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## 1 John 3:13-15

### The Stark Contrast

**1 John 3:13-15:** “Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.”

One of the lessons that we have in new members' class is “What is a Christian?” You would think that you wouldn't have to define that, but the fact of the matter is that it's been twisted and misconstrued through the years. So, the name Christian has no real comprehension or understanding in most people's minds. When you look at the word “Christian,” it's a Latin word that refers to the fact of following Christ. If you were to ask most people if they were following Christ, they'd probably say no. If you were to ask them if they're a Christian, they'd probably say yes. This reveals to us that the word has been skewed and distorted. So, our hope is as we go through the epistle of 1 John, that you realize what it means to be a Christian and have the confidence that God has intended for you. Clearly, there's a recognition of what a Christian is in 1 John.

At the end of 1 John, he says, “I have written to you who believe... that you may know that you have eternal life.” So, the confidence that comes from 1 John, as he begins to reveal all of the traits and the characteristics of those that are true believers. As you begin with this epistle, he talks about fellowship; and fellowship is this clear comradery and relationship that we have. He uses the Greek word “*koinōnia*,” which begins to talk about the fact that we have things in common. The one thing we have in common, and what he states in 1 John 1 is our fellowship is with God and with His Son. It's like David declares in Psalm 119, my relationship is with all those who fear God and keep His commandments. So, you realize the relationship has to do with “do you love God?” We are drawn to one another because of our love for Christ and our devotion to Him. Not necessarily because we have the same traits and characteristics or even superficial desires, but we come together with that one desire to be like Him. It draws us and unites the body of Christ.

So, he starts off by saying if in fact you're going to have a relationship with Christ, and if in fact you're going to have the confidence of this relationship, you have to start off by being real. What he means by this is you need to come clean. You're not perfect, you have flaws, and you have failed terribly. So, just admit it. If you confess your sins, He is faithful and just to forgive you and He'll cleanse you from all unrighteousness. If you say you have no sin, you're lying, and the truth is not in you. (1 John 1:9-10) So, he's very clear in that first chapter that you'd have to come clean. It just makes sense that if you're going to have a relationship, you're going to have

to come clean, be truthful, and transparent. Transparency and truthfulness really come out of chapter 1.

It's interesting that in chapter 1, especially towards the end, he begins to talk about the things that people say. If you look with me just by way of review, he says in 1 John 1:6, "If we say..." You see that little phrase there? If you drop on down a little further in verse 8, "If we say..." In chapter 1, he's going to help you come to terms with what you say and what is. I think one of the reasons why people are so confused is because they don't live in reality; everything is virtual. "I'm a virtual Christian," "I virtually follow Jesus," but nobody really does. It's no wonder that when Jesus turns to His disciples, He says, "Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and you don't do what I say? The evidence that I'm Lord is that you do what I say, and so it's very real in your life." So, it's interesting that he starts off in this book by saying, "Ok, I know you say certain things. You say you have fellowship." Verse 6, if you say you have fellowship but then walk in darkness, how can that be true? He then goes on and says in verse 8 that if you say you have no sin, then you're not being truthful. So, in every case, he begins to reveal the things that we say, and he puts us in touch with reality.

When you come into chapter 2, he not only takes us out of the realm of that sense of real fellowship and where we're transparent with one another; once again in any relationship that has to be true, but he puts us into the realm of what it looks like to have true righteousness. Here again, one of my great concerns is that people begin to define what they think righteousness is, and that's where we really fall into great danger; "I feel we should be doing this," or "I think we should be doing this." First of all, the Bible tells us that the church is the pillar and support of the truth; and there's no real Scripture backing it, besides the fact that there's no real clear direction of that statement. It's just "something that I feel," and we live in a world in which we're just feely, touchy as far as our emotions, and we put them on the internet and tell people what we think. Even the news nowadays goes, "We want your opinion," and I'm going, "So, when did we stop being the news?" I don't know, maybe I'm wrong, but I didn't think that the news should have anything to do with peoples' opinions but had to do with what is happening.

