrated at Calvary) controls (**synecho**) us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they who live should **no longer live for themselves**, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf." (2Cor 5:14-15+)

**P. M. Hughes** comments - The great compelling motive force in his life since conversion is that of love;

not, however, love originating, far less ending, in himself, but the love which originates and ends with God in Christ. His conduct, however it be judged, is dictated by the love of Christ (not so much his love for Christ—though that inevitably is involved—as Christ's love for him, which is prior to and the explanation of his love for Christ, and which is supremely manifested, as is clear from what immediately follows, in Christ's atoning sacrifice of Himself... It is this love (agape) and none other, that shuts him in, confines him as between two walls (Ed: A good word picture of **synecho**) to one purpose which may be summed up in the terms of the preceding verse as being to **live selflessly "unto God" and, within the framework of that supreme allegiance, to his fellow-men** ("unto you" - 2Co 5:13+). ([Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians: The English Text ... - Page 192](#))

[Westcott](#) - That which constrains us is not only His example, but the truth which that example reveals.

## **WE ARE UNDER MORAL OBLIGATION TO LOVE**

**And we ought** ([opheilo](#) - present tense) **to lay down our lives** ([psuche](#)) **for the brethren** ([adelphos](#)) - We are called to imitate Jesus (1Jn 2:6) and there is no greater way than in imitating His love. The present tense of [opheilo](#) signifies that we ought to be laying down our lives daily for our brethren! "Surrendering ourselves for others is a regular Christian obligation, and should be regarded as an ordinary duty rather than a transcendent deed of virtue." ([Smalley](#)) But just try to accomplish this surrender in your own (natural) strength! You and I simply cannot do it! We need to rely on the enabling power of the Spirit to die daily! Yes, we still have to make the decision (usually moment by moment as opportunities present themselves to "die to self"), but it is God's Spirit in us Who initiates this **desire** in our heart and gives us the **power** to accomplish it (Php 2:12+, Php 2:13+). And don't worry, God will give us plenty of "pop tests" to allow us to practice dying to self and loving others! If you are married, you know full well that what I am saying is all too true!

It is interesting that John choose **opheilo** and not **dei**, for the former conveys more of a moral obligation and the latter more of a physical necessity. [Hiebert](#) adds "Instead of saying "must" (dei), which would have conveyed the thought of "logical necessity," John uses "ought" (opheilomen) which conveys an inner sense of "moral obligation.""

**John Piper** - There is an "**oughtness**" to (brotherly love). This is the moral imperative of love that is at the very heart of the gospel. We **ought** to reflect for others the same kind of love that Jesus had for us. We **ought** to delight so much in doing them good that we are willing to give up our very lives for them. ([Love: A Matter of Life & Death](#))

**We ought** ([3784](#))([opheilo](#)) means we have an moral obligation or we "owe a debt" (so to speak) to do the same as He did, imitating Him, following in His steps. We who claim to be Christ's disciples or followers are obligated to love even as our Lord loved, to the point of death (for Him on a Cross, for us death to self - Mk 8:34-35+).

This obligation is similar to 1Jn 2:6+ where John said "the one who says he abides in Him **ought** ([opheilo](#)) himself to walk in the same manner as He walked." [Westcott](#) comments that "The life which is from God and in God must be manifested after the pattern of the divine life which has been shown upon earth."

**Kistemaker** on **ought to lay down our lives** - When he says **ought**, he imposes a moral obligation: as Jesus extends his love by giving his life, so the Christian **ought** to express his love for the believers by being willing to lay down his life for them. When the honor of God's Name, the advancement of His church, and the need of His people demand that we love our brothers, we ought to show our love at all cost—even to the point of risking and losing our lives. ([Epistles of John- Simon J. Kistemaker](#))

[Hiebert](#) on obligation of believers to **lay down** their lives - The aorist tense, "to lay down," denotes the supreme act of self-sacrifice to which Christian love, if necessary, should be willing to go, namely, the willingness to surrender our lives "for the brethren"... John is not seeking to stimulate a spirit of martyrdom in his readers, but he is stressing that this is the extent to which Christian love should be willing to go (John 15:12-13).

John uses [opheilo](#) again in chapter 4 writing "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also **ought** ([opheilo](#)) to **love one another**."

In his Third Epistle John describes another way of loving the brethren writing "Therefore we **ought** ([opheilo](#)) to support such men (traveling teachers), that we may be fellow workers with the truth." (3John 1:8) What a great truth of Jesus' maxim that it is more blessed to given than to receive (Acts 20:35), for here we see that those who demonstrate love to the traveling brethren become partners with them in their work of proclaiming the Gospel! And one day they will share in their reward in glory! Amazing love indeed!

**John Piper** on **we ought** - There is an "oughtness" to it. This is the moral imperative of love that is at the very heart of the gospel. We ought to reflect for others the same kind of love that Jesus had for us. We ought to delight so much in doing them good that we are willing to give up our very lives for them. But as you know, not many of us will have the opportunity to die for one another. But



what we all have constantly are opportunities to demonstrate Christlike love in lesser, more nitty-gritty ways—like sharing our possessions with those in need. ([Love: A Matter of Life and Death](#))

While Cain's **selfish** love led him to slay his brother, the believer's **selfless** love compels him to sacrifice for his brother! Christ has given to us, so now we are to give to others.

*The lost world will never believe John 3:16  
if Christians don't obey 1 John 3:16*

**David Guzik** - Since we are sent with the same mandate Jesus was sent with, we must demonstrate our love by **laying down our lives for the brethren**. Jesus' words As the Father sent Me, I also send you (John 20:21) seem to be ringing in John's ears.

As **Wuest** says regarding the statement **we ought to lay down our lives** - "**Lives** again is **psuche soul**. The ego must be crucified. Self must be denied for the benefit of one's brother. It must be kept in mind that our Lord's death had atoning value, whereas our laying down our lives in glad service to our fellow man does not." ([Erdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

Jesus used **opheilo** in Luke (in a parable on the master-servant relationship) declaring

"too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves (doulos); we have done only that which we ought (**opheilo**; KJV = "our duty" ~ we had a debt) to have done.'" (Lk 17:10+)

**Henry Morris comments** "As bondslaves to Christ, **we owe Him many debts**. As Paul says, "I am debtor... to preach the gospel" (Ro 1:14,15+). No longer "to live after the flesh" is also a debt we owe (Ro 8:13+). We "ought to bear the infirmities of the weak" (Ro 15:1+), "to love one another" (1Jn 4:11), "to be teachers" (Heb 5:12+), and "to walk as He walked" (1Jn 2:6+).

Ultimately, to **lay down our lives for the brethren**, is the supreme proof that we love them. John described this in his Gospel (quoted earlier) and Peter had to learn a hard lesson about what it meant (and that it could only be accomplished in the supernatural strength of the Spirit and not the natural strength of a man - and so it was not until Peter received power from on high [Lk 24:49], the power of the Holy Spirit [Acts 1:8], that he was willing to lay down his life for Christ - see Acts 5:29-32, 33, 40-41!)...

Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will **lay down my life** for You. Jesus answered, "Will you **lay down your life** for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a cock shall not crow, until you deny Me three times. (Jn 13:37-38)

Greater love has no one than this, that one **lay down his life** for his friends. (Jn 15:13)

For some of John's readers this may have indeed meant laying down their physical lives and it may still be true of many followers of Christ today, especially if they are living in areas known for intense Christian persecution. (You may be unaware of ongoing persecution. If you are click on the various countries marked on [The Voice of the Martyrs Prayer Map](#)). And then pray for your persecuted brothers and sisters, which surely is one form of laying down one's life for the brethren. "Christ died for those who hated Him and the Christian must confront... the world with a love that is ready to die even for the haters." (cp Stephen in Acts 7:54-60)

I gave My life for thee,  
My precious blood I shed,  
That thou might'st ransomed be,  
And quickened from the dead;  
I gave, I gave My life for thee;  
What hast thou given for Me?  
-- Frances R. Havergal

**John Stott** sums up this section -- Hatred characterizes the world, whose prototype is Cain. It originates in the devil, issues in murder and is evidence of spiritual death. Love characterizes the Church, whose prototype is Christ. It originates in God, issues in self-sacrifice, and is evidence of eternal life. (Borrow [The Letters of John page 148](#))

**David Allen** on laying down one's life for another - I remember when I first read about Boris Kornfeld. I have never forgotten his story. I was in my second year as pastor of my first church in 1983. Chuck Colson's book Loving God had just been published the previous year. Colson told the riveting story of the Jewish doctor in a Russian concentration camp known as a gulag. What crime against the state he had committed no one knows. Kornfeld met a fellow prisoner, a committed Christian whose name we don't know, who engaged him in conversation about Jesus. He often heard the prisoner recite the Lord's Prayer and found himself strangely drawn to the words. While carrying on his medical duties amidst filth and squalor day after day, Kornfeld began to see the parallels in the Jewish people who had suffered so much as a nation and the suffering of Jesus. He became a Christian. When Kornfeld discovered an orderly stealing food from his patients, he reported him to the commandant. Though there had been a rash of

murders in the camp, with each victim being a stoolie who had ratted someone else out and then paid for it with his life, Kornfeld didn't care. He knew his life would be in danger as soon as the orderly was released from his cellblock. Kornfeld felt a sense of newfound freedom in Christ. He wanted to tell someone about it, but the prisoner who had spoken to him about Christ had been transferred to another camp. One gray afternoon he examined a patient who had just been operated on for intestinal cancer. The man's eyes were sorrowful and suspicious, thought Kornfeld, and his face reflected the depth of his spiritual and physical misery. So the doctor began to talk to the patient, describing what had happened to him to change his life. Drifting in and out of the anesthesia's influence and shaking with fever, the patient heard the doctor's testimony about Christ and how all of our suffering is in one sense deserved on this earth for our sins. He hung on the doctor's words until he finally fell asleep. The next morning he was awakened by a commotion in the area. He wondered where his doctor friend was. Then a fellow patient told him of Kornfeld's fate. During the night, as Kornfeld slept in the infirmary, someone dealt him fatal blows to his skull with a mallet. Kornfeld died, but his testimony did not. The patient pondered the doctor's last, impassioned words about Christ, suffering, and salvation. He too became a Christian. He survived the prison camp and went on to tell the world what he had learned there. His name was Alexander Solzhenitsyn, winner of the Nobel Prize in literature in 1970 for his major work *The Gulag Archipelago*, which brought international exposure to the Soviet Union's labor camp system. He was expelled from the Soviet Union in 1974. (See [1-3 John: Fellowship in God's Family](#))

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To illustrate 1 John 3:16, which says "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters," you could depict scenarios where someone makes a significant sacrifice for another person, like:

- **A lifeguard jumping into the water to save a drowning child:**

This visually represents the act of putting oneself in harm's way to protect another, mirroring Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.

