INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW AND KEY VERSE OF THE LESSON

Key Verse: 1 John 3:11

Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary

From the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

LESSON INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

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Commentary Thoughts from Steven J. Cole
Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary
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Love One Another  

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SS Lesson for 04/12/2015

Introduction

Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson teaches us why as Christians, we should **Love One Another**. The **study’s aim** is to have God's love be the controlling factor in our daily interactions with one another. The **study's application** is to make God's standard of loving one another our constant habit in life. *(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)*.

Key Verse: 1 John 3:11

*For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another*

Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary

The words a **child** in 1 John 3:10 are not in the Greek. Thus the statement would better read, **Anyone who does not do what is right is not... of God**. The Greek expression for “of God” (*ek tou theou*) need mean no more than that a person so described does not find the source of his actions in God. He is “not... of God” in what he does. A failure to perform righteousness and a failure to **love** one’s **brother** can never be traced to God. John had already said that all sin can be traced to the devil (v. 8). John also used this phrase *ek tou theou* (“of God”) seven other times (4:1-4, 6-7; 3 John 11). By joining together the idea of righteousness (mentioned in 1 John 2:29-3:7) with love (not mentioned in vv. 2-9), John formed a bridge to a new discussion. He now considered love as the appropriate expression of the regenerate life of which he had been speaking. Love is righteousness in action. John here made it plain that his admonitions were directed to Christians. **This is the message you (Christians) have heard from the beginning: We (Christians) should love one another**. But before telling his audience precisely what love is, he first told them what it is not. It is most certainly **not** the kind of action **Cain** exhibited toward **his brother** Abel. Cain **murdered** his brother (Gen. 4:8) and in that action he was of **the evil one** (*ek tou ponērou; **belonged to** is misleading). The reason for this murder was Cain’s jealous resentment of his brother’s superior righteousness (Gen. 4:2-7). In saying this, John touched a sensitive nerve, since hatred toward another Christian is often prompted by a feeling of guilt about one’s own life as compared with that person’s. It is well to remember that such reactions are satanic, as John bluntly affirmed here. Such reactions of hatred and murder (vv. 11-12) are also worldly, since **the world hates** Christians. That fact should **not** surprise the readers (called **brothers** only here in 1 John) at all, however. What else can the world be expected to do? It is hatred among believers that is so abnormal, and against which John was fundamentally warning. In that sense it is right to treat this verse as more or less parenthetical. In contrast with the world, however, John stated, **We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers**. The first “we” of this statement is quite emphatic in the original and may mean “we, the apostles.” But even if it does, the writer no doubt intended that the readers apply this comment to themselves. Love for one’s brothers is evidence that he has entered God’s sphere of life (cf. John 13:35). The expression translated “passed from death to life” occurs elsewhere only in John 5:24 (there trans. “crossed over from death to life”) where it refers to conversion. But a phrase which is used only twice in John’s writing can hardly be said to have a fixed meaning. The context here must decide its significance. The statements of 1 John 3:14b-15 suggest that the spheres of “death” and “life” are here treated as experiential and determined by one’s actions. If so, the issue of conversion is not in view here. The statement, **Anyone who does not love** (the majority of the mss. add “a brother” or “his brother”) **remains in death**, is considered under verse 15. This verse is usually taken to mean that a true Christian cannot hate his fellow Christian, since hatred is the moral equivalent of murder. But this view cannot stand up under close scrutiny. To begin with, John speaks of **anyone who hates his brother**. If John had believed that only an unsaved person can hate another Christian, the word “his” unnecessarily personalizes the relationship (cf. comments on 2:9). But it is an illusion to believe that a real Christian is incapable of hatred and murder. David was guilty of the murder of pious Uriah the Hittite (2 Sam. 12:9) and Peter warned his Christian readers, “If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer” (1 Peter 4:15; more lit., “Let
none of you suffer as a murderer”). The view that 1 John 3:15 cannot refer to the saved is totally devoid of all realism. The solemn fact remains that hatred of some other believer is the spiritual equivalent of murder (Matt. 5:21-22), as a lustful eye is the spiritual equivalent of adultery (Matt. 5:28). John insisted then that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. The NIV does not translate the Greek participle menousan (“abiding”), which is a crucial word here. John does not say that someone who hates his brother does not possess eternal life, but rather that he does not have it abiding in him. But since for John, Christ Himself is eternal life (John 14:6; 1 John 1:2; 5:20), John’s statement is saying that no murderer has Christ abiding in him. Thus once more the experience of “abiding” is what John had in view. Hatred on the part of one Christian toward another is thus an experience of moral murder. As John had indicated in 3:14b, he held that a Christian who fails to love his brother “remains (menei) in death.” He is thus experientially living in the same sphere in which the world lives (see v. 13). Because he is a murderer at heart he can make no real claim to the kind of intimate fellowship with God and Christ which the word “abide” suggests. Eternal life (i.e., Christ) is not at home in his heart so long as the spirit of murder is there. Such a person is disastrously out of touch with his Lord and he experiences only death. (Cf. Paul’s statement, “For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die” [Rom. 8:13].) John’s words were surely grim. But no service is rendered to the church by denying their applicability to believers. The experience of the Christian church through the ages shows how urgently they are needed. Hate, unfortunately, is not confined to unsaved people.

