

1 John 3:18 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

[1 John 3:1](#)
[1 John 3:2](#)
[1 John 3:3](#)
[1 John 3:4](#)
[1 John 3:5](#)
[1 John 3:6](#)
[1 John 3:7](#)
[1 John 3:8](#)
[1 John 3:9](#)
[1 John 3:10](#)
[1 John 3:11](#)
[1 John 3:12](#)
[1 John 3:13](#)
[1 John 3:14](#)
[1 John 3:15](#)
[1 John 3:16](#)
[1 John 3:17](#)
[1 John 3:18](#)
[1 John 3:19](#)
[1 John 3:20](#)
[1 John 3:21](#)
[1 John 3:22](#)
[1 John 3:23](#)
[1 John 3:24](#)

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND HIS CHILDREN
Click chart to enlarge
Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
Another Overview Chart - [1 John](#) - Charles Swindoll

BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP		BEHAVIOR OF FELLOWSHIP	
Conditions of Fellowship	Cautions of Fellowship	Fellowship Characteristics	Fellowship Consequences
Meaning of Fellowship 1 Jn 1:1-2:27		Manifestations of Fellowship 1 Jn 2:28-5:21	
Abiding in God's Light		Abiding in God's Love	
Written in Ephesus			
circa 90 AD			

From Talk Thru the Bible

1 John 3:18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth

Greek - Teknia me agapomen (1PPAS) logo mede te glosse alla en ergo kai aletheia . (1Jn 2:1)

NET - Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue but in deed and truth.

Wuest - Little born-ones, let us not be loving in the sphere of word, nor even in the sphere of the tongue, but in

the sphere of deed and truth

- **let:** Ex 33:21 Mt 25:41-45 Ro 12:9 1Co 13:4-7 Ga 5:13 6:1,2 Eph 4:1-3,15 1Th 1:3 Jas 2:15,16 1Pe 1:22
- [1 John 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries.

EXHORTATION TO LOVE WITH ACTIONS NOT JUST WORDS

This exhortation is based on the previous discussion of the need for believers to love their brother. John's exhortation first gives the negative and then the positive. He says don't just talk about love, but practice it. Do something about meeting the other's need! Notice the opposite pairings - **with word/in deed** and **with tongue/in truth**. James 2:15-16-note is a perfect example of love "with word."

If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for [their] body, what use is that?

See John Piper's exposition of 1Jn 3:17-18 - [click here](#).

William Barclay - Fine words will never take the place of fine deeds; and no amount of talk of Christian love will take the place of a kindly action to someone in need, made at some personal expense or with some self-sacrifice, for in that action the principle of the cross is at work again. ([1 John 3 Commentary - Daily Study Bible](#))

Henry Mahan - Let us not merely profess with our tongues that we love one another, but prove it by deeds; for this is the only true way of showing love. We read in scripture of the work and labor of love. Talking about love is mere show! Demonstrating love in meeting the physical, material and spiritual needs of others is love in truth. ([1 John 3 Commentary](#))

Smalley - The major concern of this passage is to encourage obedient and active love from all those who claimed allegiance to the Johannine church. ([1, 2, 3 John Word Biblical Commentary - Stephen S. Smalley](#))

Little children (8x only by John - John 13:33; 1John 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21) - John is fondly addressing the believers as a father would his children.

Little children ([5040](#))(**teknon** diminutive of **teknon**) is literally My "born ones", the diminutive expresses affection ("my dear children"). **Teknon** is used by John to address true followers of Jesus. From John's repetitive use of **teknon** in this epistle, one might say it is an epistle for **little children**! Clearly the subjects with which John deals are not "child's play," but have serious implications regarding one's spiritual life, now and in eternity future! **Teknon** is John's way of lovingly appealing to his readers as a spiritual father would do as he sought to encourage his children to give an authentic expression of the love of God.

Harris on little children - It indicates the warmth of affection the author feels for the recipients of the letter—he is genuinely concerned for their spiritual welfare. ([Exegetical Commentary on 1 John 3:11-24](#))

Let us - Notice that John humbly includes himself in this exhortation, a great example for all Christian leaders, pastors and teachers! **Jackman** adds that "John exhorts himself and us (verse 18) not to be loving with the empty evidence of words, but with the genuine evidence of actions. Stretched as I am in a busy pastorate, I am only too conscious of how easy it is to love in words—to express sympathy, to promise to pray, to exhort and encourage—but it is actions that confirm or deny their truth. Without these, our words can be mere hypocrisy. In that case, they do stem not so much from love as from habit or duty."

Hiebert on not love with word or with tongue - While Christian love must be a vital inner reality, by its nature love demands active expression. Negatively, John insists that true love cannot be restricted to mere verbalization... If the expression of love is limited to mere verbal expression, it is simply "**mouth mercy**," (expression used by John Trapp) which is profitless and disappointing. (Cf. James 2:15–16.) ([1 John 3:13-24 Online](#)) ([The Epistles of John- An Exegetical Commentary](#))

Trapp's full quote - Words are light and cheap; and there is a great deal of **mouth mercy** abroad.

