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## Chapter 3 – Authentic Offspring

### The Irrefutable Proof

**1 John 3:16-18:** “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world’s goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.”

How do I know that I have the real thing? Really, that’s the question that 1 John addresses. Do we have faith? Is it a saving faith? James deals with this in the book of James. In which he begins to ask about the faith that many of those he had been preaching to for probably a few years, now have been dispersed abroad; and his question to them is, “Do you have real faith?” He’ll even ask, “If you can’t show kindness to your brother in a difficult time, then can that faith save you?” He’ll make a statement within the passage; the demons believe that there’s a God and they shutter, but that’s not saving faith. So, what are we talking about? We’re talking about what’s real. One of the reasons why when you go through the Old Testament, you’re seeing this emphasized almost everywhere you turn. When you look at the book of Hebrews, one of the main themes of that book is that you don’t want to live in shadows. What is he talking about? He’s saying that we embrace things that aren’t real, and you say, “This is my faith.” For instance, somebody may have a cross that somebody gave them. They say, “Oh, if I have my cross, I’m ok.” That’s not real faith, that’s a cross. Real faith is when you begin to practice the things that you say you believe. That’s real faith.

So, as you go through the book of Hebrews, you begin to realize there are a lot of shadows. He even goes all the way back to the Old Testament; that the things in the Old Testament, whether it’s a sacrifice of bulls and goats, it can never take away sins; or whether it’s the tabernacle or the priests themselves. His point was that these are just shadows that were pointing to the real. He’ll state very clearly in Hebrews 11, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for.” He puts it in the context of “You want to know what’s real? Faith in God is real.” So, you begin to read chapter 11, and you go, “By faith Noah built an ark?” That would take something real to do that because nobody else on the planet is doing anything like that. All the way through, he begins to go through this interesting list of what real looks like.

James will say, “faith without works is dead.” You can say that you have faith, but if in fact when you go through trials and tribulations you’re not rejoicing, then you don’t believe. “What do you mean by that?” Well, if you believe that God is sovereign, He’s in total control of everything, and that He’s good, then you should rejoice over anything and everything that happens; because He loves you. He’s not going to abandon you, right? He’ll never leave you nor

forsake you. So, what do you believe? If you find yourself in deep depression because you don't like the way things are going, you don't really believe God's in control and you don't believe He loves you; or maybe you don't believe that He has the power to do anything, but the fact is you don't have real faith. Real faith is always going to be active; it's going to be doing things, and as the interesting phrase that we always used to grow up hearing states, "You really only believe that which activates you." If you really believe something, then you're going to see a life change.

As we come into the epistle of 1 John, it is a letter that is talking about having a confidence in something. Like the book of Hebrews, if you're going to have confidence in something, it needs to be something you can hang onto. The writer of Hebrews will say, "We have this faith that's like an anchor for the soul." His point is that you need something to hold onto. You need something that's sure and steadfast; something that's not going to move. What is that? Well, it's got to be real. So, all the way through many of the pages of the New Testament it's getting us to that which is real. It's getting us out of the whole conversation of talking about godliness and philosophizing about things; or maybe you're debating about things. How wonderful it is that we can actually discuss with people and argue certain points, but what does it matter if it doesn't change your life? So, 1 John is going to be talking about the reality of your faith because you can't have confidence about anything that's not real. If you're just holding onto a shadow, there's no sense of hope and confidence that you've got something that's going to anchor you down.

So, as we go through and have been looking at these different chapters, we use words like "real." We've been using words like "true." So, like chapter 1, we've said fundamentally that the emphasis is about real fellowship, not just any kind of fellowship; but real fellowship. What does real fellowship look like? Well, our fellowship is in Christ and with the Father; and he starts off that way. It's something that's tangible. It actually moves and breathes and works around. It's sort of like walking up to somebody, and saying, "I love you." Then you sit down, and you go, "But I don't want anything to do with you." Ok, that's not love because true love is going to be active and moving. So, he uses words like "the things that we've handled, seen, and heard." The senses are being used because we can see the reality of it in the fellowship; and this fellowship is centered around our relationship with Christ. Real fellowship begins with our love for God. Just because a lot of people like fried chicken doesn't mean that we're going to be drawn together by that, and it's not going to be something that would hold us together because sometimes you're going to get some bad chicken; but beyond that, God says that the one thing is that we have a love for God and that consumes us and draws us together. So, there's a unity as we were talking about in Ephesians 4; one Lord, one faith, one baptism. If there's any unity of mind and purpose, as Philippians will say, make my joy complete, be of the same mind, be united in purpose. So, we have this, and we're together in it.

