

1 John 3:18 Commentary

PREVIOUS

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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 3:18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth

Greek - Teknia me agapomen (1PPAS) logo mede te glosse alla en ergo kai aletheia . (1Jn 2:1)

KJV 1 John 3:18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

BGT 1 John 3:18 Τεκν α, μ γαπ μεν λ γ μηδ τ γλ σσ λλ ν ργ κα ληθε .

NET 1 John 3:18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue but in deed and truth.

CSB 1 John 3:18 Little children, we must not love with word or speech, but with truth and action.

ESV 1 John 3:18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

NIV 1 John 3:18 Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

NLT 1 John 3:18 Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions.

NRS 1 John 3:18 Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.

NJB 1 John 3:18 Children, our love must be not just words or mere talk, but something active and genuine.

NAB 1 John 3:18 Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth.

YLT 1 John 3:18 My little children, may we not love in word nor in tongue, but in word and in truth!

MIT 1 John 3:18 Children, let us not love verbally by a lot of talk, but love by action and truth.

GWN 1 John 3:18 Dear children, we must show love through actions that are sincere, not through empty words.

BBE 1 John 3:18 My little children, do not let our love be in word and in tongue, but let it be in act and in good faith.

RSV 1 John 3:18 Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth.

NKJ 1 John 3:18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

ASV 1 John 3:18 My Little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth.

Wuest - Little born-ones, let us not be loving in the sphere of word, nor even in the sphere of the tongue, but in the sphere of deed and truth ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

- **let:** Ex 33:21 Mt 25:41-45 Ro 12:9 1Co 13:4-7 Ga 5:13 6:1,2 Eph 4:1-3,15 1Th 1:3 Jas 2:15,16 1Pe 1:22
- [1 John 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries.

Related Passages:

Ephesians 4:15+ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ,

1 John 3:16-17+ We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

1 Corinthians 13:1+ If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

EXHORTATION TO LOVE WITH ACTIONS NOT JUST WORDS

Little children ([teknion](#)), **let us not love** ([agapao](#) present tense as your habitual, reflex practice) **with word** ([logos](#)) **or with tongue** ([glossa](#)), **but in deed** ([ergon](#)) **and truth** ([aletheia](#)) - **Little children** ([teknion](#)) need instruction to grow into mature disciples. This exhortation is based on the previous discussion of the need for believers to love their brother. John's exhortation first gives the negative and then the positive. He says don't just talk about love, but practice it. Do something about meeting the other's need! Notice the opposite pairings - **with word/in deed** and **with tongue/in truth**. What is the (descriptive) "definition" of God-like **love** in this passage? By using the phrase **Let us** John humbly includes himself in this exhortation, a great example for all Christian leaders, pastors and teachers!

In love and truth (Greek - en) defines the sphere (or atmosphere if you will - see locative of sphere) in which the love is to operate.

*We shall always be anxious to tell our love
in deeds as well as by our lips*

C H Spurgeon - Truly we have some Christian children who have seen a truth, and some friend they meet with does not see it; therefore they have tried to knock his eyes out to make him see it. That is a faithful description of many Christian controversies. It is idle to attempt to compel another to think as I think by scolding him, and heaping wrath upon him. Let us never do that. Let us love.

If you cannot expect anything else of a child you do expect love; and love never seems to be more suitably enshrined than in the heart and mind of a little child. Actions speak louder than words, and we shall always be anxious to tell our love in deeds as well as by our lips. The true disciple asks continually, "Lord, what will you have me do?" He esteems it his highest honor to serve the Lord. "I would rather be at the threshold of the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Psa 84:10).

David Jackman adds that "John exhorts himself and us not to be loving with the empty evidence of words, but with the genuine evidence of actions. Stretched as I am in a busy pastorate, I am only too conscious of how easy it is to love in words—to express sympathy, to promise to pray, to exhort and encourage—but it is actions that confirm or deny their truth. Without these, our words can be mere hypocrisy. In that case, they do stem not so much from love as from habit or duty." ([Borrow - page 100](#))

THOUGHT - Dear busy pastor (that's essentially the definition of a pastor!) how are you demonstrating love to your sheep, with words or with deeds? Of course the words John refers to is not the eternal, life giving word that feeds the sheep and by default that would certainly be one of the best ways you show your love for Jesus' sheep.

*Love of the brethren in the body of Christ is
a test of the reality and authenticity of our faith*

-- [Marks of a True Christian](#)

James 2:15-16+ is a perfect example of love "with word."

Dead faith. Dead love.

Neither one does any good to others.

-- Daniel Akin

If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, **Go** ([present imperative](#)) in peace, **be warmed** ([present imperative](#)) and **be filled** ([present imperative](#))," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for [their] body, what use is that?

See **John Piper's** exposition of 1Jn 3:17-18 - [click here](#).

*Fine words will never
take the place of fine deeds*

William Barclay - Fine words will never take the place of fine deeds; and no amount of talk of Christian love will take the place of a kindly action to someone in need, made at some personal expense or with some self-sacrifice, for in that action the principle of the cross is at work again. ([1Daily Study Bible](#))

*Biblical love is a verb! It begins with feelings of concern and compassion
for those in need and always results in tangible, substantial sacrifice.*

-- [1, 2, & 3 John](#)

Henry Mahan - Let us not merely **profess** with our tongues that we love one another, but **prove** it by deeds; for this is the only true way of showing love. We read in scripture of the work and labor of love. Talking about love is mere show! Demonstrating love in meeting the physical, material and spiritual needs of others is love in truth. ([1 John 3 Commentary](#))

Stephen Smalley - The major concern of this passage is to encourage obedient and active love from all those who claimed allegiance to the Johannine church. ([1, 2, 3 John Word Biblical Commentary page 198](#))

Little children (5040)(**teknion** diminutive of **teknon**) is literally My "born ones", the diminutive expresses affection ("my dear children"). **Teknion** is used by John to address true followers of Jesus. From John's repetitive use of **teknion** in this epistle, one might say it is an epistle for **little children**! Clearly the subjects with which John deals are not "child's play," but have serious implications regarding one's spiritual life, now and in eternity future! **Teknion** is John's way of lovingly appealing to his readers as a spiritual father would do as he sought to encourage his children to give an authentic expression of the love of God. **Little children** (8x only by John - John 13:33; 1 John 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21) - John is fondly addressing the believers as a father would his children.

Harris on **little children** - It indicates the warmth of affection the author feels for the recipients of the letter—he is genuinely concerned for their spiritual welfare. ([Exegetical Commentary on 1 John 3:11-24](#))

*If the expression of love is limited to
mere verbal expression, it is simply "mouth mercy!"*

Hiebert on **not love with word or with tongue** - While Christian love must be a vital inner reality, by its nature love demands active

expression. Negatively, John insists that true love cannot be restricted to mere verbalization... If the expression of love is limited to mere verbal expression, it is simply "**mouth mercy**," (expression used by John Trapp) which is profitless and disappointing. (Cf. James 2:15–16.)

[John Trapp's](#) full quote - Words are light and cheap; and there is a great deal of **mouth mercy** abroad.

[A T Robertson](#) - He does not condemn kind words which are comforting and cheering, but warm words should be accompanied by warm deeds to make real "**in deed and in truth**". Here is a case where actions do speak louder than mere words.

Daniel Akin adds that "John is not condemning kind or comforting words. The expression of such utterances without an outward manifestation of them, however, is mere noise and therefore worthless (1Cor 13:1+). ([1, 2, 3 John - Page 161](#))

[Pulpit Commentary](#) - One may love in word only, and yet the affectionate words may be quite sincere; and this is a common case. People say kind things which they mean at the moment, but afterwards they do not take the trouble to act kindly. But to love with the tongue only is far worse. This is to say kind things which one does not mean, and which one knows to be unreal. Deeds are needed to complete the kind word; truth is needed to correct the insincere tongue.

W E Vine - One may love in word, with a changing love to a certain extent, but it does not go far enough, it merely expresses itself in affectionate terms; but, worse still he who loves with the tongue merely professes what he does not feel and is thus a hypocrite. ([Collected Writings](#))

Simon Kistemaker - Whereas John places his words in the context of love, James in his epistle discusses the same matter in connection with faith (see James 2:20). Love and faith have this in common: both need deeds to prove their genuineness. Words of love that are never translated into action are worthless. ([Epistles of John- Simon J. Kistemaker](#))

John is saying our actions speak louder than our words. One is reminded of Jesus' warning at the end of His Sermon on the Mount...

Therefore everyone who **hears these words** of Mine, and **acts upon them**, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. (Mt 7:24+)

[Hiebert](#) - Besides our verbal expressions, our love must express itself in the realm of "deed," in love-prompted, beneficent action.

David Smith - "not with word and the tongue but in the midst of deed and truth"—not in empty air but amid tangible realities. Cf. Bunyan, Good News: "Practical love is best. Many love Christ with nothing but the lick of the tongue." Sheridan, Sch. for Scand. v. i.: "He appears to have as much speculative benevolence as any private gentleman in the kingdom, though he is seldom so sensual as to indulge himself in the exercise of it". ([Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

Love (25)(**agapao**) again refers to supernatural, Spirit enabled, sacrificial, selfless love, the kind of love God demonstrated at Calvary (Jn 3:16+) and continues to demonstrate (Ro 5:8+) to we who do not deserve it. Agapao is in the present tense which calls for this supernatural love to be our lifestyle. To reiterate, don't try to love like God loves without relying on God's Spirit to initiate and empower that love! See Sam Storms [What Does Christian Love Look Like?](#)

AGAPAO IN JOHN'S EPISTLES - 1 Jn. 2:10; 1 Jn. 2:15; 1 Jn. 3:10; 1 Jn. 3:11; 1 Jn. 3:14; 1 Jn. 3:18; 1 Jn. 3:23; 1 Jn. 4:7; 1 Jn. 4:8; 1 Jn. 4:10; 1 Jn. 4:11; 1 Jn. 4:12; 1 Jn. 4:19; 1 Jn. 4:20; 1 Jn. 4:21; 1 Jn. 5:1; 1 Jn. 5:2; 2 Jn. 1:1; 2 Jn. 1:5; 3 Jn. 1:1

Simon Kistemaker - In order to be genuine, love seeks the welfare of others: "it always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres" (1 Cor. 13:7). Love is the act of giving of one's possessions, talents, and self to someone else. Note that the words we speak must correspond to our actions, and the use of our tongue must agree with the truth of God's Word. Words and tongue find their counterpart in actions and truth. ([Epistles of John- Simon J. Kistemaker](#))

The proof that one has genuine love and is a child of God rests not in sentiments but in deeds (cf Mt 25:34–40+).

-- John MacArthur

David Allen - The word for "deed" in the Greek New Testament is the noun *ergon*, which means "work" or "action." In our culture we use a word the first part of which comes from this Greek word *ergon*—*ergonomics*. Ergonomics is the study of how the workplace and the equipment used in the workplace can best be designed for efficiency, productivity, comfort, and safety. It also is used to describe the qualities in the design of equipment used at work that contributes to efficiency and productivity. Our love for others should be ergonomically effective in the sense that its distinctive quality should be that it is Christlike in every way. Our love should be productive; it should accomplish the meeting of needs in a tangible way. In one of his sermons, George Whitfield told the story of the poor beggar who asked a pastor for alms. When the pastor refused, the beggar asked the pastor for a blessing. "God bless you,"

answered the pastor. "Oh," replied the beggar, "you would not give me that if it was worth anything." ([1-3 John- Fellowship in God's Family - Preaching the Word- David L. Allen](#))

Daniel Akin - Love is so much more than making a good profession or a great speech that uses impressive rhetoric (cf. 1 Cor 13:1–3). No, love is an action word that always expresses itself in good deeds done in the context of truth. John adds the word "truth" for a very good reason. Words can be empty and actions can be hypocritical. You may choose to do nothing, though your words promise much. On the other hand, you may do something for someone, but your motives are impure and your intentions evil. We call this manipulation. God cares about both our motives and our actions. He wants us to love and care for others just like we have been loved and cared for by Jesus. Once more, it is clear isn't it? Do you want to see love in deed and in truth? Just look to the cross. (See [Exalting Jesus in 1,2,3 John - Page 80](#))

Bob Utley adds that "The deed and motives must both be motivated by self-giving love (God's love) and not just be showy deeds that feed the ego of the provider or giver."

Truth (225)(**aletheia**) is that which is seen or expressed as it really is. **Truth** is the correspondence between a reality and a declaration which professes to describe the reality. Words spoken are true when they correspond with objective reality. Persons are true when they correspond with their profession.