A T Robertson - He does not condemn kind words which are comforting and cheering, but warm words should be accompanied by warm deeds to make real "**in deed and in truth**". Here is a case where actions do speak louder than mere words.

Akin adds that "John is not condemning kind or comforting words. The expression of such utterances without an outward manifestation of them, however, is mere noise and therefore worthless (1Cor 13:1). ([1, 2, 3 John- An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture](#))

Pulpit Commentary - One may love in word only, and yet the affectionate words may be quite sincere; and this is a common case.

People say kind things which they mean at the moment, but afterwards they do not take the trouble to act kindly. But to love with the tongue only is far worse. This is to say kind things which one does not mean, and which one knows to be unreal. Deeds are needed to complete the kind word; truth is needed to correct the insincere tongue.

Vine - One may love in word, with a changing love to a certain extent, but it does not go far enough, it merely expresses itself in affectionate terms; but, worse still he who loves with the tongue merely professes what he does not feel and is thus a hypocrite.

Kistemaker - Whereas John places his words in the context of love, James in his epistle discusses the same matter in connection with faith (see James 2:20). Love and faith have this in common: both need deeds to prove their genuineness. Words of love that are never translated into action are worthless. ([Epistles of John- Simon J. Kistemaker](#))

John is saying our actions speak louder than our words. One is reminded of Jesus' warning at the end of His Sermon on the Mount...

Therefore everyone who **hears these words** of Mine, and **acts upon them**, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. (Mt 7:24)

In love and truth - The preposition in (Greek - en) defines the sphere (or atmosphere if you will) in which the love is to operate.

Hiebert - Besides our verbal expressions, our love must express itself in the realm of "deed," in love-prompted, beneficent action. [1 John 3:13-24 Online](#) ([The Epistles of John- An Expositional Commentary](#))

David Smith - "not with word and the tongue but in the midst of deed and truth"—not in empty air but amid tangible realities. Cf. Bunyan, Good News: "Practical love is best. Many love Christ with nothing but the lick of the tongue." Sheridan, Sch. for Scand. v. i.: "He appears to have as much speculative benevolence as any private gentleman in the kingdom, though he is seldom so sensual as to indulge himself in the exercise of it". ([Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

Love ([25](#))(**agapao**) again refers to supernatural, Spirit enabled, sacrificial, selfless love, the kind of love God demonstrated at Calvary (Jn 3:16) and continues to demonstrate (Ro 5:8) to we who do not deserve it. Agapao is in the **present tense** which calls for this love to be our lifestyle. To reiterate, don't try to love like God loves without relying on God's Spirit to initiate and empower that love!

Kistemaker - In order to be genuine, love seeks the welfare of others: "it always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres" (1 Cor. 13:7). Love is the act of giving of one's possessions, talents, and self to someone else. Note that the words we speak must correspond to our actions, and the use of our tongue must agree with the truth of God's Word. Words and tongue find their counterpart in actions and truth. ([Epistles of John- Simon J. Kistemaker](#))

MacArthur - The proof that one has genuine love and is a child of God rests not in sentiments but in deeds (cf. Matt. 25:34–40).

Deed (2041)(**ergon** from **ergo** = to work) refers to work, something that is done.

Allen - The word for "deed" in the Greek New Testament is the noun **ergon**, which means "work" or "action." In our culture we use a word the first part of which comes from this Greek word **ergon**—**ergonomics**. Ergonomics is the study of how the workplace and the equipment used in the workplace can best be designed for efficiency, productivity, comfort, and safety. It also is used to describe the qualities in the design of equipment used at work that contributes to efficiency and productivity. Our love for others should be ergonomically effective in the sense that its distinctive quality should be that it is Christlike in every way. Our love should be productive; it should accomplish the meeting of needs in a tangible way. In one of his sermons, George Whitfield told the story of the poor beggar who asked a pastor for alms. When the pastor refused, the beggar asked the pastor for a blessing. "God bless you," answered the pastor. "Oh," replied the beggar, "you would not give me that if it was worth anything." ([1-3 John- Fellowship in God's Family - Preaching the Word- David L. Allen](#))

Truth ([225](#))(**aletheia**) is that which is seen or expressed as it really is. **Truth** is the correspondence between a reality and a declaration which professes to describe the reality. Words spoken are true when they correspond with objective reality. Persons are true when they correspond with their profession.

