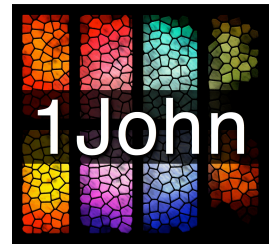


1 John
3: 16-24
March 3, 2013
Doug Smith



Practical Expressions of Love

Our values of the Great *Commission* and *Generosity* intersect beautifully when we're talking about Global Work in the month of March. 1st John lays out for us the Biblical imperative (as given by Christ) to love one another.

Our theme verse for Global Work has been 1 Timothy 6.18 (ESV)

"They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share..."

v16 Real love has a cost and often means sacrifice

- Jesus has given us the consummate definition of love. He gave his life.
- Do we all need to die to achieve this, to love well?
- Giving one's life is likely more about living than dying. It is about *living* for others.
- It will probably mean giving something up.

V17 Loving well means providing for others. It must be practical.

- In light of another's need holding back when we live in abundance means a lack of love. For John it therefore means a lack of life!
- Our abundance is obvious. We have been given to so we can give.

V18 Words and Actions

- It's easy to state our loving intentions. We must do what we say and say what we do. This means love in action.
- John knows it's easier to speak than act, but it might be worse to say something and not do it than not say or do anything.
- When what we say and do match it's a clear indication of our allegiance to Jesus.

V20 The love motivation

- The motivation to love in action must always come from a heart that has been transformed by love, not coerced by guilt.
- Though the call to serve, give and be generous can be overwhelming in the light of the world's need, we must remember: *we just need to do what we can do.*
- Getting overwhelmed by the needs of others can paralyze our action. The difference is made when we choose to act *together*, thus making a bigger impact than what we could do as individuals or singular families.

V23-24 Our benediction and prayer together. May we be motivated by love.

Discussion Questions

- What is the most generous act you've ever witnessed?
- How have you benefitted from the generosity of others? What has practical, love based generosity looked like and how has it shaped you?
- Does the idea of generous living inspire you, or scare you? Why?
- When do you know you're motivated by love or by guilt? How can you tell the difference?
- How do you cultivate a love motivation in generosity verses a guilt motivation?
- Do you feel drawn to a life of generosity right now? How so, and what are the next steps?