ALETHEIA IN JOHN'S EPISTLES - 1 Jn. 1:6; 1 Jn. 1:8; 1 Jn. 2:4; 1 Jn. 2:21; 1 Jn. 3:18; 1 Jn. 3:19; 1 Jn. 4:6; 1 Jn. 5:6; 2 Jn. 1:1; 2 Jn. 1:2; 2 Jn. 1:3; 2 Jn. 1:4; 3 Jn. 1:1; 3 Jn. 1:3; 3 Jn. 1:4; 3 Jn. 1:8; 3 Jn. 1:12

IN TRUTH AND WORDS - Talk is cheap, so unsubstantiated claims (mere word or speech) are worthless. Faith not accompanied by love for others (shown in truth and action) is worthless. Anyone can claim to have faith, but if his or her lifestyle remains selfish and worldly, then what good are the words and speeches? True love expressed in action is the fruit of a living faith. If a person claims to be a believer, has possessions to offer, sees a brother or sister in need, and still refuses to help, that person shows a lack of God's love. [1, 2, & 3 John - Page 77](#)

Jesus said: Matthew 5:16 Matthew 6:3–4 Matthew 6:19–21

Paul said: 1 Timothy 2:10 1 Timothy 6:17–18 Titus 3:8

James said : James 2:15–17

Peter said: 1 Peter 2:12, 15

John said: 1 John 3:18

Hiebert writes that "**Truth** here possibly may mean no more than "in reality" as contrasted to mere appearance, for deeds may be hypocritical. But probably "**truth**" here carries its usual fuller Johannine meaning as being in accord with the divine truth in Christ (cf. John 4:24, "in spirit and in truth"). The **truth** of God which begets love in the believer must also govern and direct his outward expression of love.

Daniel Akin adds that "The quality of **truth** is added because even actions can be hypocritical. The objective reality of love is that it expresses itself in one's actions. As Brown paraphrases, "Let us love, not by word of mouth but by **real** deeds." (**ED comment:** The deed must be motivated by Spirit enabled, selfless love and not for show or pretence.) ([1, 2, 3 John - Page 161](#))

NET Note on **truth** - Words are produced by the tongue, and the (righteous) deeds with which believers are to love one another are produced by the truth.

David Allen - use of "truth" here is probably an idiom that means "actually" or "really." Another option is to take the phrase as meaning "deeds that are produced in truth." Our love should be genuinely demonstrated in action. [91–3 John: Fellowship in God's Family](#))

John Stott - Actions speak louder than words. Essentially love is neither sentiment nor talk, but deeds. If our love is to be genuine (in truth), it will inevitably be positive and constructive (with actions). ([Borrow The Letters of John page 148](#))

Warren Wiersbe - To love "in word" means simply to talk about a need, but to love "in deed" means to do something about meeting it. You may think, because you have discussed a need, or even prayed about it, that you have done your duty, but love involves more than words—it calls for sacrificial deeds. To love "in tongue" is the opposite of to love "in truth." It means to love insincerely. To love "in truth" means to love a person genuinely, from the heart and not just from the tongue. People are attracted by genuine love, but repelled by the artificial variety. One reason why sinners were attracted to Jesus (Luke 15:1–2) was because they were sure He loved them sincerely. "But does it not cost a great deal for the believer to exercise this kind of love?" Yes, it does. It cost Jesus Christ His life. But the wonderful benefits that come to you as by-products of this love more than compensate for any sacrifice you make. To be sure, you do not love others because you want to get something in return, but the Bible principle, "Give and it shall be

given unto you" (Luke 6:38), applies to love as well as to money. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

John Gill on **in deed and in truth** - True love is a laborious and operative grace, hence we read of the work and labor of love; it shows itself by the saints serving one another, in spiritual things by bearing one another's burdens, forbearing with, and forgiving one another, praying for each other, and building up one another on their most holy faith; encouraging each other to the duties of the faith, and not suffering sins upon one another, but admonishing in love, and restoring with meekness; and in temporal things, distributing to the necessities of the saints, ministering: to them of their worldly substance, and supplying their daily wants: and this is loving "in deed", or "in work"; this is actual love, love in fact, and what is apparent and evident: and it is "in truth", when it is in reality, and not done for show; and when it is cordially and heartily done, with cheerfulness, and not grudgingly.

John Stott - It may be helpful to summarize the teaching in this passage about hatred and love. 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](#))

*One of the distinguishing marks of the child of God is love,
a love that originates in God, displays itself in actions of self-sacrifice,
and is evidence of eternal life.*

-- Daniel Akin

David Allen - **ILLUSTRATION OF LOVE IN TRUTH** - By some accounts William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, once sent a one-word telegraph message: "Others!" to encourage his officers around the world. Whether the story is true or not, one thing is for sure: Salvation Army workers were known for their unselfish commitment to others. On May 29, 1914 the Empress of Ireland sank with 130 Salvation Army officers on board. One hundred and nine of those officers were drowned, and not one body that was picked up had on a life belt. The few survivors told how the Salvationists, finding there were not enough life preservers for all, took off their own belts and strapped them upon even strong men, saying, "I can die better than you can." From the deck of that sinking ship they heralded their battle-cry around the world: "Others!" May we all pray this prayer by William Sloane Coffin: "We have taken advantage of Thy great and unqualified love. We have presumed upon Thy patience to do less than we might have done, to have been timid where we should have shown courage, to have been careful where we should have been reckless, not counting the cost. We pray now, O Father, to be used roughly. Stamp on our selfishness." (See [1-3 John: Fellowship in God's Family](#))

John MacArthur sums up this section - For John, therefore, the differences between Satan's children and God's children could not be more distinct. Those who murder, habitually hate, or are chronically self-centered and indifferent to the needs of others do not have eternal life. But those who, as part of their repentance from sin and trust in Christ, have renounced murderous, hateful attitudes and all cold, selfish indifference to the needs of others give evidence that they have been born again. In place of those sinful traits, Christians manifest genuine love to others, especially fellow believers (Ro 12:10-13; Gal. 6:10), because of the love of God shed abroad in their hearts. They sincerely obey James's injunction: "Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world" (James 1:27; cf. James 2:8, 15-17). (SEE [1-3 John MacArthur New Testament Commentary - Page 136](#))

C. Crain - The activities of love in God must necessarily characterize His children. It is not merely a question of duty or obligation, but a characteristic of their nature, which in communion with God displays itself. This is the force of 1Jn 3:17. Of course, the verse may be used as an appeal to rouse the conscience where there seems to be carelessness or indifference, but the apostle is convicting of unreality the mere profession of loving the brethren. His argument is, How can love be there if there is no activity of it? How can love that is of God be dwelling where it is not in exercise? There is danger, even in the children of God, of falling into pretension. So in 1Jn 3:18 the apostle warns against it. Clearly he is speaking here to those whom he recognizes as of God. He is exhorting them to see to it that there be no pretence; no mere loving in word or tongue, but only in deed and in truth. Unreality is a grievous sin in a child of God; it is really hypocrisy. Let us then give due heed to the apostle's warning against it. Our Lord also speaks of this in Luke 12:1. ([Readings on the First Epistle of John](#))

Robert Rayburn illustrates this selfless, sacrificial love - You may remember that after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, the protestants in France, the Huguenots, suffered terrible persecution. Some twenty years later, in the midst of that terrible danger for evangelical Christians, a young reformed minister, Antoine Court, organized a clandestine meeting of seven ministers and two elders, the first of the famous 'synods of the desert'--to organize more effectively the life and work of the now underground reformed church. By 1732, some 15 years later, all the members of that first synod, had been found and executed except Antoine Court himself and he was eventually as well. But successors were ready to take their place. In the course of those years, through Court's leadership, a seminary was established in Lausanne, Switzerland to train young Frenchmen who would then be sent back to pastor the scattered believers in France. Year after year the flower of French Christianity would graduate from that academy and sneak back into their homeland to begin their ministry and to face an almost certain death. In fact, the diploma of that seminary in those days

was known, by a kind of wry and dark humor, as a Brevet de Potence--a certificate for the gallows. One after another of those young men took their diploma in hand and went back to a French gallows all for love for God and for his people. Have you such a certificate in your possession; such a Brevet de Potence? Beloved, God does not call us at this moment to the gallows; he does not even call us to give up meat! But he does call us every day, every week, to pay the price of love, to practice love, Christ like, self-denying, cheek-turning, coat-giving, extra-mile-walking love. He tells us here, through John, not to rest until our hearts are aflame with love for our brethren and until we can say plainly every day how it was that, in love, we sought after and met the needs of our brethren; until we can say plainly how we, following our Redeemer, have given up our lives for them, and can point to the weariness, and the disruption of our well-laid plans, and the emptiness of our pocket book, and to the tears of joy and or sorrow, to the completely mended friendships which sin had disrupted--all evidence that we have laid down our lives and kept nothing back when our brother's interest or our sister's interest was at stake. ([What Love Is](#))

ILLUSTRATION - Ray Stedman's great story of loving **in deed and truth** - Yesterday I heard a young Jewish convert give the story of his life. It is a most amazing story: His name is Arthur Katz and he is a teacher in the public schools in Berkeley. He was raised as an atheist, even though he was of Jewish descent. Early in his life he became a Marxist, a committed Communist. He was always a left-wing radical, a trouble maker, at the heart of every uprising that was going on. At the close of World War II he happened to be in Germany with the American Army and personally saw the gas chambers at Dachau and Buchenwald. He came away from them shocked and sick at heart, filled with hatred, first toward the German race, and then, realizing that this was not merely a national problem but a human problem, filled with an all-pervading sense of disgust and loathing for the whole human race. He came back to Berkeley and tried to give himself to education, but more and more he realized that education was not the answer. Education could not change hearts, education could not and did not touch the basic problems of human beings. Finally he gave it all up and resigned his position. His wife lost her mind, and was put in a mental institution. Divorced, footloose, and fancy-free, he went out to wander up and down the face of the earth, hardly knowing where he was going. One rainy wet day he was in Greece, hitchhiking, with a week's growth of beard upon his face, and a dirty rucksack on his back, standing in the wind and the rain thumbing a ride. Of course, no one wanted to pick him up. He stood there for hours when at last a big Cadillac came by, and stopped. To his amazement the man did not merely open the door and gesture for him to get in; he got out of his car, came around, and began to pump his hand and to welcome him as though he were some kind of king. He took the dirty rucksack and threw it on the clean upholstery. Art said he winced himself when he saw that. Then the man invited him to get in the car, and they drove on. The man treated him as though he were a welcome guest. Art Katz could not understand this. He was taken to a hotel and the man bought him a room and cleaned him up and gave him some food. Finally he asked him what he was doing, and where he was going. There came pouring out of this young Jewish atheist all the pent-up heartache, misery, and resentment of his life. He told him the whole thing, just pouring it all out. The man sat and listened, and when he was all through, he spoke one sentence. He said, "You know, Art, what the world needs? -- those who are willing to wash one another's feet." Art Katz said, "I never heard anything more beautiful than that. Why do you say that?" And the man said, "Because that's what my Lord did." For the first time in this young atheist's life he heard a Christian witness. That was the beginning of the end. I do not have time to tell the whole story of how this young man came to know Jesus Christ. But the thing that arrested him and broke through all the years of hatred, all the pent-up resentment and bitterness of his heart and life was one act of kindness which manifested to an apparently undeserving young man, genuine courtesy and kindness in the name of Jesus Christ. "By this," Jesus said, "shall all men know that you are my disciples," (John 13:35 RSV). That is the path of love. If life is there, that kind of love will be there. Now, let it show, is John's exhortation. "Little children, let us not love in word or speech, but in deed and truth." ([1 John 3 Commentary](#))

MARKS OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN: THE BOOK OF 1 JOHN by Jim Bomkamp

1. Walks in the light - 1Jn 1:6
2. Has fellowship with other Christians who walk in the light - 1Jn 1:7
3. Believes he has a sin nature - 1Jn 1:8
4. Occasionally sins - 1Jn 1:10
5. Continually keeps His commandments - 1Jn 2:3, 3:24
6. Continually keeps His word - 1Jn 2:5
7. Walks in the same way Jesus walked - 1Jn 2:6
8. Does not hate his brother - 1Jn 2:9

9. Loves his brother - 1Jn 2:10, 3:10
10. Does not love the world (cosmos - the world in rebellion against God) - 1Jn 2:15
11. Does not love the things in the world - 1Jn 2:15
12. Does the will of God - 1Jn 2:17
13. Stays in the Body of Christ - 1Jn 2:19
14. Has an anointing and as a result understands the truth of the gospel - 1Jn 2:20-21
15. Believes that Jesus is the Christ (Jewish Messiah of scripture) - 1Jn 2:22, 5:1
16. Abides in Christ (as a branch in the vine: see John 15) - 1Jn 2:27-28
17. Continually practices righteousness - 1Jn 2:29, 3:10
18. Purifies himself just as He is pure - 1Jn 3:3
19. Does not continually practice sin - 1Jn 3:6, 5:18
20. Practices righteousness and is righteous, just as He is righteous - 1Jn 3:7
21. His seed abides in him and he cannot sin because he is born of God - 1Jn 3:9
22. Loves the brethren - 1Jn 3:14
23. Loves not only with word and tongue, but in deed and in truth - 1Jn 3:18-19
24. The abiding presence of the Holy Spirit gives assurance of salvation - 1Jn 3:24, 4:13
25. Confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (the eternal Son of God/Messiah) - 1Jn 4:2
26. Has overcome the false prophets and teachers (and the spirit that animates them) - 1Jn 4:4
27. Listens to, receives, and believes in the sound teaching from the apostles (the Bible) - 1Jn 4:6
28. Loves (with agape love) - 1Jn 4:7,8
29. Confesses that Jesus is the Son of God - 1Jn 4:15
30. Abides in (agape) love - 1Jn 4:16
31. Loves (agape) because He first loved him - 1Jn 4:19
32. Loves the child born of the Father (either Jesus, other Christians, or all men) - 1Jn 5:1
33. Overcomes the world - 1Jn 5:4
34. Believes that Jesus is the Son of God - 1Jn 5:5

J C Ryle on How to Know Your Religion is Real (excerpt from full sermon [Reality](#))

I will supply some tests by which we may try the reality of our religion.