So, he starts off in chapter 1, and he begins to talk about this real fellowship. Of course, as we come to the end of the chapter, it's really clear that in order to have real fellowship, you have

to be really truthful. So, you have to admit that you're not all that, that you have sin in your life and that you need to confess that sin. If you want to fellowship with God, you need to be truthful with Him.

As you go into chapter 2, what is very clear in that chapter is that there is such a thing as true righteousness. Now, the problem is that oftentimes churches begin to focus on something that's really not true righteousness at all. It might be the righteousness of an individual, people want to follow and buy their books, or it might be a program; which is obviously not true righteousness. The question is, what is true righteousness? He states it very clear; it is Christ Jesus Himself. Now, this is a key point, and I know once again, it may be highly axiomatic to a number of you folks, but the point is that there is no true righteousness without Christ. He is our righteousness. If in fact you put anything in front, for instance, if you put altruism or benevolence, and you say, "Well, that's true righteousness," it's not true. The righteousness of man, the benevolence of man and the kindness of man is oftentimes highly greedy and extremely selfish. Matthew 6 conveys that sometimes people go out and they want to announce the fact that they're giving to somebody. It's all about giving a position or some type of quid pro quo thing, in which "I've received some reciprocity because I've done something nice to somebody; whether it makes me feel good or something like that." To prove that all you need to do is go do something nice for somebody, and then they don't say "thank you," and see how many people get angry. "I did something for them, and they didn't say 'thank you.'" Well, who'd you do it for? "I did it for God." I don't think so. I don't think you did it for God because if you did it for God, you'd say, "Don't need it. I've already heard 'Well done good and faithful servant.'" That's all I need to hear." It's your love for God that constrains you and that which moves you.

The point of the passage is that Christ in our lives and our love for Him and the Spirit of Christ within me constrains me to do these things. I don't need the gratification of man to do right. The Spirit of God moves within my heart and it's the power of God. Now, the world is antichrist, and it's one of the things that he states within chapter 2; there are many antichrists. In other words, there are many that are against Christ. The way that it's put in 2 Timothy 3 is that there will be many that will hold to a form of godliness, but they'll deny the power thereof. Look, we're living in a world now where everybody thinks that they're the "nice guy," and they're doing a whole lot of damage by pursuing that; but it's a form of godliness. See, they're inventing themselves as a god; they're the "wonderful people," but it denies the power because the power is of Christ. Chapter 2 is very powerful. If your righteousness is not anchored in Christ, there is no righteousness; because all of my righteousness is filthy rags. The best that I can do is dirt because what am I? Dust, right? I've often told people, "Take dust, give it a bath, you're only going to get mud. That's the best that we can do." So, the righteousness that we need is Christ.

When you come to chapter 3, you begin to realize that there is something authentic here that's going on, the Spirit of Christ within us. What is the sign that I have that authenticity? Like I said,

we're using words like "real," "true," and "authentic." What is that authenticity? Well, as you go into the beginning of chapter 3, there is an identifiable mark in all of us as followers of Christ; as those that have received Christ. The passage says, strangely enough, that we have His seed. If you look in verse 9, we actually have His seed within us. Now, the point of this is, maybe I can put it another way, we have His genes. The genes that we have are basically talking about His nature, His disposition. In other words, a person proclaims "I'm a follower of Christ. I've got Jesus in my heart." Well, do you have His genes? Look at the way they live. Look at their attitude. Look at their life. Look at their pursuits. Look at their disposition. Look at their practices. Look at their habits because that proves whether or not they have the seed of God within them. In fact, verse 8, "the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil."

