

*A People of the Book*  
*A Textual Study*

A Study of

I John

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## Introduction To 1 John

### 1. Author

- a. The author does not give his name or his title.
- b. Easily identified from his style, vocabulary & content – same author as the books of “The Gospel of John” & the epistles 2nd & 3<sup>rd</sup> John.
- c. Some say there are 2 Johns – John the apostle & John the elder. The weight of evidence says that John the apostle wrote the book.
- d. About John
  - 1) An apostle the son of Zebedee
  - 2) Irenaeus the bishop of Lyons in 177AD summarizes the testimony of the early church – “John the disciple of the Lord who reclined on his breast & himself issued the gospel at Ephesus”.
  - 3) Tradition says that John spent his latter years preaching teaching & writing. At some point he was exiled to the Isle of Patmos during the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian.
- e. John was one of the 1<sup>st</sup> disciples of Jesus – Jn.1:35,39
- f. John & James were either partners with their father or worked for their father in a large fishing business. Lk.5:10
- g. John & James left all to follow Jesus Mt.4:21-22
- h. John was one of the three apostles who comprised the inner circle of disciples – a group of disciples who were with Jesus on very special occasions (Transfiguration; Gethsemane) Mt.17:1,2; 26:36,37; Mk.5:37-43
- i. John was called the beloved disciple because he seems to have been especially close to Jesus & stresses love so much in his writings. Lk.5:10; Jn.18:26; 21:20,23; Acts 4:13
- j. John was the disciple to whom Jesus committed the care of His mother Jn.19:26,27
- k. John is said by Paul to be one of the three pillars of the church – Gal.2:9

### 2. Date written

- a. Uncertain – probably somewhere between AD 85-90
- b. There is no mention of the persecution under the Roman Emperor Domitian which happened in AD 95, so most likely was written before that date.
- c. This book is found in the earliest Greek manuscripts & has never been questioned about being scripture.
  - 1) Polycarp is the earliest reference to this book in his letter to the Philippians – about AD 155
  - 2) There are also what seems to be quotations from the epistle from earlier writers – Clement of Rome; the Didache; and the epistle to Diogenetus
  - 3) Eusebius verifies that John wrote at least the 1<sup>st</sup> two epistles
  - 4) Clement of Alexandria mentions “the greater epistle” of John which shows that he knew of more than one letter.

### 3. To whom was it written?

- a. There is no greeting, farewell or personal references that reveals the recipients.
- b. Therefore it was written to the church at large – each church can look at the letter as a personal letter from John to them.
- c. Tradition says that the book was written from Ephesus where John was preaching.

### 4. Purpose

- a. To defend the faith & strengthen the church against false teachers. John confronted the 1<sup>st</sup> stages of Gnosticism.
  - 1) Gnosticism said that the body was evil & resulted in two different attitudes toward the body.
    - a) Body must be disciplined & mastered as much as possible.
    - b) What is done by the body mattered little – was evil & doomed to death – what mattered was the spirit. Let the body eat, drink & be merry & do whatever it wanted.
    - c) Since the beginnings of Christianity there are millions who have believed that they were safe & acceptable to God as long as they have been baptized & belong to a church & practice the rituals of that church & worship here & there. They believed that what they did with their bodies did not matter much, as long as it was not too serious of a sin. What made them acceptable to God was that they were baptized & belonged to the church.
  - 2) Truth destroys this teaching. The human body is not evil: Jesus came to this earth in a human body. Being God, He could not be touched with evil, so the body could not be evil. The body is honorable & what man does in his body affects him spiritually. It determines his relationship & destiny with God. It is totally impossible to keep one's spirit right with God & allow the body to go it's own way. A person is both body & spirit & therefore must honor God with both their body & their spirit. (Rom.12:1,2; 1 Cor.6:12-20)
- b. That we may know that we have eternal life – 1 Jn.5:13
  - 1) The phrase “we know” is used 13 times to give assurance to the believer.
  - 2) John gives test after test that believers can use to prove they have eternal life.
    - a) Seven proofs one really knows God – 2:3-29
    - b) Six proofs that one really loves God – 3:1-4:21
    - c) Three proofs that one really believes – 5:1-21