In approaching this part of my subject, I ask every reader of this paper to deal fairly, honestly, and reasonably with his soul. Dismiss from your mind the common idea,—that of course all is right if you go to church or to chapel. Cast away such vain notions for ever. You must look further, higher, deeper than this, if you would find out the truth. Listen to me, and I will give you a few hints. Believe me, it is no light matter. It is your life.

(1) For one thing, if you would know whether your religion is real, try it by the place which it occupies in your inner man. It is not enough that it is in your head. You may know the truth, and assent to the truth, and believe the truth, and yet be wrong in God's sight.—It is not enough that it is on your lips. You may repeat the creed daily. You may say "Amen" to public prayer in church, and yet have nothing more than an outward religion.—It is not enough that it is in your feelings. You may weep under preaching one day, and be lifted to the third heaven by joyous excitement another day, and yet be dead to God.—Your religion, if it is real, and given by the Holy Ghost, must be in your heart. It must occupy the citadel. It must hold the reins. It must sway the affections. It must lead the will. It must direct the tastes. It must influence the choices and decisions. It must fill the deepest, lowest, inmost seat in your soul. Is this your religion? If not, you may well doubt whether it is "real" and true. (Acts 8:21; Rom. 10:10.)

(2) In the next place, if you would know whether your religion is real, try it by the feelings towards sin which it produces. The Christianity which is from the Holy Ghost will always have a very deep view of the sinfulness of sin. It will not merely regard sin as a

blemish and misfortune, which makes men and women objects of pity and compassion. It will see in sin the abominable thing which God bates, the thing which makes man guilty and lost in his Maker's sight, the thing which deserves God's wrath and condemnation. It will look on sin as the cause of all sorrow and unhappiness, of strife and wars, of quarrels and contentions, of sickness and death,—the blight which has blighted God's fair creation, the cursed thing which makes the whole earth groan and travail in pain. Above all, it will see in sin the thing which will ruin us eternally, except we can find a ransom,—lead us captive, except we can get its chains broken,—and destroy our happiness, both here and hereafter, except we fight against it, even unto death. Is this your religion? Are these your feelings about sin? If not, you may well doubt whether your religion is "real."

(3) For another thing, if you would know whether your religion is real, try it by the feelings toward Christ which it produces. Nominal religion may believe that such a person as Christ existed, and was a great benefactor to mankind. It may show Him some external respect, attend His outward ordinances, and bow the head at His name. But it will go no further. Real religion will make a man glory in Christ, as the Redeemer, the Deliverer, the Priest, the Friend, without whom he would have no hope at all. It will produce confidence in Him, love towards Him, delight in Him, comfort in Him, as the mediator, the food, the light, the life, the peace of the soul. Is this your religion? Do you know anything of feelings like these toward Jesus Christ? If not, you may well doubt whether your religion is "real."

(4) For another thing, if you would know whether your religion is real, try it by the fruit it bears in your heart and life. The Christianity which is from above will always be known by its fruits. It will produce in the man who has it repentance, faith, hope, charity, humility, spirituality, kind temper, self-denial, unselfishness, forgivingness, temperance, truthfulness, brotherly-kindness, patience, forbearance. The degree in which these various graces appear may vary in different believers. The germ and seeds of them will be found in all who are the children of God. By their fruits they may be known. Is this your religion? If not, you may well doubt whether it is "real."

(5) In the last place, if you would know whether your religion is real, try it by your feelings and habits about means of grace. Prove it by the Sunday. Is that day a season of weariness and constraint, or a delight and a refreshment, and a sweet foretaste of the rest to come in heaven?—Prove it by the public means of grace. What are your feelings about public prayer and public praise, about the public preaching of God's Word, and the administration of the Lord's Supper? Are they things to which you give a cold assent, and tolerate them as proper and correct? Or, are they things in which you take pleasure, and without which you could not live happy?—Prove it, finally, by your feelings about private means of grace. Do you find it essential to your comfort to read the Bible regularly in private, and to speak to God in prayer? Or, do you find these practices irksome, and either slur them over, or neglect them altogether? These questions deserve your attention. If means of grace, whether public or private, are not as necessary to your soul as meat and drink are to your body, you may well doubt whether your religion is "real."

Robert Neighbour - A love in deed and in truth. I John 3:18: "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."

Herein is a wealth of room for our thoughts.

If we love because He loved, we should also love as He loves. God loved and gave. Christ loved and died. If we love as He loved our love will not dwell in platitudes and high sounding phrases. Our love will be in deed and in truth.

(1) WE WILL LOVE THOSE HE LOVED. The lost world, the Church, the brethren. For "He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love."

(2) WE WILL GIVE AS HE GAVE, even to the giving of our lives.

I 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.

Do we really love in this fashion? Are we willing to go even unto the death for the brethren?

(3) WE WILL HAVE COMPASSION AS HE HAD COMPASSION. When Christ saw the multitudes He had compassion on them, and He said, "Give ye them to eat."

James 2:15, 16: "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, * * what doth it profit?"

How is it with us?

I John 3:17: "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

Surely, if we love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all of our soul and with all of our might, we will also love our neighbor as ourself

James Scudder - Life-Giving Love

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

Several years ago, a Dallas man named Herman Moody was diagnosed with leukemia. The experts at Baylor Hospital told this 47 year-old import/export specialist that he had only one chance to live: a bone marrow transplant. And it had to be a perfect match. So, the doctors at the cancer center entered Moody's information into their worldwide database. The computer came up with a suitable match. There was only one problem. The prospective donor lived in Belgium.

The doctors at Baylor gave the Belgian a call and told him their dilemma. To their surprise he readily agreed to make the trip to Dallas and donate some of his bone marrow. He traveled across the world to save the life of a man he had never met. When asked why he made the sacrifice, the Belgian replied, "Several years ago, my brother died of cancer and I was heartbroken. After his death, I promised God that if I could, I would help someone stay alive. That's when I signed up with the bone registry."

The man from Belgium continued, "When I go to church, I hear my pastor say to love my neighbor. How can I refuse to help my brother when he is in need? When they called and asked if I could travel to Dallas, as a Christian, how could I say no?"¹

This man from Belgium embodied the true spirit of Jesus' command to love our neighbor. How many of us would make the same sacrifice?

If you haven't love in your heart, you should throw your hope to the four winds and go and get a better one. D.L. Moody

1 JOHN 3:18 [Your Daily Journey with God: 365 Daily Devotions - Page 348](#)

The best way to have friends is to be one, and we can all do that. Fortunately, the rules for being a friend are simple enough for anyone to master.

First, work on your relationship with the Lord every day. The love we need for others comes from Him, and if we walk in the light with Him, we'll be able to have fellowship with others (1 John 1:7). And with His love comes His joy, peace, and patience.

Second, avoid the use of the word I. When you're with others, ask about their day, their health, and their burdens.

Third, don't be easily offended. A prudent person overlooks an insult (Proverbs 12:16, NIV). Good friends have thick skins.

Fourth, be cheerful. No one wants to be around a grumpy, irritable, or depressed spirit. Be friendly!

Fifth, drop everything to help your friend in a time of crisis or emergency. After all, you never know when you'll be on the receiving end.

Cultivate your friendships, and they will come back to bless you.

A friend knows when you have a need and comes to strengthen you in the hand of God. DAVID JEREMIAH

The Only Option 1 JOHN 3:18

Sometimes in a relationship the only service we can render is to love the other person. Whether it is a friend or a child in a tough circumstance, a family member in crisis or a neighbor who dislikes you, loving actions may be all we can do.

I am a fix-it person. Whenever my children or friends have problems, I want to swoop in and make everything OK. Many times that is not only impossible, but it's not wise. We may need to let our children, our friends and our family members learn hard lessons, even though it is difficult for us to stand back and watch.

Those of us who have dealt with adolescents know that in their desire to be independent (a healthy quality, by the way), they often do not want help, which they view as interference. In those cases, all we can do, as parents or teachers, is stand back and find ways to love them by the things we do (or don't do) and say (or don't say). This is a form of godly service.

Remember, in self-righteous service, we do things for others because it will make us feel better. In true service, we do things for others because it will make them feel better.

Dry Sponges [Celebrate Recovery Daily Devotional: 366 Devotionals](#)

"Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth."¹ JOHN 3:18

One way to think about the recovery process is to imagine what water does to a dry sponge. We come into the process dried up and thirsting for life. We've tried other things, but so far nothing has helped. We have come to the realization that no one but our Creator is going to be able to provide what we so desperately need.

In the same way a dry sponge soaks up all the water it is exposed to, the Celebrate Recovery process allows us to soak up God's peace, love, grace, and forgiveness. Oh, how good that feels when our dry spirits soak up all that life-giving water! Eventually, though, we reach our saturation point. We can't hold any more until we allow ourselves to be wrung out on those around us through

our service. Then we can soak up more. This is a healthy process, because—as we all know—a waterlogged sponge left on the counter for a few days will begin to stink.

The old saying “You can’t keep it unless you give it away” is right. This is why service is so important. If we come into the process, soak up God’s goodness, then fail to give back, we’ll soon be like that waterlogged sponge: we become rancid and begin to smell. God’s way is to fill us, wring us out, and fill us again.

PRAYER Holy Father, I love to feel your life-giving Spirit flowing within me. Remind me to stay fresh and healthy by sharing with others what you’ve given to me. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

LOVE AS AN ACT OF THE WILL Frederick Buechner [Faith That Matters: 365 Devotions from Classic Christian Leaders](#)

My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. 1 JOHN 3:18 NKJV

In the Christian sense, love is not primarily an emotion, but an act of the will. When Jesus tells us to love our neighbors, he is not telling us to love them in the sense of responding to them with a cozy emotional feeling. You can as easily produce a cozy emotional feeling on demand as you can a yawn or a sneeze. On the contrary, he is telling us to love our neighbors in the sense of being willing to work for their well-being even if it means sacrificing our own well-being to that end, even if it means sometimes just leaving them alone. Thus in Jesus’ terms, we can love our neighbors without necessarily liking them. In fact liking them may stand in the way of loving them by making us overprotective sentimentalists instead of reasonably honest friends.

This does not mean that liking may not be a part of loving, only that it doesn’t have to be. Sometimes liking follows on the heels of loving. It is hard to work for people’s well-being very long without coming in the end to rather like them too.

Have you ever prayed regularly for an enemy? What happened? Did the enemy change? Did you?
Father, show me how to contribute to my neighbor’s life, whether it’s by contact or peace. Amen.

REACH OUT AND TOUCH by Gail and Gordon MacDonald

“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.”1 JOHN 3:18

Catherine Booth, cofounder of the Salvation Army, was a remarkably sensitive person. And her discernment showed best in her relationship to William, her husband. In a letter written to him, she declares her intent that their home will always be a place sensitive to his needs and concerns:

“I am delighted; it makes me happy to hear you speak as you do about home. Yes, if you will seek home, love home, be happy at home, I will spend my energies in trying to make it a more than ordinary one; it shall, if my ability can do it, be a spot sunny and bright, pure and calm, refined and tender, a fit school in which to train immortal spirits for a holy and glorious heaven; a fit resting-place for a spirit pressed and anxious about public duties; but oh, I know it is easy to talk, I feel how liable I am to fall short; but it is well to purpose right, to aim high, to hope much; yes, we will make home to each other the brightest spot on earth, we will be tender, thoughtful, loving, and forbearing, will we not? Yes, we will.”