Hiebert writes that "**Truth** here possibly may mean no more than "in reality" as contrasted to mere appearance, for deeds may be hypocritical. But probably "**truth**" here carries its usual fuller Johannine meaning as being in accord with the divine truth in Christ (cf. John 4:24, "in spirit and in truth"). The **truth** of God which begets love in the believer must also govern and direct his outward expression of love. ([1 John 3:13-24 Online](#)) ([The Epistles of John- An Expositional Commentary](#))

Akin adds that "The quality of **truth** is added because even actions can be hypocritical. The objective reality of love is that it expresses itself in one's actions. As Brown paraphrases, "Let us love, not by word of mouth but by **real** deeds." (Ed comment: The deed must be motivated by Spirit enabled, selfless love and not for show or pretence.) ([1, 2, 3 John- An Exegetical and](#)

[Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture](#))

NET Note on **truth** - Words are produced by the tongue, and the (righteous) deeds with which believers are to love one another are produced by the truth.

Allen - use of "truth" here is probably an idiom that means "actually" or "really." Another option is to take the phrase as meaning "deeds that are produced in truth." Our love should be genuinely demonstrated in action.

Stott - Actions speak louder than words. Essentially love is neither sentiment nor talk, but deeds. If our love is to be genuine (in truth), it will inevitably be positive and constructive (with actions). ([Ref](#))

Wiersbe - To love "in tongue" is the opposite of to love "in truth." It means to love insincerely. To love "in truth" means to love a person genuinely, from the heart and not just from the tongue. People are attracted by genuine love, but repelled by the artificial variety. One reason why sinners were attracted to Jesus (Luke 15:1–2) was because they were sure He loved them sincerely. ([Wiersbe Bible Commentary](#))

Gill on **in deed and in truth** - True love is a laborious and operative grace, hence we read of the work and labor of love; it shows itself by the saints serving one another, in spiritual things by bearing one another's burdens, forbearing with, and forgiving one another, praying for each other, and building up one another on their most holy faith; encouraging each other to the duties of the faith, and not suffering sins upon one another, but admonishing in love, and restoring with meekness; and in temporal things, distributing to the necessities of the saints, ministering: to them of their worldly substance, and supplying their daily wants: and this is loving "in deed", or "in work"; this is actual love, love in fact, and what is apparent and evident: and it is "in truth", when it is in reality, and not done for show; and when it is cordially and heartily done, with cheerfulness, and not grudgingly.

Ray Stedman's great story of loving **in deed and truth** - Yesterday I heard a young Jewish convert give the story of his life. It is a most amazing story: His name is Arthur Katz and he is a teacher in the public schools in Berkeley. He was raised as an atheist, even though he was of Jewish descent. Early in his life he became a Marxist, a committed Communist. He was always a left-wing radical, a trouble maker, at the heart of every uprising that was going on. At the close of World War II he happened to be in Germany with the American Army and personally saw the gas chambers at Dachau and Buchenwald. He came away from them shocked and sick at heart, filled with hatred, first toward the German race, and then, realizing that this was not merely a national problem but a human problem, filled with an all-pervading sense of disgust and loathing for the whole human race. He came back to Berkeley and tried to give himself to education, but more and more he realized that education was not the answer. Education could not change hearts, education could not and did not touch the basic problems of human beings. Finally he gave it all up and resigned his position. His wife lost her mind, and was put in a mental institution. Divorced, footloose, and fancy-free, he went out to wander up and down the face of the earth, hardly knowing where he was going. One rainy wet day he was in Greece, hitchhiking, with a week's growth of beard upon his face, and a dirty rucksack on his back, standing in the wind and the rain thumbing a ride. Of course, no one wanted to pick him up. He stood there for hours when at last a big Cadillac came by, and stopped. To his amazement the man did not merely open the door and gesture for him to get in; he got out of his car, came around, and began to pump his hand and to welcome him as though he were some kind of king. He took the dirty rucksack and threw it on the clean upholstery. Art said he winced himself when he saw that. Then the man invited him to get in the car, and they drove on. The man treated him as though he were a welcome guest. Art Katz could not understand this. He was taken to a hotel and the man bought him a room and cleaned him up and gave him some food. Finally he asked him what he was doing, and where he was going. There came pouring out of this young Jewish atheist all the pent-up heartache, misery, and resentment of his life. He told him the whole thing, just pouring it all out. The man sat and listened, and when he was all through, he spoke one sentence. He said, "You know, Art, what the world needs? -- those who are willing to wash one another's feet." Art Katz said, "I never heard anything more beautiful than that. Why do you say that?" And the man said, "Because that's what my Lord did." For the first time in this young atheist's life he heard a Christian witness. That was the beginning of the end. I do not have time to tell the whole story of how this young man came to know Jesus Christ. But the thing that arrested him and broke through all the years of hatred, all the pent-up resentment and bitterness of his heart and life was one act of kindness which manifested to an apparently undeserving young man, genuine courtesy and kindness in the name of Jesus Christ. "By this," Jesus said, "shall all men know that you are my disciples," (John 13:35 RSV). That is the path of love. If life is there, that kind of love will be there. Now, let it show, is John's exhortation. "Little children, let us not love in word or speech, but in deed and truth." ([1 John 3 Commentary](#))

