

## A LOOK AT THE NEW TESTAMENT

### *// Read 1 John 3:11-24*

Whilst speaking about a mutual acquaintance, a Christian friend says to you, “I can’t stand him. He really gets under my skin, and I just can’t bear being around him any more.’ From these verses, what would you say to your friend?

In v12, John warns his readers that refusing to love one another is like the relationship between Cain & Abel, which ended in murder (Genesis 4). How does the root of hatred begin by refusing to show sacrificial love to each other?

According to this passage, love should be the defining characteristic of Christians. From these verses what should this love look like? (see also John 15:12, and Ephesians 5:1-2) What does this practically mean for your life and relationships right now?

Sadly, it can be easy to pretend to love people, but still harbour ungodly and unhealthy attitudes about them in your heart. How might verse 18 help?

There is clearly a close link in this passage between responding to Christ’s love (in his death & resurrection), and our own sacrificial love to other people. How does this link work itself out in practice?

You sometimes hear the phrase ‘Love is a verb’. What specific steps can you take to put love into practice?

This passage is a stark reminder of the potency of hatred and its consequences, and also of the life-changing antidote to such attitudes. You may like to take some time to reflect on your own relationships. Maybe you would like to confess your need of forgiveness and remind yourself of Jesus’ love for you and those with whom you have difficult relationships with.

**study** notes  
week **seven**

## THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

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### WAY IN

*Reflection: At first glance, this commandment can appear to be less relevant to us than others. After all, most people agree that murder is a bad thing, and don't often feel the effects of it in our day to day lives. However, God has much to say to you through his word. Therefore take some time to ask him to calm your heart and help you to listen to him.*

After watching the TV news one day, your friend says to you "People seem to have stopped treating other like human beings. It's terrible, people have no respect for each other any more." Do you agree? Why/why not?

Whilst walking through the town centre one day, two people from different charities stop you to try and raise support. One is from a charity that helps sick dolphins, and the other is a charity that helps poor people in Africa. Which charity are you more likely to give your money to? Why?

### A LOOK AT EXODUS

*// Read Exodus 20:13*

As you think through the commandments so far, what strikes you about the change of direction here? Why is that?

*// Read Genesis 9:1-7*

What do these verses teach us about the value of animals and the value of humans?

What do you think it means that humans are uniquely made in God's image? Why is this so important?

Why is murder even more devastating than merely 'ending a life', therefore? How might this impact some of the important ethical issues of our day (eg. abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment)?

Of v4-6, Derek Kidner writes: "The law on blood is theologically far-reaching...It prepared men to appreciate the use of blood in sacrifice. Belonging to God, it could be seen as His atoning gift to sinners, not theirs to Him." Why do you think that the bible talks so often of blood, and its importance? As you look to the New Testament, how does this shed light on the enormity of Jesus' death on the cross?

*// Read Matthew 5:21-26*

Why does Jesus group anger with murder? How do you cope with feelings of anger towards other people?

What three ways does Jesus say that we can break this commandment? What might this look like in our lives today?

Because anger at someone is as devastating as physical murder, Jesus urges reconciliation. Take time to think & pray about any situations in which you may need to be reconciled with someone.

### QUOTE TO REFLECT ON

*"There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations - these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit - immortal horrors or everlasting splendours. This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn. We must play. But our merriment must be of the kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously - no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption. And our charity must be real and costly love, with deep feeling for the sins in spite of which we love the sinners - no mere tolerance, or indulgence which parodies love as flippancy parodies merriment. Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbour is the holiest object presented to your senses." (C.S. Lewis)*

Do you agree? How might remembering that people are made in God's image radically change your life?