

Read: 1 John 3:14-18

Love in Action

1 John 3:16-18

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Meet Bill. He's a teacher. Bill has the amazing ability to see creative opportunities in his classroom no one else sees. He sees problems long before they even happen. He notices when a struggling student needs encouragement or extra attention.

But what good is Bill's ability to see opportunities if he doesn't *do* something? Or, if he sees the problems, but offers no solutions? Or if he notices when his students are up or down, but does nothing about it?

Today's devotion is a lesson on love from someone who loved the most people, the most often, with the most passion. If you really want to know what love is, don't look at Bill. Don't even look at yourself. We know what love is. But it's not always easy to show love, is it? What's harder: to say, "I love you," or, to *live* up to those words? What's easier: to say, "That's mine," or, to let others be first before you? Loving the way God wants us to love is so hard—not because we can't, but because too often we won't.

God's Word today urges, "*Let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth.*" The only way we truly know that kind of love is to see it in action. But don't look at Bill. Don't look at yourself. Look at Jesus. He laid down his life for all of our failures to love. Then he picked his life back up to keep showing his love for you every day. Jesus inspires us to keep loving others every day!

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for Younger Children

- Can you find someone you love and say, “I love you”?!
- What could you do for the person you just said, “I love you” to that would *show* that you love them?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Can you recall a time you felt unloved because of what someone said or did to you?
- Think of some common needs people have. What are some ways we can love our brothers and sisters in those needs?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Give several examples of Christians “loving” with “words or speech” but not “with actions and in truth.”
- Talk through specifics: how did Jesus practice what John preaches in verse 15, 17, and 18?

Closing Prayer:

Gracious Savior, give us your heart of love for others so that we always see their needs and use our gifts to help them. Amen.

Hymn: CW 497: 1,5 – This is My Will

“This is my will, my one command,
That love should dwell among you all.
This is my will, that you should love
As I have shown that I love you.

All that you ask my Father dear
For my name’s sake you shall receive.
This is my will, my one command,
That love should dwell in each, in all.”