



- The key to a thriving life is experiencing God's **love** for you.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 1 John 3:16 (NIV)

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

- God loves you, but does His love **define** you?

- The EKG of a Christ follower is **love**.

And now, dear children, remain in fellowship with Christ so that when he returns, you will be full of courage and not shrink back from him in shame. 1 John 2:28 (NLT)

- The assurance of where you'll spend eternity comes from your **intimacy** with Jesus.

Since we know that Christ is righteous, we also know that all who do what is right (*Practice righteousness*) are God's children. 1 John 2:29 (NLT)

Biblical righteousness means:

- It's a Relationship: Being right **with God**.

- It's a lifestyle: Living like **Jesus**.

God's love identifies:

- God's love identifies us as **belonging** to Him.

See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! 1 John 3:1 (NLT)

- God's loves identifies what we are **becoming**.

Dear friends, we are already God's children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is. 1 John 3:2 (NLT)

- God's love identifies our **behavior**.

And all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure. 1 John 3:3 (NLT)

Anyone who continues to live in him will not sin. But anyone who keeps on sinning does not know him or understand who he is. 1 John 3:6 (NLT)

John is not saying:

- You have to live a **perfect** life.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God... Romans 3:23 (ESV)

- There is no **grace** when you fail.

But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." James 4:6 (ESV)

John is saying:

- We can't live a sinless life, but we can **sin less** in life.

Those who have been born into God's family do not make a practice of sinning, because God's life is in them. So they can't keep on sinning, because they are children of God. 1 John 3:9 (NIV)

The sin that John is referring to here:

- Sin as a failure to practice **righteousness**.

- Sin as a failure to love other **believers**.

For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. 1 John 3:11 (NIV)

Modeling a love like Jesus:

- A love that overlooks the **faults** of others.
- A love that **forgives**.

- You can't be in the family if you don't **love** the family.

Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him. 1 John 3:15 (NIV)

We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. 1 John 3:16 (NLT)

If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? 1 John 3:17 (NIV)

- God's love can't be in a person who is unwilling to **share** it.

2 things to notice:

- He's not talking about having **excess**, but the basics.
- He's talking about loving the **individual** in need.

- Love demonstrates who you **belong** to.

Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions. Our actions will show that we belong to the truth, so we will be confident when we stand before God.

1 John 3:18-19 (NLT)

Practicing love = The decision to compassionately, righteously and responsibly seek the **wellbeing** of another.

Application Step:

- Am I **becoming** more like Jesus?
- Am I meeting **needs**, or just feeling **sorry** for people?



TO CREATIVELY LOVE AND LEAD PEOPLE IN A GROWING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS.

Questions for Connection Groups:

These questions also work well for personal time with God.

- What scripture and/or point spoke most to you from the Talk on Sunday? Explain why?
- What does it mean for God's love to define us? Why is this essential for every believer?
- How does God's love identify us as belonging to Him? How does God's love identify what we are becoming? How does God's love identify our behavior?
- Read 1 John 3:3; What does it mean to keep ourselves pure? How do we do that? Why is this important?
- Read 1 John 3:4-6; What do these verses say to you? Is sinning less a priority in your life? How can we prevent sin from being something we repeatedly do?
- How do we tend to fail at practicing righteousness?
- Do you find the point troubling that says: "You can't be in the family if you don't **love** the family."? Why is loving others so important?
- From 1 John 3, what is John saying our love for others should look like?
- How does love demonstrate who we belong to?
- How does loving others sacrificially make us more like Jesus?

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