If you back up into verse 5, "You know that He appeared in order to take away sins."

So, is your pursuit to eradicate sin? "I don't know, I'm kind of learning to live with it." Well, then that's not the seed that's in you; because the seed that is of Christ wants to get rid of sin. Isn't that what it says in verse 5? "You know that He appeared," for what reason? To get it out. He's trying to get it out. Go back to 1 John 1:9, "Confess your sins, He is faithful and just to forgive you." It doesn't say "deny your sins." You're lying, but if you confess your sins, He's going to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. I want to be cleansed. Do you want to be cleansed? That's His seed within you. It's evidence of His seed. The same thing is true with the practices of righteousness. If you look at the end of 1 John 3:7, "Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous."

The things that you're pursuing, the business that you're involved in, and that's why he talks specifically about the works of the devil; because the business that he's involved in is slanderous, cutting and tearing people down. "*Diabolos*" means "slanderer," and he wants to destroy other people's lives, but certainly the way of a believer should be to build up the body of Christ; to be proclaiming the truth. That's why we are proclaimers of what is called "good news." We want to build up the body of Christ. So, interesting picture in which you begin to see the identifiable mark. In verses 10-12 you begin to see the obvious nature, which once again the activity that we're involved in really defines who we are. He says it so simply in verse 10, "By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother." It's pretty clear; you don't need to go too much depth into that particular point. Then as you come to verses 13-15, there is a clear contrast between the world and the godly. It's this contrast that really demonstrates that we're drawn to what the world is actually against; which is bizarre if you think about it. Here again, the world is against Christ. So, everything that we're drawn to is what the world hates; we are driven by love, and the world is driven by hate. Ecclesiastes will talk about the result of every man's work is the result of rivalry. Everybody's competing with one another. That's the world, but we're not. We're not of the world, right? We're in it, but

we're not of it. We're not heading in that same direction. What moves us? What motivates us? You know, there's actually no command in the Bible to hate one another? You can go ahead and search it. Google it if you want to, but there's no passage in the Bible that says, "therefore, hate one another." But there are a lot of passages that deal with the command, what? "Love one another" because that's what we've been called to do. In fact, if you think about it, we're not even allowed to hold on to anger. Ephesians 4 says that you can't let that sun go down on your wrath; 24 hours tops, is all you can have to stew, and it's the kindness of God that lets us do a little stewing. Beyond that, you start going bananas or making other people bananas. You begin to see the destruction, and that's why He says, "Be angry and sin not;" because anger held onto is only going to create sin. Why? Because the anger of man does not accomplish the righteousness of God. So, man with his anger is sort of like power, man can't handle power. It corrupts him. He can't handle anger. It messes with him. As Scripture tells us, it ultimately ends up as a root of bitterness that begins to take control of us; and before long, you walk out and it's a beautiful sunny day with a beautiful blue sky, and the only thing you can think of is hating somebody. You can't think of anything but how that guy just took what you had, or whatever, and the hatred which begins to consume. So, we don't live there, and that's the point. As 2 Corinthians 5:14 says, "the love of God constrains us." We're not motivated by hate, we're clearly motivated by love. In fact, we've looked at other passages that make reference to this, but Leviticus 19:17 puts it so succinctly, you can't even hate somebody in your heart. I know that we feel a little bit better, "I didn't say anything," or "I didn't hit him," "I didn't throw something at him," "I didn't shoot him," and I'm sure that's wonderful; but the fundamental point is that not even in your heart can you hate. That's pretty wild, isn't it? God's not even going to let you do that.

When you come to the book of Matthew 5, Jesus begins to deal with "and by the way, you can't even try to get it out of your system." You know how somebody does something to you, and you just say to yourself, "You know, I'd feel better if I just say something like 'You idiot.' If I could just say that I'd feel better. I'd let it go after that." And God says, "You can't do that." In fact, one of the phrases that He uses, if you were to transliterate it into English would be, "you can't even say, 'You air head.'" Empty-headed is really what the passage is dealing with, but the point of the passage is that you can't use disparaging remarks. You can't do it in a hurtful way out of anger. Now, Scripture does not mean that you can't say what is true, but it's saying that you can't attack somebody out of anger. You begin to realize that "Gee, it doesn't sound like I have many options." Look, probably if you knew this was true, you wouldn't have signed up to be a Christian, right? It's part of being a Christian.