So, as we see in this, he starts off by saying you need to get real about what's really right. The question is, "Ok, so, what's really right?" He says, "Jesus." That which is our standard and our paragon is Jesus; not me, it's not you, it's Jesus. The way that he puts it in 1 John 2:1,

"My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father..." look at the end of the phrase here, "Jesus Christ the righteous."

Not only is He righteous, but He's also the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 2:2) He is the Advocate that we have, our faith is in Him. If He is our everything, then everything is clear; but if it's up to anybody about what's right and wrong, then we're going to have a lot of confusion. Unity comes from realizing where true righteousness comes from. Look, there have been times

where I've read certain passages, and I go, "That can't be right." Then the Spirit of God goes, "But I said it was." Then I go, "It's right." I just need to change my way of thinking, once again, that's repentance; because we all come with all kinds of baggage, and the "unstable and untaught," as Peter would say, distort Scripture. So, we all try to make it say what we want it to. I oftentimes tell people, "Look, if you're confused about sound doctrine, very simple step here, all you have to do is ask yourself, "Does it look like Jesus?" If it doesn't look like Jesus, it's bad doctrine. If it looks like Jesus, it's perfect doctrine. So, the teachings of Scripture are very clear and are made very clear; because as Scripture tells us in John 1, "the word of God became flesh and dwelt among us." So, we actually get to see doctrine lived out in the person of Christ. Once again, I think sometimes it rubs us the wrong way. I mean, you look at one of the first times that Jesus begins to speak in the synagogue in particular in His own hometown, He opens up the book of Isaiah, and begins reading it. Up to a point, the Pharisees, leaders, and the scribes are going, "Wow, I really like this text." Then, Jesus begins to say, "Yeah, but see these bad guys in here? That's you." Then, they didn't like that anymore. I know that there are times where the things that Jesus does are very accepting. I mean, He goes, and He heals people, He ministers to them. Then, there are times where He's very offensive to them. If you wanted to start a ministry, and wanted to build a big church, we'll call it "mega church," universal, you would think that what you would do is not go into the temple and turn over the money tables; but that's one of the first things He does in the beginning of His ministry in John 2. So, it's almost like He subverts the whole popularity thing right off the bat. What we know is that He did that because He loved, and it was His love for those that were being mistreated, abused, and exploited through their poverty; and the temple was taking advantage of people. He says, "My Father, My Dad, wanted you to help people. He didn't want you to use people. This house should be a house of prayer for them, not against them." So, there were those that came in, and they were exploiting. They were hurting the innocent. If there was one thing that Jesus wouldn't take, it was hurting the innocent. So, He would take those strong stands.

Another example is in Matthew 15, I think the disciples were taken back by it. You would think that the religious leaders, wow, they're the guys, right? Oftentimes, they're not. So, Jesus actually corrects them. Nobody likes to be corrected, right? Maybe David, you read Psalm 119, "It was good that I was corrected." So, he actually said that; and as Proverbs says, a wise person actually wants correction. (Proverbs 15:31) Unfortunately, there are a lot of unwise people. In Matthew 15, Jesus corrects the Pharisees, and they're a little upset about it, a lot upset. As you drop on down to verse 12, it says, "Then the disciples came and said to Him, 'Do You know that the Pharisees were offended?'" Sometimes I say things from the pulpit, and my wife goes, "Do you know that maybe you kind of stepped on some toes?" Yeah, I knew.

"...'Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?'" Jesus said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted." Now, watch the next phrase, "Let them alone..."

That doesn't sound like love to me, does it to you? In fact, by the time you come to chapter 23, Jesus is really hitting those guys that are taking advantage hard. Now, quite frankly, they look more righteous than anybody else, but they're taking advantage of people; and it's their oppression that Jesus just isn't going to allow to happen. It's the reason why they crucified Him, because He did this.