Stott - It may be helpful to summarize the teaching in this passage about hatred and love. Hatred characterizes the world, whose prototype is Cain. It originates in the devil, issues in murder and is evidence of spiritual death. Love characterizes the church, whose prototype is Christ. It originates in God, issues in self-sacrifice, and is evidence of eternal life. ([Ref](#))

Akin - John's challenge in this section is for his readers to be genuine in their love. One of the distinguishing marks of the child of God is love, a love that originates in God, displays itself in actions of self-sacrifice, and is evidence of eternal life. ([1, 2, 3 John- An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture](#))

Allen - By some accounts William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, once sent a one-word telegraph message: "Others!" to encourage his officers around the world. Whether the story is true or not, one thing is for sure: Salvation Army workers were known for their unselfish commitment to others. On May 29, 1914 the Empress of Ireland sank with 130 Salvation Army officers on board. One hundred and nine of those officers were drowned, and not one body that was picked up had on a life belt. The few survivors told how the Salvationists, finding there were not enough life preservers for all, took off their own belts and strapped them upon even strong men, saying, "I can die better than you can." From the deck of that sinking ship they heralded their battle-cry around the world: "Others!" May we all pray this prayer by William Sloane Coffin: "We have taken advantage of Thy great and unqualified love. We have presumed upon Thy patience to do less than we might have done, to have been timid where we should have shown courage, to have been careful where we should have been reckless, not counting the cost. We pray now, O Father, to be used roughly. Stamp on our selfishness." (Ibid)

MacArthur sums up this section - For John, therefore, the differences between Satan's children and God's children could not be more distinct. Those who murder, habitually hate, or are chronically self-centered and indifferent to the needs of others do not have eternal life. But those who, as part of their repentance from sin and trust in Christ, have renounced murderous, hateful attitudes and all cold, selfish indifference to the needs of others give evidence that they have been born again. In place of those sinful traits, Christians manifest genuine love to others, especially fellow believers (Ro 12:10-13; Gal. 6:10), because of the love of God shed abroad in their hearts. They sincerely obey James's injunction: "Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world" (James 1:27; cf. James 2:8, 15-17). ([1-3 John- MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

Crain - The activities of love in God must necessarily characterize His children. It is not merely a question of duty or obligation, but a characteristic of their nature, which in communion with God displays itself. This is the force of 1Jn 3:17. Of course, the verse may be used as an appeal to rouse the conscience where there seems to be carelessness or indifference, but the apostle is convicting of unreality the mere profession of loving the brethren. His argument is, How can love be there if there is no activity of it? How can love that is of God be dwelling where it is not in exercise? There is danger, even in the children of God, of falling into pretension. So in 1Jn 3:18 the apostle warns against it. Clearly he is speaking here to those whom he recognizes as of God. He is exhorting them to see to it that there be no pretence; no mere loving in word or tongue, but only in deed and in truth. Unreality is a grievous sin in a child of God; it is really hypocrisy. Let us then give due heed to the apostle's warning against it. Our Lord also speaks of this in Luke 12:1. ([Readings on the First Epistle of John](#))

Robert Rayburn illustrates this selfless, sacrificial love - You may remember that after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, the protestants in France, the Huguenots, suffered terrible persecution. Some twenty years later, in the midst of that terrible danger for evangelical Christians, a young reformed minister, Antoine Court, organized a clandestine meeting of seven ministers and two elders, the first of the famous 'synods of the desert'--to organize more effectively the life and work of the now underground reformed church. By 1732, some 15 years later, all the members of that first synod, had been found and executed except Antoine Court himself and he was eventually as well. But successors were ready to take their place. In the course of those years, through Court's leadership, a seminary was established in Lausanne, Switzerland to train young Frenchmen who would then be sent back to pastor the scattered believers in France. Year after year the flower of French Christianity would graduate from that academy and sneak back into their homeland to begin their ministry and to face an almost certain death. In fact, the diploma of that seminary in those days was known, by a kind of wry and dark humor, as a Brevet de Potence--a certificate for the gallows. One after another of those young men took their diploma in hand and went back to a French gallows all for love for God and for his people. Have you such a certificate in your possession; such a Brevet de Potence? Beloved, God does not call us at this moment to the gallows; he does not even call us to give up meat! But he does call us every day, every week, to pay the price of love, to practice love, Christ like, self-denying, cheek-turning, coat-giving, extra-mile-walking love. He tells us here, through John, not to rest until our hearts are aflame with love for our brethren and until we can say plainly every day how it was that, in love, we sought after and met the needs of our brethren; until we can say plainly how we, following our Redeemer, have given up our lives for them, and can point to the weariness, and the disruption of our well-laid plans, and the emptiness of our pocket book, and to the tears of joy and or sorrow, to the completely mended friendships which sin had disrupted--all evidence that we have laid down our lives and kept nothing back when our brother's interest or our sister's interest was at stake. ([Sermon](#))

Protecting the Hurting - Other than the usual twice-a-day brushing times, we didn't spend much time around our house worrying about my son Steven's teeth. At least not until he knocked out one of his permanent front teeth in a little scrape with his favorite climbing tree.

