

1 John 3:11-24

Week 5 - Christian License And Registration

? Tell us about a time that someone made you feel loved.

1 John 3:11-16 (NIV)

¹¹ For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. ¹² Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. ¹³ Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. ¹⁴ We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. ¹⁵ Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

? John starts this passage off by contrasting the Christian command to love one another with Cain's murder of Abel. Why do you think he makes this contrast?

Genesis 4: 2-8 (NIV)

² Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. ³ In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. ⁴ And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, ⁵ but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

⁶ Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? ⁷ If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”

⁸ Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.” While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

? What emotions were at the heart of Cain's sin? Do you ever struggle with some of the emotions he struggled with?

? As Christians, how can we combat the sins that crouch at our door and desire to have us?

? John tells the people of the early church not to be surprised if the world hates them. This “hate” can manifest itself in many different ways today: your boss might disagree with your moral code, your friends might think you’re a prude and make fun of your beliefs, strangers might think you’re a loon when you casually mention Jesus, etc. Why do you think we’re surprised that people of the world “hate” us, or that non-Christian values conflict with ours?

What Was the Nature of Cain’s Sin?
Many commentators think that Cain brought a poorer quality offering. However, since scripture doesn’t directly comment on the quality of Cain’s offering, Cain probably brought whatever was close at hand, while Abel clearly brings the best of what he has. It seems from the text, that Abel clearly had a heart to please God. Cain on the other hand became angry and jealous when his offerings were not received favorably. Cain could have acknowledged why his offering was not looked on favorably and moved in obedience towards God; instead he nurtured the anger, bitterness, and jealousy, which led him down a darker path.

? What are some practical ways we can respond when we face these kinds of situations?

1 John 3:16-24 (NIV)

¹⁶ This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. ¹⁷ If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? ¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

¹⁹ This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: ²⁰ If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹ Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God ²² and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. ²³ And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. ²⁴ The one who keeps God’s commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

? John makes some strong bold powerful claims about Christian life. How should Jesus’ example empower us to love boldly – even loving those that may hate us?

? Why might John highlight verses 19 and 20, which say that God is greater than our hearts?

? Verses 21-22 say that if our hearts don't condemn us, we can approach God with confidence, and he will give us anything we ask of Him. This makes God sound like a magic genie. Based on God's sovereignty, in what sense will God give us what we want?

For Discussion and Accountability

? How can resting in Christ's love affect the way in which I love others this week?