These are the words of a woman who was reaching out to touch, who had looked within a man and found something to which she could minister.

A W Tozer - Doctrine without Love [Tozer on the Holy Spirit: A 365-Day Devotional - Page 14](#)

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. —1 John 3:18

The blight of the Pharisee’s heart in olden times was doctrine without love. With the teachings of the Pharisees Christ had little quarrel, but with the pharisaic spirit He carried on unceasing warfare to the end.

It was religion that put Christ on the cross, religion without the indwelling Spirit.... An unblessed soul filled with the letter of truth may actually be worse off than a pagan kneeling before a fetish.

We are safe only when the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, only when our intellects are indwelt by the loving Fire that came at Pentecost. For the Holy Spirit is not a luxury, not something added now and again to produce a deluxe type of Christian once in a generation.

No, He is for every child of God a vital necessity, and that He fill and indwell His people is more than a languid hope. It is rather an inescapable imperative.

They that walk in the King's holy way must have pure hearts, gentle tongues, loving ways, happy faces and restful lives.

Life-Changing Mission

Let's not just talk about love; let's practice real love. (1 John 3:18 MSG)

Sonya was a little nervous about the week ahead. The singles pastor at church had asked her to join a mission trip to the mountains of West Virginia. They would be repairing homes of elderly people each morning and holding Bible school at a local church each afternoon.

On the first afternoon in a corner of the fellowship hall, a little girl named Natalie sat by herself while the others played games. Natalie didn't say much, so Sonya did the talking. She talked about her life, her favorite Bible stories, and how much Jesus meant to her. Then it was time to leave.

The next afternoon Natalie made a beeline for Sonya and pulled her over to the same corner. She had brought a doll, which she put in Sonya's lap. Each afternoon was the same: Sonya would sit and talk to the quiet girl, playing with the doll, and trying to make Natalie smile. At the end of the week, the church's pastor told Sonya that Natalie had a troubled home life, and he had never seen her bond with anyone before Sonya. Sonya fought back tears when she told Natalie good-bye, and gave her a little Bible to take home.

Mission trips are incredible opportunities for spiritual stretching. Not only do you experience new places, cultures, and people, but you are put in situations you have never faced before. These moments drive us to depend on God's provision and faithfulness, and we see Him come through for us in amazing new ways.

Consider taking a short-term mission trip. Check at your church or denominational website to see what mission opportunities are coming up. If you are unable to go on a trip yourself, you could support someone who is going with prayer and financial help.

EMPATHY EMPIRE 1 JOHN 3:18 [The Christian History Devotional: 365 Readings & Prayers](#)

1786: America in the early 1800s had a network of charitable organizations known as the "benevolent empire," active in such causes as Bible distribution, temperance, missions, and, last but not least, abolition of slavery. One of the prominent men in the benevolent empire was Arthur Tappan, born on this date into a devout Massachusetts family. He and his brother, Lewis, made a fortune in exporting silk, lost the fortune, made another fortune in finance, and they never forgot that God intended people of great wealth to do great things for mankind. There were few noble causes of the 1800s that the Tappan brothers were not associated with.

It is said that slavery is a stain on American history, something that never should have endured in a land where people honored Thomas Jefferson's words about all men being created equal. While this is true, it is also true that at no point did all Americans condone slavery, and many Christians opposed it on religious grounds. Both Tappans were active in the American Anti-Slavery Society, which some Americans regarded as extreme, and at one point Lewis Tappan's home was vandalized. The Tappan brothers understood that it was inevitable that, in time, a Christian nation would abolish slavery. Sadly, it took a bloody war to bring it about, but emancipation did come, and Arthur Tappan died in July 1865, having lived to see emancipation and the end of the war.

The brothers Tappan were more than social activists, for they were supporters of noted evangelist Charles Finney and helped build his enormous Broadway Tabernacle in New York. Finney shared their abolitionist views, as well as their belief that support for evangelism and missions did not exclude support for social change. While their critics sometimes mocked them as meddlesome do-gooders, the members of the "benevolent empire" deserve honor, especially those who, like the Tappan brothers, put their vast wealth to good use.

Prayer: Lord, whatever we possess is from you. Give us opportunities to use it for the glory of your kingdom. Amen.

Daily Light on the Daily Path - Walk in love.

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."—Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.—Love covers all offenses.

"Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."—"Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return."—Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles.—Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.—If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.—Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

Eph. 5:2; John 13:34; 1 Pet. 4:8; Prov. 10:12; Mark 11:25; Luke 6:35; Prov. 24:17; 1 Pet. 3:9; Rom. 12:18; Eph. 4:32; 1 John 3:18

The Harsh Reality Of Poverty, Just What Is My Responsibility? - Newell Hillis in Facts of the Matter

Let's pretend that you have decided to gear down to the level where hundreds of millions of people on this planet live. Here's a starter kit on how to get there:

- "First, take out the furniture: leave a few old blankets, a kitchen table, maybe a wooden chair. You've never had a bed, remember?
- Second, throw out your clothes. Each person in the family may keep the oldest suit or dress, a shirt or blouse. The head of the family has the only pair of shoes.
- Third, all kitchen appliances have vanished. Keep a box of matches, a small bag of flour, some sugar and salt, a handful of onions, a dish of dried beans. Rescue the moldy potatoes from the garbage can: those are tonight's meal.
- Fourth, dismantle the bathroom, shut off the running water, take out the wiring and the lights and everything that runs by electricity.
- Fifth, take away the house and move the family into the toolshed.
- Sixth, no more postman, fireman, government services. The two-classroom school is three miles away, but only two of your seven children attend anyway, and they walk
- Seventh, throw out your bankbooks, stock certificates, pension plans, insurance policies. You now have a cash hoard of \$5.
- Eighth, get out and start cultivating your three acres. Try hard to raise \$300 in cash crops because your landlord wants one-third and your moneylender 10 percent.
- Ninth, find some way for your children to bring in a little extra money so you have something to eat most days. But it won't be enough to keep bodies healthy—so lop off 25 to 30 years of life."

As a follower of Christ, what is my responsibility?

"If a man shuts his ear to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered ... He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses." (Proverbs 21:13; 28:27)

"If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth." (1 John 3:17, 18)

PRAYER: "Dear God, help me to see those less fortunate than myself through your eyes, and respond in a way that reflects the very heart of Jesus. Amen."

Daily Light on the Daily Path -

"She has done what she could."

"This poor widow has put in more than all of them."—"Whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward."—If the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.

Let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.—If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?—Whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

"When you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'"

Mark 14:8; Luke 21:3; Mark 9:41; 2 Cor. 8:12; 1 John 3:18; James 2:15–16; 2 Cor. 9:6–7; Luke 17:10

Adrian Rogers - Christlike love is serving love. And, you know, if the members of our church all had Christlike love, we wouldn't have to beg for people to work in the nursery. We wouldn't have to beg for people to work on the parking lot. We wouldn't have to beg for people to work in Vacation Bible School, or to sing in the choir. You see, that's Christlike love. It is serving love. First John 3, verse 18: "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." When you have Christlike love, there is no job too small for you to do. Jesus, the Lord of Glory, is serving, washing dirty feet.

Will you call others to live in my love? Will you lead others into a life of love? The world is crying out for the love we can show them together.

My love pulverizes prejudice and builds enduring loyalty.
My love moves hearts to be generous, to serve and benefit others.
My love stirs hearts to pour out for the poor, the lonely, the sick.
My love sets hearts free from fear, anger, anxiety.
My love sets hearts free from the feverish drive to own and possess things that can never give life.
In me
in my love
in my life
you find abundant life, refreshing you with rest, permeated with profound peace, jubilant with joy. A great adventure.
I love you, my child!

Read the full devotional from [What is the Father like by Phillip Keller - Borrow - see page 116, chapter 12-](#)

WHAT LOVE LOOKS LIKE - Greg Laurie

“My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.” (1 John 3:18)

Have you ever felt like a spiritual failure? If so, then you're in good company. Even the Apostle Peter felt that way after he denied the Lord. When Jesus told the disciples they would abandon Him in His hour of need, Peter insisted that he never would. But Jesus said that Peter would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed that day. And he did.

Now Peter finds himself in an awkward moment. Jesus was crucified and had risen on the third day. He suddenly appears to them at the Sea of Galilee. Before they knew it, Jesus was cooking breakfast for everyone with the fish He had just helped them catch. Maybe as they ate, Peter was remembering when, not all that long ago, he denied the Lord by the glow of another fire.

Eventually, the Lord breaks the silence. He asks Peter a series of questions, each with the same phrase: “Do you love Me?”

Peter had learned his lesson. Instead of boasting of his love for the Lord, he simply answers, “Yes Lord; You know that I love you” (John 21:15–17). In the original language, the word Peter used for “love” was *phileo*. It could be translated, “have an affection for.”

At least Peter was being honest. We can talk all day about how much we love God, but never act on it. Peter eventually proved his love for the Lord. A leader in the early church and the writer of two New Testament epistles, he reportedly was crucified upside-down as a martyr for his faith.

How about you? Is your love for the Lord expressed more by your words than your actions?

Adrian Rogers - The Bible says in First John chapter 3:18: “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.”

Do you know what could happen this morning? This morning you could get it down in your notebook. And you could say, “Hey let's see what the pastor said. He said first of all, of yes I remember. He said that we are to have the kind of love this to be selfless love. Oh what was the second point oh yes I remember, it's to be steadfast love. What was the third kind of love? Yeah, I've got it, serving love.” And, you get that in your notebook.

Friend listen. Get it in your life. Don't love in word but in deed and in truth. Jesus is literally doing something. Jesus gave His disciples what they needed at that moment. Do you know what they needed at that moment? They needed to be renewed, refreshed, restored, revived and reinvigorated. That's what they needed. Now, let me tell you what love does. If you love me let me tell you what you are going to do for me. If you love me you are not going to give me what I want because many times what I want is not what I need and what I need is not what I want.

My dad use to say, “You need a spanking.” He was right. But, I sure didn't want one. Amen. If you love me you're not going to give me what I want. And, you're certainly not going to give me what I deserve if you love me. What did Judas deserve? He didn't deserve to have his feet washed. What did those disciples deserve? They didn't deserve to have their feet washed. They were arguing about who's going to be the greatest. Jesus did not give them what they desired nor what they deserved but he gave them what they needed.

And, that's what love does. Love gives what is. It is serving love. Jack Hyles is one of my favorite preachers. He's pastor of the First Baptist church of Hammond, Indiana. He is a great soul-winner. I heard Jack one time speak and he said he went into an airport restaurant there to eat breakfast. And the lady there said, “Would you like a menu?” He said, “Yes ma'am.” “You like some coffee.” “Yes ma'am.” You ready to order.” “Yes madam.” She said, “Yes ma'am, yes ma'am, yes ma'am. Is that all you can say is yes ma'am?” He said, “Yes ma'am.” And, she was very snippity to him. He went ahead and ordered and she just kind of slung the food in front of him. He ate it and she had a scowl on her face.

And, when he got up to leave he put something like a 10-dollar bill, a very large bill, by the plate and walked out. She said, "Hey, you left some money on the table." He said, "Don't people tip around here. She said, "You mean that's for me?" He said, "Yes ma'am." She said, "You would give me a tip like that after the way I've treated you?" "Yes ma'am." She said, "I don't understand it. Why?" He said, "I looked at you. I could tell you were hurting." He said, "I knew you must have some kind of problem. I just felt maybe this would make your day a little better." She started to cry. She said, "Mister you don't know the problems I've got. I got up this morning with a child that was sick and I had to go to work. This is the only joy that I have. I don't have anybody else. I don't have a husband. And, I couldn't get a babysitter and I had to leave that sick child alone at home to take care of himself." And then on the way here to work my car broke down and I don't know what I'm going to do. I don't have the money to have it fixed. I was late to work and the boss chewed me out." He said, "I knew you were hurting." And he told her about Jesus. Right there though tears she gave her heart to Christ. And, she was wonderfully saved. Now most of us would have said, "She doesn't deserve a tip." And, she didn't. He didn't give her what she deserved. He gave her what she needed. Isn't that right?

You see, that's what love is. Real love doesn't give people what they deserve. Judas didn't deserve that. The disciples didn't deserve that. But, Jesus knew at that moment that was the thing that they needed. And that's what Jesus did.

And, it was a small thing, in a way, washing feet. It was a humble thing. An insignificant kind of a thing that only a slave would do. Do you know something folks? We've got a lot of those kinds of jobs around this church. We need nursery workers. It would be nice if some of you were to lay aside your Sunday finery as Jesus laid aside His garments and go work in the nursery. We need people to work on the parking lots. We need people to work in the -kitchen. We need people to do some of the jobs that are not really glamorous jobs. Not necessarily the thing that is glamorous but the thing that is needed. Real love is serving love. Not just in word but in deed and in truth. Not just giving people what they deserve or what they desire but what they need.

