

- e. The phrase “yet closes his heart against him” could be used at DIFFERENT times for a child of God or a child of the evil one.
- f. John contrasts WORDS versus ACTIONS.
 - I SEE you.
 - I HEAR you.
 - I INQUIRE of you.
 - I RESPOND to you.
- 3. A starting definition of love - Love is a self-sacrificing, caring commitment that shows itself in seeking the highest good of others...even people DIFFERENT from us.

LET’S APPLY THIS:

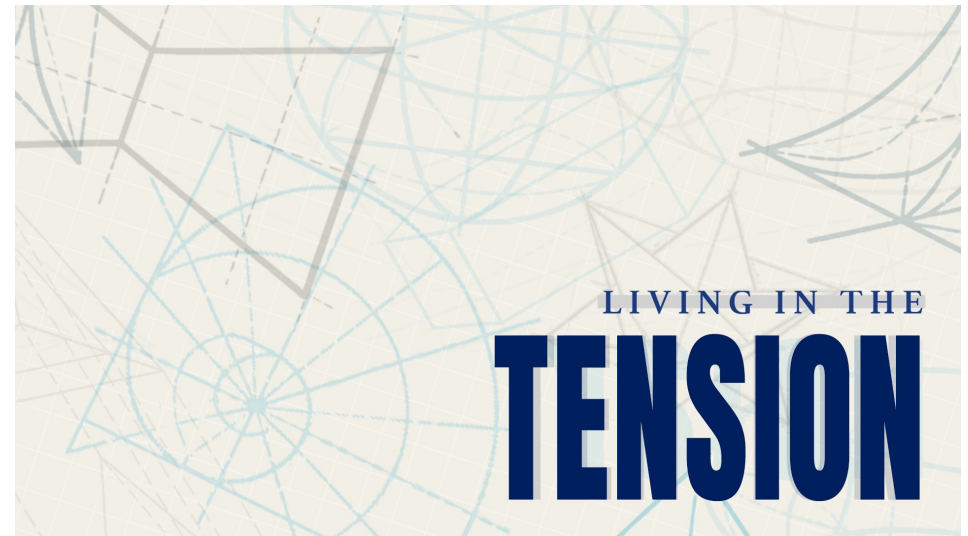
Who? We don’t get to choose whom we love.

Where? We can love people in any environment, but we can love more deeply in smaller environments.

How? We can practice the “one another’s” of Scripture. We can pray with each other. We can choose significant conversations over shallow ones. We can make sacrifices for each other.

What’s your next faithful step after today?

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July 4 & 5, 2026 | Living in the Tension- 3 | 1 John 3:11-18 Gary Dilley, pastor

TODAY’S SCRIPTURE:

1 John 3:11 For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 12 We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. 13 Do not be surprised, brothers that the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. 15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. 16 By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. 17 But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

Living in the Tension:

1. The tension between what we know we should do and what we feel like doing.
2. The tension between who we were before and who God is making us now.

LOVE HAS BEEN COMMANDED FROM THE BEGINNING

1 John 3:11 For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

John restates the command of JESUS from the upper room.

John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

THE NEGATIVE EXAMPLE: THE WAY OF CAIN (VS. 12-15)

1. This first example illustrates the ABSENCE of love.
2. Cain becomes the picture of LIFE apart from God.

1 John 3:12 We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. 13 Do not be surprised, brothers that the world hates you.

- a. A characteristic of the children of the evil one is MURDER. Cain demonstrated his connection to the kingdom of darkness by murdering his brother.
- b. John didn't use the normal Greek word for "killing" someone (apothnēskō). John uses a graphic term to describe Cain's actions: sphazō, which means "to butcher or slaughter". This was VIOLENT and PREMEDITATED.
- c. Another contrast - The evidence of new LIFE.

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. ...

Notice the order:

We do not LOVE in order to be saved.

We love BECAUSE we have been saved.

- d. The evidence of DEATH. A second characteristic of the children of the evil one is HATRED.

1 John 3:14 ...Whoever does not love abides in death. 15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

THE POSITIVE EXAMPLE: THE WAY OF CHRIST (VS. 16-18)

1 John 3:16 By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. 17 But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

1. The PATTERN for our love is seen in the sacrifice of Jesus.

Two men. Two actions. Two outcomes.

- a. Having shown that love for the family is EVIDENCE of being a Christian, John now sets forth the supreme example of this love: the sacrifice of Jesus.
 - b. "LAID down" involves a deliberate, willful, thought out act that demonstrated his love for mankind.
 - c. Believers are called to demonstrate self-sacrificing LOVE for each other.
- ... "and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers." (v.16)*
2. Christian love is expressed by ACTIONS, personal and practical.
 - a. Real Christian love is expressed in the daily acts of SERVICE and help. This may not seem like much at the end of the day, but when put altogether, it can add up to a lot.

- b. John helps us see the PERSONAL nature of what it means to love. Notice an interesting change John makes from v. 16 to v. 17. He speaks of "brothers", plural, in v. 16, but makes a deliberate and purposeful change in v. 17. He narrows it down to a singular "brother", the one person God is calling to your attention.
- c. LIKING a person is a matter of personal preference. LOVING a person is a matter of obedience to Christ.
- d. A WARNING is given in v. 17. It is a final characteristic of the absence of love - INDIFFERENCE (the most socially acceptable way to avoid love).

Notice the order given:

A person has resources.

A person sees a need.

A person closes his heart.