- **A soldier shielding a comrade from gunfire:**

This highlights the idea of putting another's life before your own, even in a dangerous situation, showcasing the ultimate act of selfless love.

- **A parent donating a kidney to their sick child:**

This illustrates the immense love and commitment one can have for a family member, signifying a willingness to give a part of oneself for their well-being.

- **A volunteer working tirelessly at a homeless shelter:**

This portrays the concept of actively serving others with no expectation of reward, reflecting the selfless nature of Christian love.

- **A person offering their last piece of food to someone in need:**

This simple act demonstrates the idea of sharing what you have with others, even when it means sacrificing something yourself.

Key points to emphasize in these illustrations:

- **The act of giving:**

The focus should be on the person actively taking action to help another, not just thinking about it.

- **Selflessness:**

The illustration should convey that the sacrifice is made without expecting anything in return.

- **Personal connection:**

Depicting a recognizable relationship between the individuals can further emphasize the depth of love involved

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## **Mahan - He Laid Down His Life For Us 1 John 3:16**

Here is the most profound, sublime, and glorious truth that human tongue can speak, proclaimed in seven simple, one-syllable words. There is not a long, complicated word in the entire sentence!

Great thoughts can always be expressed in simple words, such as “Thank you,” or “I love you.” But feeble thoughts need to be dressed up in rhetoric and fine language. Someone said, “Today’s intellectuals need Latin words and confusing sentences to express their feeble ideas, but God’s servants are always content to preach the gospel in the Spirit and with the understanding!”

We do not preach for admiration but for edification. We do not preach to impress men but to instruct them.

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**ILLUSTRATION OF LAYING DOWN LIFE FOR BRETHREN** - A young mother admitted, in a testimony meeting, that she never seemed to find time for her own personal devotions. She had several little children to care for, and the hours melted away. Imagine her surprise when two of the ladies from the church appeared at her front door. “We’ve come to take over,” they explained. “You go into the bedroom and get started on your devotions.” After several days of this kind of help, the young mother was able to develop her devotional life so that the daily demands on her time no longer upset her.

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### **GOLFERS HAVE A CHANGE OF HEART**

When you willingly give Jesus all that you are and all that you have, you receive so much more in return.

I heard a story once about a group of guys who were returning from playing golf in rural Georgia. As they drove down a two-lane road they came up on a smoldering house. It was obvious it had burned during the night. Standing in front of the smoldering ashes was a distraught woman with a small child. The men were Christians, so they stopped the car and asked if she was okay. She said nobody was hurt but she had lost all she had. The men each pulled a few dollars out of their pockets and handed it to the woman and said, “God bless you.”

They drove off in silence. After a couple of miles the driver stopped the car and took off his golf hat. He turned to his buddies and said, “Okay, take out your wallets and give me all the money you have and we’re going to go back and give it to her.” They emptied their wallets and one man even wrote a large check. The amount in the hat totaled over \$1,000.

When they returned, they found the woman standing in the same place. The driver got out and said to the woman, “We just gave you some money, but we made a mistake. Would you be willing to give me all that money back?”

The woman looked at him as if he was crazy, but without complaining she gave him the few dollars they had given her. The driver then added that money to that inside his hat and handed her the whole hat. Then he said, “We’ll be sending you more.”

What a great picture of the fulfillment of this parable. God asks us to give Him all we have—and we don’t have that much—and what we have He gave to us in the first place. But when we willingly surrender everything to Him, He pours out so much blessing we can’t even contain it all!

(From a sermon by David Dykes, Sell Out and Buy Up! 8/17/2012)

Scriptures: 1 John 3:16-20, 1 Timothy 6:6-19

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### **Brennan Manning**

By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. 1 JOHN 3:16 NKJV

My own glimpse of Jesus moved from obscurity to increasing clarity on a winter’s night in the Zaragoza desert in Spain. The world was asleep, but my heart was awake to God. During prayer I heard Jesus say, “For love of you I left my Father’s side. I came to you who ran from me, who fled me, who did not want to hear my name. For love of you I was covered with spit, punched and beaten, and fixed to the wood of the cross.”

Although it was many years ago, this morning in an hour of quiet time, I realized that those words still burned on my life. Whether I am in a state of grace or disgrace, the words impose themselves with the stark realism of objective truth. That night in the cave I stared at a crucifix for hours, figuratively seeing the blood streaming from every wound and pore in Christ’s body. The longer I looked, the more I realized that no man has ever loved me and no woman could ever love me as he does. I cried out in the darkness, “Jesus, are you crazy—are you out of your mind to have loved me so much?” I learned that night what a wise old Franciscan told me: “Once you come to know the love of Jesus Christ, nothing else in the world will seem beautiful or desirable.”

Is any love more attractive than Jesus’? Lord, thank you for letting love move you to save me. Amen.

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**Jerry Bridges - EVERYTHING FOR US** (1 JOHN 3:16) [Holiness Day by Day: Transformational Thoughts](#)

The Law of God set forth in Scripture is a transcript of God's own moral nature. It's the law that was fully imprinted on Adam's heart as part of his being created in God's image. It's the same law that the apostle Paul said is still written on people's hearts regardless of how obscured it may now be (Romans 2:12–16). It's a universal law applicable to all people of all times.

The apostle Paul was referring to this universal moral will of God when he wrote that Christ was "born under the law" (Galatians 4:4). Jesus was born under the Law because He came to perfectly obey it in our place. He came to do what we, because of our sinful nature, could not do.

There is, however, another significant dimension to Jesus' obedience. As our representative, He not only was obligated to obey the precepts of the Law, but also to suffer its penalty for our violation of it. This obligation He freely assumed in obedience to the Father's will.

So Jesus not only obeyed the Father's universal moral will, which we call the Law of God; He also obeyed the Father's specific will for Him, namely to suffer the penalty for our sin. The writer of Hebrews referred to this specific will of God for Jesus when he wrote, "And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10, NIV).

In recent years Christians have tended to focus on the death of Christ almost to the neglect of His sinless life. Jesus' life of perfect obedience has been seen mostly as a necessary precondition to His death. However, Jesus not only died for us; He also lived for us. All that Christ did in both His life and death, He did in our place as our substitute.

"For My Daddy Showed Me So ..."

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.

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**"For My Daddy Showed Me So ..."— 1 JOHN 3:16 [Pearls of Great Price: 366 Daily Devotional Readings - Page 14](#)**

Several years ago Nancy wrote to tell me the deep struggles she and her husband wrestled with over placing their severely handicapped son, Brad, in a residential facility. Should they bring him home? Did the family have enough support?

I tried to give the family some tools to make those critical decisions, and she recently wrote back to express her appreciation. They'd made their decision; Brad was home again. "Joni," she wrote, "incredible fruit has resulted in our lives from that decision. God used Brad to change my husband and me, helping us see the Lord in a way we never could have had Brad not lived in our midst."

Nancy also enclosed a beautiful three-page tribute to her husband, written from Brad's point of view. Every paragraph was a powerful testimony to a father's flexibility, integrity, love, and devotion to his disabled child. Little Brad "wrote," "Dad, I can't give anything back to you except my smiles when I hear your voice, or my giggles when you whistle. I can't even say, 'I love you.'" But I think the best part of the tribute is the close: "Maybe I can't read the Bible, but I can 'say' Jesus loves me, this I know, for my daddy showed me so."

Greeting card makers employ countless poets and writers to come up with clever, funny, poignant, or romantic ways to say, "I love you; I'm thinking about you." But God didn't send a greeting card to show his love — he came himself. He didn't just tell us he loved us — he gave up his own life on our behalf. You can talk and sing about love until the cows come home. But at the end of the day, real love means sacrifice.

How can you show the love of Jesus today by what you sacrifice for another?

Thank you, God, for those who have showed me the true love of Christ by what they gave up to teach, encourage, help, and support me.

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**REAL LOVE [Embracing Eternity: Living Each Day with a Heart Toward Heaven](#)**

. 1 John 3:16

"There's no doubt in my mind that nothing can separate you from God and his love." Desecration, 21

A YOUNG BOY was sitting in the waiting room of a hospital worried about his sick sister when a doctor sat down beside him. The boy's parents sat on the other side. The doctor explained to the boy that his sister needed a blood transfusion and that he was one of the few people with the kind of blood that she needed. Both he and his sister had very rare blood types, the doctor explained. And unless his sister received this transfusion, she would probably die.