Love is proven by action [The Love Dare Day by Day: A Year of Devotions for Couples - Page 55](#)

Little children, we must not love in word or speech, but in deed and truth. 1 John 3:18

When the Bible declares, "God is love" (1 John 4:8), that's all we should need to believe it. And yet God has chosen to put His words into action. He "proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us!" (Romans 5:8). He "sent His One and Only Son into the world so that we might live through Him" (1 John 4:9). He proved it. He gave His love an understandable definition by turning it from a noun into a verb.

If God Himself knows that our human minds and hearts need to see love to believe it, then your spouse is not being unreasonable to expect your love to show itself in observable actions. Love may always be somewhat hard to measure and define, but the closest we come to understanding it is by recognizing the actions it creates. Love that doesn't identify itself through expression is meaningless to your spouse. "Better is open rebuke than hidden love" (Proverbs 27:5 NIV). Make your love obvious. Get busy!

PRAYER "Heavenly Father, I pray that You would help my love to go beyond thoughts, feelings, and words, and be translated into daily actions. In Jesus' name, amen."

DOROTHEA DIX Humanitarian, Teacher, Nurse (1802–87) - The Top 100 Devotional Collection

Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth1 JOHN 3:18 NIV

In 1841, Dorothea Dix volunteered to teach a women's Sunday school class at the East Cambridge, Massachusetts, House of Correction. What she saw disturbed her. The women—many mentally ill—were confined in unheated smelly cages, closets, cellars, stalls, and pens. They were chained, naked, beaten with rods, and lashed into obedience. Dorothea brought the abuses to the attention of the state's court—and in time, they were corrected.

In the next four years she visited jails and almshouses in every state east of the Mississippi River and took detailed notes. Everywhere Dorothea traveled, it was the same: prisoners, the mentally ill, and disabled people were treated harshly. She pled before state legislatures, and as a result, she helped establish thirty-two mental hospitals and fifteen schools for the mentally disabled. When she was commended for her efforts, she said, "I am merely acting in obedience to the voice of God."

Dorothea Dix believed every person has value, and she worked to see that those unable to speak for themselves received fair treatment. Certain groups of people in our communities may also be neglected. We can do something. We may call their need to the attention of those who can help. And we can show God's love to them by becoming actively involved in their lives.

Evidences of Loving God - Before the Face of God

Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. [1 John 3:18]

The first fruit of the Spirit is love, and it is love that is the focus of Paul's remarks in 1 Corinthians 13. What does Christian love mean? What are the signs of love?

First, love disposes us to honor God. It quickens a desire in our hearts for adoration. Do you enjoy the adoration of God in prayer, or is your prayer life merely endless petitions and requests? One of the signs of growing sanctification is an increasing accent on adoration in our prayers. We want more and more to honor God, to be enthralled with his majesty, and this is not natural to us in our sinful state.

In short, love inclines us to worship.

Second, love gives credit to God's Word. Love does not operate in a spirit of suspicion. When we love someone we are more prone to trust what they tell us. Also, today there is a mentality in some parts of the church that enjoys finding problems in Scripture, and this is not a manifestation of love.

Third, love in the heart acknowledges the right of God to govern—not simply the universe but also me. Love melts the arrogance of our fallen nature, and delights in the authority of God. The Lordship of Christ becomes a sweet doctrine, rather than one which causes a chaffing attitude. Glad obedience quickly follows.

Fourth, love inclines us to desire justice for our neighbors. It moves us away from condemning and cheating and otherwise wronging our neighbors, toward giving them what is their due. It moves us away from slander and gossip, toward mercy and charitableness. Fifth, love disposes us toward contentment in whatever situation we find ourselves. This does not mean some kind of apathy, but it does mean that we are content with our lot even as we try to improve it. We are able to rejoice in the government of God as he superintends our lives for his good.

Coram Deo If an evidence of loving God is adoration in prayer, spend five minutes today exalting God for who he is. Focus strictly on adoration, resisting the temptation to lapse into petitions, supplication, or thanksgiving. Use psalms as models for adoring God in prayer.

Charles Stanley - Blessed Assurance

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 JOHN 3:18–24

KEY VERSE: 1 JOHN 3:23

This is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

It is easy to look across the church sanctuary and see someone whose salvation you would not question. Perhaps you also can identify someone you believe is struggling even more in his walk with Jesus than you are.

One of the enemy's traps is to get us to compare ourselves to others. It is a way that he deceives us into thinking we do not measure up.

At other times he gets us to think we're better than the next person so we become complacent in our faith. The only true measuring stick resting in a church pew is in the book rack. It is the Bible, the inerrant Word of God.

Listen to what God says about assurance of salvation: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16 NASB); "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31 NASB); and "This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 3:23 NASB).

The common thread in these scriptures is that salvation comes only through belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. There is no other itinerary or requirement, no need for comparisons: "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13 NASB).

Father, thank You for the blessed assurance You have given me. Let me continually use the measuring stick of Your Word to check my spiritual growth.

Examples of His Love 1 JOHN 3:18 [Promises: A Daily Guide to Supernatural Living - Page 99](#) Bill Bright

The story is told about two farmers. Every day, one of them would haul pails of water up the steep slope to his terraced field and irrigate his meager crop. The second farmer tilled the terrace just below, and he would poke a hole in the dike and let the other farmer's water run down into his field.

The first farmer was upset. Being a Christian, he went to his pastor and asked for advice. The pastor told him to keep on watering as before and to say nothing. So, the farmer returned to his fields and the watering of his crop, but the farmer below him continued to drain off his water. Nothing had changed.

After a few days, the first farmer went to his pastor again. The pastor told him to go a step further—to water his neighbor's crop! So the next day, the farmer brought water to his neighbor's field and watered the crops. After that, he watered his own field.

This went on for three days, and not a word was exchanged between the two farmers. But after the third day, the second farmer came to the first farmer.

"How do I become a Christian?" he asked.

"There is a saying, 'Love your friends and hate your enemies.' But I say: Love your enemies!...If you are friendly only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even the heathen do that. But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:43–48).

The love displayed on the cross is a reminder that we aren't meant to lead comfortable, self-focused lives. Jesus' actions show us that love isn't merely emotion—it's sacrifice and self-denial. We live to love both God and others, and that's best done with actions that serve.

Are you really loving the people around you? How can you love them better? REBECCA VAN NOORD

WE SETTLE FOR WORDS: DEEDS ARE TOO COSTLY [Evenings with Tozer: Daily Devotional Readings - Page 170](#)

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. 1 JOHN 3:18

The practice of substituting words for deeds is not something new, for the Apostle John saw it in his day and warned against it. James also had something to say about the vice of words without deeds: "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?"

We settle for words in religion because deeds are too costly. It is easier to pray, "Lord, help me to carry my cross daily" than to pick up the cross and carry it. But since the mere request for help to do something we do not actually intend to do has a certain degree of religious comfort, we are content with repetition of the words. What then? Shall we take a vow of silence? Shall we cease to pray and sing and write and witness until we catch up on our deeds?

I say no, that would not help. While we have breath we must speak to men about God and to God about men. To escape this snare of words without deeds, let us say nothing we do not mean. Break the habit of conventional religious chatter. Speak only as we are ready to take the consequences. Believe God's promises and obey God's commandments. Practice the truth so that we may with propriety speak the truth. Deeds give body to words. As we do acts of power our words will take on authority and a new sense of reality will fill our hearts!

A W Tozer - OUR LOVE FOR GOD [Mornings with Tozer: Daily Devotional Readings - Page 30](#)

Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. 1 John 3:18

The taking over of the romantic love ideal into our relation to God has been extremely injurious to our Christian lives. The idea that we should "fall in love" with God is ignoble, unscriptural, unworthy of us and certainly does no honor to the Most High God!

We do not come to love God by a sudden emotional visitation. Love for God results from repentance, amendment of life and a fixed determination to love Him. (**ED: ALL ENABLED BY AND DEPENDENT ON THE HOLY SPIRIT!**) Then as God moves more perfectly into the focus of our hearts, our love for Him may indeed rise and swell within us till like a flood it sweeps everything before it.

But we should not wait for this intensity of feeling. We are not responsible to feel but we are responsible to love, and true spiritual love begins in the will.

We should set our hearts to love God supremely, however cold or hard they may seem to be and go on to confirm our love by happy and careful obedience to His Word.

Enjoyable emotions are sure to follow!

Love in the Abstract ... Not the Concrete

A story about a professor of psychology illustrates the difference between showing love and simply talking about it. The man had no children of his own, but whenever he saw a neighbor scolding a child for some wrongdoing he would say, "You should love your boy, not punish him." One hot summer day the professor was repairing his concrete driveway. Tired after several hours of work, he laid down the trowel, wiped the perspiration from his forehead, and started toward the house. Just then, out of the corner of his eye, he saw a mischievous little boy putting his foot in the fresh cement. He rushed over, grabbed him, and was about to spank him when a neighbor leaned out his window and said, "Watch it, Professor! Don't you remember? You must love the child!" At this, he yelled back furiously, "I do love him in the abstract, but not in the concrete!" (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

1 John 3:18 Mark 6:30-44; 8:1-13 TODAY IN THE WORD

Let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. - 1 John 3:18

A church in Cincinnati, Ohio, has had phenomenal growth over the last several years. Their primary means of evangelistic outreach has been to show acts of kindness to people in their community. On several occasions they have volunteered to clean restaurant bathrooms, rake the leaves of the yards of elderly residents, and provide free Sunday newspapers to community newcomers. And each time they do such things they state that they are doing so to show the love of Christ in a tangible way.

How would you feel about cleaning a restaurant bathroom or clearing a neighbor's snowy sidewalk? This might be fine for another church, but we often have our own excuses for not meeting the needs of others. We are no different from the disciples in today's reading. For every generation, showing brotherly kindness is more difficult than it first appears.

It's important for us to realize that the two accounts of miraculous feedings in Mark 6 and 8 are recorded primarily to validate the messianic claims of the Lord Jesus Christ. But one is struck by the contrast between the way Jesus responded to needy people and the way His disciples responded. In fact, the two miracles could very well serve as a mirror for our souls.

Like the disciples, we might be inclined to excuse ourselves from showing acts of brotherly kindness because we're busy. After a hard day's work, we want rest, not responsibility (6:30-31). At the same time, the disciples seem to have thought that if people were able to get to Jesus, they were surely able to take care of their own needs (v. 36). And then there was the issue of ability. The disciples saw the crowds and assumed that there was no way they could minister to all those hungry people. Their resources were limited and the task seemed impossible (6:37; 8:4). They had all of their excuses in place, just like us.

APPLY THE WORD

To counter any excuses that you might use to avoid practicing brotherly kindness, be intentional about helping someone today. You can start with a simple prayer asking God to bring someone into your life who has a need that you can meet. It might be anything from fixing someone's flat tire to taking someone out to lunch who is discouraged with life. Brotherly kindness doesn't become a virtue overnight. But it can become a quality in our lives when we intentionally seek to make it one.

1 John 3:17-18 – Love – Jim Wilson

Sixty-five year Clive Collins was opening the trunk of his car in a parking lot when he stepped on a manhole cover, which tipped, allowing him to fall into a 5 ft hole. Collins was trapped in the manhole for 45 minutes while other shoppers passed by without helping. He said one woman parked right beside him and looked under the hood of her car. Though he asked her to call an ambulance, the woman refused to acknowledge that he was there. Another shopper acknowledged Collins, but never did anything to help. Collins said the man drove by slowly, looking straight at him. When Collins waved to get his attention, the man waved back, but never stopped.

Despite his injuries, Collins was finally able to get his cell phone out of his pocket and call for help. He was treated for two broken ribs, a chipped tooth, a strained groin, and needed 47 stitches. Collins said "Probably about 15, 20 people walked by. The more I called out, the less they seemed to notice me." Local authorities said they were investigating why the manhole cover tipped, but could not explain why no one stopped to help.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/england/dorset/5345940.stm>. Submitted by Jim Sandell

Truthfulness Can Hurt

If truth-telling springs from love, it will not only pain those who hear it, it will pain those who speak it. If telling the truth is fun, it probably doesn't come from love. Jeremiah told the truth and was called the "weeping prophet."

See: Zechariah 8:16; Ephesians 4:15; 1 John 3:18

Love—With Skin On

Frightened by the clamor of thunder in the night, a little child cried out. Holding her securely in his arms, her father explained that she needn't fear. God would take care of her because He loved her greatly.

"I know God will take care of me and love me," she replied. "But right now, Daddy, I want someone with skin on to love me."
We are to be God's love, with skin on!

