

First John 3:16-20

- 1) How can I know my love for other believers is genuine?—3:16-18
 - a) Do I embrace the obligation?—3:16 ¹⁶ *By this* [ἐν οὗτος] *we have come to know* [pf. act. ind. γινώσκω] *love* [ἀγάπη],
 - i) The pattern of Jesus' deliberate and voluntary death for the advantage of others—*that* [ὅτι] *That One* [ἐκεῖνος] *laid down* [aor. act. ind. τίθημι] *His life* [ψυχὴ] *on our behalf* [ὑπὲρ ἐγώ] (cf. John 10:11, 15, 17; 15:13)
 - ii) Our ongoing moral obligation—and *we* (emphatic) *ought* [pres. act. ind. ὀφείλω] *to be laying down* [pres. act. inf. τίθημι] *our lives* [ψυχὴ] *on behalf of* [ὑπὲρ] *the brothers* [ἀδελφός]. (doing what is advantageous for them)
 - b) What is the answer to a legitimate rhetorical question?—3:17 ¹⁷ *But* [δέ] ... *in what way* [πῶς] *is the love* [ἀγάπη] *of God* (God's own love) *residing* [pres. act. ind. μένω] *in him?* (If these 3 conditions are met)
 - i) Pseudo-Christians possess the means to meet the need—the *one who has* [pres. act. subj. ἔχω] *the world's* [κόσμος] *necessities of life* [βίος],
 - ii) Pseudo-Christians are fully aware of the need—and *notices* [pres. act. subj. θεωρέω] *his brother* [ἀδελφός] *having* [pres. act. ptc. ἔχω] *a need* [χρεία],
 - iii) Pseudo-Christians refuse to meet the need—and *shuts* [aor. act. subj. κλείω] *his affections* [σπλάγχνον] *from* [ἀπό] *him*, (cf. James 2:15-16)
 - c) Do I obey a practical command?—3:18 ¹⁸ *Little children* [τεκνίον], *let us not love* [pres. act. subj. ἀγαπάω]
 - i) Negatively; mere sentimental talk—in *word* [λόγος] *or tongue* [γλῶσσα]
 - ii) Positively; active love—but [ἀλλά] *in* [ἐν] *activity* [ἔργον] *and truth* [ἀλήθεια].
- 2) How does practicing love for others impact me personally?—3:19-20 ¹⁹ *And ...*
 - a) Two aspects of assurance of salvation—3:19
 - i) Objective assurance—*by this* [ἐν οὗτος] (loving in activity and truth) *we are knowing* [pres. act. ind. γινώσκω] *that* [ὅτι] *we are* [pres. act. ind. εἰμί] *of* [ἐκ] *the truth* [ἀλήθεια], (cf. Satan's offspring marked by an absence of love—3:11-15)
 - ii) Subjective assurance—and *our hearts* [καρδία] *will be persuaded* [fut. act. ind. πείθω] *before* [ἔμπροσθεν] *Him*,
 - b) Possible situation—3:20 ²⁰ *that* [ὅτι] (explanatory) *if* [εἰάν 3rd class condition] *our heart* [καρδία] **should be condemning** (emphatic) [pres. act. subj. καταγινώσκω] *us*,
 - i) Two helpful truths about God
 - (1) Greatness—*that* [ὅτι] (explanatory) *God is* [pres. act. ind. εἰμί] *greater* [μέγας] *than our heart* [καρδία]
 - (2) Omniscience—and *He is knowing* [pres. act. ind. γινώσκω] *each thing* [πάντα].
 - ii) Additional thoughts
 - (1) Your conscience is not infallible. Sometimes its condemnation of us is unjust. Sometimes its excusing of us is unjust.
 - (2) God's love working in and through us gives us confidence when our hearts point us to one of our failures. God desires to heal the wounded conscience of the sensitive believer.
 - (3) God is often more merciful toward us than our own conscience. However, never quickly dismiss a guilty conscience, but always analyze your conscience in light of the Scriptures.