

True Love

Give Love, Get Love

Once upon a time, it was politically correct and culturally smart to be both a Christian and a Church Member. The US was considered a Christian nation and everyone knew that everyone went to church – and those who didn't, knew they were supposed to! But that was back then. Today it's kinda odd to claim to be a Christian and those few who go to church are beyond odd. They're weird and in a huge minority. Churches and the church schedule no longer get preferential treatment. And almost all vestiges of Christianity have largely been banished from public life. It's not quite persecution, but it's creeping nearer all the time. Sometimes it feels a bit like You and Me Against the World.

1 John 3:11–18

1. Agape Love for _____ is the foundation of Jesus' message and for Christianity.
2. Christianity makes _____ claims, but the church is being _____ in our culture.
3. Agape love for one another isn't just all in ... it's _____.

My Count Me In! Commitments

- I'll be here next Sunday
- I'll invite a friend
- I'll be here next Sunday
- I'm ready to join a small group of hearty believers
- I'm ready to serve the church in a new way (the office will contact you to explore this)
- I will make 3 encouragement contacts this week

Additional Notes

Digging Deeper, Going Further

True Love: Give Love, Get Love

Scripture: 1 John 3:10–18

Introduction: By the time John wrote this first letter to the saints, the world had literally turned against the church. But the persecution wasn't the only thing attacking the church – church members themselves were rebelling against each other, fighting about the church's mission to reach the lost, and quarreling about who believed what. It had moved from Them–against–Us to Pogo's sage comment, "We have met the enemy and he is us." And John was having none of that ...

1. Read 1 John 3:10–18. In the most recent Bible translations, the editors have added "and sisters" to almost every incidence of the word brother. This is rightly so, since the instructions apply equally. However, in this section, doing so means we could easily miss some of the interesting rhetoric that John is weaving as he compares the brothers of the church with the brothers Cain and Abel. (Review Genesis 4 to refresh your memory of that account.) Why do you think John chose that story to illustrate the consequences of church disharmony?
2. What do you think are some of the reasons that "the world" hates the church?
3. What do you think John means when he says we've passed from death to life *because we love each other?* (v 14)
4. Dr. Bill pointed out that John doesn't offer a continuum when it comes to agape love and hate ... if we don't exhibit agape love then we are guilty of hating one another. Why do you think John was All In or nothing at all in his declaration about how Christians treat each other?
5. John writes that sacrifice is a key trait of agape love (v 16) and that Jesus' death is the prime example. What are some of the sacrifices you have made for the sake of the church this year? On a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being dying for one another, where would you rank those sacrifices?
6. Read James 2:14–19. John is probably reiterating this part of James' letter, which suggests John included this passage to emphasize James' words. How do you see the church accomplishing this command? Where do you think there are gaps? What are you willing to do about those gaps?

Next Week: True Love – Loving the Unlovables
Who will you be inviting to worship with you this week?