See: John 13:34; 1 John 3:18; 4:20

Charles Swindoll - Being unselfish in attitude strikes at the very core of our being. It means we are willing to forego our own comfort, our own preferences, our own schedule, or own desires for another's benefit. And that brings us back to Christ. Perhaps you never realized that it was His attitude of unselfishness that launched Him from the splendor of heaven to a humble manger in Bethlehem . . . and later to the cross at Calvary. How did He accept all that? Willingly. 1 JOHN 3:18

JOHN OF THE CROSS* However high the doctrine, adorned the eloquence, sublime the style, the fruits of the sermon will be, in general, no better than the spirit of the preacher.

Live a life of love

Christ's love in us is a special kind of love that is directed away from things that defeat and turned toward things that bring victory (1 John 2:15–17).

A warm and responsive love for others has always been an ingredient in the victorious Christian life (1 John 3:11). Such love must have more than a verbal expression. It must express itself as naturally in deeds as an apple tree bears apples (1 John 3:18).

The incentive for our loving each other is the wonderful fact that God loves us (1 John 4:11).

Spurgeon - A sermon to the Lord's little children - 1 John 2:12 [A Sermon to the Lord's Little Children](#)

Observe that our text is addressed to the 'little children'. It is thought by many wise interpreters that under this term John includes the whole church of God, and that afterwards he divides that church into two companies, the fathers and the young men: those who under one aspect are all 'little children', are under another regarded as young men or fathers. There is very much to support this view in several instances in this epistle. John is evidently addressing all the saints when he speaks of them as 'My little children,' as, for instance, in 1 John 3:18 and also in the closing verse, 'Little children, keep yourselves from idols.' Surely, all the saints are included in these exhortations. There is a sense in which every Christian is still a little child, a sense in which he ought to be so, ever dependent upon the great Father, ever ready to receive the word of the Father without questioning, ever teachable, ever restful in the Father's care, and full of love to him who is his all in all. Of necessity we must ever be 'children before God' for our finite capacity is so limited that we are mere babes in knowledge in the presence of Infinite wisdom, and babes in understanding when contrasted with the great Father of spirits. We know enough to make us know that we know very little. The most advanced intellects in the church are infants compared with the Ancient of Days; 'we are but of yesterday, and know nothing': with all our experience, with all our study, with all our meditation, with all our illumination, we remain 'little children' when measured by the boundless knowledge of the Lord.

Christlikeness

A young seminary student was serving as a chaplain in the emergency room of a large charity hospital when a woman was brought in who had tried to take her own life. He did his best to comfort her and after a few minutes, in her agitated state, she looked up and asked, "Are you Jesus?"

Without thinking about it, that young student had fulfilled his life's purpose—to reveal to the world the compassion of Jesus Christ. The Bible says the world will know Christians by how they love others—if their love is like the love of Jesus.

Act in selfless love today and "be Jesus" to someone.

My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. 1 JOHN 3:18

Too Little Action

A New England clergyman, impressing on his congregation the necessity of practical godliness, and contrasting the early Christians with those of the present generation, very properly remarked, "We have too many resolutions and too little action. The Acts of the Apostles is the title of one of the books of the New Testament; their resolutions have not reached us."

See: 1 Timothy 6:18; Hebrews 10:24; James 4:17; 1 John 3:18

THE ROBBER AND THE PRIEST

Topics: Conscience; Fasting; Foolishness; Hypocrisy; Integrity; Lent; Resisting Temptation; Vices

References: Proverbs 20:11; Matthew 23:13–36; 1 Corinthians 8:8; Titus 1:16; 1 John 3:18

A priest was coming back to his rectory one evening in the dark when he was accosted by a robber who pulled a gun on him and demanded, "Your money or your life!"

As the priest reached into his coat pocket, the robber saw his Roman collar and said, "I see you're a priest. Never mind, you can go."

The priest tried to reciprocate by offering the robber a candy bar that he remembered was in his pocket.

The robber replied, "No thank you, Father. I don't eat candy during Lent."

—Harold A. Buetow, *Embrace Your Renewal* (Alba House, 2004)

Three Groups

Regarding salvation and assurance, there are three groups of people:

1. those who are secure but not sure;
2. those who are "sure" but not secure; and
3. those who are secure and sure.

Category one are conscientious believers in Christ who are saved but lack assurance. In category two are professing Christians who say, "Even though I'm living in sin, I'll make it. After all, 'once saved, always saved!'" The third group are born-again believers who enjoy a warm, secure relationship with Christ each day. The objective basis of our salvation is the finished work of God's Son on the cross. The subjective basis for our assurance is our believing the truth about Christ (1 John 2:2, 4; 2:15; 5:1), loving the brethren (1 John 3:14, 18, 19, 4:7–8), and obeying Christ's commandments (1 John 2:3–5).

SPIRITUAL DEATH, CONCEPT OF - Tony Evans

A LUXURY car company had a powerful commercial some time ago. There were two dummies in the car. Engineers were going to crash the car into a wall in order to show how sturdy and solid the Lexus was.

What caught my attention when I saw this commercial was what the dummies looked like. They were dressed in suits and ties. One dummy had a hat on. The other dummy had his hand on the wheel sporting an expensive watch. They were good-looking dummies headed toward a brick wall.

When we go to our cars after church with our nice dresses and our nice suits and we sit in our nice vehicles, the question is, are you a dummy behind the wheel? Those dummies in the commercial were looking good, but they were headed toward disaster. So it is possible to be a good-looking dummy. Many people are walking around today spiritually dead but don't know it.⁸⁹⁴

[Double-mindedness; Spiritual Life, Manifestation of] Isa. 29:13; 1 John 3:18

Faith And Works: James 2:18; 1 John 3:18

Elisabeth Gabriele Valé rie Marie, the Duchess in Bavaria, married Prince Albert I of Belgium in 1900. In 1909, upon Albert's ascent to the throne, Elisabeth became Queen Elisabeth I. Though she was from German decent, she supported Belgium in both World War I and II. During the First World War, the Queen made herself beloved by visiting the frontlines and by sponsoring a nursing unit.

During the German occupation of Belgium from 1940 to 1944, she used her German connections and influence to assist in the rescue of hundreds of Jewish children from deportation by the Nazis. After the war she was awarded the title "Righteous Among the Nations" by the Israeli government.

One day while visiting Soviet-dominated Warsaw in 1956, Elisabeth was assigned a chief of protocol to accompany her to mass: "Are you a Catholic?" she asked the man. "Believing," he replied, "but not practicing."

"Of course," said Elisabeth, "then in that case you must be a Communist."

"Practicing, Your Majesty," he replied, "but not believing." There cannot be a schism between what we believe and what we practice.

Tears of Love - Billy Graham 1 JOHN 3:18 NIV [Hope for Each Day Morning and Evening Devotions - Page 168](#)

One of our associate evangelists was preaching at a university. He yearned to win the students to Christ, but their reaction was hostile. One young woman was especially antagonistic. After the lecture she came to him and said, "I don't believe anything you said."

He replied, "I'm sorry that you don't agree, but do you mind if I pray for you?"

She answered, "Nobody has ever prayed for me before. I guess it won't do any harm."

He bowed his head and began to pray. She stood looking straight ahead. But suddenly she noticed that while he was praying, tears were coming down his cheeks. When he opened his eyes, she herself was in tears. She said, "No one in my entire life has ever shed a tear for me." They sat on a bench, and that woman accepted Christ as her Savior.

May the Lord use you today to help bring someone into His Kingdom by your love and your witness.

SCRIPTURE: Various

INTRODUCTION: We must have loving relationships in the church without neglecting those outside the church.

1. Your Love Must Reach In (1 John 3:11, 14, 16, 18; John 13:34–35). Healthy, loving relationships must be built within the church. This is the proving ground for us as Christians. Those outside the church are watching what happens inside the church to see if we really are who we claim to be—followers of Jesus. All too often we fail at this point.

2. Your Love Must Reach Out (Matt. 28:18–20; Rom. 10:13–14; 2 Cor. 5:17–20). We will not share the love of Christ if we don't care about others' salvation. We must become people who care. We need to see with God's eyes and feel with His heart toward those who don't know Him.

CONCLUSION: A healthy spiritual life will be found in those who reach out with their words, time, and energy, in love both to one another and to those who are without Christ.

Willing to Take the Risk

LOVE 1 John 3:10–17

A good way to gauge how much you love God is to consider how much you are willing to give for the cause of Christ. A man named Andy proved his love in a very real way.

Years ago, Andy, a graduate school student from the mid-west, was moved by the need of another brother. The new semester had come and one of his friends was \$150.00 short of what he needed to stay in school. Andy didn't have to think twice about what to do. He gave his friend the money.

Andy made a tremendous sacrifice. Like most students, he did not have a large reserve of cash to share. In fact, a year later, Andy had to drop out of school for a year to earn more money to finish his own education. Did he ever regret giving that money to his friend? Not in any way. He later said, "To have done anything else would have been sin. My brother had a need and I had the privilege of helping meet that need. Don't worry about me. God will take care of me too." And God did. Andy finished his degree a year later—just in time ... in God's time ... in God's way ... with God's provision.

The believer never loses when his motive for action is love. Love is always worth the risk.

He Had Mastered the Principles of Caring

Alan Loy McGinnis relates the following:

In my hometown an obscure nurseryman died recently. His name was Hubert Bales, and he was the shyest man I ever met. When he talked, he squirmed, blinked his eyes rapidly, and smiled nervously.

Hubert never ran in influential circles. He grew shrubs and trees, working with his hands the plot of land left by his father. He was anything but an extrovert.

Yet when Hubert died, his funeral was the largest in the history of our little town. There were so many people that they filled even the balcony of the church.

Why did such a shy man win the hearts of so many people? Simply because, for all his shyness, Hubert knew how to make friends. He had mastered the principles of caring, and for more than 60 years he had put people first. Perhaps because they recognized that his generosity of spirit was an extra effort for someone so retiring, people loved him back. By the hundreds.

See: Romans 12:10; Philippians 2:3-4; 1 John 3:18

I'd Rather See a Sermon

I'd rather see a sermon
Than hear one any day;
I'd rather one should walk with me
Than merely show the way;
For the eye's a better pupil
And more willing than the ear;
Good counsel is confusing
But examples always clear.
And best of all the preachers
Are the men who live their creeds;

For to see good put into action
Is what everybody needs.
I can soon learn how to do it
If you let me see it done;
I can watch your hands in action,
But your tongue too fast may run.
And the lectures you deliver
May be very fine and true,
But I'd rather get my lesson
By observing what you do;
For I may misunderstand you
And the high advice you give,
But there's no misunderstanding
How you act and how you live.

See: 2 Corinthians 9:12-13; 1 John 3:18

They Shaved Their Heads!

Oceanside, Calif:

Mr. Alter's fifth-grade class at Lake Elementary School made headlines when the boys in the class decided by themselves to shave their heads. They did so, without embarrassment, because one of their own, Ian O'Gorman, developed cancer and had undergone chemotherapy. His hair began to fall out. To make their friend feel at home, to feel one with the crowd, all his classmates agreed to shave their heads, with their parent's permission, so that upon his return, Ian would not stand out from the class. No one would know who the "cancer kid" was. The teacher, Mr. Alter, was so moved by the spirit of his class that he too shaved his head.

See: Romans 15:1-2; Galatians 6:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:9; 1 John 3:18

Show Me!

In the play, My Fair Lady, Eliza is being courted by Freddy, who writes to her daily of his love for her. Eliza's response to his notes is to cry out in frustration:

Words! Words! I'm so sick of words!...
Don't talk of stars
Burning above,
If you're in love,
Show me!
Don't talk of love lasting through time.
Make me no undying vow
Show me now!

We need more than words to experience a loving relationship. We need to be shown. Let your love be seen!

See: 1 John 3:18

Slave Trade

William Wilberforce opposed the slave trade on explicitly religious grounds, to the great consternation and dismay of the vested interests of England. "Things have come to a pretty pass when religion is allowed to invade public life," railed Lord Melbourne during a debate on abolishing slavery. Melbourne was, thankfully, proved wrong.

See: Deuteronomy 6:5-9; James 1:27; 1 John 3:18

1 John 3:18, 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 TODAY IN THE WORD

Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. - 1 John 3:18

William Wilberforce, one of the more well-known members of the Clapham Sect, worked tirelessly in Parliament to abolish the British slave trade. But it was Hannah More, a lesser known member, who wrote this on the subject of notable Christian service: "We are apt to mistake our vocation by looking out of the way for occasions to exercise rare and great virtues, and by stepping over the ordinary ones that lie directly in the road before us."

