

# 1 JOHN: DISCERNING TRUE FROM FALSE SPIRITUALITY

## Part IX: Understanding Spiritually True Love

### A. Understanding What Spiritually True Love Is NOT

(1 John 3:10b-15)

#### I. Introduction

- A. Truly upright believers obey Christ's command to love one another, cf. John 13:35; 1 John 2:7-11.
- B. However, the love God has in mind is unlike the ideas of love that the ungodly possess, so the Apostle John in 1 John 3:10b-15 clarified first of all what true godly love is **NOT** (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 895):

#### II. Understanding What Spiritually True Love Is NOT, 1 John 3:10b-15.

- A. Though 1 John 3:10a claims the children of God are distinguished from Satan's children as only God's children produce a righteous lifestyle, 1 John 3:10b introduces a new paragraph on a different subject, *Ibid.*
- B. John in 1 John 3:10b-15 thus sought to define what spiritually true love is **not** that his readers might **avoid** it:
  1. If a believer does not love his brother in Christ (1 John 3:10b), he is out of fellowship with the Lord since Christ commanded His disciples at the beginning to love one another, 1 John 3:11 with John 13:35.
  2. A believer is then **not** to be like Cain who was of Satan and slew his brother, 1 John 3:12a; Genesis 4:8.
  3. Cain murdered Abel because his works were evil and his brother's works were righteous, 1 John 3:12b. Thus, a believer is **not** to resist God's convicting work, but repent as the Lord sought to get Cain to do in Genesis 4:3-7 lest he resist God's conviction by hating and murdering another believer who is upright!
  4. The world like Cain resists God's convicting work through the righteous lives of believers, leading it to hate and so perform acts of hatred toward the godly, so John warned his readers not to marvel if the world hated them, 1 John 3:13. [Note how this truth was also taught by Jesus in John 15:18-22.]
  5. John also added that we believers know we have permanently passed (*metabebakamen*, perfect tense of *metabaino*, "to go or pass from one place to another," U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 818; The Analyt. Grk. Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 265) out of death over into eternal life by the fact that we love fellow brothers in Christ, 1 John 3:14a. Thus, love of the brethren is a positive evidence of one's salvation.
  6. Conversely, he who does not love "remains" (*meno*, *Ibid.*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., p. 819; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 504-505) in death (1 John 3:14b), what is often taken "to mean that a true Christian cannot hate his fellow Christian," *Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 896. However, the hatred in the context is toward a "brother" (cf. 1 John 3:10b, 14), so John refers to **believers who hate**, and such do not "remain," *meno*, what Jesus taught in John 15:7 (*Ibid.*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., p. 390) referred to the **experiential state of fellowship with God**. John thus claimed that though an evidence of a true believer is that he loves his brother in Christ, a believer's failure to love other believers, though not an indication that he is not saved, is nevertheless evidence that he is out of fellowship with the Lord!
  7. 1 John 3:15 then explained the sad position of a believer who is out of fellowship with the Lord by hating his fellow brother in Christ (as follows):
    - a. Every believer who hates his brother is actually a murderer, a sin that can be committed not only by the physical act of murder as in Cain's case, but by harboring the attitude of the hatred itself, 1 John 3:15a.
    - b. We know that everyone who is thus a murderer by deed or attitude alone does not have eternal life "remaining" (*meno* again, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., p. 819) in him, that is, he does not have eternal life **abiding** in him in the sense that he is out of fellowship with God, *Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., N. T.; 1 John 3:15b.

**Lesson:** (1) An evidence of salvation is love of the brethren, but (2) a believer can disobey God's Word, thus getting out of fellowship with God and hating his brother in Christ as a murderer. (3) Spiritually true love in a believer is thus (a) NOT the attitude of hatred for a fellow believer, (b) NOT the deed of hatred committed against a fellow believer, (c) what attitude and deed is expressed by the lost world toward believers, and it is (c) NOT resistance to God's conviction of sin that rises from an exposure of one's sin by the uprightness of another believer.

**Application:** (1) May we trust in Christ to be saved, John 3:16. (2) Then, may we love the brethren and (3) not be shocked if the world hates us. (4) If we hate another believer, may we confess it to be restored to fellowship with God, 1 John 1:9. (5) If we are convicted of sin by another believer's walk, may we not resist it and hate him, but confess it to God to be restored to fellowship with Him. (6) If many believers we know sin, what Revelation 3:14-22 teaches occurs in our Laodicean Church era, a godly walk will convict them of sin, so may we not be shocked if many believers hate us for a godly walk. (7) If they become abusive, may we withdraw from them, 2 Tim. 3:1-5.