From the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

One of the major themes of the New Testament is love. Among the ancient Greeks there were several words for love. One word connoted romantic love, another family love, and another love between friends. There was, however, one word that was rarely used among the secular Greeks: agape Appearing in its various forms about fifty times in 1 John, it most often is used for God's love for us and the love we are to have for one another. Compared to the other kinds of human love, agape is more likely to involve self-sacrifice. When asked about the greatest commandment, Christ quoted the Law, which declared that we are to love both God and our neighbor (Mark 12:28-34; Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18). When addressing the problem of misusing spiritual gifts in the Corinthian church, Paul established that love is the proper motivation for Christian service (1 Cor. 13). While love is one of the most talked about teachings of Christ, it may be one of the least practiced. The Lord Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Love must be expressed actively. Love isn’t just words; it is self-giving actions. In teaching this, the apostle John echoes things he learned from Jesus and from the teachings of the Old Testament. There are five books in our New Testament that we attribute to the apostle John, who was one of the original 12 disciples (see Matthew 4:21; 10:2). Three of the five books are epistles (letters)—the ones we designate 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John. Church history strongly associates John with the church in Ephesus; tradition says he died in this great Greek metropolis in the AD 90s. The three letters were probably written in the region of Ephesus for churches in the area, and they date from the AD 80s or 90s. John would have been an elderly man at that time. The dignity of his age peeks through in 1 John, where he addresses his readers as his “little children” numerous times. The letter of 1 John addresses several problems within the original readers’ church or churches. These problems included a denial of Jesus’ bodily existence, a denial of sin in the lives of some, and a general lack of love for one another. False teachers were so bold that John referred to them as having “the spirit of the antichrist” (1 John 4:3; compare 2:18, 22); John wanted their influence eliminated. It was with a spirit of watchfulness combined with an overarching attitude of love that the apostle wrote 1 John. Its short message still speaks powerfully today.
Major Theme Analysis

*Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV*

**Supportive Love (1 John 3:11-15)**

11 For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another,
12 not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.
13 Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you.
14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.
15 Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

**Supportive love despite unloving relationships (11-12)**

*Love despite unloving relationships by praying for your enemies (Matt 5:43-47)*

43 'You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?

*Love despite unloving relationships by feeding your enemies (Prov 25:21-22)*

21 If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. 22 In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the Lord will reward you.

*Love despite unloving relationships by blessing those who persecute you (Rom 12:14)*

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

*Love despite unloving relationships by loving versus being rude, self-seeking and easily angered (1 Cor 13:5)*

5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

*Love despite unloving relationships by loving and bless instead of revenge (1 Peter 3:9)*

9 Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

**Supportive love despite the world's hatred (13)**

*Love in spite of the world hatred because the world hated Jesus (Matt 10:22)*

22 All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.

*Love in spite of the world hatred because great is our reward in heaven for being insulted and rejected because of our faith (Luke 6:22-23)*

22 Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. 23 "Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their fathers treated the prophets.
Love in spite of the world hatred because we don't belong to the world (John 15:18-19)
18 "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. 19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.

Love in spite of the world hatred because through Jesus we can overcome the world (John 16:33)
33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Love in spite of the world hatred because we have been given God's word (John 17:14-16)
14 I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. 15 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.

Love in spite of the world hatred because Christians should try to live a godly life (2 Tim 3:12)
12 In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

Supportive love that leads from death to life (14-15)

From death to life because of hearing God's word (John 5:24)
24 "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

From death to life because of God's love and grace (Eph 2:4-5)
4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved.

From death to life because of loving one another (1 John 2:9-11)
9 Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. 10 Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble.

From death to life because of belief in Jesus (John 3:36)
36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

From death to life because of being rescued by Jesus (Col 1:12-14)
12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. 13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Sacrificial Love (1 John 3:16-18)
16 By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.
17 But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?
18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.
Sacrificial love that uses Jesus example of laying down His life (16)

Example of how to love enough to give life (John 15:12-14)
12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command.

Example of risking life for others (Rom 16:3-4)
3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus. 4 They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them.

Example of willing to die for God's work (Phil 2:28-30)
29 Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor men like him, 30 because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me.