In the passage that we're looking at, we're going to be talking about this thing called "love." Like "Christian," the word "love" has been misunderstood. We know that it's clearly defined in 1 Corinthians 13. I just love that chapter, and I know that so many of you do too because it talks about the characteristics of it. "Love does not seek its own, it's not easily provoked," things like that. You begin to realize also that it will not acquiesce to unrighteousness or falsehood, but it will rejoice in truth. The world seems to like to move it on one end of the scale or the other when it fits them. I mean, how many times have I heard people say, "You Christians are supposed to be forgiving." What they mean by that is "you're supposed to be tolerant of the horrific things that I do." And I would say, that's not love; any more than you had a child, and they picked up a pistol, and they have one bullet in the chambers and Russian roulette... sorry not Russian, they're really nice people. I just have to make fun of that stuff, but they put the gun to their head, and they start pulling the trigger. Now, at what point do you think I'm going to get intense? I mean, probably when the kid picks it up, or even looks at it, because why? Because I hate the kid? Because I love the kid. I don't want to see him get hurt. So, the intensity that you'll see with Christ in some situations, even the fact that He'll turn to Peter, and go, "Get behind Me, Satan," is not an act of hatred, it's in act of love. He's rescuing him. In fact, if Christ had done what Peter wanted Him to do, He wouldn't have died for Peter's sins, and Peter would have had no salvation. So, the graciousness of God is to love in the right way. Once again, our paragon is Jesus. So, we follow Him in the love that we display, and we're going to be talking about that within the passage.

We not only have understood what true righteousness is in chapter 2, but we now go into chapter 3, and we begin to see what it means to be an authentic offspring of Christ. Christ is defined as that true righteousness, and that's why in chapter 2 you see this word used repeatedly, "antichrist." That is to say that the world is "anti" or against the Christ. He'll then go on, and say that the same attributes, same characteristics, if in fact you are a believer, will be in you, and the world will be anti you. They'll hate you. So, we're going to begin to see some of the qualities and characteristics of what it means to take on the character and nature of God. That's why in chapter 3, we started off with the title "Authentic Offspring." It starts off with this great beginning, "See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God." How wonderful that is. Could you imagine that we're actually the offspring of God? We're God's children.

He starts off with that. Now, he goes on, and he begins to describe the fact that there's an identifiable mark in us that really demonstrates that we are a child of God. How he describes it, just to summarize it, is how he demonstrates that we have a focus of Christ. He actually appears

to us. Now, he'll state, "it has not appeared as yet what we will be," for the day is coming when we'll see Him in all of His fullness, but we have seen Him. The point is in verse 5,

"You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin."

The point of the passage is we see what He has done for us on that cross. He has appeared, it's been made evident to us; the Spirit of God has revealed to us, "I know exactly what Jesus is about."

The world will talk about Jesus in a lot of interesting terms. Of course, I've heard about the "historical Jesus", and you hear people redefining Jesus in highly distorted ways, but we know what Jesus is about. Jesus is about taking away sins. The world wants to bring you in, and say, "Jesus is about tolerance of sin." No, no, no, the reason He came is to take away sins. He came to die to sins, and we see this clearly. I get it, the world doesn't see it, but we see this clearly. We know why He came, and He appeared for this reason.

Now, he'll go on and say that because of this, those who abide in Him don't want to sin. (1 John 3:6) Now, I'm not saying that you're going to be sinless, and he's not saying that, but he is saying that you're not going to pursue it. The world pursues these things, and as Peter will say, they're surprised that you don't run in the same dissipation as they do. They're going, "Why don't you like this kind of stuff?" I really don't want to do this. Now, you may fall and do some of those things, "we have an Advocate with the Father." (1 John 2:1) "If you'll confess your sins, He is faithful and just to forgive you, but we don't want to sin." We have the same goal, the same desire, same pursuit that Christ did. What is that? To eradicate sin, and our goal is to begin here. Like in Matthew 7, it says, "Look, I get it, you can see your brother's sin a lot better than your own, but take the log out, and then help your brother with the speck." It doesn't say, "Don't help the brother get the speck out," because the speck is hurting your brother. So, why wouldn't you help him? But you can't see clearly to help him appropriately if you're weighed down with sin. So, get your life right, then you can help him. That's why Galatians 6 says, "you who are spiritual, restore such a one." So, who is it that does the restoration? The person that's not right with God? No, the leader, the one that's in charge, more specifically, the one who is walking in that walk. So, you go, and you restore that person because you'll direct them in the right way; and you'll do it not to gratify yourself, but for the Spirit of God. It's a very interesting chapter as you begin to see this identifiable mark. What's also interesting, you might want to mark it well,