"Would you give your blood to Mary?" the doctor asked. Johnny hesitated and bit his lip to keep it from quivering. "Sure, for my sister," he said, smiling to hide his fear.

Soon the two children were wheeled into the hospital room. Mary was pale and thin. Johnny was robust and healthy. Neither spoke

as the nurse inserted the needles into their arms, beginning the transfusion. Johnny's smile faded as he saw the blood flow through the tubes. He laid his head back on his pillow and closed his eyes. His face never changed. When the procedure was almost done, he looked up at the doctor and with a slightly shaken voice asked, "Doctor, when do I die?"

I hope someone was quick to hug the selfless child!

Jesus says, "I command you to love each other in the same way that I love you. And here is how to measure it—the greatest love is shown when people lay down their lives for their friends" (John 15:12–13).

If you want to know the depth of people's love, just look at how much they are willing to sacrifice for you. If you wonder what people think of you, look at what they're willing to do for you. When people are willing to pay the ultimate price, you no longer have to wonder if their love is genuine.

You and I may never be called on to give up our life for someone we love. But people will know just the same, because how we live says as much about us as how we're willing to die.

#### REFLECTION

According to today's reading, how will we know what real love is?

Can you say honestly that you display the love of Christ to those around you? Can you give examples of how you do that?

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#### Societies [Best of All, God is with Us: Heartwarming Devotions from the ...](#)

We know what real love is because Christ gave up his life for us. And so we also ought to give up our lives for our Christian brothers and sisters.—1 John 3:16, NLT

When John Wesley returned to England from his failed American mission, he noted what happened to his old friend George Whitefield in the ensuing years. Whitefield, like Wesley, drew huge crowds and many were saved, but there was something critical missing, and Wesley saw what it was. Here's his report:

They did repent and believe the gospel. And by his ministry a line of communication was formed, quite from Georgia to New-England.

But the last journey he made, he acknowledged to some of his friends, that he had much sorrow and heaviness in his heart, on account of multitudes who for a time ran well, but afterwards "drew back unto perdition...."

... Those who were more or less affected by Mr. Whitefield's preaching had no discipline at all. They had no shadow of discipline; nothing of the kind. They were formed into no societies: They had no Christian connection with each other, nor were ever taught to watch over each other's souls. So that if any fell into lukewarmness, or even into sin, he had none to lift him up: He might fall lower and lower, yea, into hell, if he would, for who regarded it?

John Wesley found a remedy to the problem of the Whitefield converts who were falling away:

Two of our Preachers willingly offered themselves to go to America. They laboured first in Philadelphia and New York; afterwards in many other places: And everywhere God was eminently with them, and gave them to see much fruit of their labour. What was wanting before was now supplied: Those who were desirous to save their souls were no longer a rope of sand, but clave to one another, and began to watch over each other in love. Societies were formed, and Christian discipline introduced in all its branches.

The work of God then not only spread wider, particularly in North Carolina, Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and the Jerseys, but sunk abundantly deeper than ever it had done before. —from "The Late Work of God in North America"

There is no one lonelier than the troubled Christian who has no one to help him through deep waters. One role of the church is to express the love of Christ toward other believers in practical ways. When someone hurts, we are to be our brother's keeper. Let me ask you: is there someone who watches diligently over your soul? Do they know your deepest hurts? Your greatest victories? And then, let's turn the question around: are you there for your brothers and sisters in Christ? Are you "connected together" effectively? You may be the answer to the prayers of someone you know. Build relationships with other believers and watch the church grow stronger.

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**Love Rules!** What is it like to live in the light of Jesus' love, as 1 John 3:16 emphasizes? Have you ever entered a dark room or an abandoned apartment, turned on the light, and watched the cockroaches scurry away? Living in the light means we do not have to run away when Jesus shines the truth of His Word on our lives. It means we welcome His inspections. According to the apostle John, it means letting the Savior's love guide our conduct.

That's a tough assignment and sometimes we fail to make the grade. But Jesus forgives us when we confess our sins. He pardons our transgressions. That's why it's so important to stay close to Him, whatever our circumstances. Jesus not only tells us how to be

compassionate, but also helps us to display kindness when we rely on Him.

**Love Comes First.** American pastor, author, and sociologist, Tony Campolo, tells the story of a 13-year-old hydrocephalic girl living in a Haitian missionary hospital. The girl, brain-damaged and deformed from an accumulation of fluid in her head, rocked nervously on her bed, day after day, year after year. The Haitian nurses, though very busy with more hopeful cases, lovingly tended this girl, feeding her, changing her diapers, and tending to her safety needs.

One day the girl accidentally rocked herself off her bed and onto the cement floor, seriously injuring herself. The nurses could have dismissed the fall as being "God's will" and cut down on her care. Instead, they chose to increase her care and to spend long hours in prayer for her.

We learn from 1 John 3 that loving the unlovely is a Christian's mandate and challenge. Will we love those we find physically and mentally repulsive? And will we care about and care for society's "hopeless"?

It is through our meaningful relationships—those based on love, full of grace and truth—that we best reflect Jesus' love and draw others to faith in Him. Love for others is the foremost commandment when it comes to practicing our profession of faith in the Savior.

**Called to Love.** Pastor Jeff Wallace recalls a time when his young daughter, Gracie, was holding his hand as they walked out of a convention hall where they had heard a gifted preacher convey afresh the love and mercy of the Lord Jesus. Jeff noticed Gracie's rapt attention as the preacher spoke. And Jeff, too, was greatly moved and impressed by the minister's sermon.

Jeff relates that he was not surprised when Gracie looked up at him and asked, "Daddy, did you think that was a good preacher?" "Oh, yes, sweetheart, he is a great preacher," Jeff responded. "Do you think he's a better preacher than you are?" Gracie continued. "Oh, yes, sweetheart, he's a much better preacher than I am," Jeff admitted. "Not really, Daddy," Gracie concluded. "The only preacher better than you is Jesus!"

Jeff made the following observation: "Of course, my confidence in my preaching ability has little affected my daughter's opinion. But my heart was overjoyed by her expression of pure love and devotion. Love does that. It always affects. It always brings joy. It always builds up. Love is the only service that power cannot command and money cannot buy. Love is the key to the universe that unlocks all doors. Love is more than a characteristic of God. It is His character."

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### **Don Fortner - The love of God' 1 John 3:16**

Read Hosea 3:1–3; 14:1–9

Children of God, rejoice in and give thanks for the love of God in Christ. None of us deserves to be loved by God. There is nothing in us by nature, either actually or potentially, that could have caused God to love us. He is holy; we are evil. He is pure; we are defiled. He is righteous; we are sinful. He is the glorious God of heaven; we are the filthy worms of the earth. Yet the infinite, eternal God loved us! He loved us freely! There is no cause to be found for the love of God for us except in himself. He says, 'I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.'

The love of God for our souls is sovereign. I cannot explain the sovereignty of God's love for his own elect, but I can rejoice in his love. He did not love Esau or Judas, but he did love, Jacob and John, He did not choose to love many of my friends and companions or many of my own kinsmen, but blessed be his name, he did choose to love me! I was more undeserving of his love than all the others combined; nevertheless he loved me. Shall I not rejoice in his love?

The love of God for his own elect is eternal. His love for us, like himself, is without beginning. The Lord God loves us with an everlasting love. Before angel loved angel, before man loved man, before either angels or men were created, Jehovah loved us, and said, 'I will be their God, and they shall be my people.'

The proof of God's love for us is in the sacrifice of his own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to save us. 'God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us' (Rom. 5:8). God so greatly loved us that, though the price of our redemption must be the blood of his own Son, he willingly made the sacrifice!

And God's love for his own is an immutable love. It changes not. The Lord God will never cease to cherish his own. His love will never come to an end. It can never be exhausted. It never even diminishes or becomes cold. God loves us perfectly and without end. No, not even our many sins affect his love. 'Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!'

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### **Billy Graham - THE SUPREME SUFFERER 1 JOHN 3:16 [Unto the Hills: A Daily Devotional - Page 154](#)**

Throughout His earthly life, Jesus was constantly exposed to personal violence. At the beginning of His ministry, His own townfolk at Nazareth tried to hurl Him down from the brow of the hill (Luke 4:29). The religious and political leaders often conspired to seize Him and kill Him. At length He was arrested and brought to trial before Pilate and Herod. Even though He was guiltless of the accusations, He was denounced as an enemy of God and man, and not worthy to live.



The sufferings of Jesus also included the fierce temptations of the devil: “Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil” (Matthew 4:1).

Remember, too, that He knew in advance what was coming, and this enhanced his suffering. He knew the contents of the cup He had to drink; He knew the path of suffering He should tread. He could distinctly foresee the baptism of blood that awaited Him. He spoke plainly to His disciples of His coming death by crucifixion.

Jesus, the supreme sufferer, came to suffer for our sins. As a result of His sufferings, our redemption was secured.

What does the Divine Sufferer demand from us? Only our faith, our love, our grateful praise, our consecrated hearts and lives. Is that too much to ask?

