

1, 2, 3 JOHN
THIS IS THE LIFE
SMALL GROUP STUDY #7
LOVING BROTHERS VS. SACRIFICING THEM
1John 3:11-24

Ice Breaker: Has anyone (other than Jesus) ever laid their life down for you? What did they do? How did it make you feel towards them?

INTRO: John has talked several times about how important it is to love our brothers. In this section, John points out again how bad hating and holding a grudge really is.

READ: 1John 3:11-24

***11** This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. **12** Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and **murdered** his brother. **And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous.** **13** Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you. **14** We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. **15** Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.*

16** This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. **17** If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? **18** Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. **19** This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence **20** whenever our hearts condemn us. **For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

***21** Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God **22** and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. **23** And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. **24** Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.*

Q: John uses Cain and Able as an example to teach us about our own relationships. Read Gen. 4:4-7 to get some insight into what happened between these brothers.

*Gen. 4:4-7 "...The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, **5** but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. **6** Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? **7** If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."*

- What did the Lord tell Cain to do in order to overcome his anger and depression?
- What did God warn would happen if Cain disobeyed the Lord?

Q: According to 1 John 3:12, why did Cain kill Abel?

- Because Able was righteous and he wasn't.
 - Wickedness usually resents righteousness!
- Cain wanted to worship God on his own terms. Abel was proof that God could and should be worshiped on His terms.

Q: The Greek word used for murder in verse 12 is *sphazoe* and means "to kill as a sacrifice". Why might John have chosen that word?

- What is the implication for us?
 - Attempting to worship God on your own terms will lead to resenting brothers for their righteousness.
 - Hating them and sacrificing them will always be the result!
 - Following God on His terms will cause some people (even in the church) to resent you and sacrifice you.

Q: According to vs. 14, how can we know if we have eternal life?

Q: According to vs. 15, why is hatred towards a brother such a serious problem?

Q: How does John define love? (Vs. 16-18)

- What are some ways we can lay down our lives for our brothers?

Q: Do you ever doubt if you have really been born again?

- According to vs. 18-19, what are some ways you can set your heart at rest?
- If your heart still condemns you, what comfort can you find in vs. 20?

Q: Verses 21-22 contain a premise and a promise. What are they?

Q: Verse 20 tells us that our hearts (feelings) can condemn us wrongly. Why would Satan be interested in having you feel condemned?

- A guilty conscience **won't allow you to:**
 - Have confidence before God.
 - Without confidence before God, you can't/won't approach the Throne of Grace; so you can't **receive mercy or find grace to help** in time of need. (Heb. 4:16)
 - Get from God whatever we ask for. (1John 3:22)
 - Serve the Living God. (Heb. 9:14)

APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT: *Answer the following questions as best you can, then get with your discipler/discipleship group and discuss your answers.*

1. What sin is “crouching at your door”? How will you master it?
2. What are some practical ways you practice laying down your life for your brothers?
3. Is your conscience clean or guilty? To assess this, ask yourself these 3 questions:
 - a. Do I have confidence before God? (1John 3:21; Heb. 4:16)
 - b. Do I have a powerful and effective prayer life? (1John 3:22)
 - c. Am I really serving the Living God? (Heb. 9:14)