(1 John 3:9) "No one who is born of God..."

Once again, he uses this phrase, "practices," which is a way of saying, "this is your way of life," "this is something that you pursue."

So, no one who is born of God pursues, carries out, longs for, goes after sin "because His seed," God's "sperma" is actually the word that is used there, "abides in him; and he cannot sin."

His point is that the identifiable mark is that you have the nature and disposition of God in you. When you receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, you become born again. What happens is that the Spirit of Christ comes within you, and transforms you, and now you begin to have the same disposition and desires as God. You go, "Ok, what is that?" To eradicate sin in your life. You don't want the sin in your life. "God, I don't want to do this anymore." It's fundamentally inexplicable, right? You can't really explain it. "How did this happen?" Why is it that one day I long to do that which is evil, and the next day I don't? Scripture is saying that's one of the evidences, you have this identifiable mark, and you begin to have an obvious nature. If you look in the passage, it begins to be described in the fact that we keep, preserve, guard the word of God. We just want to do what He says. Here again, we don't start daydreaming what we think the word of God says, we just want to do what He says. I often would tell my kids, "Just get in there, ask yourself without any agenda, 'What does it say?' and then just start doing that; but find out what it says." Unfortunately, we oftentimes start in the realm of "well I want it to say," and then, "how can I get it to say it better?" Then, we start pulling out certain passages of Scripture that somehow suit what we pursue.

So, you have the identifiable mark, you have the obvious nature, which is obviously the nature of Christ. Now, you go into the fact that there's an interesting contrast between us and the world. Have you noticed that? You don't seem to look like them, you don't seem to do the things they do, you don't seem to love the things they love. It's just so bizarre, and I'll tell you what's even more bizarre is you're going to find people hating you that you go, "I don't even know why they hate me." In fact, sometimes you'll do something very gracious, and they'll hate you more.

He's going to be talking about the contrast that is evident. So, if you pick up with me in 1 John 3:13, it starts this way,

"Do not be surprised, brethren..." Ok, that's a command by the way. "I'm shocked! The world hates me!" He goes, "Why are you shocked? Stop. Don't be shocked anymore." Because it actually is a badge of honor if the world hates you.

"Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you."

The world is hate, and even when the world talks about "love," they're still hating people. It's strange. Once again, they'll use words, but they'll turn them around; like in Isaiah 5, they say light is darkness, darkness is light, and good is evil and evil is good. They just literally flip it around, and you're going, "How bizarre is this?" The passage is telling us that the world is going to hate you, and that's what the world does.

He's going to show the stark contrast: the world hates, believers love. There are going to be passages in which Christ is going to refer and use the word "hate" for us; in which there's a contrast. For instance, you need to hate your mother, father and brother in comparison with your love for God. He's not talking about the hatred that you're seeing. He's using the word as a contrast. You need to love God so much that your love for anybody else would appear as

hatred. So, you have to move that text aside because I know that some of your minds are thinking about this; but God has called the believers to walk in the love of Christ. Now, the question we have to deal with is “what is the love of Christ?” Obviously, the love of Christ is different than my definition of what love is. But if you look with me in verse 14, he then drops in, and he says,

“We know...”

So, now we have confidence. Remember it starts off in chapter 1, “you say this.” So, in chapter 2, he goes into the fact that “this we know is true.” Now, he goes into the realm of “we know.” So, you can feel it getting stronger as you’re going through the book.

