



International Bible Lesson

International Bible Study Commentary

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Why We Lay Down Our Lives

1 John 3:11-17

Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren (1 John 3:16—KJV).

We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren (1 John 3:16—NASB).

We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another (1 John 3:16—NRSV).

In describing the followers of Jesus, among other truths, John wrote that they have passed from death to life. They no longer abide or remain in death; therefore, they love one another. Furthermore, they have eternal life abiding in them. In 1 John 1:2, John called Jesus “eternal life,” writing, “this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us.” The followers of Jesus have Jesus abiding within them. In Colossians 1:27, Paul described, “the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” The followers of Jesus know love because Jesus and His love live within them. They also know love because Jesus Christ laid down His life for them when He died on the cross for the forgiveness of their sins and their cleansing from all unrighteousness. Knowing the quality of eternal life that they enjoy from knowing Jesus within them, knowing that nothing can separate them from the love of Christ, and knowing they will enjoy this wonderful quality of eternal life with Jesus forever, the followers of Jesus prayerfully endeavor to live,

love, and live again like Jesus did. They know they ought to lay down their lives for one another just as Jesus laid down His life for them. Therefore, they pray and watch for opportunities to bless and help others. They pray for the means and the wisdom to act and give helpfully when they see a brother or sister in need.

Thinking Further

1. From the beginning, what lesson did John teach the followers of Jesus? Does this lesson still apply to Christians today?
2. What two reasons did John give for Cain murdering his brother Abel? Can you think of one or more additional possible reasons or motivations?
3. What distinguished Abel from his brother Cain?
4. From these verses, how can a follower of Jesus Christ know that they have passed from death to life and have eternal life?
5. How did Jesus demonstrate His love and teach us what loves does?

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