After having the tooth reinserted, splinted, x-rayed, drilled, and examined by an array of dentists, we are now very much aware of protecting Steven's mouth. The whole family has rallied around Steven to make sure we save that tooth. We know that if he damages it again, he may lose it. For the time being, he's had to put a halt to playing soccer, chasing girls at recess, and biting into

apples.

Our experience with Steven's tooth reminds me of how we should protect the people in our churches who have been damaged by life. John told us to love one another (1 Jn. 3:14,17-18). In fact, this is an important way we demonstrate that we belong to the Lord (v.19). If we sense the presence of people who need our love and care, we can't just ignore them and risk losing them. If we don't protect them with Christian love, the next time they get hurt they may turn elsewhere for help.

Like an injured child, hurting people need protection. Let's make sure they get it from the church. By Dave Branon

Putting It Into Practice

Is there someone in my church who is hurting?

What could I do? Would a kind word, a visit, or an encouraging card from me be helpful?

What concerns one child of God concerns the whole family of God.

More Than Words - The favorite words my wife likes to hear from my lips, next to "Let's eat out tonight," are the words "I love you." But they are meaningless to her if I don't show my love by the way I treat her. This is true in all relationships. We must do more than just say we care about people who are needy, lonely, or depressed. We must show it.

Many years ago a couple told me about an elderly widow who had no family or close friends. She lived next door and they often invited her over for their evening meal. One snowy afternoon the wife saw the neighbor head for the city dump pulling a small wagon. When dusk arrived and she had not yet returned, the husband became concerned and set out to look for her.

He eventually found her near a pile of debris, sitting on her cart, head down, oblivious to the snow—a picture of despondency. He touched her shoulder and called her by name. With a start, she looked up and said, "You are God's answer to my prayer. I just told Him that I was here alone, that only He knew, and that nobody cared. He just showed me that you care." The man gently led her home where she rested and shared a meal with him and his wife. That's loving "in deed and in truth" (1 Jn. 3:18).

Today, let's look for ways to put words into action. By Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Open my eyes, Lord, to people around me,
Help me to see them as You do above;
Give me the wisdom and strength to take action,
So others may see the depth of Your love.

—K. De Haan

True compassion is love in action.

Laundry Love —1 John 3:18 - When James Cates was a university student, he worked the night shift as a houseparent in a residential treatment center. One of his responsibilities was the sometimes overwhelming task of doing the laundry for 23 teenage boys.

The laundering process was hard on the clothes, so when a troubled young resident named Jake was given a new shirt from his mother, James offered to wash it separately. Soon other boys began asking him to include a favorite article of clothing in his "special" load. It was a small act of kindness, but it meant a lot to the boys.

Twenty years later, after establishing a successful practice as a therapist, teaching at a university, and being published in scholarly journals, Cates wrote: "With time to look back and reflect, no client I have ever known and no service I have ever performed means more to me than Jake and his shirt, and those special loads of clothes."

A simple act of caring is a powerful expression of God's compassion in our troubled world. The apostle John wrote, "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18). Is there some "washing" you can do today? By David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When your heart's with compassion filled,
And you God's Word would heed,
Why not in love give help to one
Who has a special need? —Hess

A little kindness can make a big difference.

Love In Action -- Read: 1 John 3:16-24 | Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. —1 John 3:18 - A young man sent a love letter to his girlfriend. It read: "Darling, I'd climb the highest mountain, sail the widest ocean, cross the hottest desert just to see you. P.S.—I'll be over Saturday night if it doesn't rain."

We chuckle at his fickleness, but feel bad for the girl who, like all of us, longs for love in action, not empty promises.

John said that Jesus Christ showed us what true love is when "He laid down His life for us." But John continued, "We also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 Jn. 3:16).

The Greek word used for love in 1 John 3:16 is agape. This kind of love is characterized by sacrifice. It is a love based on the will, not on emotions. It's not a feeling subject to the whims of our convenience. It is a decision to love another despite the cost.

Laying down our lives for others usually doesn't mean dying. Often it costs little more than stopping what we're doing and entering someone's world of need. I once felt prompted by the Holy Spirit to stop scrubbing my kitchen floor to visit a neighbor. She later accepted Christ, in part due to the friendship we had established during that visit.

Don't miss small opportunities to love by waiting for big ones. With agape love, even small acts of love are big. By Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

What does James 1:27 instruct us to do?

According to James 2:14-18, how are we to give evidence of our faith in Christ?

Love in deed is love indeed!

Sandal Love - Read: 1 John 3:16-24 | A young woman backpacking in Colorado encountered another woman hobbling down a mountain trail. On one foot she wore an improvised shoe made of green twigs wrapped with a strip of cloth.