(1 John 3:14) “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren...”

That’s a clear distinction within the passage. Now, what we have is an interesting Jewish phrase in the text, “passed out.” It’s actually “passed over.” You know, the Passover? Do you know what the Passover was pointing to? Yeah, the death angel was passing over so that you wouldn’t die as they were leaving Egypt. Only the ones that hadn’t put the blood on the door died. So, it’s an interesting picture of bringing the Passover in on the whole thing. “How do I know that I’m going through the night? How do I know that death angel is going to pass over me?” He goes, “This is how you know; you have love for the brethren.” Now, he’s going to make an interesting distinction within the passage, and I want you to note that with me. In that, he’s going to use the term “brethren,” plural, and then he’s going to use a phrase with a personal pronoun “your brother.” There is a distinction that he’s given and it’s important for us to realize that distinction. If you’ll look with me in verse 14,

“We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren.”

That’s dealing cumulative with those that have put their faith and their trust in Christ, and desire the same things as Christ i.e., as you go back to chapter 1, have the same fellowship. Our fellowship is with God and with His Son; have the same transparency, the same paragon as Christ is. So, it unites us as what is called “the brethren.”

“We know that we have passed out of death into life...”

Why? Because you’re drawn to other Christians; likeminded faith. I’m not drawn to people that hate Christ. I don’t want to be around them. I long to be with those that love Him and are called according to His purpose. Look, you want to sit down and talk about Christ? Fine. You want to talk about yourself? I’ll probably listen for a little while. You want to talk about horrible things? I don’t want to have company with you. When you look at Psalm 1, it’s very clear, how happy is the man that isn’t with those people? Whether it’s the people that are sinning or the people that are railing on people, I don’t want to be with those people; but I do want to be with those that love Christ. So, we’re drawn together. This is very unique. Go into the world, actually just

go into the school system, hold up a sign, and say, "Who wants to meet around Jesus Christ?" See how many people you get together. Not many.

Once again, you go back, don't marvel, "few there are," as Matthew would say. So, it starts off by saying that you don't have to worry because if the world liked you, that's when you would have to worry. That's when you're in danger, but you're in a safe place when you know you love the brethren. There is a source of comfort that I have. People have asked me, "How do you know that you're going to heaven?" Because I love God's people and they're going to be in heaven. So, we're already attached. How wonderful that is; the Scripture is actually referring to that. It goes on, and says, "He who does not love abides in death." Now, he will segue into the fact that love seems to be absent from us. Now, one of things that he's going to be talking about in 1 John 4 is, "we know love by this, that He laid down His life for us. In this is love, not that we loved Him, but that He loved us." So, the world doesn't know what love is. They use the word "love," but they don't know what it is. We have the love of God, and this unites us. If you don't have love in you, then you abide in... what? Death. Ok, so that's very clear.

(1 John 3:15) "Everyone who hates his brother..."

Ok, so what did we just change? Well, we're no longer using the plural "brethren," but we're actually using the singular, and we're using the personal pronoun "his;" as in genitive case, possessive. So, it's your brother. I have found that family has a way of testing your Christianity. Have you found that to be true? It's easy to love somebody way on the other side of the world, and you can send money to them, and you don't even have to deal with them. But you maybe have an obnoxious brother or sister, or somebody that God has placed in your surroundings, and He goes, "Now, that's your brother" and you go, "Ok." So, you learn to love that one that God has placed. So, it is interesting that he uses a personal pronoun and the fact that it's singular. It says this, "Everyone who hates his brother." Now, the text doesn't start off with "love," does it? It starts off with "hate." So, he's conveying that we have a strong love for the brethren This defines us. I'll tell you what else defines us; we don't hate. Now, why does he use the word "brother"? Because if you back up into verse 12, he gives this interesting example,

"Not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous."

