

According to 3: 16-18, loving others involves a lot more than words. List the various characteristics of biblical love as found in these verses.

In a nutshell, what one word would you use to describe biblical love?

Look back at 3:1-3. What is the predominant theme in these verses? How would you connect 3:1-3 with 3:16?

It would be hard to **obey God consistently** and **love people sacrificially** if you didn't already have the seed of God and a proper view of His love in your heart, wouldn't it? In fact, it would be impossible! Oh, you could do it temporarily. But over a lifetime, you couldn't make yourself "practice righteousness" and "love your brother" by sheer self-motivation or mere good works. It takes more than spiritual duct tape to give you the genuine traits of a Christian – it takes God's seed planted within you, what I call heavenly genetics. Basically, obeying God and loving others is an inside job!

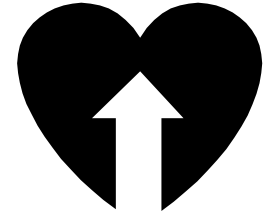
Now go back and read 3:1-3 and 3:9 – it becomes clearer now why it is important to have God's seed. How has God's seed given you the ability to obey and love in ways you never would have thought possible? Write at least two.

Essentially . . .

. . . those who fellowship with God can't help but obey and love. Why? Because God's seed has taken root inside and is sprouting. The result? Genuine fruit grown by God, not artificial produce duct-taped by man.

Duct Tape Spirituality

Admit it – Lots of people do good things and treat others nicely even though they hardly ever spend any time with God. So the question now becomes, "Why can't I just add those items to my life my own way?" Good question! Though it may appear possible by the good citizenship of some fine people, we can't just attach ourselves to God's good side with a heavenly adhesive, some sort of spiritual duct tape that allows us the benefits of God without having to become an integral part of His body. John now clarifies some root issues about love and obedience by showing us from where the power to love and obey truly originates.



Read I John 3:1-24

Study Questions:

The critical verse in this chapter is 3:9. Write it below.

In 3:9, what is it that enables us to *not* sin?

The verses *before* 3:9 deal with which one of our primary traits?

The verses *following* 3:9 deal with what other primary trait?

According to 3:4-8 . . .

. . . define sin. What other words would you use to describe these two words?

. . . why did Jesus come to earth? Also look at John 1:29 for a phrase much like the one here in 3:5.

. . . what does John mean when he writes that if you know God you don't sin – that you don't sin *ever* or that you don't sin *consistently*?

. . . what “deception” was John attempting to help these believers overcome?

. . . what idea is associated with the word *appeared* in verse 5 and verse 8?

. . . whether we are “of the devil” or “of God” is evidenced by what one thing?

3:10 contrasts two types of children. Who are they, and what separates them from one another?

The phrases “in Him” or “of God” appear several times between verses 4 and 10, and they both contain the idea that we are *from* or *out of* God. This gives the idea that we have done more than attach ourselves to the outside of a higher being. Instead, it clearly paints the picture of a new birth.

Go back and read 3:9 again. What word seems to give the same idea of an inner birth?

Think about *His seed* for a moment – when was it planted in you? How does it grow?

The phrase “practice righteousness” in 3:10 may mean an overall lifestyle of obedience, or it may actually refer to a specific commandment in 3:11 (since *for* is a connecting word between the two verses). What is that command?

According to 3:12, who is an example of someone who didn't love his brother?

What phrase in 3:12 indicates Cain really fought with jealousy?