

1 John 3:18-22

Introduction

Who is this guy and where is he from? (Jim Fleming—I teach a class at the Hixson Campus)

What are we learning about in our class? (The Essential 100 and we are almost done. We will be in **1 John 3** on October 7, so that helps me out quite a bit)

When is this switching of teachers happening? (Today only . . . for now)

Why the swap? (I pray about who should teach my lessons and the erroneous text)

Review

1 John 3:1-3

How do we radiate love in living?

- I. Examination: The Rule of Love (3:1a-c) Lavished
 - A. Reflect
 - B. Right Now
 - C. Result
 - D. Restatement
- II. Explanation: The Rejection of the World (3:1d) Lost
 - A. The World's orientation
 - B. The World's comprehension
 - C. The World's rejection of Jesus
 - D. The World's rejection of us
- III. Exaltation: The Result of His Return (3:2) Looking
 - A. He owns us right now
 - B. He will be revealed
 - C. We will be with Him
 - D. We will be like Him
 - E. We will behold His full glory
- IV. Evaluation: The Reflection that Matters (3:3) Longing
 - A. We participate now in His glory
 - B. We should now reflect His partial glory
 - C. We will be full of His glory soon enough
 - D. We now purify ourselves (meaning of καθαίρειν)

1 John 3:4-10

Am I continuing to follow the course of rebellion in my Christian walk?

- I. Rebellion represents a life prior to Christ (4)
- II. Rebellion is incompatible with the work of Christ (5-6)
- III. Christ came to destroy the works of rebellion (7-8)
- IV. Rebellion is incompatible with the Indwelling Holy Spirit (9-10)

1 John 3:11-17

A child of God loves the brethren. Do I love my brother and sister?

- I. The Call to Love (11-12) Contrast #1
 - A. The command to love
 - B. The negative example of Cain
 1. Sacrifice
 2. Warning
 3. Sin
 4. Punishment
- II. The Proof of Love (13-14b) Contrast #2
 - A. Expectation of the world
 - B. Expectation of the self
- III. The Lack of Love (14c-15) Contrast #3
 - A. Soaking in death
 - B. Hating our brethren
- IV. The Sacrifice of Love (16-17) Contrast #4
 - A. The example of Jesus
 - B. Sacrificial love

Read: 1 John 3:18-22

18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. 19 And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. 20 For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. 21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. 22 And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

Explain: 1 John 3:18-22

I. Assurance that love works (Test #1: Are you **working**?)

18 My little children, let us not love [*agape*] **in word or in tongue, but in deed** [business, occupation, work] **and in truth.**

Have you heard the phrase, “It is the thought that counts”? The thought does count, but the action shows. If I only ever tell my wife that I love her and never show her, she will not believe me and I will be proving myself a liar, a fake, and a hypocrite.

Example of hypocrites: chocolate bunnies at Easter (has the form and appearance, but empty inside) that are a great disappointment when we find out what is really on the inside

John is not condemning encouragement, but he is clearly stating that talking the talk is not enough—walking the walk is required.

Guzik quoting Stott quoting Lewis: It is easier to be enthusiastic about Humanity with a capital ‘H’ than it is to love individual men and women, especially those who are uninteresting, exasperating, depraved, or otherwise unattractive. Loving everybody in general may be an excuse for loving nobody in particular.

Love not only sees the need and speaks out towards the need, love acts out towards the need.

Love works.

II. Assurance that love checks (Test #2: Are you **confident**?)

19 And by this [by our loving actions] **we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure** [persuade, assure, have confidence in] **our hearts before Him.**

One of the proofs of our salvation and relationship with God is that we do the work. When we do the work, the work helps to persuade/assure our hearts that we are in Him.

20 For if our heart condemns [finds fault within, accuses, condemns, blames] **us** [when we know our words do not match our works], **God is greater** [greater, larger, elder, stronger] **than our heart, and knows all things.**

There are two ways to understand this verse: **Plummer: This is an awful thought for the impenitent, a blessed and encouraging thought for the penitent.**

It reminds me of **Titus 1:15: To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.**

If you are right with God, this verse is encouraging—if you are not right with God, this verse is scary.

Have you ever tried to pray knowing that you had unconfessed sin in your life when you knew that your prayer was not being heard? It is hard to have confidence in God if we are hiding sin.

Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures: God's omniscience is linked with his love and sympathy. God knows every secret in our hearts.

We can hide nothing from Him. In addition, we can rest in the knowledge that He is always good in all that He does at all times in all places.

Love gives us an opportunity to determine if our hearts condemn us. If we see no evidence of working love, we should have pause for concern.

Love checks.

21 Beloved [*agapetos*—the adjective form of *agape*], **if our heart does not condemn** [finds fault within, accuses, condemns, blames] **us, we have confidence** [freedom in speaking, unreservedness in speech, openness, frankness, no concealment, confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance] **toward God.**

Guzik: Condemnation can well up inside us that has nothing to do with our standing before God. It may be the work of the enemy of our souls (who, according to Revelation 12:10 accuses the brethren), or the work of an over-active conscience. At those times, we trust in what God's Word says about our standing, not how we feel about it.

It is a comforting thing to know that God's Word is rock-solid even when our hearts falter. We will all have moments of doubt and lack of faith—but God's Word is true and sure and can always be trusted.

Again, love gives us an opportunity to determine if our hearts condemn us. There will be times when we are in God's will and doing God's work when we doubt—it is then that we lean on His Word and take the confidence from it instead of from ourselves.

Love checks.

III. Assurance that love collects (Test #3: Are you **receiving?**)

22 And whatever we ask [to ask, beg, call for, crave, desire, require] **we receive** [lay hold of, receive, catch] **from Him, because we keep** [attend to carefully, take care of, guard, observe] **His commandments and do** [do, make, produce, author, act well, carry out, execute, celebrate] **those things that are pleasing** [agreeable] **in His sight** [presence].

When we are right before God and are doing His work His way with a clear conscience, this verse applies. It does not apply in a vacuum—it only applies when the conditions above are met (doing the work God’s way and having confidence in God).

Guzik: It is sobering to look at our lives and see how much we do to please ourselves and how much we do to please the Lord. We shouldn’t think that the two are opposites; God is glorified when we enjoy His goodness and His good things. Yet, the godly life will have special focus on just pleasing God, even if it doesn’t particularly please us at the moment.

When was the last time we prayed for something that would please God?

When was the last time we came before God in total confidence?

If you look around in your life and see no evidence of answered prayer, it may be because those conditions for answered prayer are not being met—doing God’s work God’s way and having confidence in God.

Love collects.

HP: When Christians love actively (according to God’s Word) and have confidence in God, prayers are answered. Are my prayers being answered?

Apply (What is the point?)

1. God is in the assurance business—He wants to give assurance
2. God knows our hearts

Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Know where you stand before God (use your conscience and use your Bible)
2. Rest in the fact that He is good (and then get to **work**)

End by 9:45