In other words, he goes all the way back to Cain, and we go, "Ok, Cain and Abel, they were brothers." Yes, but more than that. They were humanity. Think about it, who else was populating the earth right now? Let's see, Adam, Eve, Cain and Abel. That's it. So, who was Cain's brother? Whoever was alive that was part of his family. That's why John goes all the way back to Cain and Abel. I initially thought, "Well, why didn't he say something about Judas? Because Judas betrayed." It was because he wanted to show somebody that represented all of humanity; and his point was to display that you can't hate these that came from humanity. You can't hate humanity. Now, I can tell you I have good reason to hate humanity on occasions, but



I can't. The Lord will not let you hate them. "For God so loved the world." God is not a God of hate.

To give you an example of this, look with me in Luke 6:27. Jesus begins to talk to His disciples, and He starts off this way, as the world has their own way of looking at the things,

"But I say to you... love your enemies, do good to those who hate you."

Now, in the passage, it's telling us that there are haters. They're going to hate you. In fact, He's already established the fact that you're going to be hated in the world. Not only did we read it in 1 John, but Jesus will say it in John 15, you'll see it in Matthew 10, and Matthew 5. All the way through Scripture God is warning us, "They're going to hate you; and they're going to hate you because you love Me; because they're antichrist." He already established this, but his point is in verse 27, "but you can't hate." Now, the word that he uses here for "love" has more to do with benevolence. In other words, you can't be unkind to anybody. So, one of the things that really defines us is even if somebody hates us and is hateful towards us, we will not be unkind to them. In fact, we will want their good. We will not retaliate. We want what is good for them. So, it reads this way,

"But I say to you... love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

(Luke 6:28) bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

(Luke 6:29) Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either.

(Luke 6:30) Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back.

(Luke 6:31) Treat others the same way you want them to treat you.

(Luke 6:32) If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them."

The thing that makes you different is that you'll show kindness to those that are unkind to you. Now, I want to clarify to you that this is not dealing with the church. It's not dealing with the government. It's not dealing with a parent. If a kid hits the parent in the face, guess what? He's grounded or he's really sore, but you don't do that. We're not talking about that. We're talking about your mindset and your attitude. "I'm not going to hate that person. I'm going to want good for them." It goes into the whole realm of Romans 12, right? Because we know vengeance is the Lord's. He's going to take care of this. We put our trust and faith in Him, and we do what we do because He's called us to do that just like His Son. We're following His cross. Jesus says, "Take up your cross, follow Me. You want to look like Me? This is your heart: you're going to have a strong attachment to those that love Me, but you're not going to hate anyone." That's a very interesting picture, and very clearly defined as you go throughout Scripture. This love that we have is obviously not the same kind of love that the world would have, because you go to 1

Corinthians 13 that says you don't rejoice in unrighteousness. People will sometimes say that if you have love then you'll agree, affirm, or cater to evil; and that's not true. That's not what love is about at all. It is saying that you're not going to retaliate; you're not going to wish bad on that person or wish evil for them. Is your hope that justice would prevail? Obviously, we want justice to prevail.

There's a passage in Ezekiel 33, if I can quote it for you. God declares,

(Ezekiel 33:11) "... 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?'"

The point is that we don't want somebody to hurt. God is not willing that any should perish. I don't want that. I've often said, as much as there have been some people that have just so irritated me that I just wanted them completely out of my life, in my wildest imagination I could never wish hell on anybody. I wouldn't want that for anybody, would you? Now, there are going to be people that we're going, "Turn and live!" That's what I want, and it's by demonstrating that kind of love that affirms in our heart we have the love of Christ in us. There are going to be those that don't. We're going to take part of that love too. I just want to emphasize this, that we're going to have in our heart to be very strong in what is right, so that we can rescue them. Once again, the picture of the kid with the gun.

There's a passage in Leviticus, you ought to have it underlined in your Bible. I know there's probably not too many passages in Leviticus that you have underlined, but Leviticus 19, if you'll look there with me. In Leviticus 19:17, we get into the whole "you shall not hate." It reads this way,

"You shall not hate your fellow countryman..." Watch the phrase, "in your heart."