Example of walking as Jesus did and love being complete in Him (1 John 2:5-6)
5 But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: 6 Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

Example of being willing to deny self and lose life (Mark 8:34-35)
34 Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 35 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.

Example of willing to die for those who are not righteous (Rom 5:7-8)
7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Sacrificial love that helps those in need (17)

Helping those in need by being kind to the poor (Prov 19:17)
17 He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward him for what he has done.

Helping those in need by sharing resources (Isa 58:6-7)
6 "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? 7 Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter — when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

Helping those in need by supplying their needs out of our abundance (2 Cor 8:14-15)
14 At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality. 15 as it is written: "He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little."

Helping those in need by generously sharing (1 Tim 6:18)
18 Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.

Helping those in need by not forgetting to do good and sharing (Heb 13:16)
16 And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.
Helping those in need by supporting the helpless (James 1:27)

27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Sacrificial love that is accompanied by action (18)

Love accompanied by action through responding to daily opportunities (Matt 25:41-43)

41 “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’

Love accompanied by action through providing physical needs versus just wishing them well (James 2:14-17)

15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

Love accompanied by action through putting God's word into practice (Luke 6:47-49)

47 I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. 48 He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. 49 But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."

Love accompanied by action through not just being hearing of the word, but doers (Ezek 33:30-32)

31 My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they express devotion, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain. 32 Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words but do not put them into practice.

Love accompanied by action through being obedient (Matt 21:28-31)

28 "What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.' 29 "I will not," he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. 30 Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go. 31 "Which of the two did what his father wanted?" "The first," they answered.

Sincere Love (1 John 3:19-24)

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.
23 And 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.
Sincere love that results in confidence toward God (19-21)

Confidence toward God because God will be the judge (1 Cor 4:4-5)

4 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. 5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

Confidence toward God because of having Jesus as our High Priest (Heb 4:15-16)

15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin. 16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Confidence toward God because of being cleansed by God (Heb 10:22)

22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

Confidence toward God by continuously being in Jesus (1 John 2:28)

28 And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.

Confidence toward God because believing in the Name of Jesus (1 John 5:13-15)

13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. 14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of him.

Sincere love that is in obedience to God's commandments (22-23)

Obedience to God's commandments by remaining in Jesus' love (John 15:10)

10 If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.

Obedience to God's commandments by loving Jesus (John 14:15)

15 "If you love me, you will obey what I command.

Obedience to God's commandments to obtain loving communion with God (John 14:23-24)

23 Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24 He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

Obedience to God's commandments by offering ourselves as God's slave (Rom 6:16)

16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey — whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

Obedience to God's commandments to show love for God (1 John 5:3)

3 This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome,
6 And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.

**Conclusion and Other Thoughts**

*Commentary Thoughts from Steven J. Cole*

**THE MARK OF THE CHURCH IS LOVE**

John draws a sharp, point-for-point contrast between the hatred that marks the world and the love that marks the church. Whereas hatred is typified in Adam’s firstborn, …

**Love is typified in God’s firstborn, Christ (3:16).**

Verse 16 literally reads, “By this we have experientially come to know love, that That One laid down His life for us.” The cross is the supreme demonstration of what real love—God’s love—is. There is hardly a passage in the New Testament that speaks of God’s love that does not also speak of the cross. The most familiar is another 3:16, John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” (See, also, Gal. 2:20; Rom. 5:8; Eph. 5:25; 1 John 4:10.) If you want to know what God’s love is like, look at Jesus, the Righteous One, who willingly sacrificed Himself on behalf of the ungodly. Whereas hatred originates with the devil, …

**Love originates with God.**

John will state this directly in 4:7, but it is implicit in our text. Love in the believer comes from God. In 3:10b, John said that the one who does not love is not of God, implying that the one who loves is of God. In 3:17, he says that if we do not demonstrate practical love for those in need, the love of God does not abide in us. If you lack love for someone, first make sure that you are born of God. Then, ask Him for it. Whereas hatred divides people and may result in murder, …

**Love unites people and results in laying down our lives for others (3:16-17).**

Jesus showed His love by laying down His life for us. Thus (3:16), “we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” That is a hard saying! Be honest—would you lay down your life for the people in this room? You can easily sit here and say, “Yes, I’d die for my fellow Christians.” But, the urge to save your own skin is pretty strong. Who can truly say in advance, “I’d die for my brothers?” But John doesn’t leave us to sit around speculating about what we might do if persecution hits. He brings it down to everyday living (3:17): “But whoever has the world’s goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?” Ouch! It’s easy to say that you would lay down your life for the brethren. But if you aren’t doing it inch by inch, in the little details of setting aside your selfishness to serve others, beginning at home (Eph. 5:25), it’s empty talk to say, “I’d die for my brothers in Christ!” Self-sacrifice is never convenient. It’s always more of a hassle to meet someone’s needs than to ignore him. But, John’s point is the same as Jesus’ point in the parable of the Good Samaritan: We must not ignore others’ needs, but rather, sacrifice our time, energy, and money to help them out. This does not mean indiscriminately doling out money to those who are lazy or irresponsible (2 Thess. 3:10-12). We need discernment and wisdom to know how best to help a needy person. But we also need to be careful not to excuse our indifference by labeling the other person as lazy or irresponsible. Love unites people through practical deeds of self-sacrifice. Whereas hatred is motivated by personal sin, …