This notion is at the heart of Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 13. What matters most isn't always our greatest achievements, spiritual or otherwise. When considered in the light of what will endure, all of the spiritual gifts, whether tongues or knowledge (which the

Corinthians esteemed) or prophecy (which Paul valued), have secondary importance. What matters most is that we've acted for love and in love. Love will be the final criterion for our spiritual lives. And love is what will distinguish the Christian life and community.

We must remember that Paul wasn't waxing eloquent on the theme of love for the purposes of poetry. 1 Corinthians 13, before it became a common passage to be used in weddings, was included in a letter to a church whose sins of pride and arrogance, whose misuse and misunderstanding of spiritual gifts, and whose socioeconomic differences had become sources of division. Paul hasn't pushed the pause button on his main themes of his letter, but in this chapter, he gives feet to the character of love. It is the force that he knows can unify the Corinthian community.

When the Corinthians decide to love, the factional infighting and envious quarreling in the community will end (cf. 1:11, 3:3). When the Corinthians begin to love, the exercise of spiritual gifts will build up, rather than divide, the community. When the Corinthians consider controversial questions of Christian faith and practice, and when love governs that discussion, the unity of thought and mind to which Paul first called them will be realized (1:10).

APPLY THE WORD

Love can heal what pride has injured. It can bind up the places where we've been wounded and where trust has eroded. In a commentary on 1 Corinthians, one New Testament scholar says, "Love requires the formation of character." He means to highlight that what Paul has described in this chapter isn't necessarily how we feel love for others but how we show love. To love is to need a radical inner transformation. To love is to depend on Christ, whose example defines for us what love is (1 John 3:16).

1 John 3:18 – MULTI/RACISM - Jim Wilson

In his book, *An Unstoppable Force*, Erwin McManus writes, "Jesus came and destroyed the dividing wall that not only separated man from God but also Jew from Gentile. God is about destroying walls that divide. The church will gain traction in the multicultural environment when she begins to dismantle the walls created not by the hands of God but by our own hands. Sometimes this will require nothing less than confession of the sin of racism and prejudice and the kind of repentance that leads to change. It isn't enough to go to church with a diverse world; God calls us to embrace those who are different as brothers and sisters."

—*An Unstoppable Force*, p. 54

1 John 3:18 (NLT) "Dear children, let us stop just saying we love each other; let us really show it by our actions."

For more information on *An Unstoppable Force*, go to <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0764423061/freshministry>

Poor Widow

In his *Treasury of Quotations*, F. B. Proctor told the following story: A man was trying to get financial help for a widow who was in dire need, but his efforts were meeting with very little success. Even so, most of the people he contacted did express their regret over the sad situation of the poverty-stricken woman. The concerned man, refusing to give up, had high hopes as he approached a wealthy acquaintance, but he too refused to offer help. In declining the request, the rich man said, "I do want you to know, however, that I really feel sorry for that poor woman." The one who was asking for the money responded, "I'm sure you do. But I'm afraid you don't feel it in the right place." "Oh, yes, I do," the man replied, "I feel it very deeply in my heart." The other responded, "That's the problem. You feel it in the wrong place. I just wish those feelings were also in your pocket."

R.W.D., *Our Daily Bread*, June 23 (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Protecting the Hurting -

Other than the usual twice-a-day brushing times, we didn't spend much time around our house worrying about my son Steven's teeth. At least not until he knocked out one of his permanent front teeth in a little scrape with his favorite climbing tree.

After having the tooth reinserted, splinted, x-rayed, drilled, and examined by an array of dentists, we are now very much aware of protecting Steven's mouth. The whole family has rallied around Steven to make sure we save that tooth. We know that if he damages it again, he may lose it. For the time being, he's had to put a halt to playing soccer, chasing girls at recess, and biting into apples.

Our experience with Steven's tooth reminds me of how we should protect the people in our churches who have been damaged by life. John told us to love one another (1 Jn. 3:14,17-18). In fact, this is an important way we demonstrate that we belong to the Lord (v.19). If we sense the presence of people who need our love and care, we can't just ignore them and risk losing them. If we don't protect them with Christian love, the next time they get hurt they may turn elsewhere for help.

Like an injured child, hurting people need protection. Let's make sure they get it from the church. By Dave Branon (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Putting It Into Practice

Is there someone in my church who is hurting?

What could I do? Would a kind word, a visit, or an encouraging card from me be helpful?

What concerns one child of God concerns the whole family of God.

More Than Words - The favorite words my wife likes to hear from my lips, next to "Let's eat out tonight," are the words "I love you." But they are meaningless to her if I don't show my love by the way I treat her. This is true in all relationships. We must do more than just say we care about people who are needy, lonely, or depressed. We must show it.

Many years ago a couple told me about an elderly widow who had no family or close friends. She lived next door and they often invited her over for their evening meal. One snowy afternoon the wife saw the neighbor head for the city dump pulling a small wagon. When dusk arrived and she had not yet returned, the husband became concerned and set out to look for her.

He eventually found her near a pile of debris, sitting on her cart, head down, oblivious to the snow—a picture of despondency. He touched her shoulder and called her by name. With a start, she looked up and said, "You are God's answer to my prayer. I just told Him that I was here alone, that only He knew, and that nobody cared. He just showed me that you care." The man gently led her home where she rested and shared a meal with him and his wife. That's loving "in deed and in truth" (1 Jn. 3:18).

Today, let's look for ways to put words into action. By Herbert Vander Lugt (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Open my eyes, Lord, to people around me,
Help me to see them as You do above;
Give me the wisdom and strength to take action,
So others may see the depth of Your love.

—K. De Haan

True compassion is love in action.

Laundry Love —1 John 3:18 - When James Cates was a university student, he worked the night shift as a houseparent in a residential treatment center. One of his responsibilities was the sometimes overwhelming task of doing the laundry for 23 teenage boys.

The laundering process was hard on the clothes, so when a troubled young resident named Jake was given a new shirt from his mother, James offered to wash it separately. Soon other boys began asking him to include a favorite article of clothing in his "special" load. It was a small act of kindness, but it meant a lot to the boys.

Twenty years later, after establishing a successful practice as a therapist, teaching at a university, and being published in scholarly journals, Cates wrote: "With time to look back and reflect, no client I have ever known and no service I have ever performed means more to me than Jake and his shirt, and those special loads of clothes."

A simple act of caring is a powerful expression of God's compassion in our troubled world. The apostle John wrote, "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18). Is there some "washing" you can do today? By David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When your heart's with compassion filled,
And you God's Word would heed,
Why not in love give help to one
Who has a special need? —Hess

A little kindness can make a big difference.

Love in Deed and Truth - Henry Mahan

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

1 John 3:18

The thing that troubles me most, when it comes to the validity of our profession of Christ, is that we talk, preach, and sing of love, mercy, and forgiveness but then, when the opportunity comes for us to love the unlovely, forgive the offender, and bind up the wounded heart, we join the circle of Pharisees, clutching our stones, ready to wound and maim.

A profession that does not produce is a false profession.

Slave Trade

William Wilberforce opposed the slave trade on explicitly religious grounds, to the great consternation and dismay of the vested interests of England. "Things have come to a pretty pass when religion is allowed to invade public life," railed Lord Melbourne during a debate on abolishing slavery. Melbourne was, thankfully, proved wrong.*

See:Deuteronomy 6:5–9; James 1:27; 1 John 3:18

Truthfulness Can Hurt

If truth-telling springs from love, it will not only pain those who hear it, it will pain those who speak it. If telling the truth is fun, it probably doesn't come from love. Jeremiah told the truth and was called the "weeping prophet."*

See:Zechariah 8:16; Ephesians 4:15; 1 John 3:18

SIGNS OF LIFE - David Jeremiah

- Life Sign: Others will know I am a Christian by my love.
 - Life Verse: My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.—1 John 3:18
 - Life in Action: What characteristics of Jesus' love do I fail to demonstrate? What can I do to incorporate those characteristics in my life?
-

Deeds Not Words (1 John 3:18)

A converted cowboy put it very well when he said, "Lots of folks that would really like to do right, think that serving the Lord means shouting themselves hoarse praising His name. Now I'll tell you how I look at that. I am working for Jim here. Now if I would do nothing but sit around the house here telling what a good fellow Jim is and singing songs to him, I would not suit Jim. But when I buckle on my straps and hustle among the hills and see that Jim's herd is all right, not suffering for water and feed, or being driven off the range and branded by cow thieves, then I am serving Jim as he wants to be served." Let that be our philosophy, too, when the temptation is to talk too much, even for Christ (1 John 3:18).

John Newton - My course of study, like that of a surgeon, has principally consisted in walking the hospital.

Just Do It - Monroe Gaultney

Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. 1 John 3:18

In Other Words

God's children should do more than talk lovingly or speak the language of love; love and truth must also be revealed by their actions.

Small Bites

- ✓ We are God's children
- ✓ Our behavior should reveal His love
- ✓ Loving talk is not enough

- ✓ Talk of loving is not enough
- ✓ Love of talking is not enough
- ✓ What we do reveals who we are
- ✓ We are His. He is ours. All because of love
- ✓ The love in His truth comforts us
- ✓ The truth in His love directs us
- ✓ Love of His truth protects us
- ✓ The truth of His love encourages us
- ✓ The truth from His love guides us
- ✓ Love from His truth inspires us

Questions and Thoughts to Aid Digestion

Do you talk, or do you do? Do you talk about what you do, or do what you talk about?

Do you walk it out after you talk it out?

Have you ever talked yourself out of expressing or accepting love?

Think about one of your habits or actions that express His love. Now one more. Was that hard?

Can your actions be loving and yet not truthful?

How does one express love by truthful actions?

Are honesty and truth the synonyms for the same thing, or are they different?

Prayer: Dear Lord, help me

C. S. Lewis, through his clever and devilish Screwtape, has put the matter into focus for us in one of the Screwtape letters. The senior devil, Screwtape, gives the following advice to the junior temptor, Wormwood, in the matter of how Wormwood should attempt to undermine the faith and repentance of a young Christian.

The great thing is to prevent his doing anything

It remains to consider how we can retrieve this disaster. The great thing is to prevent his doing anything. As long as he does not convert it into action, it does not matter how much he thinks about this new repentance. Let the little brute wallow in it. Let him, if he has any bent that way, write a book about it; that is often an excellent way of sterilizing the seeds which the Enemy plants in a human soul. Let him do anything but act. No amount of piety in his imagination and affections will harm us if we can keep it out of his will. As one of the humans has said, active habits are strengthened by repetition but passive ones are weakened. The more often he feels without acting, the less he will be able ever to act, and, in the long run, the less he will be able to feel. [The Preacher's Commentary - Vol. 35: 1, 2 and 3 John / ... - Page 50](#) (See [page 72 of Screwtape Letters](#))

Love In Action -- Read: 1 John 3:16-24 | Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. —1 John 3:18 - A young man sent a love letter to his girlfriend. It read: "Darling, I'd climb the highest mountain, sail the widest ocean, cross the hottest desert just to see you. P.S.—I'll be over Saturday night if it doesn't rain."

We chuckle at his fickleness, but feel bad for the girl who, like all of us, longs for love in action, not empty promises.

John said that Jesus Christ showed us what true love is when "He laid down His life for us." But John continued, "We also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 Jn. 3:16).

The Greek word used for love in 1 John 3:16 is agape. This kind of love is characterized by sacrifice. It is a love based on the will, not on emotions. It's not a feeling subject to the whims of our convenience. It is a decision to love another despite the cost.

Laying down our lives for others usually doesn't mean dying. Often it costs little more than stopping what we're doing and entering someone's world of need. I once felt prompted by the Holy Spirit to stop scrubbing my kitchen floor to visit a neighbor. She later accepted Christ, in part due to the friendship we had established during that visit.

Don't miss small opportunities to love by waiting for big ones. With agape love, even small acts of love are big. By Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

What does James 1:27 instruct us to do?

According to James 2:14-18, how are we to give evidence of our faith in Christ?

Love in deed is love indeed!

Sandal Love - Read: 1 John 3:16-24 | A young woman backpacking in Colorado encountered another woman hobbling down a mountain trail. On one foot she wore an improvised shoe made of green twigs wrapped with a strip of cloth.

"Lost one boot crossing a stream," she explained. "Hope I can get down the mountain before dark."

The first hiker reached into her own pack and took out a sport sandal. "Wear this," she said. "You can mail it to me when you get home."

The woman gratefully accepted the sandal and set off down the trail. A few days later the sandal arrived in the mail with a note saying: "I passed several people who noticed my predicament, but you're the only one who offered any help. It made all the difference. Thanks for sharing your sandal with me."

The Bible says love can be seen and touched—it's tangible. It may be as big as the Good Samaritan's care for an injured man (Lk. 10:30-37) or as small as a cup of cold water given in Jesus' name (Mt. 10:42).

