

The Christian Tranquilizer

Ray Stedman

I. Introduction.

- A. Text: I John 3:19-20.
- B. Love is a popular theme, but the world grows increasingly loveless.
- C. John contrasts themes of love and hate.
- D. Love brings forth help and health—hate brings forth death.

II. The importance of the deed of love.

- A. Love must issue in something one does or says.
- B. It cannot be merely imaged.
- C. What love does as a deed.
 - 1. It reassures a doubting heart.
 - 2. It gives boldness and effectiveness to prayer.
 - 3. It evidences a Spirit-filled life.

III. Love reassures a doubting heart.

- A. The problem we frequently face is the problem of a condemning conscience.
- B. This is often the result of an attack by the evil one.
- C. This also often occurs because we have engaged in some gross sin.
 - 1. If we fall into these experiences, we are bound to fall into a guilty conscience.
 - 2. This is not the condition that John is concerned with in this section though.
 - 3. If we are conscious of something that is wrong that we have done, we are to confess it.
- D. The other two conditions are primarily in view: the times we have a sense of condemnation resulting from being mistreated or ignored, or the times when we have not been accomplishing much.
- E. The solution: recognizing that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ. (Romans 8:1)

1. We must know that we are of the truth, putting on the breastplate of righteousness guarding against our emotions.
2. We must love not only in words but also in deeds and truth.
3. We must return good for evil.
4. When we act in love instead of retaliating, we receive a sense of peace that we are sons and daughters of the Father. (Philippians 2)
5. Do a good deed for Christ's sake in order to reassure your heart—God is greater than our hearts and knows everything.
 - a. God knows that the self-giving heart is not natural to man.
 - b. This can only be natural to the regenerate believer.
 - c. God therefore knows that the accusations of our hearts are wrong.

Application questions:

1. What three things does the deed of love do for the believer according to John?

2. How is love a reassurance when we doubt about our salvation? Does this suggest that doing loving things helps us to earn our salvation? Explain.

3. How have you found assurance in performing some good for other people? How has this message changed or strengthened that experience for you?