You know how sometimes we'll say, "I didn't say anything." Yeah, but did you think it? Jesus is very clear in Matthew 5 about that.

"You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart." Now watch the very next phrase, "you may surely reprove your neighbor." See, why does Scripture throw that in? Because the world will say, "If you reprove something or somebody, you hate them." That's not true. If you reprove somebody, you love them. "For who the Lord loves He disciplines." (Hebrews 12:6) It's the love of God that will bring discipline in somebody's life. That's why Proverbs says, "faithful are the wounds of a friend, deceitful are the kisses of an enemy." (Proverbs 27:6) Because a friend will get after a person. If a father loves his kid, he's not going to let him hurt himself; and he's going to do everything he can to put the pressure on.

It's sort of like Paul when he talks to the Corinthians, he goes, "Ok, you have a choice. I can come to you in love, or I can come to you with a stick, but you're going to stop doing that." Then he comes to the church in 1 Corinthians 5, and he goes, "I can't believe you guys have let this go on because now it's hurting everybody else. We're not going to let this continue on." So,

you begin to realize that the love that Christ showed, and the clarity of that even with His protection of His own men. When they were coming to get Jesus, and they go, “Are you the guy?” and He goes, “I’m the guy. Leave these guys alone.” Then he made all of the soldiers fall to their knees. Remember that in the Gospel of John? Sometimes we overlook that, but the point is that He was going to protect them; and in some ways, if you think about it, He’s actually keeping them from sinning grossly by hurting these guys. So, it’s the kindness of God that does this. His standards, what He does, but it’s the love of Christ. This is a very interesting passage because it defines love, not in the realm of tolerance or acquiescence, or backing off, but in “we’re going to do the right thing; and that’s why we’re going to take the stand.”

When it talks about your love for one another, don’t confuse it with what the world is saying. But there is a strong evidence; just to make it clear by way of summary. The way we know that we are His, we love each other that love the Lord, we’re drawn to each other, and we don’t hate. It doesn’t matter what somebody does to us, we will not come back in retaliation. We will not come back in vengeance. In fact, if you look in Leviticus 19:18, what does it say? It’s actually going to show you what it looks like to hate. Now, if you reprove somebody and take a stand, that’s not hate, that’s love; but what you can’t do, verse 18, “You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge.”

So, parents, you can get after your kids, you can’t bear a grudge. You have to still love them. In fact, that’s an act of love. Proverbs says he who withholds his rod hates his son. So, you want to take those stands, but you want to display a love and affection because the whole reason you did that was to rescue them. It wasn’t to hurt them; it was to save them, and that’s your desire. So, if you have these qualities in you, wow, you’re heaven bound. Pretty exciting, isn’t it?

### **Closing Prayer:**

Father, we give You thanks for Your love for us; and for the evidence of Your Spirit within us. How wonderful it is that we begin to think like You. We begin to take on Your nature, we take on Your character; and we see the things that You hate, and we hate them, like sin, because it’s so destructive in lives and we want to get rid of it. In fact, You were willing to give Your life to take away that sin. We’re willing to give up things, comfort, pleasure to get that stuff out of our lives. How destructive it is, not only to us, but to others. We don’t want that in our life anymore. Lord, how wonderful it is that there are those in our midst that love You and that want to fellowship around You. They want to embrace you. They want to do the very things that You pursue. How we’re drawn to people like this. How division begins to come in churches when people begin to think in terms of “well, I think this” and “I think that” rather than “this is what the word of God says, and this is what we follow.” How wonderfully uniting it is in how our hearts come together. Father, even more than that, we just thank you that you’ve given us a spirit that just will not allow us to hate. That’s got to be divine because that’s not like me.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, I'm just going to ask you to examine your hearts.  
1 John is about saying, "what does real look like?" and he's giving you the picture. A lot of people can say, "I'm a Christian," but do you really understand what that's about? John is clarifying for you.