

Blood Is Thicker Than Water

^{NRS} **1 John 5:1** Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. ² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments.

³ For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, ⁴ for whatever is born of God conquers the world.

And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. ⁵ Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

⁶ This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one that testifies, for the Spirit is the truth.

Larger story- divorce in my family.

Story in First John- divorce in the community.

There's certainly no love lost- throwing around the word antichrist all over the place.

1. John letters introduced- came as a set (Princeton bathroom gets this.)
2. This is important- this large message helps us understand the smaller
3. Context of division in community- big problem for a community of love. Theme:
how do we deal with conflict when the honeymoon is over?
4. Face it- name it (Our capacity for denial is without bottom. Me as a kid- school morning on the way out. Omigosh- I need paper! When did you need this paper?
Two...or ten days ago.)
5. Grieve it- ask for what you need and want and then observe the results.
Sometimes the answer is yes, and sometimes it's no. It's just the way life is. In this case there was no way to make the brothers who left come back- they were too far gone.

6. Go forward- can't focus on them and what they are doing wrong anymore. In this case we can love the people we still have. Focus on the love- not the hate. And we can focus on how we can do better- the commandments. And not in a burdensome way- but in a way that's liberating. Commandments best understood as descriptive, not prescriptive- they describe loving community. They are better questions than they are commands.

Bit about blood at the end- it's because real love hurts. It's hard. It requires sacrifice. And there's nothing worth more.