Real love takes action. The Bible says, "Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1 Jn. 3:18). On the trail of life today, when we meet a hobbler, let's offer a sandal in love. By David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

You may give without loving,
but you can't love without giving.

Get Practical - Read: 1 John 3:16-24 | The missionary noticed that the woman who was helping the family with household chores and with the local language was upset. So she asked some questions and learned that the helper was pregnant, and that she and her husband had decided to abort the baby because they felt they couldn't afford a second child.

The missionary immediately contacted her friends in the United States for financial assistance. She then sat down with her helper and told her that for the next 2 years at least, there would be enough money to take care of the child.

The husband and wife were not Christians, and they didn't have convictions against abortion. But when they heard the news, they were ecstatic. The economic aid gave them confidence that they could care for their child, so they chose not to abort. The missionaries felt they had done something to show Christ's love to this family (1 Jn. 3:18).

Isn't that the way it's supposed to be? We are surrounded by needy people. They're not likely to hear us if we only preach to them, but they may listen if we do something to help them. That, in turn, may open their hearts to hear the really good news about salvation through faith in Jesus. By Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

To reach people for Christ, get practical.

So let our lips and lives express
The holy gospel we profess;
So let our works and virtues shine,

To prove the doctrine all divine. —Watts

People don't care how much you know unless they know how much you care.

Arms Of Love - Read: 1 John 3:16-20 | Many college students go on summer missions trips. But rarely does one come back with plans to rescue a baby. Mallery Thurlow, a student at Cornerstone University in Grand Rapids, went to Haiti to help distribute food. One day a mother showed up at the distribution center with a very sick infant in her arms. The woman was out of options. The baby needed surgery, but no one would perform it. Without intervention, the baby would die. Mallery took baby Rose into her arms—and into her heart.

After returning to the US, Mallery searched for someone to operate on baby Rose. Most doctors held out little hope. Finally, Rose was granted a visa to leave Haiti, and Mallery went back to get her. Detroit Children's Hospital donated the \$100,000 surgery, and it was successful. A little life was saved.

It's unlikely that we will have such a dramatic impact on others. Yet challenged by this student's willingness, we can find ways to provide help. She didn't let circumstances, youth, or inconvenience stop her from saving Rose's life.

Like Mallery, we are called to love "in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18). Who needs you to be God's arms of love today? By Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When you see someone in need,
Love demands a loving deed;
Don't just say you love him true,
Prove it by the deeds you do. —Sper

Compassion puts love into action.

Actions Speak Louder - Read: Matthew 9:1-8 | Irritated with a young athlete who had accomplished little yet boasted about his ability, a TV commentator said, "Don't tell me what you're going to do—tell me what you've done!" Actions speak louder than words.

This principle is seen in Jesus' life. In Matthew 9, a paralytic was brought to Him. Jesus' response? "Your sins are forgiven." When the religious leaders objected, He raised the question of the hour: "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk?'" (v.5).

The answer is obvious. To say He had forgiven the man's sins was simple, because it couldn't be proven or disproven. But, to say "Arise and walk" was different. It was instantly verifiable. So, to prove His authority to forgive sins, Jesus said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house" (v.6). And he did!

Jesus' actions supported His words, and so should ours. John wrote, "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18). What we say is significant to a watching world only if it's consistent with what we do. As we tell people about Christ's love, those words will communicate powerfully if surrounded by acts of love and kindness. Actions do speak louder! By Bill Crowder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I'd rather see a Christian
Than to hear one merely talk,
I'd rather see his actions
And behold his daily walk. —Herrell

Our works and words should say the same thing.

Active Compassion -- Read: 1 John 3:16-24 | Every so often when I walk into my office in the morning, I find a surprise on my desk. Not long ago the item was a sunflower coffee mug dropped off by a fellow employee. She had seen it in a shop and knew it would cheer up my wife—so she bought it and left it on my desk with an encouraging note.

It was my pleasure to take that gift home to my wife Sue and to give it to her in the name of the woman who wanted to encourage her.

This person could have simply thought about my wife. She could have talked to someone about her in a positive way. But those things don't come close to providing the encouragement that comes from taking action.

In 1 John 3:18, John talked about what we are to do when we see others in need. He told us to have active compassion: "Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed." When we see a need, it's good to talk about it, but we must also do something about it. We are instructed: "Be doers of the Word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22).

Ask the Holy Spirit to place someone on your heart to help in Jesus' name. Then take action. Make a difference today. Send a card. Give a gift. Offer a ride. Make a call. Love in deed is love indeed. By Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, when I learn that someone is hurting,
Help me know what to do and to say;
Speak to my heart and give me compassion,
Let Your great love flow through me today. —K. De Haan

Compassion is love in action.

What Makes You Tick? - Read: 1 John 3:16-24 | In our zeal to introduce people to Christ, we must not forget that the Holy Spirit often uses adverse circumstances to increase their sense of spiritual need. He may also use those same circumstances to help us share the love of Christ with them.

Author Jennifer Rees-Larcombe was burdened for a neighbor named Diana but couldn't seem to get close to her. One evening she and several friends were praying for Diana when the doorbell rang. It was Diana's husband. He was desperate. His wife had recently broken her leg and ankle and wouldn't be able to walk for several months. "Do you know of anyone who could look in on her every day?" he asked.

Saddened, yet grateful for this opportunity, Jennifer and her friends began cooking, cleaning, and shopping for Diana. Several months later, she noticed Diana reading a Bible. Diana explained, "I wanted to find out what makes you Christians tick, so I asked my husband to buy this Bible." Soon they started attending Jennifer's church, and eventually they both received Christ.

Are you burdened for someone who needs the Lord? Keep praying and keep loving them "in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18). They'll wonder what makes you tick, and in time they'll find out it's Jesus! By Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

For me 'twas not the truth you taught,
To you so clear, to me so dim,
But when you came to me, you brought
A deeper sense of Him. —Clelland

A helping hand can open the door of a person's heart to the gospel.

Live Honestly - Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. —1 John 3:18

As children grow up, we who are parents or leaders pray that they will learn to discriminate more and more between right and wrong. But be prepared! Eventually these children will compare our actions with our words. If what we do and what we say don't match up, they will be confused, not knowing which to follow—our actions or our words.

In his second letter to Timothy, Paul could honestly say, "I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did" (1:3). His actions and his words agreed.

Paul then described Timothy's faith as "genuine" and pointed to his spiritual heritage: the genuine faith of his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice (v.5). Later in his letter, the apostle urged Timothy, "Continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures" (3:14-15). Christians whose actions and words are consistent can influence generations of people for Christ.

Children put a searchlight on the quality of our lives. "Do as I say" is not the highest standard, but rather an honest life that invites,

“Do as I do.” That means having actions and words that match up. Do yours? By Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Blest is the household where honesty reigns,
Where dad and mom practice the truth;
Blest are the children whom God leads and trains,
And are taught His Word from their youth. —Fitzhugh

Children are more likely to do what you do than to do what you say.

Get Practical - Read: 1 John 3:16-24 |

The missionary noticed that the woman who was helping the family with household chores and with the local language was upset. So she asked some questions and learned that the helper was pregnant, and that she and her husband had decided to abort the baby because they felt they couldn't afford a second child.

The missionary immediately contacted her friends in the United States for financial assistance. She then sat down with her helper and told her that for the next 2 years at least, there would be enough money to take care of the child.

The husband and wife were not Christians, and they didn't have convictions against abortion. But when they heard the news, they were ecstatic. The economic aid gave them confidence that they could care for their child, so they chose not to abort. The missionaries felt they had done something to show Christ's love to this family (1 Jn. 3:18).

Isn't that the way it's supposed to be? We are surrounded by needy people. They're not likely to hear us if we only preach to them, but they may listen if we do something to help them. That, in turn, may open their hearts to hear the really good news about salvation through faith in Jesus. By Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

To reach people for Christ, get practical.

So let our lips and lives express
The holy gospel we profess;
So let our works and virtues shine,
To prove the doctrine all divine. —Watts

People don't care how much you know unless they know how much you care.

Lamb-Chop Witness - Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. —1 John 3:18

Have you ever heard of witnessing with a lamb chop? W. H. Lax, a Methodist minister in London for 38 years, did just that. An old man was gravely ill, and Pastor Lax called on him. The man had no time for ministers, and as soon as he saw Lax's clerical collar he turned away and refused to speak.

Lax suspected that the man's food supply had run low. So when he left the house, the minister stopped at a local butcher shop and had two lamb chops sent over. He called again in a few days and the old fellow was a bit friendlier. On his way home, Lax left another order with the butcher. By his third visit there was a noticeable change. The man was congenial and outgoing; he even allowed the minister to witness to him.

While Lax was away on a preaching mission, the old man died. Apparently he had put his trust in Christ, for just before he died he said, “Tell the minister that it's all right now. I'm going to God. But be sure to tell him it wasn't his talking that changed me. It was those lamb chops!”

Meeting someone's need can provide a great opportunity to share the gospel. It can melt the most hardened heart and open doors that have been locked for a lifetime. Do you know someone who needs a “lamb chop” today? By Haddon W. Robinson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Putting It Into Practice - Are there people in your neighborhood or workplace who are resisting the gospel? How can you show your love and concern by meeting their needs?

Sometimes the best witness is kindness.

Faith At Work - Read: James 2:14-26 | Christians sometimes sing the following words:

This world is not my home,
I'm just a-passing through.

Does that mean that we who are headed for heaven aren't to have a concern for the present world? No. We can't pray as Jesus instructed us, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Mt. 6:10), and be indifferent to the needs and evils of our planet. On the contrary, we ought to be eager to carry out Paul's counsel, "As we have opportunity, let us do good to all" (Gal. 6:10).

British historian Paul Johnson points out that our spiritual forebears in 19th-century England battled against slavery, poverty, vice, and illiteracy because of their devotion to God. He wrote, "Generous-minded Victorians, who took big risks by publicly expressing their concern for the poor, did not pretend that they knew everything about the problem or propose specific solutions." The dynamic of their concern, Johnson asserts, was their solid belief in God.

We are saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8), but our faith is to produce "good works" (v.10). Let's follow the example of those Victorian Christians. And may we be like Christ, "who went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). By Vernon C. Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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So let our works and virtues shine,
To prove the doctrine all divine. —Watts

A living faith is a working faith.

A Friend In Need - Read: 1 John 3:11-18 | Not long ago my wife, Janet, and I bought a quantity of beef from a friend who raised cattle on a small farm. It was less expensive than meat from a grocery store, and we put it in the freezer to use throughout the coming months.

Then a terrible lightning storm cut power throughout our area. For the first 24 hours we were confident that the freezer would keep the meat frozen. But when the second day came with still no word of getting our power back, we began to be concerned.

We contacted Ted, a member of our Bible-study group, to see if he had any advice. He canceled an appointment he had and showed up at our doorstep with a generator to provide power for the freezer. We were thankful that Ted helped us, and we knew it was because of his love for Christ.

The old saying "a friend in need is a friend indeed" took on new meaning for us. John reminds us in 1 John 3:18, "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth." Sometimes this means inconveniencing ourselves to care for the interests of others or receiving that help when we ourselves are in need. After all Christ has done for us, it's a blessing to be His hands and feet in loving one another. By Dennis Fisher ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Father, thank You for making me a part of Your
family by giving Your Son Jesus for me. Help me
to accept the care of others and also to serve them
out of gratitude and out of my love for You.

When we love Christ, we love others.

Here Am I - Read: 1 John 3:16-23 | Open your mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy. —Proverbs 31:9

In the courtroom while waiting for his case to come before the judge, Gary heard story after sad story of people who were losing their homes. Many went through the procedure as if it were familiar to them. But one woman named Leslie seemed bewildered. Gary sensed that she didn't know what to do or where to turn.

He tried to silence the quiet voice inside him that was urging him to help, but he couldn't. He thought of many reasons not to get

involved. First, engaging strangers in conversation is not one of his strengths; second, he was afraid of being misunderstood. But he thought that the prompting was from God, and he didn't want to risk being disobedient.

When Gary saw Leslie leaving the courthouse, he spoke to her. "Ma'am," he said, "I heard your testimony inside the courtroom, and I believe God wants me to help you."

At first Leslie was suspicious, but Gary assured her of his sincerity. He made some phone calls and got her connected with people in a local church who provided the help she needed to keep her house.

God has called us to active duty (1 John 3:18). When we sense His prompting to help someone, we should be willing to say, "I believe God wants me to help you." By Julie Ackerman Link ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God calls into action today
All those who are children of light;
Whatever our hand finds to do,
Let's do it with all of our might. —Hess

We are at our best when we are serving others.

A Friend In Need - Read: 1 John 3:11-18 | My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. —1 John 3:18

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