

3:18 Love in Deed and in Truth

Put Love into Practice.

Chrysostom: It is not enough to have good intentions. You must also put them into effect with genuine willingness and a happy heart. Catena.⁸²

Love Is Active.

Hilary of Arles: Actions speak louder than words. Introductory Commentary on 1 John.⁸³

3:19 Knowing That We Are of the Truth

By This We Shall Know.

Oecumenius: We know that we belong to the truth if we love in deed as well as in word. Anyone who says one thing but does another is a liar and a stranger to the truth. Commentary on 1 John.⁸⁵

3:20 God Is Greater Than Our Hearts

God Knows Everything.

Clement of Alexandria: This means that God's power is greater than the conscience which belongs to the soul, because God's love knows everything. Adumbrations.⁸⁷

Persuading Our Hearts.

Oecumenius: If we practice what we preach, we shall persuade our hearts, that is to say, our consciences, that we are on the right track. For then God will bear witness that we have listened to what he says. Commentary on 1 John.⁸⁸

3:21 We Have Confidence Before God

If Our Hearts Do Not Condemn Us.

Augustine: Our conscience gives us a true answer, that we love and that genuine love is in us, not feigned but sincere, seeking our brother's salvation and expecting nothing from him except his salvation. Ten Homilies on 1 John 6.4.⁹¹

Attend to the Warnings of Conscience.

Cyril of Alexandria: As long as you are in this life (for this life is nothing other than the way which we all take), do not ignore or reject the warnings of your conscience. For if you do so, when you have run your course, your conscience will rise up against you and accuse you before your judge, and thrust you in front of the judge's sentence and turn you over to eternal punishment. You will not have to endure this if along

the way you show yourself kind toward this adversary and accept his well-intended rebukes with gratitude. Catena.⁹²

3:22 Ask and You Will Receive

Whatever We Ask.

Theophylact: If we obey God's commands, then our obedience will bear fruit, for we shall receive whatever we ask for. Commentary on 1 John.⁹⁷

3:23 Love One Another

Believe in the Name of the Son.

Theophylact: The first point to be made here is that we must love one another according to the faith which we have in the name of Jesus Christ, for it is by this that we know that the grace of the Holy Spirit given to us will be firmly planted in us. The second thing to notice is the use of the word name, which is quite frequent in Scripture. It includes the will, the glory and the honor of the one who bears it, and his will is that everyone everywhere should be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.⁹⁹ Commentary on 1 John.¹⁰⁰

3:24 God Abides in Us by His Spirit

God's Care.

Clement of Alexandria: Our assurance comes from his care for us and his provision for the future. Adumbrations.¹⁰¹

Do unto Others.

Oecumenius: What does John mean by this? It is exactly what Jesus said: "Whatever you want others to do to you, do the same to them."¹⁰³ Therefore if we want our neighbors to be well-disposed toward us, we must be equally well-disposed toward them. If this is God's command, how much more ought we to obey it if we dwell in him and are sealed by him? He cannot deny himself, and it must surely be the case that whatever he has asked us to do he has already done or become in himself. Therefore if we do what he says, we know that he will give us whatever we ask and that his gift will be sealed in us. Commentary on 1 John.¹⁰⁴