"Lost one boot crossing a stream," she explained. "Hope I can get down the mountain before dark."

The first hiker reached into her own pack and took out a sport sandal. "Wear this," she said. "You can mail it to me when you get home."

The woman gratefully accepted the sandal and set off down the trail. A few days later the sandal arrived in the mail with a note saying: "I passed several people who noticed my predicament, but you're the only one who offered any help. It made all the difference. Thanks for sharing your sandal with me."

The Bible says love can be seen and touched—it's tangible. It may be as big as the Good Samaritan's care for an injured man (Lk. 10:30-37) or as small as a cup of cold water given in Jesus' name (Mt. 10:42).

Real love takes action. The Bible says, "Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1 Jn. 3:18). On the trail of life today, when we meet a hobbler, let's offer a sandal in love. By David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

You may give without loving,
but you can't love without giving.

Get Practical - Read: 1 John 3:16-24 | The missionary noticed that the woman who was helping the family with household chores and with the local language was upset. So she asked some questions and learned that the helper was pregnant, and that she and her husband had decided to abort the baby because they felt they couldn't afford a second child.

The missionary immediately contacted her friends in the United States for financial assistance. She then sat down with her helper and told her that for the next 2 years at least, there would be enough money to take care of the child.

The husband and wife were not Christians, and they didn't have convictions against abortion. But when they heard the news, they were ecstatic. The economic aid gave them confidence that they could care for their child, so they chose not to abort. The missionaries felt they had done something to show Christ's love to this family (1 Jn. 3:18).

Isn't that the way it's supposed to be? We are surrounded by needy people. They're not likely to hear us if we only preach to them, but they may listen if we do something to help them. That, in turn, may open their hearts to hear the really good news about salvation through faith in Jesus. By Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

To reach people for Christ, get practical.

So let our lips and lives express
The holy gospel we profess;
So let our works and virtues shine,
To prove the doctrine all divine. —Watts

People don't care how much you know unless they know how much you care.

Arms Of Love - Read: 1 John 3:16-20 | Many college students go on summer missions trips. But rarely does one come back with plans to rescue a baby. Mallery Thurlow, a student at Cornerstone University in Grand Rapids, went to Haiti to help distribute food. One day a mother showed up at the distribution center with a very sick infant in her arms. The woman was out of options. The baby needed surgery, but no one would perform it. Without intervention, the baby would die. Mallery took baby Rose into her arms—and into her heart.

After returning to the US, Mallery searched for someone to operate on baby Rose. Most doctors held out little hope. Finally, Rose was granted a visa to leave Haiti, and Mallery went back to get her. Detroit Children's Hospital donated the \$100,000 surgery, and it was successful. A little life was saved.

It's unlikely that we will have such a dramatic impact on others. Yet challenged by this student's willingness, we can find ways to provide help. She didn't let circumstances, youth, or inconvenience stop her from saving Rose's life.

Like Mallery, we are called to love "in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18). Who needs you to be God's arms of love today? By Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When you see someone in need,
Love demands a loving deed;
Don't just say you love him true,
Prove it by the deeds you do. —Sper

Compassion puts love into action.

Actions Speak Louder - Read: Matthew 9:1-8 | Irritated with a young athlete who had accomplished little yet boasted about his ability, a TV commentator said, "Don't tell me what you're going to do—tell me what you've done!" Actions speak louder than words.

This principle is seen in Jesus' life. In Matthew 9, a paralytic was brought to Him. Jesus' response? "Your sins are forgiven." When the religious leaders objected, He raised the question of the hour: "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'?" (v.5).

The answer is obvious. To say He had forgiven the man's sins was simple, because it couldn't be proven or disproven. But, to say "Arise and walk" was different. It was instantly verifiable. So, to prove His authority to forgive sins, Jesus said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house" (v.6). And he did!

Jesus' actions supported His words, and so should ours. John wrote, "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18). What we say is significant to a watching world only if it's consistent with what we do. As we tell people about Christ's love, those words will communicate powerfully if surrounded by acts of love and kindness. Actions do speak louder! By Bill Crowder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I'd rather see a Christian
Than to hear one merely talk,
I'd rather see his actions
And behold his daily walk. —Herrell

Our works and words should say the same thing.

Active Compassion -- Read: 1 John 3:16-24 | Every so often when I walk into my office in the morning, I find a surprise on my desk. Not long ago the item was a sunflower coffee mug dropped off by a fellow employee. She had seen it in a shop and knew it would cheer up my wife—so she bought it and left it on my desk with an encouraging note.

It was my pleasure to take that gift home to my wife Sue and to give it to her in the name of the woman who wanted to encourage her.

This person could have simply thought about my wife. She could have talked to someone about her in a positive way. But those things don't come close to providing the encouragement that comes from taking action.

In 1 John 3:18, John talked about what we are to do when we see others in need. He told us to have active compassion: "Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed." When we see a need, it's good to talk about it, but we must also do something about it. We are instructed: "Be doers of the Word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22).