Christ living in us will enable us to live above our circumstances, however painful they are. Perhaps you who read these words find yourself almost crushed by the circumstances you are now facing. You wonder how much more you can stand. But don't despair! God's grace is sufficient for you and will enable you to rise above your trials. Let this be your confidence:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? . . . No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (Romans 8:35–37)

Our Father and our God, You whose Son suffered greatly in my stead, I praise Your marvelous name. I bring to Your holy altar my grateful praise, my love, my consecrated heart, and my surrendered life. Take them, Lord

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**Reflecting Love 1** JOHN 3:16 Chris Tiegreen [The One Year Worship the King Devotional: 365 Daily Bible](#)

**IN WORD** Though we don't fully understand God's love, we can accept it. Even though its depth is beyond our imaginations, we can assume that because He is God—infinite, perfect, and completely “other”—He is capable of it. We, however, know how short we fall. We are not capable of that kind of love, because self-sacrifice is only part of our nature within a few special family relationships.

Nevertheless, that's exactly the kind of love to which God calls us. We are to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. He came into this world to lay down His life for us, and He never said that's the end of the story. We are to lay down our lives in exactly the same way. If we want to have God's kind of love, we have to realize its depths. And its depths call for the ultimate sacrifice.

That's hard to obey. In fact, this commandment to love each other in the same way that Jesus loved us is perhaps the most neglected in all of Scripture. It isn't that we can't love each other. It's that we can't love each other like that. We usually don't mind going out of our way for our friends, being generous with our money, even forgiving our enemies from time to time. But to die for them? Even if we take that figuratively, it's beyond us. We can sacrifice to a point, but there's a line we won't cross. We don't pay ultimate sacrifices easily. The flesh cannot do such a spiritual thing.

That's why it's a certain sign of God at work in a person. Sacrificial love, in its purest sense, can only be birthed in us from above. Only the Spirit of the sacrificial God can produce sacrificial children. Only a supernatural being can do something so . . . well, supernatural.

**IN DEED** Ask the hard questions about your love life. Who do you love? How much? Are you willing not just to go out of your way occasionally, but to radically sacrifice for the sake of reflecting God's love?

He alone loves the Creator perfectly who manifests a pure love for his neighbor. —VENERABLE BEDE

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**On This Day - Mass Murder** [On This Day: 365 Amazing and Inspiring Stories about Saints...](#)

Under Pope Sixtus IV, builder of the Sistine Chapel, the nepotism of the Renaissance papacy reached its worst. The Vatican bustled with his 16 nephews, two brothers, and three sisters who continually injected themselves into Italian and church affairs. They became the leading figures of Rome. They traveled with vast retinues, feasted at banquets, dressed in pearl-embroidered clothes, and slept with endless partners in luxuriant beds.

But they soon clashed with their rivals in pleasure and power, the Medici family, based in Florence. The Medici banking firm had been the traditional Vatican bankers. But when conflicts arose, Sixtus transferred the vast papal fortunes to another family of bankers, the Pazzi. The Medici counterattacked, tempers flared, and in 1478, with the pope's knowledge, his nephews and bankers hatched a plan to murder Lorenzo and Julian Medici.

On Sunday, April 26, 1478, the two Medici brothers entered the cathedral in Florence for Easter Mass. They were, according to their custom, unarmed and unguarded. The service began. Suddenly, as the priest lifted the bread of the Eucharist into the air, Julian felt

a stabbing pain pierce his chest. The dagger was withdrawn, then thrust again and again. He died quickly. Lorenzo was attacked at the same instant. He instinctively flung his cape around his arm, forming a shield, and fought off his attackers.

His rage was unquenchable. He tracked down the conspirators and had them hung or thrown from palace windows. Their ears and noses were cut off, and they were hacked to pieces, dragged through the streets, and thrown into the Arno.

Sixtus retaliated by excommunicating Lorenzo, suspending all religious services in Florence, and launching a futile two-year war against the city. The two men remained enemies till 1484 when Sixtus died. Lorenzo the Magnificent, as he was called, lived eight years longer, then died at age 43 after drinking a mixture of jewels prescribed by physicians for his stomach pains.

We know what love is because Jesus gave his life for us. That's why we must give our lives for each other. 1 John 3.16

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### **I'd Die for You—1 John 3:16** [More Precious Than Silver: 366 Daily Devotional Readings - Page 14](#)

Real love is an action—a selfless, sacrificial giving. The greatest act of love anyone can perform is to give himself or herself for others.

Sometimes it's easier to say, "I'd die for you" than it is to say, "I'll live for you. Let me put your desires first. Let me think of your interests before my own." I think we would all agree that living sacrificially is a real death to self. It's a killing of your selfishness, your own desires. To die for others, to live for others, is a gift of love that can only come from God. Why only from him? Because it takes superhuman strength to live—I mean, really live—for others.

The sweetest lives are those to duty wed,  
Whose deeds, both great and small,  
Are close-knit strands of unbroken thread  
Where love ennobles all.  
The world may sound no trumpets, ring no bells;  
The book of life the shining record tells.  
The love shall chant its own beatitudes  
After its own life working. A child's kiss  
Set on thy sighing lips shall make thee glad;  
A sick man helped by thee shall make thee strong;  
Thou shalt be served thyself by every sense  
Of service which thou renderest.  
Elizabeth Barrett Browning

I wish I could make it more complicated. But it's ever so simple. Receiving God's love and then giving his love, dying for others and living for others—that pretty much sums up the Christian walk, our purpose for being. How's your love quotient? Are you giving more than you're receiving? Are you ready to live for someone else? In what ways do you need to die to self?

Teach me, Lord, through the example of your life, to graciously give of myself that others might live. Keep me from a sense of martyrdom, and enable me to retain my joy.

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### **1 JOHN 3:16 - Audie Lewis**

If you wish to be "the disciple whom Jesus loved," begin soon. I suppose that John was between twenty and twenty-five when he was converted; at any rate, he was quite a young man. All the representations of him that have been handed down to us, though I attach no great value to them, yet unite in the fact of his youth. Youthful piety has the most profitable opportunity of becoming eminent piety. If you begin soon to walk with Christ, you will improve your pace, and the habit will grow upon you. He who is only made a Christian in the last few years of his life will scarcely reach to the first and highest degree, for lack of time, and from the hampering influence of old habits; but you who begin soon are planted in good soil, with a sunny aspect, and should come to maturity.

If you want to be the man whom Jesus loves, cultivate strong affection and let your nature be tender and kind. The man who is habitually cross and frequently angry cannot walk with God. A man of a quick, hot temper who never tries to check it, or a man in whom there is a malicious remembrance of injuries, like a fire smoldering amidst the embers, cannot be the companion and friend of Jesus, whose spirit is of an opposite character. A pitiful, compassionate, unselfish, generous heart is that which our Lord approves. Be willing to lay down, not only your comfort, but even your life for the brethren. Live in the joy of others, even as saints do in heaven

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Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 1 John 3:16

Can you really define the word “love” for me?

I do not believe you can actually define love—you can describe it but you cannot define it. A person or a race which has never heard of the word “love” can never come to an understanding of what love is even if they could memorize the definitions in all of the world’s dictionaries.

But just consider what happens to any simple, freckle-faced boy with his big ears and his red hair awry when he first falls in love and the feeling of it comes into every part of his being. All at once, he knows more about love than all of the dictionaries put together!

That is why I say that love can only be understood by the feeling of it. The same is true with the warmth of the sun. Tell a man who has no feeling that it is a warm day and he will never understand what you mean. But take a normal man who is out in the sun and he will soon know it is warm. You can know more about the sun by feeling than you can by description.

So, there are qualities in God that can never be explained by the intellect and can only be known by the heart, the innermost being. That is why I say that I do believe in feeling. I believe in what the old writers called religious affection—and we have so little of it because we have so little of true repentance, obedience, separation and holy living!

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Philip Brooks —1 John 3:16.

The wayfarers come to us continually, and they do not come by chance. God sends them. And as they come, with their white faces and their poor scuffling feet, they are our judges. Not merely by whether we give, but by how we give and by what we give, they judge us. One man sends them entirely away. Another drops a little easy, careless, unconscientious money into their hands. Another man washes and clothes them. Another man teaches them lessons. Thank God there are some men and women here and there, full of the power of the Gospel, who cannot rest satisfied till they have opened their very hearts and given the poor wayfaring men the only thing which really is their own, themselves, their faith, their energy, their hope in God. Of such true charity-givers may He who gave Himself for us increase the multitude among us every day!

And the voice that was calmer than silence said,

“Lo it is I, be not afraid!

The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,

In whatso we share with another’s need;

Not what we give, but what we share,—

For the gift without the giver is bare;

Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,—

Himself, his hungering neighbor, and me.”

James Russell Lowell.

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**Daily Light on the Daily Path** - By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us.

The love of Christ that surpasses knowledge.—“Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”—You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.—Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.—Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.—Bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.—“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”—Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.

“You also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.”—We ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

1 John 3:16; Eph. 3:19; John 15:13; 2 Cor. 8:9; 1 John 4:11; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13; Mark 10:45; 1 Pet. 2:21; John 13:14–15; 1 John 3:16

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**Lehman Strauss - (1 John 3:16)**

The word perceive means to know and understand. How can we know and understand the love of God, the love that God is? Only by experience. To perceive is to know by experience. No unsaved person can ever perceive the love of God. “Hereby perceive we [the

born ones]...” “He laid down His life for us.” This He did in the Person of His Son, for “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself” (2 Corinthians 5:19). The love of God is perceived only by those who appropriate Christ’s death for their own sins.

Have you noticed that we have here the second John 3:16? Both the Gospel 3:16 and the Epistle 3:16 are saying the same thing. At Calvary the love of God was exhibited in the sacrificial death of Christ. This is divine love in its greatest and highest expression. “He laid down His life for us.” The phrase, “lay down,” is peculiar to the writings of John (John 10:17–18; 15:13). By this voluntary laying down of Christ’s life the believer has come to know what true love is in its inmost nature. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). (See also Galatians 2:20.)