If I could have you underline this, 1 Corinthians 16:14, it's a very simple verse. You could actually memorize it today, and you wouldn't even break a sweat.

"Let all that you do be done in love."

Now, let me just clarify, we address sin, we pursue righteousness, but we don't hate. That's an interesting combination, isn't it? We address sin. In fact, we'll identify it more than anybody

else. In fact, according to Ephesians 5, we expose sin; but we can't hate. We pursue the right thing. We're supposed to pursue righteousness. The problem with us doing the right thing is it makes people mad. That's one of the reasons why if in fact you're a Christian, Jesus says the world is going to hate you; but it's not because we're hating them. It's because we're doing what's right, and we're doing the things that they hate. We're walking in integrity, we're telling the truth, we're pursuing the things that are right, and we're being faithful. Do you know how much the world hates fidelity? They hate that. It just makes them feel miserable, but we are truly faithful and if we say something, we do it. The Psalmist says, "A righteous man swears to his own hurt and will not change." Even if, "Well, I promised." "You know it's going to cost you." "It's going to cost me. I said I was going to do it; I'm going to do it." I think that verse really bothered me when I was in business. I had a small business in California when I was trying to get through school, and a couple times you'd go around and bid on certain things. So, you start getting into it, and you go, "Ok, I'm not anywhere close to that." I could just hear the Lord on my shoulder, "You said you were going to do it for that much." Man, I ate a lot of business that way, but you made a commitment, and we're real, right? That's the one thing that really separates us from the world. It's like light and darkness. We present what is true and what doesn't change, and that's the fidelity of Christ and we remain. In fact, one of the things stated in 1 John 2:19 is "they went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us." Why? Real doesn't change. It's not fickle. It remains true. So, interesting passage as you begin to see the reality of our faith. There's clearly a stark contrast and in that God has called upon us.

Let me just say one more thing in this regard, and if I could just put it in the context of John 13. I don't think there's a better place in Scripture that reveals this fundamental point, and that is that we love, the world hates. It is a stark contrast. I've often heard people say, "I love God, I love God." All you have to do is hang around long enough to see them get angry about something. Then you go, "I'm not seeing it." In John 13, it's the Passover and Jesus is having a meal with His disciples. How is He demonstrating that? Well, He's doing something real. He's actually washing their feet; which that's kind of a real thing to care for somebody that much, to humble yourself that much. Jesus has been saying, "I came to be a servant to everybody," and now, he's washing feet, and you go, "Ok, He said He was going to be a servant, but I didn't expect Him to be real about that." But He was, wasn't He? So, He begins to wash their feet, but what's interesting in the passage is it reads this way in verse 2, read it with me, "During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him."

It's telling us that Judas is there. He's washing Judas' feet. There's an interesting distinction in 1 John, we love the brethren, we do not hate our brother. Once again, he put it in the context of going all the way back to Cain and Abel, which goes to humanity. So, let me put it another way, we do not hate humanity. I may disagree with humanity, I may hate what they're doing, but I do not hate humanity. That's the mark of a believer, a follower of Christ. Here He is washing the feet of the devil himself. Already the devil has put it in his heart. Now, we know that he's not

going to come in him until verse 27, but it's an interesting text. If you read it with me, you begin to see that He's demonstrating love. Of course, He's calling upon them to do the same thing.

(John 13:21) "When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and testified and said, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me.'"

Then the disciples began looking at each other, going, "It could be me." (John 13:22) Of course, Judas then takes off, and nobody even knows that it's him, and they go, "Well, maybe he's gone to help the poor." because he had the moneybox.

(John 12:27) "After the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Therefore Jesus \*said to him, "What you do, do quickly."

(John 12:28) Now no one of those reclining at the table knew for what purpose He had said this to him.

