



True Christian Love for Others

1 John 3:18-24

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth (1 John 3:18—KJV).

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

Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action (1 John 3:18—NRSV).

When Jesus preached His Sermon on the Mount, He warned, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven” (Matthew 7:21). Simply declaring the truth that Jesus is Lord without obeying Jesus as Lord is an example of living by words alone without corresponding deeds. Jesus taught the crucial importance of right actions based on a foundation of truth: “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock” (Matthew 7:24). John also warned against a religion of mere words without appropriate works, a life of speech instead of truth and action. John remembered that Jesus called people to follow Him as the way, and the truth, and the life; and Jesus promised He would send His followers the Spirit of truth (John 14:6; 15:26). True belief in Jesus as Lord will always lead His true followers to speaking the truth in love and to loving actions. The Apostle James gave some examples of truth leading to right actions when he wrote, “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world;” and then James asked the question, “If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,’ and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that?” (James 1:27; 2:15-16).

Thinking Further

1. What did John mean when he distinguished between not loving in word and speech but loving in truth and action.
2. From what you know about the teachings in John's letter so far or other parts of the Bible, what is one way you can love in truth?
3. From what you know about the teachings in John's letter so far or other parts of the Bible, what is one way you can love in action?
4. How can a follower of Jesus know that they are from the truth?
5. What must you do to receive whatever you want from God?