

# Lay Down Your Life

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April 22, 2018

**Open:** Do you believe that the world views Christians today as loving? Why or why not?

**Read:** 1 John 3:11-24

**Discuss:**

1. In verse 11 John says that believers "have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another." What are some other Bible verses which call us to love one another?
2. According to verses 12-15, what does our love (or lack of love) reveal about us? These same verses make clear that when it comes to issues of love and hate, God is concerned with both our feelings and our actions. Why must Christian love include both feelings and actions?
3. If, as believers, we are characterized by love, why might the world still hate us (v. 13)? How should we respond to this hate?
4. Verse 16a tells us that Christ's life helps us to know what love is. What are some examples of Christ showing love? From Christ's example, how might you define "love"?
5. Verse 16b says, "we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers." What might this look like practically? What should motivate or empower us to "lay down our lives for the brothers" even when we don't feel like it?
6. Why is it so hard to obey verses 17-18? What can help us overcome these challenges? How do we decide whom to help and how to help? How have you experienced success at moving from good intentions to specific actions?
7. According to verses 19-20, how might our hearts be reassured by our loving others? How would you summarize the lesson from verses 19-20?
8. According to verses 21-24, what additional benefits come from our loving our Christian brothers? What should we do if we don't feel love for other believers?

**Apply:** What's one practical way that you might lay down your life for another believer this week, especially for someone you might not be naturally inclined to serve?

**Pray:** Pray that God would make us a church family characterized by genuine love for one another.

## 1 John 3:11-24

<sup>11</sup> For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. <sup>12</sup> We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. <sup>13</sup> Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. <sup>14</sup> We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. <sup>15</sup> Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

<sup>16</sup> By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. <sup>17</sup> But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? <sup>18</sup> Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

<sup>19</sup> By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; <sup>20</sup> for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. <sup>21</sup> Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; <sup>22</sup> and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. <sup>23</sup> And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. <sup>24</sup> Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us. (ESV)