**1 John 3:10b-23: To stay close to God, we have to love His children**

**Previous Context**

* **Not written to tell us who is a Christian or not. It is about how we manifest the “real us”. We do that when we do righteousness.**
* **Righteousness is 1) when we “believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ and 2) Love one another” (1 Jn. 3:23). Clearly, unbelievers can’t do that.**
* **The insertion of the word “practices” in some translations is a paraphrase and doesn’t reflect the text well. About 40 translations agree with that.**
* **It’s not about God accepting less sin, but no sin!**
* **Clearly, the theme of this section is love: Before, “love” = 7xs; here, 21xs**

**THE TEXT**

**1. What love is not – 1 John 3:10b-15**

* **3:10b – Some translations are poor at this point emphasizing a “practice”.**
* **What is unique: brotherly love based on our common faith in Christ.**
* **Out of sync with God if there’s no righteousness or love for the brethren.**
* **3:11 - John 13:34 - Only believers can obey this.**
* **3:12 - Even a family relationship doesn't prevent this from happening.**
* **It's not uncommon to envy, or even hate, spiritual believers (from guilt?).**
* **Those who have God's approval vs. those who do not - 1 Cor. 11:19**
* **3:13 - If brothers can hate you, then the world sure can!**
* **3:14 - The Apostles knew their experience of love was an experience of life.**
* **To walk with God is to experience life - Romans 8:5-13**
* **When we don't love other believers, we don’t experience life.**
* **When we hate other believers, we are living in the sphere (experience) of death, where the world is (v. 13).**
* **3:15 – “His brother" - Matt. 5:20-22; Mk. 7:20-22; Jas. 3:9-16; David!**
* **When we don't love other Christians, eternal life is not a controlling influence in our lives.**
* **When we abide in Him, Jesus abides in us and is a controlling influence in us - John 15:1-7**
* **A “brother” would not be his brother if he were not a Christian.**

**2. What love is – 1 John 3:16-18**

* **3:16 - Laying down our lives = Sharing the material things that sustain life.**
* **3:17 - "Shuts up his heart" = "locks up his sympathies"**
* **God's love is not functioning in a person like this!**
* **Can’t “shut up” our affections for them without betraying a lack of love.**
* **Jesus’ sacrifice defines love, we are to emulate His example.**
* **It specifically involves believers; God’s love does not abide in one who sees his brother in need and doesn’t act.**
* **A Christian is capable of not loving his brother and abiding in (the experience of) death. In that sense, he is also a “murderer”.**
* **3:18 - Sometimes it's easier to say we'll *die* for someone than to actually help them in time of need.**
* **Genuine love demands action and matches biblical truth.**

**3. What love does for believers – 1 John 3:19-23**

* **3:19 - When we act on biblical truth, we are in sync with God!**
* **Deceptive emotions: We all have had tried to express love and felt we haven't done enough, we think about past failures, and such.**
* **We can correct those fears by objectively caring for others by our actions in harmony with God’s Word.**
* **God knows it all! He evaluates actions and gives proper credit!**
* **When we love in deed and truth, we should persuade our hearts that God is greater than our hearts; He knows perfectly the love we have expressed.**
* **So, we can count on God knowing reality, in spite of our emotions.**
* **The result is confidence toward God and answered prayer**
* **The phrase “before Him” is emphatic (v. 22) Prayer in view!**
* **3:20 – Pray! Be confident in God’s matchless love and mercy.**
* **3:21 - Our hearts may be trained by the reality of who our God is!**
* **His love for us helps give us boldness and confidence in prayer.**
* **God is pleased with Christians who obey; that impacts prayer – Pr. 15:8**
* **God appreciates and remembers those who obey – Mal. 3:16-17**
* **Since we desire to please Him, we will subject all our prayers to His will. This isn’t “dodging” reality, but embracing it – Lk. 22:42; 1 Jn. 5:14-15**
* **A major request = God's will! Matt. 6:10; Acts 21:14; 1 John 5:14-15. Why would we want anything else?**
* **3:22 - Obedient Christians will not ask for what is not pleasing to God.**
* **3:23 - What does it mean to "keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight"?**
* **First, we are to "believe the name of His son Jesus Christ"...**
  + **For eternal life (John 20:30-31) and...**
  + **For effective prayer (John 14:13-14; 15:16)**
* **Next, love (with faith) summarizes all the commands - Romans 13:8, 10**
* **God's will = Faith in Jesus’ name and obedience to His commandment!**

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