Ask the Holy Spirit to place someone on your heart to help in Jesus' name. Then take action. Make a difference today. Send a card. Give a gift. Offer a ride. Make a call. Love in deed is love indeed. By Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, when I learn that someone is hurting,
Help me know what to do and to say;
Speak to my heart and give me compassion,
Let Your great love flow through me today. —K. De Haan

Compassion is love in action.

What Makes You Tick? - Read: 1 John 3:16-24 | In our zeal to introduce people to Christ, we must not forget that the Holy Spirit often uses adverse circumstances to increase their sense of spiritual need. He may also use those same circumstances to help us share the love of Christ with them.

Author Jennifer Rees-Larcombe was burdened for a neighbor named Diana but couldn't seem to get close to her. One evening she and several friends were praying for Diana when the doorbell rang. It was Diana's husband. He was desperate. His wife had recently broken her leg and ankle and wouldn't be able to walk for several months. "Do you know of anyone who could look in on her every day?" he asked.

Saddened, yet grateful for this opportunity, Jennifer and her friends began cooking, cleaning, and shopping for Diana. Several months later, she noticed Diana reading a Bible. Diana explained, "I wanted to find out what makes you Christians tick, so I asked my husband to buy this Bible." Soon they started attending Jennifer's church, and eventually they both received Christ.

Are you burdened for someone who needs the Lord? Keep praying and keep loving them "in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18). They'll wonder what makes you tick, and in time they'll find out it's Jesus! By Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

For me 'twas not the truth you taught,
To you so clear, to me so dim,
But when you came to me, you brought
A deeper sense of Him. —Clelland

A helping hand can open the door of a person's heart to the gospel.

Live Honestly - Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. —1 John 3:18

As children grow up, we who are parents or leaders pray that they will learn to discriminate more and more between right and wrong. But be prepared! Eventually these children will compare our actions with our words. If what we do and what we say don't match up, they will be confused, not knowing which to follow—our actions or our words.

In his second letter to Timothy, Paul could honestly say, "I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did" (1:3). His actions and his words agreed.

Paul then described Timothy's faith as "genuine" and pointed to his spiritual heritage: the genuine faith of his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice (v.5). Later in his letter, the apostle urged Timothy, "Continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures" (3:14-15). Christians whose actions and words are consistent can influence generations of people for Christ.

Children put a searchlight on the quality of our lives. "Do as I say" is not the highest standard, but rather an honest life that invites, "Do as I do." That means having actions and words that match up. Do yours? By Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Blest is the household where honesty reigns,
Where dad and mom practice the truth;
Blest are the children whom God leads and trains,
And are taught His Word from their youth. —Fitzhugh

Children are more likely to do what you do than to do what you say.

Get Practical - Read: 1 John 3:16-24 |

The missionary noticed that the woman who was helping the family with household chores and with the local language was upset. So she asked some questions and learned that the helper was pregnant, and that she and her husband had decided to abort the baby because they felt they couldn't afford a second child.

The missionary immediately contacted her friends in the United States for financial assistance. She then sat down with her helper and told her that for the next 2 years at least, there would be enough money to take care of the child.

The husband and wife were not Christians, and they didn't have convictions against abortion. But when they heard the news, they were ecstatic. The economic aid gave them confidence that they could care for their child, so they chose not to abort. The missionaries felt they had done something to show Christ's love to this family (1 Jn. 3:18).

Isn't that the way it's supposed to be? We are surrounded by needy people. They're not likely to hear us if we only preach to them, but they may listen if we do something to help them. That, in turn, may open their hearts to hear the really good news about salvation through faith in Jesus. By Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

To reach people for Christ, get practical.

So let our lips and lives express
The holy gospel we profess;
So let our works and virtues shine,
To prove the doctrine all divine. —Watts

People don't care how much you know unless they know how much you care.

Lamb-Chop Witness - Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. —1 John 3:18

Have you ever heard of witnessing with a lamb chop? W. H. Lax, a Methodist minister in London for 38 years, did just that. An old man was gravely ill, and Pastor Lax called on him. The man had no time for ministers, and as soon as he saw Lax's clerical collar he turned away and refused to speak.

Lax suspected that the man's food supply had run low. So when he left the house, the minister stopped at a local butcher shop and

had two lamb chops sent over. He called again in a few days and the old fellow was a bit friendlier. On his way home, Lax left another order with the butcher. By his third visit there was a noticeable change. The man was congenial and outgoing; he even allowed the minister to witness to him.

While Lax was away on a preaching mission, the old man died. Apparently he had put his trust in Christ, for just before he died he said, "Tell the minister that it's all right now. I'm going to God. But be sure to tell him it wasn't his talking that changed me. It was those lamb chops!"