(John 12:29) For some were supposing, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus was saying to him, "Buy the things we have need of for the feast"; or else, that he should give something to the poor.

(John 12:30) So after receiving the morsel he went out immediately; and it was night.

(John 12:31) Therefore when he had gone out, Jesus \*said, 'Now...'"

Things have changed. Well, what has changed? "I'm going to now demonstrate what love for one another is." Now, what He demonstrated to begin with was a care for humanity, and we'll put it in the context of mercy. God wants us to be merciful to humanity, "but now, I'll show you who you love," and He begins to demonstrate the love for the brethren. In fact, He'll state this in verse 34, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another."

Why didn't He say this when Judas was there? Because he wasn't a "one another." He goes on by saying, "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." So, the distinction within the passage, and the irrefutable proof that we're going to see within the text is that there is this sacrificial love that we have for one another. We don't hate humanity, and we will be merciful to humanity, but we love one another.

If you look with me in 1 John 3, you're going to see this in 1 John 3:16-18. He starts off by the simple phrase "we" completely, perfect tense, comprehend and "know" what love is because it's been manifest to us the love of God, right? It takes us into 1 John 4:10, "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." So, we really wouldn't know what love was. I do think it's interesting that there's not text that says, "God is hate," but it does say, "God is love." We want to be like Him. So, that's why we pursue it.

(1 John 3:16) "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

Now, every time He interjects the word "brethren," plural, within the passage, he's referring to those of us who are believers; and the fact that we have all these things in common. We're drawn to God's children, we're drawn to the Spirit that's within them, we're drawn to their desires because they have the same desires as Christ to eradicate sin in their life. They have the same desire to do away with the deeds of destruction, of the devil. So, they're following Christ, and we're drawn to that. There's no doubt about it. "All men will know you love Me when they begin to see just how much you love one another because you're in love with Me in that." We see Christ in each other, right? That's what draws us to each other and how we know that we're disciples of Christ. That's how we know that we've decided to follow and be like Him. So, the passage is very clear in this, and it's put in the context of our love for one another. I want you to mark this one little phrase here, "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us."

When you read John 15, one of the great phrases within the text is "greater love has no man than this, that one lay down his life for his friend," right? That's a great passage, but I think sometimes we just limit it to the sacrifice of a death, and it doesn't mean simply that. It certainly takes that in, "Greater love has no man than this, that one lay down his life;" but it goes beyond that, and the reason why I say that is he uses specifically the word "*psychē*" for "life." Now, he could use "*zoe*," which would be another word for life in general; but he specifically uses that which is oftentimes described as "the soul of man." Now, the point is that we need to be willing to lay down our soul. Ok, this is the key because "souls" takes in the things that really define you. We were talking about this in offertory, right? Things that define you, basically soul. The Spirit is the thing that moves you. Soul is the aversions that you have, what you're drawn to, who you are as a person. Scripture is telling us that if in fact we love the brethren, we need to be willing to lay down anything that would benefit us for them. In other words, the way that it's put in Philippians 2, that we ought to hold others in higher esteem than ourselves. So, what is the passage saying? It's saying that I sometimes lay down my desires, tendencies, the things that I want for that given day. If I have an opportunity to minister to somebody, and I have to sacrifice my time, I'll do it because I love the brethren that much.

I think one of the reasons why that passage doesn't mean as much to us is because we go, "Yeah, I'll die for somebody." Ok, first of all, you really haven't thought that one through and secondly, you're willing to do something that you don't ever think you'll have to do. The point of the passage is you're going to have to do this all the time. This becomes a way of life. I can prove it as you go through 1 Corinthians 8, 9, and 10 in particular; in which Paul begins to say if something is going to cause our brother to stumble, even if it's just like eating my favorite meal, I'm never going to eat it again. You go, "Ok, really, I like that meal." He says, "But it hurts them." I'm not going to do anything that would cause them to stumble, nothing. As Romans 14 would say, even if it seems to be a good thing for me. "Let not a good thing for you be spoken of as evil" and be destructive in their lives. Decide this, not to put a stumbling block in their



