



The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
Confidence in Christ is the right kind of confidence

POEM FOR THE WEEK:
Let all who think that they can stand
Take heed lest they should fall;
These words remind us of the truth
That God is Lord of all
—Branon

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall
(1 Cor 10:12 NKJV)
(from "Our Daily Bread", July 23, 2010)

Series: Love For One Another

UNIT: Godly Love Among Believers

NEXT WEEK

Responsive Love
(Acts 4:32-5:11)

Confident Love

1 John 3:11-24

Lesson Background and Introduction

At the time of the writing of 1 John, the apostle had served as a pastor for the Ephesians for more than a decade. John wrote as the senior statesman of the church, likely the last living of the 12 original apostles. First John contains a wide range of topics that summarize the aged apostle’s teachings and advice for his beloved “children,” the Christians of Ephesus. The letters of John deal with factions within and outside the church of Ephesus, which had begun to teach many false things (examples: 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3). The child of God must believe the truth, obey the commands, and love brothers and sisters in Christ. John showed that such threats to the faith must be dealt with firmly and without compromise, yet with a spirit of love. Christians cannot return hate and abuse with more hate and abuse. John asks if we love God. He insists we cannot make a credible claim to loving God if we hate other people. Furthermore, we cannot claim to love other people without evidence. Does the love of God in our hearts result in acts of kindness toward others? Cain’s heart of hate and anger resulted in murder, a heinous but accurate reflection of his inner thoughts. Jesus Christ’s heart of love resulted in the willing sacrifice of his life as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29), the same world that John warns will hate Jesus’ followers (1 John 3:13). The paradox is profound, but the evidence is there with Jesus. While we were his enemies, he died for us (Romans 5:8-10). What does the evidence of our lives reveal about the secrets of our hearts?

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Love Not Hate - In his letter to believers, the apostle John repeated Jesus' command to love each other (1 John 3:11). It is easy to find things to criticize about another person and end up despising that person. However, the biblical command is to love in the same way God loves—giving grace and overlooking faults and weaknesses. Jesus wants His followers to depend on Him to remove these kinds of negative attitudes and replace them with love. John used Cain as an example of a hateful person. He was jealous and despised his brother, Abel (Gen. 4:6-7). This seething attitude eventually led him to murder Abel (vs. 8; Heb. 11:4; 1 John 3:12). This should never occur among believers. Jesus made this clear in His Sermon on the Mount: a physical murder does not have to take place. If you hate in your heart, cutting off a relationship, wishing the person was dead or disregarding them—that is like killing the person (Mart. 5:21-22). God's children should grow, develop, and increasingly look and love like Him.

Biblical Love - So, what does true biblical love look like? The highest form of love is from God. He willingly extends a grace-filled love, given to everyone, even when He knows it will not be received. Jesus exemplified this kind of love when He laid down His life for the entire world.

Practical Love - How do we love today? John said, do not only talk about God's love, but let people see it in action. If a brother or sister is in need, the Christian ought to be the one to come to the rescue. If you turn your back on someone in need, how can you say, "I love God, and I love people as He does"? Once a person believes in Jesus and is filled with His love, compassion for others comes next. The Holy Spirit seals the relationship, reassuring the person of their close relationship with Christ.

(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Confident in Supportive Love (1 John 3:11-15)

Supportive love despite unloving relationships (11-12)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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)

Love in spite of the world hatred because we don't belong to the world (John 15:18-19)

Love in spite of the world hatred because through Jesus we can overcome the world (John 16:33)

Love in spite of the world hatred because we have been given God's word (John 17:14-16)

Love in spite of the world hatred because Christians should try to live a godly life (2 Tim 3:12)

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

From death to life because of hearing God's word (John 5:24)

From death to life because of God's love and grace (Eph 2:4-5)

From death to life because of loving one another (1 John 2:9-11)

From death to life because of belief in Jesus (John 3:36)

From death to life because of being rescueded by Jesus (Col 1:12-14)

Confident in Sacrificial Love (1 John 3:16-18)

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)

Example of risking life for others (Rom 16:3-4)

Example of willing to die for God's work (Phil 2:28-30)

Example of walking as Jesus did and love being complete in Him (1 John 2:5-6)

Example of being willing to deny self and lose life (Mark 8:34-35)

Example of willing to die for those who are not righteous (Rom 5:7-8)

Sacrificial love that helps those in need (17)

Helping those in need by being kind to the poor (Prov 19:17)

Helping those in need by sharing resources (Isa 58:6-7)

Helping those in need by supplying their needs out of our abundance (2 Cor 8:14-15)

Helping those in need by generously sharing (1 Tim 6:18)

Helping those in need by not forgetting to do good and sharing (Heb 13:16)

Helping those in need by supporting the helpless (James 1:27)

Sacrificial love that is accompanied by action (18)

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

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

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

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

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

Confident in Sincere Love (1 John 3:19-24)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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)

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

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

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

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

Obedience to God's commandments by walking in obedient love (2 John 6)