Meeting someone's need can provide a great opportunity to share the gospel. It can melt the most hardened heart and open doors that have been locked for a lifetime. Do you know someone who needs a "lamb chop" today? By Haddon W. Robinson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Putting It Into Practice - Are there people in your neighborhood or workplace who are resisting the gospel? How can you show your love and concern by meeting their needs?

Sometimes the best witness is kindness.

Faith At Work - Read: James 2:14-26 | Christians sometimes sing the following words:

This world is not my home,
I'm just a-passing through.

Does that mean that we who are headed for heaven aren't to have a concern for the present world? No. We can't pray as Jesus instructed us, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Mt. 6:10), and be indifferent to the needs and evils of our planet. On the contrary, we ought to be eager to carry out Paul's counsel, "As we have opportunity, let us do good to all" (Gal. 6:10).

British historian Paul Johnson points out that our spiritual forebears in 19th-century England battled against slavery, poverty, vice, and illiteracy because of their devotion to God. He wrote, "Generous-minded Victorians, who took big risks by publicly expressing their concern for the poor, did not pretend that they knew everything about the problem or propose specific solutions." The dynamic of their concern, Johnson asserts, was their solid belief in God.

We are saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8), but our faith is to produce "good works" (v.10). Let's follow the example of those Victorian Christians. And may we be like Christ, "who went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). By Vernon C. Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

So let our lips and lives express
The holy gospel we profess;
So let our works and virtues shine,
To prove the doctrine all divine. —Watts

A living faith is a working faith.

A Friend In Need - Read: 1 John 3:11-18 | Not long ago my wife, Janet, and I bought a quantity of beef from a friend who raised cattle on a small farm. It was less expensive than meat from a grocery store, and we put it in the freezer to use throughout the coming months.

Then a terrible lightning storm cut power throughout our area. For the first 24 hours we were confident that the freezer would keep the meat frozen. But when the second day came with still no word of getting our power back, we began to be concerned.

We contacted Ted, a member of our Bible-study group, to see if he had any advice. He canceled an appointment he had and showed up at our doorstep with a generator to provide power for the freezer. We were thankful that Ted helped us, and we knew it was because of his love for Christ.

The old saying "a friend in need is a friend indeed" took on new meaning for us. John reminds us in 1 John 3:18, "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth." Sometimes this means inconveniencing ourselves to care for the interests of others or receiving that help when we ourselves are in need. After all Christ has done for us, it's a blessing to be His hands and feet in loving one another. By Dennis Fisher ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Father, thank You for making me a part of Your family by giving Your Son Jesus for me. Help me to accept the care of others and also to serve them out of gratitude and out of my love for You.

When we love Christ, we love others.

Here Am I - Read: 1 John 3:16-23 | Open your mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy. —Proverbs 31:9

In the courtroom while waiting for his case to come before the judge, Gary heard story after sad story of people who were losing their homes. Many went through the procedure as if it were familiar to them. But one woman named Leslie seemed bewildered. Gary sensed that she didn't know what to do or where to turn.

He tried to silence the quiet voice inside him that was urging him to help, but he couldn't. He thought of many reasons not to get involved. First, engaging strangers in conversation is not one of his strengths; second, he was afraid of being misunderstood. But he thought that the prompting was from God, and he didn't want to risk being disobedient.

When Gary saw Leslie leaving the courthouse, he spoke to her. "Ma'am," he said, "I heard your testimony inside the courtroom, and I believe God wants me to help you."

At first Leslie was suspicious, but Gary assured her of his sincerity. He made some phone calls and got her connected with people in a local church who provided the help she needed to keep her house.

God has called us to active duty (1 John 3:18). When we sense His prompting to help someone, we should be willing to say, "I believe God wants me to help you." By Julie Ackerman Link ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God calls into action today
All those who are children of light;
Whatever our hand finds to do,
Let's do it with all of our might. —Hess

We are at our best when we are serving others.

A Friend In Need - Read: 1 John 3:11-18 | My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. —1 John 3:18

Not long ago my wife, Janet, and I bought a quantity of beef from a friend who raised cattle on a small farm. It was less expensive than meat from a grocery store, and we put it in the freezer to use throughout the coming months.

Then a terrible lightning storm cut power throughout our area. For the first 24 hours we were confident that the freezer would keep the meat frozen. But when the second day came with still no word of getting our power back, we began to be concerned.

We contacted Ted, a member of our Bible-study group, to see if he had any advice. He canceled an appointment he had and showed up at our doorstep with a generator to provide power for the freezer. We were thankful that Ted helped us, and we knew it was because of his love for Christ.

The old saying "a friend in need is a friend indeed" took on new meaning for us. John reminds us in 1 John 3:18, "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth." Sometimes this means inconveniencing ourselves to care for the interests of others or receiving that help when we ourselves are in need. After all Christ has done for us, it's a blessing to be His hands and feet in loving one another. By Dennis Fisher ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Father, thank You for making me a part of Your family by giving Your Son Jesus for me. Help me to accept the care of others and also to serve them out of gratitude and out of my love for You.