way. Let that be your goal. Romans 14 begins to talk about, you know throwing out those opinions? I got a lot of opinions, and the world has a lot of opinions, but do you know what Scripture says in Romans 14? Keep your opinions to yourself. Read it. The whole chapter says, "It's yours! Keep it! It's not theirs. Don't throw it at them, don't tell them they have to be doing it. You know how people will walk up to you, "You know what I think you ought to do?" Keep it, don't say it. Walk away because there's nothing beneficial in you giving your opinion to them. You're going to have to sacrifice that. I know the world is going to be a worse place because you didn't give your opinion and a lot of people are going to suffer, but that's a sacrifice you'll make because you love the people around you. That's why it uses the word "*psychē*" because it literally is talking about those things that we naturally feel desires for. Obviously, we feel a strong desire to preserve our own life; anything else that would be important to us we're going to lay that down for the brethren so that we can build them up. When we do that, according to the passage, that's irrefutable proof that you are a child of God.

I oftentimes think of the passage in 2 Corinthians 8:9 where it uses this interesting analogy in which it says that "though Christ was rich..." and that's kind of an understatement, "He became poor for us that we might have the wealth of the kingdom of God." Think about that. So, He actually gave up His wealth for us, and He took on the form of a bondservant for me.

So, the passage starts off by really defining the kind of sacrifice, "We know love by this, that He lay down His life." We ought to do the same thing for those around us. It is the Spirit of God within us. Let me tell you, when you start sacrificing for others and giving up something that is near and dear to your heart for a brother in Christ, it's going to shock you. You're going to say, "Who did that?" and "Why did I do that?" You're going to realize, "That was the Spirit of God in me. That's the Spirit of God moving in my life."

He goes on and says in 1 John 3:17, which is placed side by side, "But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother..." Once again, singular, right? The other was plural dealing with the brethren. Now, we're dealing with his brother; going back to the whole thing of Cain and Abel which goes back to humanity; a brother, your brother. In other words, humanity is your brother in that sense; in the flesh and blood. The passage reads this way,

"But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart..."

This is pretty interesting. It means to suppress any kind of compassion. Have you ever seen somebody in need, and you go, "I don't know if I want to get dirty." Do you know what you're doing? You're closing your heart to compassion.

"But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him..."

Against him? God could have talked all day and not use the word "against."

"How does the love of God abide in him?"

The passage is telling us we're going to have a strong sacrificial love for the brethren. We're going to want to literally sacrifice for them. But then it turns, and it says that by the way, you're not going to hate humanity to the point of if you see a man hurting, you're going to help him. Now, what's the proof text for this? Well, I'd probably say Luke 10, right? The good Samaritan. You read that passage, and you go, "Ok, let's see, there was a priest and there was a Levite, and everybody starts passing by this poor guy." You know the guy on the road that was helped? Did you know that it doesn't say that he was a Jew or a gentile. It doesn't say if he was a Samaritan. Now, the good Samaritan stopped, but it doesn't say who the guy was that was hurt. Did you notice that? It doesn't say what his religion was. It doesn't say anything about him. The only thing that it says is the guy is a mess and he needed help basically. I'm transliterating. So, what happens in the passage? There's one that stops, one that helps, and one that pays for his room. It's the good Samaritan. That's somebody that we wouldn't have thought would do it because the Samaritans were despised. But this is the guy that was good because he had the heart of compassion. So, it's an interesting going back and forth; you must love the brethren, you cannot hate humanity. "Hate" would be closing your heart to compassion; in case you ever want to know what hate would look like. Here again, just because you help somebody that couldn't help themselves, doesn't mean that you approve of their lifestyle; but it means they're dying, and somebody needs to help them. I think it's one of the reasons why Titus says to meet pressing needs, and we were called for this purpose.

If you look at 1 John 3:16-17, it's very clear "by this we know what love looks like." It loves very strongly, and it doesn't hate.

1 John 3:18 is a great summary within the passage, "Little children..." "Teknion" is the word that he uses; which makes reference to a fondness that he has as a teacher to his pupil.

"Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue..." I like the fact that he puts both of them in there because "tongue" is really dealing with our speech. It's kind of like walking up to somebody, and saying, "Be warmed, be filled, be clothed." You're just saying "I hope you have a nice day. I'm sorry you're feeling bad." You say whatever sounds good, but it doesn't help them. You just said something. The other is dealing with the "word," it's actually "*logos*" within the text; which is dealing with "a thought." I oftentimes think of all the books that have been written on acts of kindness by individuals going, "if you don't know how wonderful I am I'll write a book about it." So, people like to let others know just how gracious and wonderful they are. So, that goes out there and sometimes it's poems. I know some people that are really good at love poems. They sound so great. I'm not against poems, I'm not really for them, but I don't hate them. I don't love them, but anyway, these poems are really good at expressing depth. This person has no idea how to love somebody. This guy can write a poem that sounds so loving and so wonderful and watch his wife change his tire. Literally, I'm going, "Man, does this guy have any idea what love is?" Well, in words it looks like he does, but he doesn't.

(Proverbs 20:6) "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?"

We're talking about something that's real, and the passage is very clear that you can't just talk about it or write about it. It has to be an action, and it has to be sincere and genuine. It's that last one that always gets me because there are many times where I'll do the right thing because I know it's the right thing; but by George, I'm not going to like it. It's just not a genuine or sincere heart. It doesn't mean that I have to like the chore, but it does mean that I have to rejoice over the fact that I'm doing it for God; and that brings me joy. That changes the whole dynamic for me. If I can look up to God, I'd shovel a lot of it for Him. When you think that you and I actually get to do stuff for God, who wouldn't? That's where truth comes in, and that's where the Lord begins to test my heart, "Is that My spirit in you?"

Scripture tells us that Jesus went to the cross, and let's go ahead and end in that passage if you look with me in Hebrews 12. It's a good thing to do, fix our eyes on Jesus, right?

(Hebrews 12:1) "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses..." He's talking about the testimonies in chapter 11 that have already been declared.

"Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

(Hebrews 12:2) fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith..." Now, the reason I like that phrase is because he's not only demonstrating that He's the one by which all this comes from, but He's really the one that defines what real faith looks like. Once again, when He died on the cross, He wasn't kicking and screaming, He wasn't blaming me for nailing Him to the cross; although it was my sin that nailed Him there. He wasn't trashing me, He wasn't even saying, "I don't deserve this." All the way through His death, it's just concern for me and a love for the Father that is moving Him. So, it says, "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him..." Now, who would even remotely think about joy while you're on a cross?

"Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross..." Now, look at the next phrase, because it's a mistranslation, and I really want to correct it. It's not "despising the shame," it literally means "thinking nothing of the shame." Thus, the word "despising." In other words, it's sort of like when Paul says, "I consider the sufferings of this world not to be compared with the glories that are to follow." What Paul is doing in the text is saying that he's despising those things and saying, "They are nothing." So, the passage literally reads, "He thought nothing of the shame." In other words, He was so joyful over what He was doing for the Father, and longed to please Him so powerfully that He didn't even give it a thought of the shame that He was suffering for you and me. Now, that's truth right there. That's sincerity. That's a deed in truth, and that's what He's calling us to do. Scripture is asking us, "Do you have the Spirit of Christ within you?" What's the irrefutable proof? You're going to sacrifice for the brethren, you're not going to be hateful to the world, and you're going to do everything in deed and in truth.

**Closing Prayer:**

Father, we give You thanks for Your word and just speak to our hearts today. The reality is that we long to walk in the Spirit of Christ, and yet we find ourselves oftentimes not. You tell us this is the will of God, being filled with the Spirit, and we realize how necessary that is and how wonderful it is when we are. For not only do we find ourselves being real with You, but we also find ourselves being close to You, and nothing could bring more joy to us than that.

Your head bowed and your eyes closed, we're asking you to get real about your faith. Stop talking about it, stop philosophizing about it, stop arguing about it. If in fact, you have real faith and genuine love, you're going to be drawn to the brethren. You'll be willing to sacrifice for them no matter what; and no matter what the world does to you, you are not going to hate them back. That's Christ.