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The only way to learn how to love is to find out what it means to be loved by God.

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1 John 3:16 Never underestimate the tremendous influence you can wield through patient suffering for Jesus' sake. An incident in a French juvenile reformatory illustrates this truth. When a particularly rebellious boy stabbed another youth, inflicting a minor wound, he was sentenced to 3 months in a dark cell on a bread-and-water diet. He was afraid of the dark, and the prospect of what lay ahead terrified him. The wounded boy, who was a Christian, volunteered to take his place. The director accepted this suggestion on the condition that the guilty lad bring the bread and water to the other boy each day. On the sixth day he broke down and asked to take the punishment himself. The suffering of that Christian lad had touched his heart, and soon the guilty boy became a believer in Christ.

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**Why Love Begets Hate** - Read: John 15:18-27 | [Jesus said], "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you." —John 15:18 - If there is one thing believers in Jesus should be known for, it is love. The word love appears in Scripture more than 500 times. The essence of the gospel is love, as we see in John 3:16. “For God so loved the world ...” The epistle of 1 John 3:16 elaborates: “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us.”

Christians are to serve one another in love (Galatians 5:13), love their neighbors as themselves (Galatians 5:14), live a life of love (Ephesians 5:2), and love with actions and in truth (1 John 3:18).

So, if Jesus and His followers are all about love, why do some people love to hate us? Why are there, according to one estimate, 200 million persecuted believers in the world today?

Jesus told us why. He said to His disciples, “Everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed” (John 3:20). Jesus is the Light. When He walked this earth, people hated Him because He exposed the darkness of their sin. We are now His light in this world (Matthew 5:14); therefore, the world will also hate us (John 15:19).

Our task is to be channels of God’s love and light, even if we are hated in return. By Dave Branon [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Some will hate you, some will love you;  
Some will flatter, some will slight;  
Cease from man, and look above you,  
Trust in God and do the right. —Macleod

Love in return for love is natural,  
but love in return for hate is supernatural.

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**The Ultimate Sacrifice** - Read: 1 John 3:16-23 | When Deng Jinjie saw people struggling in the water of the Sunshui River in the Hunan province of China, he didn’t just walk by. In an act of heroism, he jumped into the water and helped save four members of a family. Unfortunately, the family left the area while he was still in the water. Sadly, Jinjie, exhausted from his rescue efforts, was overwhelmed and swept away by the river current and drowned.

When we were drowning in our sin, Jesus Christ gave His life to come to our aid. We were the ones He came to rescue. He came down from heaven above and pulled us to safety. He did this by taking the punishment for all of our wrongdoing as He died on the cross (1 Peter 2:24) and 3 days later was resurrected. The Bible says, “By this we know love, because [Jesus] laid down His life for us” (1 John 3:16). Jesus’ sacrificial love for us now inspires us to show genuine love “in deed and in truth” (1Jn 3:18) to others with whom we have relationships.

If we overlook Jesus’ ultimate sacrifice on our behalf, we’ll fail to see and experience His love. Today, consider the connection between His sacrifice and His love for you. He has come for your rescue. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand](#)

By Jennifer Benson Schuldt

Rescued: By Jesus' love;

Rescued: For life above;

Rescued: To serve my King;

Rescued: My praise to bring. —Verway

Jesus laid down His life to show His love for us.

INSIGHT: John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23; 20:2; 21:7) and to whom Jesus entrusted the care of His mother, Mary (Jn 19:26-27), was well qualified to write about love. In 1 John 2, he described the quality and authenticity of the love expected of the children of God. Here in 1 John 3, he pointed to the death of Christ and directed us to Him as our standard of Christian love (1Jn 3:16). True Christian love is sacrificial action and selfless generosity displayed both in speech and in actions (1Jn 3:16-18).

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**Oswald Chambers** - "Will You Lay Down Your Life?" - Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends....I have called you friends... —John 15:13, 15

Jesus does not ask me to die for Him, but to lay down my life for Him. Peter said to the Lord, "I will lay down my life for Your sake," and he meant it (John 13:37). He had a magnificent sense of the heroic. For us to be incapable of making this same statement Peter made would be a bad thing— our sense of duty is only fully realized through our sense of heroism. Has the Lord ever asked you, "Will you lay down your life for My sake?" (John 13:38). It is much easier to die than to lay down your life day in and day out with the sense of the high calling of God. We are not made for the bright-shining moments of life, but we have to walk in the light of them in our everyday ways. There was only one bright-shining moment in the life of Jesus, and that was on the Mount of Transfiguration. It was there that He emptied Himself of His glory for the second time, and then came down into the demon-possessed valley (see Mark 9:1-29). For thirty-three years Jesus laid down His life to do the will of His Father. "**By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren**" (1 John 3:16). Yet it is contrary to our human nature to do so. If I am a friend of Jesus, I must deliberately and carefully lay down my life for Him. It is a difficult thing to do, and thank God that it is. Salvation is easy for us, because it cost God so much. But the exhibiting of salvation in my life is difficult. God saves a person, fills him with the Holy Spirit, and then says, in effect, "Now you work it out in your life, and be faithful to Me, even though the nature of everything around you is to cause you to be unfaithful." And Jesus says to us, "...I have called you friends...." Remain faithful to your Friend, and remember that His honor is at stake in your bodily life. ([Will You Lay Down Your Life- My Utmost For His Highest](#))

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**Andrew Murray - LIKE CHRIST: In His Self-sacrifice.**

"Walk in love, even as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour."—Eph. 5:2.

"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."—1 John 3:16.

What is the connection between self-sacrifice and self-denial? The former is the root from which the latter springs. In self-denial, self-sacrifice is tested, and thus strengthened and prepared each time again to renew its entire surrender. Thus it was with the Lord Jesus. His incarnation was a self-sacrifice; His life of self-denial was the proof of it; through this, again, He was prepared for the great act of self-sacrifice in His death on the cross. Thus it is with the Christian. His conversion is to a certain extent the sacrifice of self, though but a very partial one, owing to ignorance and weakness. From that first act of self-surrender arises the obligation to the exercise of daily self-denial. The Christian's efforts to do so show him his weakness, and prepare him for that new and more entire self-sacrifice in which he first finds strength for more continuous self-denial.

Self-sacrifice is of the very essence of true love. The very nature and blessedness of love consist in forgetting self, and seeking its happiness in the loved one. Where in the beloved there is a want or need, love is impelled by its very nature to offer up its own happiness for that of the other, to unite itself to the beloved one, and at any sacrifice to make him the sharer of its own blessedness.

Who can say whether this is not one of the secrets which eternity will reveal, that sin was permitted because otherwise God's love could never so fully have been revealed? The highest glory of God's love was manifested in the self-sacrifice of Christ. It is the highest glory of the Christian to be like his Lord in this. Without entire self-sacrifice the new command, the command of love, cannot be fulfilled. Without entire self-sacrifice we cannot love as Jesus loved. "Be ye imitators of God," says the apostle, "and walk in love, even as Christ hath loved us, and given Himself a sacrifice for us." Let all your walk and conversation be, according to Christ's example, in love. It was this love that made His sacrifice acceptable in God's sight, a sweet-smelling savour, As His love exhibited

itself in self-sacrifice, let your love prove itself to be conformable to His in the daily self-sacrifice for the welfare of others, so will it also be acceptable in the sight of God. "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

Down even into the daily affairs of home life, in the intercourse between husband and wife, in the relation of master and servant, Christ's self-sacrifice must be the rule of our walk. "Likewise, ye husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it."

And mark specially the words, "Hath given Himself for us an offering to God." We see that self-sacrifice has here two sides. Christ's self-sacrifice had a Godward as well as a manward aspect. It was for us, but it was to God that He offered Himself as a sacrifice. In all our self-sacrifice there must be these two sides in union, though now the one and then again the other may be more prominent.

It is only when we sacrifice ourselves to God that there will be the power for an entire self-sacrifice. The Holy Spirit reveals to the believer the right of God's claim on us, how we are not our own, but His. The realization of how absolutely we are God's property, bought and paid for with blood, of how we are loved with such a wonderful love, and of what blessedness there is in the full surrender to Him, leads the believer to yield himself a whole burnt-offering. He lays himself on the altar of consecration, and finds it his highest joy to be a sweet-smelling savour to his God, God-devoted and God-accepted. And then it becomes his first and most earnest desire to know how God would have him show this entire self-sacrifice in life and walk.

God points him to Christ's example. He was a sweet-smelling savour to God when He gave Himself a sacrifice for us. For every Christian who gives himself entirely to His service, God has the same honour as He had for His Son, He uses him as an instrument of blessing to others. Therefore John says, "He who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" The self-sacrifice in which you have devoted yourself to God's service, binds you also to serve your fellow-men; the same act which makes you entirely God's, makes you entirely theirs. (See note.)

It is just this surrender to God that gives the power for self-sacrifice towards others, and even makes it a joy. When faith has first appropriated the promise, "Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me," I understand the glorious harmony between sacrifice to God and sacrifice for men. My intercourse with my fellow-men, instead of being, as many complain, a hindrance to unbroken communion with God, becomes an opportunity of offering myself unceasingly to Him.

Blessed calling! to walk in love EVEN AS Christ loved us, and gave Himself for us a sacrifice and sweet-smelling savour to God. Only thus can the Church fulfil its destiny, and prove to the world that she is set apart to continue Christ's work of self-sacrificing love, and fill up that which remaineth behind of the afflictions of Christ.