**Love is motivated by God’s love in Christ.**
That’s the point of verse 16. If God’s love as shown on the cross abides in your heart, it will flow through you to others. If you’re running short on love, stop and meditate on what Jesus did for you. If the servant who had been forgiven the huge debt had stopped to think about it, he would have forgiven his fellow servant the lesser debt (Matt. 18:23-35). Or, as John states (4:11), “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” Finally, whereas hatred is the evidence of spiritual death, …

**Love is the evidence of spiritual life (3:14).**

John states (3:14), “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.” While this fruit of the Spirit never grows to perfect maturity in this lifetime, you should be able to see growth in love when you compare your self-centered life before conversion with your focus since you were saved. If you say that you know Christ, but continue to live for yourself, if you’re unwilling to be inconvenienced or sacrifice yourself and your possessions to meet the needs of others, you need to examine whether or not you’ve truly passed out of death into life. If you have tasted God’s love in Christ at the cross, the new direction of your life will be to grow in love for others.

**Conclusion**

In verse 11, John says, “This is the message which you have heard from the beginning.” He means, from the beginning of your Christian life you were taught to love one another. It’s a basic truth that you should start to learn and practice from the first day of your Christian experience. God’s love flowing through us to one another should so mark the church that it draws a sharp contrast between us and the world. Ray Stedman (Expository Studies in 1 John [Word], pp. 264-265) tells the story of a Jewish man named Art, who was raised as an atheist. Early in life, he became a committed Marxist. At the close of World War II, he was in Germany with the American army and saw the gas chambers at the concentration camps. It filled him with hatred, first toward the Germans and then, as he realized that this went deeper than nationality, at the whole human race. He came back to Berkeley and gave himself to education, but he came to see that it was not the answer. Education could not change hearts. Finally, he resigned his position. His wife lost her mind and was put in a mental institution. Divorced, and without ties, he went out to wander. One rainy day in Greece, grubby and dirty, he was hitchhiking. No one wanted to pick up a seedy looking character like him. He had stood in the rain for hours when a Cadillac stopped. To Art’s amazement, the driver did not just gesture for him to get in. He got out of the car, came around and began to pump his hand and welcome him warmly. He took Art’s dirty rucksack and threw it on the clean upholstery. Then he drove Art to a hotel, rented him a room, and gave him some food. Finally, he asked Art what he was doing and where he was going. All the pent-up heartache, misery, and resentment of a lifetime came pouring out of this young Jewish atheist, while the man sat and listened. When Art was through, the man said, “You know what this world needs? Those who are willing to wash one another’s feet.” Art said, “I never heard anything so beautiful. Why do you say that?” The man said, “Because that’s what my Lord did.” For the first time in his life, this young atheist heard a clear presentation of the gospel. He became a Christian and went on to devote his life to serving the Lord. That unnamed man, quietly going about being a Christian, demonstrated what John says to us (3:18), “Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.”

(Adapted from URL: https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-16-hatred-or-love-1-john-311-18)

**Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

In the 1960s, artist Robert Indiana created a rendering of the word LOVE that has become iconic in America. He took the four letters of that word and put them in two rows, creating a square of letters in the process. To add visual interest, Indiana tilted the letter O. This representation has been crafted into three-dimensional sculptures that have become public art in various cities. That is both clever and inspirational, but a sculpture of the word love doesn’t really help anyone in need. Such a sculpture may coexist in cities with homeless folks who live in daily need. These people are not helped by massive and lifeless works of art; they need active...
compassion. May we not be guilty of elevating love to statue status while neglecting our duty to help those in need in our families, churches, and communities.

**Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator**

1. Christian love must be genuine— not superficial (I John 3:11-12)
2. The believer cannot allow hatred to take root and destroy himself and others
3. The love of God sets us apart from the world and for His service (vss. 13-18)
4. Christian love is action—not just an emotion or attitude
5. Christian love is evidence of genuine faith (vss. 19-21)
6. Obedient living leads to confidence in prayer (vs. 22)
7. Genuine faith is the basis of obedience to God’s Word (vss. 23-24)