c. Things that John stresses in his book

- 1) Love – 1 Jn.2:7-11; 3:1-3,11-17,23; 4:7-21
- 2) Jesus is the Son of God – 1 Jn.1:7; 2:1,22; 3:8; 4:9,10,14,15;  
5:1,5,9-13,18,20
- 3) Jesus did come as a man – 1 Jn.1:1-3,5,6; 4:2,3,9,10,14; 5:6,8,20
- 4) Jesus is the savior – He died for our sins – 1 Jn.1:7; 2:1,2; 3:5,8,16;  
4:9,10,14
- 5) That the Spirit lives within the believer – 1 Jn.2:20,27; 3:24;  
4:13,15,16; 5:12
- 6) The need for separation from the world – 1 Jn.2:15-17; 3:1,3,13; 4:3-5;  
5:4,19
- 7) Righteousness & obedience to God – 1 Jn.2:3-8,29; 3:3-15,22-24;  
4:20,21; 5:2-4,17-19

## The Son Of God Has Come To The Earth

### Introduction

John jumps right into the subject he wants to cover. There is no greeting and no salutation. What he has to say is of great importance; he must get right to the point: God's Son has come to earth. God is not living off in outer space someplace like so many people think and say; God has not forgotten the earth. God is not unconcerned and disinterested in the world. The very opposite is true. God loves and cares for us and He has proven it in the most supreme way possible: God has sent His Son into the world. This is the glorious testimony of John: God's Son has come into the world and His name is Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior of the world.

### 1 Jn.1:1-5

#### 1. Jesus Christ has always existed

- a. That is what is meant by the words "that which was from the beginning"
- b. He existed before the world & was the beginning & essence of all life.
- c. He was not created, He was from the beginning with God – Jn.1:1-3; 17:5  
Phil.2:6-8

#### 2. Jesus Christ became a man

- a. As a man He allowed people to see & hear Him as well as look upon Him & handle Him. Phil.2:6-8
- b. People were able to hear Him teach & share the good news that God loves man
- c. For three years John & the other apostles & thousands of others had conversation with Him & listened to Him speak the words of God.
- d. John was a personal witness – he saw Him with his own eyes
- e. **Looked upon** = gaze upon for a long time so as to understand & grasp His significance. You will never understand Jesus by glancing – you must look intensely & seriously truly seeking to know Him.
- f. **Handled Him** – more than touching. It is to grope & grasp after so as to understand & comprehend – to examine closely.  
(Lk.24:39 – handle me & see that I am not a spirit)

#### 3. Jesus is the word of life

- a. Jesus Christ Himself is *the Word*.
  - 1) What is a word - it is the expression of an idea, a thought, an image in the mind of a person. A word describes what is in the mind of a person.
  - 2) John is saying this: in the life of Jesus Christ, God was speaking to the world, speaking and demonstrating just what He wanted to say to man.
  - 3) This means the most wonderful thing. It means that God has given us much more than mere words in the Holy Scriptures. God has given us Jesus Christ, *The Word*.

- 4) As *The Word*, Jesus Christ was the picture, the expression, the pattern, the very image of what God wished to say to man. The very image within God's mind of the *Ideal Man* was demonstrated in the life of Jesus Christ.
  - 5) Jesus Christ was the perfect expression of all that God wishes man to be. Jesus Christ was God's utterance, God's speech, *God's Word* to man. Jesus Christ was the *Word of life who came to earth to show us that the very energy, force, power, and essence of life is in God and in God alone.*
  - 6) Therefore, if a person wants life, he must trust and depend upon God for life. For life in all of its energy and force and being exists only in God & His Son Jesus Christ.
- b. Jesus Christ Himself is *the Word of life*
- 1) the very message of life, the good news (gospel) of life. He is the very embodiment of life, the energy and force of life; therefore, when He came to earth, He brought the Word of life to man.
  - 2) Jesus Christ—His life, His acts, His teaching—tells men how to live. In Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ alone is the Word of life, the Word that tells man how to conquer death and to live abundantly both now and eternally.
  - 3) Jesus Christ is the *Word of life*. This is the great thing that He revealed to man.
  - 4) But note: How did He reveal this great message to man? 1 John 1:2 tells us in clear language. The verse is here given just as it reads in the Greek text:  
 “And the life was revealed, and we have seen and bear witness, and report to you the life, the eternal, which was with the Father, and was revealed to us.”
- c. Jesus came & revealed to us what life is with the Father.
- 1) He identified with man & made Himself available to man
  - 2) He allowed them to use all their senses to comprehend Him & thus fully understand His Father.
  - 3) His message - Men do not have to live in sin and the dread of corruption and death; men can live in the abundance of love, joy, and peace with God, both now and eternally.

