**Grace Group Guide**

**1 John 3: 10-18**

In 1967, the Beatles recorded and released a song called "All You Need is Love." I recalled it while I was
studying for this week and thought to myself, "let's see what 1967 pop-culture has to say about the
most powerful force in the world ... " To say I was let down would be a tremendous understatement.
While to many, that song and that movement (Summer of Love) was geared towards unity and coming
together, both were quite shallow and superficial - especially when held up against scripture.

"18 **Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth."**

*Ray Stedman (Expository Studies in* 1 *John [Word], pp.* 264-265) *tells the story of a Jewish man named
Art, who was raised as an atheist. Early in life, he became a committed Marxist. At the close of World
War II, he was in Germany with the American army and saw the gas chambers at the concentration
camps. It filled him with hatred, first toward the Germans and then, as he realized that this went deeper
than nationality, at the whole human race. He came back to Berkeley and gave himself to education, but
he came to see that it was not the answer. Education could not change hearts.*

*Finally, he resigned his position. His wife lost her mind and was put in a mental institution. Divorced, and
without ties, he went out to wander. One rainy day in Greece, grubby and dirty, he was hitchhiking. No
one wanted to pick up a seedy looking character like him. He had stood in the rain for hours when a
Cadillac stopped. To Art's amazement, the driver did not just gesture for him to get in. He got out of the
car, came araund and began to* *pump his hand and welcome him warmly. He took Art's dirty rucksack
and threw it on the clean upholstery. Then he drove Art to a hotel, rented him a room, and gave him
some food.*

*Finally, he asked Art what he was doing and where he was going. All the pent-up heartache, misery, and
resentment of a lifetime came pouring out of this young Jewish atheist, while the man sat and listened.
When Art was through, the man said, "You know what this world needs? Those who are willing to wash
one another's feet." Art said, “I never heard anything so beautiful. Why do you say that?" The man said,
"Because that's what my Lord did." For the first time in his life, this young atheist heard a clear
presentation of the gospel. He became a Christian and went on to* *devote his life to* *serving the Lord.*

*That unnamed man, quietly going about being a Christian, demonstrated what John says to* *us* {3:18},
*"Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth."*

1. **Is there a difference between loving someone and liking him? If so, what are the practical ramifications of this?**

Jesus was very specific when He spoke to the disciples concerning love. Consider John 13:34-35 34*A new
commandment* / *give* to *you, that you love one another, even as* / *have loved you, that you also love one
another.* 35*By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

It would have been more than enough for Jesus to share those words and then move on. But Jesus, as
our supreme example, didn't just tell people to love each other, He showed us what that meant. Just
before He said this, He took on the form of a bondservant and washed the feet of the disciples. Just
after He said this, He went to the cross. (Phil 2:1-8)

John Piper shares 3 reasons why Jesus death is the supreme example of love - **1. It Involved the
Greatest Possible Sacrifice** - First of all, it involved the greatest possible sacrifice. Christ gave up his very
life for us. Love takes so much joy in another person's welfare that it is willing, eager, delighted to
sacrifice one's own personal well-being for the good of the other person. Now a person's life is his most
precious possession. To rob him of it, which is murder, is the greatest possible sin you could ever
commit against him. By the same token, to give one's own life for the sake of another's is the greatest
possible expression of love for him. You remember what Jesus said in John 15:13: "Greater love has no
man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." It is a sharp contrast that John paints for us.
Cain's hatred issued forth in murder. Jesus' love issued forth in self-sacrifice, even to the point of giving
up his very life for us.

**2. It Meets Our Deepest Needs** - Second, and more importantly, Christ's death on the cross is the
supreme example of love in that it meets our needs in a way that nothing else ever could. It is not only
the greatest possible sacrifice, it also does the greatest possible good for us. The key words in v. 16 are
"he laid down his life for us." You see, self-sacrifice in and of itself is not intrinsically valuable. Self-
sacrifice becomes love only to the extent that it is positively related to human need. Only insofar as self-
sacrifice works for the good of another does it have any value in the eyes of God. I think that is what
Paul was getting at in 1 Corinthians 13:3, "If I give away all that I have, and if I deliver my body to be
burned [there's self-sacrifice to be sure] but have not love [that is, the self-sacrifice is not directed to
meeting the needs of anyone else], I gain nothing." But Christ's love for us is exceedingly positive. (True
love always is.) It moved him to lay down his life for us. Again, there is a sharp contrast. In Genesis

4:8 we read, "Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him." In 1 John 3:16 we read, "[Jesus
Christ] laid down his life for us." And in those prepositions, the "against" of Genesis 4:8 as compared to
the "for" of 1 John 3:16, we find the difference between love and hate, between life and death. The
death of Jesus Christ is the supreme example of love because it meets our deepest needs-it brings us
peace with God, forgiveness, a clear conscience, hope for the future, power to love in the present, etc.,
etc. It does the greatest possible good for us.

**3. It Had the Greatest Possible Motive** - But not only does Jesus' death embody love because it was the
greatest possible sacrifice done for the greatest possible good. It was also done for the greatest possible
motive. According to John 12:28 Jesus went to the cross in order to glorify the name of his heavenly
Father. And the writer of Hebrews tells us that Jesus endured the cross "for the joy set before him"
(Hebrews 12:2). These two inextricably linked goals-the glory of God and our own delight and joy in
it-are to be the supreme motive for any act of love. They were for Jesus, and they are to be for us.

On the flip side, John also acknowledges the reality of anger and hurt and the role it plays in the lives of
individuals. We dug into the story of Cain and Abel a little bit on Sunday that we might see just how
serious it is to harbor anger and hate in your heart. John doesn't mince words when he tells us that sort
of attitude has no place in the life of a believer.

1. **Practically, how would you counsel a Christian to deal with deep-seated bitterness, anger, or hatred?**

What scriptures come to your mind when you consider question #2?

Love is a word and idea that we throw around entirely too often. Let us not be guilty of loving only in
word, but let us back those words up in deed as the Spirit of God empowers us to love one another.