But does God really expect us to deny ourselves so entirely for others? Is it not asking too much? Can any one really sacrifice himself so entirely? Christian! God does expect it, Nothing less than this is the conformity to the image of His Son, to which He predestinated you from eternity. This is the path by which Jesus entered into His glory and blessedness and by no other way can the disciple enter into the joy of His Lord. It is in very deed our calling to become exactly like Jesus in His love and self-sacrifice. "Walk in love, EVEN AS Christ loved." It is a great thing when a believer sees and acknowledges this. That God's people and even God's servants understand it so little, is one great cause of the impotence of the Church. In this matter the Church indeed needs a second reformation. In the great Reformation three centuries ago, the power of Christ's atoning death and righteousness were brought to light, to the great comfort and joy of anxious souls. But we need a second reformation to lift on high the banner of Christ's example as our law, to restore the truth of the power of Christ's resurrection as it makes us partakers of the life and the likeness of our Lord. Christians must not only believe in the full union with their Surety for their reconciliation, but with their Head as their example and their life. They must really represent Christ upon earth, and let men see in the members how the Head lived when He was in the flesh. Let us earnestly pray that God's children everywhere may be taught to see their holy calling.

And all ye who already long after it, oh, fear not to yield yourselves to God in the great act of a Christ-like self-sacrifice! In conversion you gave yourself to God. In many an act of self-surrender since then you have again given yourselves to Him. But experience has taught you how much is still wanting. Perhaps you never knew how entire the self-sacrifice must be and could be. Come now and see in Christ your example, and in His sacrifice of Himself on the cross, what your Father expects of you. Come now and see in Christ—for He is your head and life—what He will enable you to be and do. Believe in Him, that what He accomplished on Earth in His life and death as your example, He will now accomplish in you from heaven. Offer yourself to the Father in Christ, with the desire to be, as entirely and completely as He, an offering and a sacrifice unto God, given up to God for men. Expect Christ to work this in you and to maintain it. Let your relation to God be clear and distinct; you, like Christ, wholly given up to Him. Then it will no longer be impossible to walk in love as Christ loved us. Then all your intercourse with the brethren and with the world will be the most glorious opportunity of proving before God how completely you have given yourself to Him, an offering and a sacrifice for a sweet-smelling savour.

O my God, who am I that Thou shouldst have chosen me to be conformed to the image of Thy Son in His self-sacrificing love? In this is His divine perfection and glory, that He loved not His own life, but freely offered it for us to Thee in death. And in this I may be



like Him; in a walk in love I may prove that I too have offered myself wholly to God.

O my Father, Thy purpose is mine; at this solemn moment I affirm anew my consecration to Thee. Not in my own strength, but in the strength of Him who gave Himself for me. Because Christ, my example, is also my life, I venture to say it: Father, in Christ, like Christ, I yield myself a sacrifice to Thee for men.

Father, teach me how Thou wouldst use me to manifest Thy love to the world. Thou wilt do it by filling me full of Thy love. Father, do it that I may walk in love, even as Christ loved us. May I live every day as one who has the power of Thy Holy Spirit to enable me to love every one with whom I come into contact, under every possible circumstance, to love with a love which is not of me, but of Thyself. Amen.

NOTE One of the most earnest and successful labourers in the work of saving the lost writes as follows: "If I had not been led to a clearer and fuller experience of what salvation is, I never could have gone through the work of the last few years. But, at the same time, one thing has continually been becoming clearer, that we cannot speak of unbroken fellowship with our Lord unless we give up ourselves, and that without ceasing, to a world lying in the wicked one, to save in the strength of our Lord what He gives us to save. A consecration to the Lord without a consecration to our neighbour becomes an illusion or leads to fanaticism. It is this giving up of ourselves to the world to be its light and salt, to love it, even when it hates us, that constitutes for all really consecrated souls the true battle of life. To find in labour our rest, and in fighting the sin around us in the power of Jesus our highest joy, to rejoice more in the happiness of others than our own, and so not to seek anything for ourselves, but everything for others, this, this is our holy calling."

May God help us not only to admire such thoughts, but at once to join the little bands among His children who are really giving up everything, and making their life-work the winning of souls for Jesus.

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**Warren Wiersbe - 1 John 3:16).GOOD AND CHEAP - borrow [Pause for power : a 365-day journey through the Scriptures](#)**

In these days of multiplied social agencies, it is easy for Christians to forget their obligations. "Let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers" (Gal. 6:10).

This "doing good" need not be in terms of money or material supplies. It may include personal service and the giving of oneself to others. There are many individuals in our churches who lack love and would welcome friendship.

A young mother admitted, in a testimony meeting, that she never seemed to find time for her own personal devotions. She had several little children to care for, and the hours melted away.

Imagine her surprise when two of the ladies from the church appeared at her front door.

"We've come to take over," they explained. "You go into the bedroom and get started on your devotions." After several days of this kind of help, the young mother was able to develop her devotional life so that the daily demands on her time no longer upset her.

If we want to experience and enjoy the love of God in our own hearts, we must love others, even to the point of sacrifice

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### **Robert Neighbour - The Proof of Christ's Love**

"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us" (1 John 3:16).

There are many ways in which Christ gives proof of His love. "All things were made by Him and for Him." These things are all given unto us.

Some one wrote:

"I feel as weak as a violet,  
Alone 'neath the deep blue sky  
As lone, but as trustful also,  
For the whole year long, I see  
All the wonders of faithful nature,  
At work for the likes of me."

But Christ's love, expressed in nature's benefits, is not His chief proof of love. The Cross of Christ is the real proof of Christ's love. "Hereby perceive we the love of God because He laid down His life for us." Again, "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

No man has a greater love than this: that a man would lay down his life for his friends; but, Christ died while we were yet enemies.

"Yet a great way off He saw me,  
Ban to kiss me as I came;  
As I was, my Father loved me,  
Loved me in my sin and shame."

"To His blessed inner chamber,  
Ground no other foot can tread,  
He has brought the lost and found one,  
Him who liveth, and was dead."

The great proof of Christ's love is twofold.

1. He died. He shed His Blood as a ransom. The hireling will leave the sheep and flee because he is an hireling and careth not for the sheep. Christ is the True Shepherd; He is the Good Shepherd. Twice in John 10, does Christ speak of "giving His life for the sheep;" twice He speaks of "laying down His life."

God loved the world, and proved His love by giving His Son.  
Christ loved the Church and proved it by giving Himself for it.  
Christ loved us, individually, and proved it by laying down His life.

2. He died for sinners. A blessed verse which clearly sets forth this fact is Romans 5:6-10: This is quite a long passage, but we quote it in full:

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His Blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." In this quotation we have these statements:

1. "Christ died for the ungodly."
2. "While we were yet sinners."
3. "When we were enemies."

On Calvary's Cross, Christ showed His love for sinners when He cried: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). He prayed for the very ones who wagged their heads and derided Him; for the very ones who nailed Him there. Not only did He PRAY for them, He DIED for them.

It was the prodigal son, in all his sin and shame, for whom the father yearned; it was he, upon whom he planted the kiss of his love; it was he to whom he gave the ring, the robe and the shoes; it was he for whom he killed the fatted calf; it was for his return that they made merry. To be sure the prodigal son came home with tears and confession, but nevertheless he came home robbed of everything that made him, in the sight of men, worth the while.

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### **GLORYING IN THE CROSS Gal. 6:14 James Smith**

We glory in the Cross because in it we see—

- 1 The Fulfilment of Prophecy. Gen. 3:15. Isa. 55. Dan. 9:24-26.
- 2 The Love of God Exhibited, 1 John 3:16
- 3 The Love of Christ Declared, John 15:13; Gal. 2:20
- 4 The Removal of that which was against us, Col. 2:14
- 5 The Redemption price for our souls, Gal. 3:13
- 6 The Way of Escape from our sins, 1 Peter 2:24
- 7 The Foundation of our Peace established, Col. 1:20; Eph. 2:16

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### **The Ultimate Sacrifice 1 John 3:16-23**

By this we know love, because [Jesus] laid down His life for us. — 1 John 3:16

When Deng Jinjie saw people struggling in the water of the Sunshui River in the Hunan province of China, he didn't just walk by. In an act of heroism, he jumped into the water and helped save four members of a family. Unfortunately, the family left the area while he was still in the water. Sadly, Jinjie, exhausted from his rescue efforts, was overwhelmed and swept away by the river current and

drowned.

When we were drowning in our sin, Jesus Christ gave His life to come to our aid. We were the ones He came to rescue. He came down from heaven above and pulled us to safety. He did this by taking the punishment for all of our wrongdoing as He died on the cross (1 Peter 2:24) and 3 days later was resurrected. The Bible says, "By this we know love, because [Jesus] laid down His life for us" (1 John 3:16). Jesus' sacrificial love for us now inspires us to show genuine love "in deed and in truth" (v.18) to others with whom we have relationships.

If we overlook Jesus' ultimate sacrifice on our behalf, we'll fail to see and experience His love. Today, consider the connection between His sacrifice and His love for you. He has come for your rescue. — Jennifer Benson Schuldt

Rescued: By Jesus' love;

Rescued: For life above;

Rescued: To serve my King;

Rescued: My praise to bring.

— Verway

Jesus laid down His life to show His love for us.

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### **Robert Neighbour - We Know the Love of the Son of God**

"Hereby we have known love, because He hath laid down His life for us" (I John 3:16).

1. An Apostle of love. Is it not remarkable that John Boanerges, the son of thunder, is John, the Apostle of love?

The change wrought in John's life was wrought when he was touched with the finger of God.

John loved, because he was first loved.

John became the Apostle of love, because he walked in such close fellowship with Jesus Christ Who manifested perfect love.

2. A striking comparison.. It is good to compare John 3:16, with I John 3:16. The verses parallel one another in that both of them are great outstanding verses concerning love.

The contrasts however are as distinct as the parallelisms.

John 3:16 tells us of the love of God in giving Christ; I John 3:16 tells us of the love of Christ in laying down His life.

John 3:16 has for its scope the "whole world;" and "whosoever believeth;" I John 3:16 is written exclusively to saints.

In John 3:16, there is a reference to "faith," and to "perishing;" in I John 3:16, there is nothing said of either, because the ones addressed already believed and could never perish.

3. Love is a key note of the Epistle. Let us look at three passages.

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us" (I John 3:1).

"And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (I John 4:16).

"We love Him, because He first loved us" (I John 4:19).

It is only necessary to read the Epistle through, to see how much there is in it of the love of God, and of the love of Christ, and of the love of saints.

4. Wherein the love of God is seen. The love of Christ is seen in His laying down His life for us (see I John 3:16). This is the statement of our key verse.

The love of God is manifested, because "God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." This is the statement of I John 4:9.

It is inconsistent for Christian Scientists or any one else to talk glibly about the love of God, and then to deny that His love was manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ by His coming down from Heaven and dying upon the Cross.

God does not commend His love to us because of His temporal gifts, nor because of His Divine watchcare over us, nor because of His preparations for us; but — "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

5. How we should love His love. Certainly a love so great, so full, so free, as the love of God, should find a response in the hearts of men.

Let us see how this love should be loved, according to John's Epistle.

(1) WE SHOULD LOVE HIM IN DEED AND IN TRUTH.

"My little children, let us not love with word, nor with tongue only; but in deed and in truth" (I John 3:18, 1911 Bible).

God does not desire mere expressions of love, He wants us to prove our love by our walk and our work, as well as by our word.

(2) WE SHOULD LOVE HIM BY KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENTS.

"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" (1 John 5:3).

In the Gospel of John we find three statements:

"If ye love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15).

"He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me" (John 14:21).

"If a man love Me, he will keep My Words" (John 14:23).

There is no better way for us to manifest our love toward God and toward His Son, our Saviour, than by keeping His commandments. Thus we abide in His love.

(3) WE SHOULD LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (1 John 4:11).

It is always true that he who loveth God, will love his brother also.

We will love because we are loved. If we love Him Who begat us, we will also love those who are begotten of Him.

There is one thing of which we may assure our hearts — love should play a great part in the believer's life; even as it has in the life of God.

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### **Charles Stanley - REJECTING ACCUSATION** [Pathways to His Presence: A Daily Devotional - Page 23](#)

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 JOHN 3:16–21

KEY VERSE: 1 JOHN 3:20

For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.

How often have you heard someone say, "I know God has forgiven me, but I will never be able to forgive myself"?

Such self-condemnation can spring from several sources, but it is, in any case, an enemy God has already defeated. Romans 8:1 tells us, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." This encouraging statement covers all condemnation, including self-recrimination. How, then, should we deal with those condemning voices?

First of all, we need to distinguish between remorse and guilt. It is appropriate to feel sorrow and remorse for past deeds, but to carry guilt for them is not necessary. The Bible assures us that if we confess our sins, God is faithful to forgive us (1 John 1:9). Any lingering feelings of guilt after this are enemies trying to rob us of our freedom in Christ.

Sometimes these feelings of guilt stem from the mistaken notion that we still must pay for our sins, so we unconsciously embrace perpetual remorse as a way to make restitution for past wrongs. Such a practice suggests the faulty notion that Jesus did not really pay for all sin by the shedding of His precious blood. When we realize that He has stamped "paid in full" on our account, then we must never dare to side with those who would have us believe otherwise.

Since God has given us His Word, we can reject all accusing voices and rest on His promise: "For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things" (1 John 3:20).

Lord, I reject all accusing voices and rest on Your promises. You are greater than condemnation and accusation.

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### **C. H. SPURGEON, [God's Love to the Saints](#) (introductory comments)**

"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us."—1 John 3:16.

TRUE love cannot long be dormant. It is like fire, of an active nature; it must be at work. Love longs for expression; it cannot be dumb. Command it to be without expression, and you command it not to live. And true love is not satisfied with expressing itself in words. It does use words, but it is painfully conscious of their feebleness, for the full meaning of love is not to be conveyed in any human language. It breaks the backs of words, and crushes them to atoms when it lays upon them all that it means. Love must express itself in deeds, as our old proverb says, "Actions speak more loudly than words." Love delights, too, in sacrifices; she rejoices in self-denials; and the more costly the sacrifice, the better is love pleased to make it. She will not offer that which costs her nothing; she loves to endure pains, and losses, and crosses, and thus she expresses herself best.

This is a general principle, which is not only applicable to men, but it reaches even up to God himself; for "God is love," and being love, he must display love, nor can he rest with merely speaking of his love. His love must manifest itself in action. More than that, God could not rest until he had made the greatest sacrifice that he could make, and had given up his only-begotten Son to die in the place of sinners. When he had done that, then he could rest in his love. God does not come to us, and say, "Men and women, I love you; and you must believe that I love you although I do nothing for you to prove my love." He does ask us to believe in his love, but

he has given us abundant proofs of it; and, therefore, he has a right to claim our belief in it. The apostle of love, who wrote the chapter from which our text is taken, tells us, "Hereby we are made to know"—for that would be the real translation of the original,—"Hereby we come to know, we do know, the love of God, because he laid down his life for us." Just as we learn the love of others by seeing what they are prepared to sacrifice for us, so is it even with God himself, we discover, discern, perceive, and are made to know, the love which he bears to us by the fact that "he laid down his life for us."

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**Spurgeon - [The Death of Christ for His People](#)** (introductory comments) - Come, believer, and contemplate this sublime truth, thus proclaimed to thee in simple monosyllables: "He laid down his life for us." There is not one long word in the sentence; it is all as simple as it can be; and it is simple because it is sublime. Sublimity in thought always needs simplicity in words to express itself. Little thoughts require great words to explain them; little preachers need Latin words to convey their feeble ideas, but great thoughts and great expressers of those thoughts are content with little words.

"He laid down his life for us." Here there is not much upon which any man can display his eloquence; here is little room for metaphysical discussion or for deep thought; the text sets before us a simple yet sublime doctrine. What, then, shall I do with it? If I would speak of it profitably to myself, since I need not employ my wit to dissect it, nor my oratory to proclaim it, let me exercise my adoration to worship it; let me prostrate all my powers before the throne, and, like an angel when his work is done, and he has nowhere else to fly at his Lord's command, let me fold the wings of my contemplation, and stand before the throne of this great truth, and meekly bow myself, and worship him that was, and is, and is to come,—the great and glorious One who "laid down his life for us."

It will be well for me, in commencing my discourse, to remind you that there is no understanding the death of Christ unless we understand the person of Christ. If I were to tell you that God died for us, although I might be telling you a truth, and you might possibly not misunderstand what I meant, yet I should be at the same time uttering an error. God cannot die; it is, of course, impossible, from his very nature, that he could even for a moment cease to exist. God is incapable of suffering. It is true that we sometimes use words to express emotions on the part of God; but, then, we speak after the manner of men. He is impassive; he cannot suffer; it is not possible for him to endure aught; much less, then, is it possible for him to suffer death. Yet we are told, in the verse from which our text is taken, "Hereby perceive we the love of God." You notice that the words "of God" are inserted by the translators. They are in italics because they are not in the original. A better translation would be, "Hereby perceive we love." But when we read "of God," it might lead the ignorant to fancy that God could die; whereas, God could not. We must always understand, and constantly remember, that our Lord Jesus Christ was "very God of very God," and that, as God, he had all the attributes of the Most High, and could not, therefore, be capable either of suffering or death. But then he was also man, "man of the substance of his mother," man, just like ourselves, sin alone excepted. And the Lord Jesus died not as God; it was as man that he gave up the ghost; as man, he was nailed to the cross. As God, he was in heaven, even when his body was in the tomb; as God, he was swaying the sceptre of all worlds even when the mock sceptre of reed was in his hand, and the imperial robe of universal monarchy was on the eternal shoulders of his Godhead when the soldier's old purple cloak was wrapped about his manhood. He did not cease to be God, he did not lose his Omnipotence, and his eternal dominion, when he became man; nor did he, as God, die or suffer; it was as man that he "laid down his life for us."

Come, now, my soul, and worship this man, this God. Come, believer, and behold thy Saviour; come to the innermost circle of all sanctity, the circle that contains the cross of Christ, and here sit down; and, whilst thou dost worship, learn three lessons from the fact that "he laid down his life for us." The first lesson should be,—Did he lay down his life for us? Ah! then, my brethren, how great must have been our sins that they could not have been atoned for at any other price! Secondly, did he lay down his life for us? Ah! then, beloved, how great must have been his love! He would not stop short anywhere, until life itself had been resigned. Thirdly, did he lay down his life for us? Ah! then, my soul, be of good cheer; how safe art thou! If such an atonement hath been offered, if such a sure satisfaction hath been given to Almighty God, how secure thou art! Who is he that can destroy him who hath been bought with the blood of such a Redeemer?

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**Spurgeon** - Learn three lessons from the fact that He "laid down his life on behalf of us." The first lesson should be: Did Christ lay down his life for me? Then how great must have been my sins! I never saw sin till that hour when I saw it tear Christ's glories from his head—when it seemed for a moment even to withdraw the lovingkindness of God from him—when I saw him covered with his own blood, and plunged into the uttermost depths of oceans of grief. Then I said, "Now I know what you are, O sin, as never before I knew it!" Though other sights might teach me something of the dire character of evil, yet never, till I saw the Savior on the tree, did I understand how base a traitor man's guilt was to man's God.

Second, Did the Savior lay down His life for me? Then how greatly He must have loved me! I may look back, I may look forward, but whether I look back to the decrees of eternity, or look forward to the pearl-gated city, and all the splendors that God has prepared for his own beloved children, I can never see my Father's love so beaming forth, in all its effulgence, as when I look at the cross of Christ and see him die on it. Christ laid down his life, his glorious life, for a poor worm; he stripped himself of all his splendors, then

of all his happiness, then of his own righteousness, then of his own robes, till he was naked to his own shame; and then he laid down his life, that was all he had left, for our Savior had not kept anything back.

Third, Did my Savior lay down his life for me? Then HOW SAFE I AM!2 The doctrine of Holy Scripture is this: that God is just, that Christ died in the stead of his people, and that, as God is just, he will never punish one solitary soul of Adam's race for whom the Savior did thus shed his blood. The Savior did, indeed, in a certain sense, die for all; all men receive many a mercy through his blood, but that he was the Substitute and Surety for all men, is so inconsistent, both with reason and Scripture, that we are obliged to reject the doctrine with abhorrence.3 Believer, this is your security, that all your sin and guilt, all your transgressions and your iniquities, have been atoned for, and were atoned for before they were committed; so that you may come with boldness, though red with all crimes, and black with every lust, and lay your hand on that Scapegoat's head, and when you have put your hand there, and seen that Scapegoat driven into the wilderness, you may clap your hands for joy, and say, "It is finished, sin is pardoned."

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**Spurgeon** - When Queen Eleanor sucked the poison from her husband's wounds, at the risk of her own life, I can see reasons why she should do it. I say not that she was bound to do it, but I do say that the relationship of a wife accounts for what she did.

But Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had no relationship to us until he chose to assume the relationship which he did assume out of infinite compassion. There was no more relation between him and us than between the potter and the clay; and if the clay upon the wheel goes amiss, what does the potter do with it but take it, and throw it into a corner? And so might the great Creator have done with us; but, instead of doing so, he sheds his blood that he may make us into vessels of honour fit for his own use.

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**Andrew Murray - LIKE CHRIST: Giving His Life for Men.**

"Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your slave: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."—Matt. 20:26, 27, 28.

"Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."—1 John 3:16.

In speaking of the likeness of Christ's death, and of being made conformable to it, of bearing the cross and being crucified with Him, there is one danger to which even the earnest believer is exposed, and that is of seeking after these blessings for his own sake, or, as he thinks, for the glory of God in His own personal perfection. The error would be a fatal one; he would never attain the close conformity to Jesus' death he hoped for; for he would be leaving out just that which is the essential element in the death of Jesus, and in the self-sacrifice it inculcates; that characteristic is its absolute unselfishness, its reference to others. To be made conformable to Christ's death implies a dying to self, a losing sight of self altogether in giving up and laying down our life for others. To the question, how far we are to go in living for, in loving, in serving, in saving men, the Scriptures do not hesitate to give the unequivocal answer: We are to go as far as Jesus' even to the laying down of our life. We are to consider this so entirely as the object for which we are redeemed, and are left in the world, the one object for which we live, that the laying down of the life in death follows as a matter of course. Like Christ, the only thing that keeps us in this world is to be the glory of God in the salvation of sinners. Scripture does not hesitate to say that it is in His path of suffering, as He goes to work out atonement and redemption, that we are to follow Him.10

How clearly this comes out in the words of the Master Himself: "Whoever will be chief among you, let him be your bond-servant, As the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." The highest in glory will be he who was lowest in service, and likest to the Master in His giving His life a ransom. And so again, a few days later, after having spoken of His own death in the words: "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit;" He at once applied to His disciples what He had said by repeating what they had already heard spoken to themselves, "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." The corn of wheat dying to rise again, losing its life to regain it multiplied manifold, is clearly set forth as the emblem not only of the Master but of each one of His followers. Loving life, refusing to die, means remaining alone in selfishness: losing life to bring forth much fruit in others is the only way to keep it for ourselves. There is no way to find our life but as Jesus did, in giving it up for the salvation of others. Herein is the Father, herein shall we be glorified. The deepest underlying thought of conformity to Christ's death is, giving our life to God for saving others. Without this, the longing, for conformity to that death is in danger of being a refined selfishness.

How remarkable the exhibition we have in the Apostle Paul of this spirit, and how instructive the words in which the Holy Spirit in him expressed to us its meaning! To the Corinthians he says: "Always bearing about the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you." "Though -Ye was crucified through weakness, YET HE LIVETH by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall LIVE WITH HIM BY THE POWER OF



GOD TOWARD YOU" (2 Cor. 4:10–12; 13:4). "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church" (Col. 1:24). These passages teach us how the vicarious element of the suffering that Christ bore in His body on the tree, to a certain extent still characterizes the sufferings of His body the Church. Believers who give themselves up to bear the burden of the sins of men before the Lord, who suffer reproach and shame, weariness and pain, in the effort to win souls, are filling up that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in their flesh. The power and the fellowship of His suffering and death work in them, the power of Christ's life through them in those for whom they labour in love. There is no doubt that in the fellowship of His sufferings, and the conformity to His death in Phil. 3. Paul had in view not only the inner spiritual, but also the external bodily participations in the suffering of Christ.

And so it must be with each of us in some measure. Self-sacrifice not merely for the sake of our own sanctification, but for the salvation of our fellow-men, is what brings us into true fellowship with the Christ who gave Himself for us.

The practical application of these thoughts is very simple. Let us first of all try and see the truth the Holy Spirit seeks to teach us. As the most essential thing in likeness to Christ is likeness to His death, so the most essential thing in likeness to His death is the giving up our life to win others to God. It is a death in which all thought of saving self is lost in that of saving others. Let us pray for the light of the Holy Ghost to show us this, until we learn to feel that we are in the world just as Christ was, to give up self, to love and serve, to live and die, "EVEN AS the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." Oh that God would give His people to know their calling; that they do not belong to themselves, but to God and to their fellow-men; that, even as Christ, they are only to live to be a blessing to the world.

Then let us believe in the grace that is waiting to make our experience of this truth a reality. Let us believe that God accepts of our giving up of our whole life for His glory in the saving of others. Let us believe that conformity to the death of Jesus in this, its very life-principle, is what the Holy Ghost will work out in us. Let us above all believe in Jesus: it is He Himself who will take up every soul that in full surrender yields itself to Him, into the full fellowship of His death, of His dying, in love to bring forth much fruit. Yes, let us believe, and believing seek from above, as the work end the gift of Jesus, likeness to Jesus in this too.

And let us at once begin and act this faith. let us put it into practice. Looking upon ourselves now as wholly given up, just like Christ, to live and die for God in our fellow-men, let us with new zeal exercise the ministry of love in winning souls. As we wait for Christ to work out His likeness, as we trust the Holy Spirit to give His mind in us more perfectly, let us, in faith begin at once to act as followers of Him who only lived and died to be a blessing to others. Let our love open the way to the work it has to do by the kindness, and gentleness, and helpfulness, with which it shines out on all whom we meet in daily life. Let it give itself to the work of intercession, and look up to God to use us as one of His instruments in the answering of those prayers. Let us speak and work for Jesus as those who have a mission and a power from on high which make us sure of a blessing. Let us make soul-winning our object. Let us band ourselves with the great army of reapers the Lord is sending out into His harvest. And ere we thought of it, we shall find that giving our life to win others for God is the most blessed way of dying to self, of being even as the Son of man was, a servant and a Saviour of the lost.

O most wonderful and inconceivably blessed likeness to Christ! He gave Himself to men, but could not really reach them, until, giving Himself a sacrifice to God for them, the seed-corn died, the life was poured out; then the blessing flowed forth in mighty power. I may seek to love and serve men; I can only really influence and bless them as I yield myself unto God and give up my life into His hands for them; as I lose myself as an offering on the altar, I become in His spirit and power in very deed a blessing. My spirit given into His hands, He can use and bless me.

O most blessed God! dost Thou in very deed ask me to come and give myself, my very life, wholly, even unto the death, to Thee for my fellowmen? If I have heard the words of the Master aright, Thou dost indeed seek nothing less.

O God I wilt Thou indeed have me? Wilt Thou in very deed in Christ permit me, like Him, as a member of His body, to live and die for those around me? to lay myself, I say it in deep reverence, beside Him on the altar of death, crucified with Him, and be a living sacrifice to Thee for men I Lord! I do praise Thee for this most wonderful grace. And now I come, Lord God! and give myself. Oh for the grace of Thy Holy Spirit to make the transaction definite and real! Lord! here I am, given up to Thee, to live only for those whom Thou art seeking to save.

Blessed Jesus! come Thyself, and breathe Thine own mind and love within me. Take possession of me, my thoughts to think, my heart to feel, my powers to work, my life to live, as given away to God for men. Write it in my heart: it is done, I am given away to God, He has taken me. Keep Thou me each day as in His hands, expecting and assured that He will use me. On Thy giving up Thyself followed the life in power, the outbreaking of the blessing in fulness and power. It will be so in Thy people too. Glory be to Thy name. Amen.