#### 4. **Jesus came that men might have fellowship with God**

- a. God is not far off, disinterested in man & uncaring about what happens to us.
- b. Through Jesus He has shown that He deeply loves & cares for us & wants to have fellowship with us; to have a personal relationship with us.
- c. Through Jesus we can:
  - become acceptable to Him
  - relate to Him and talk and share with Him
  - have Him walk with us throughout the day, looking after and caring for us step by step
  - cast our problems upon Him
  - trust Him to help us in meeting our needs

## 5. John wrote that our joy may be full & complete

- a. **Joy** (chara): an inner gladness; a deep seated pleasure. It is a depth of assurance and confidence that ignites a cheerful heart. It is a cheerful heart that leads to cheerful behavior.
- b. Several things need to be said about the believer's joy.
  - 1) Joy is divine. It is possessed and given only by God. Its roots are not in earthly or material things or cheap triumphs. It is the joy of the Holy Spirit, a joy based in the Lord. It is His very own joy (John 15:11; Acts 13:52; Rom. 14:17; Gal. 5:22; 1 Thess. 1:6).
  - 2) Joy does not depend on circumstances or happiness. Happiness depends upon happenings, but the joy that God implants in the believer's heart overrides all, even the matters of life and death (Psalm 5:11; 2 Cor. 6:10; 2 Cor. 7:4).
  - 3) Joy springs from faith (Rom. 15:13; Phil. 1:25; 2 Tim. 1:4; Matt. 2:10).
  - 4) Joy of a future reward makes and keeps one faithful (Matthew 25:21, 23; Acts 20:24; Hebrews 12:2).
- c. The source of the believer's joy.
  - 1) The fellowship of the Father and His Son brings joy (1 John 1:3-4).
  - 2) Victory over sin, death, and hell (John 14:28; John 16:20-22).
  - 3) Repentance brings joy (Luke 15:7, 10).
  - 4) The hope of glory brings joy (Rom. 14:17; Hebrews 12:2; 1 Peter 4:13).
  - 5) The Lord's Word—the revelations, commandments, and promises which He made—brings joy (John 15:11).
  - 6) The commandments of Christ and the will of God bring joy. Obeying and doing a good job stirs joy within the believer's heart (John 15:11; John 17:13; Acts 13:52).
  - 7) Prayer brings joy (John 16:24).
  - 8) The presence and fellowship of believers brings joy (1 John 1:3-4).
  - 9) Converts bring joy (Luke 15:5; Phil. 4:1; 1 Thess. 2:19-20).
  - 10) Hearing that others walk in the truth brings joy (3 John 4).
  - 11) Giving brings joy (2 Cor. 8:2; Hebrews 10:34).

## 6. Jesus' message – God is light & in Him is no darkness at all

- a. God is light
  - 1) Means His very nature & character are light. What is within Himself.
  - 2) God dwells in the splendor, glory, and brilliance of light.
    - a) Wherever He is, the splendor, glory, and brilliance of light shines out of His being.
    - b) In fact, there is not even a need for the sun when God's glory is present. The glory of His presence just beams forth the most brilliant light imaginable, so brilliant and glorious that it would consume human flesh. Rev. 21:23; 22:5
- b. God reveals the light of all things – the truth of all things
  - 1) Light is the symbol of purity and holiness.

- 2) Light means the absence of darkness and blindness; it has no spots of darkness and blackness, of sin and shame.
- 3) His light beams in, spots, opens up, identifies, illuminates, and shows things as they really are.
- 4) His light allows a man to walk out of darkness. Man no longer has to grope, grasp, and stumble about trying to find his way through life. The path of life can now be clearly seen. He does away with darkness & chaos.

c. In Him is no darkness

- 1) Darkness symbolizes sin & evil & all that a person should not do
- 2) Darkness means one is ignorant of God – Rom.1:22
- 3) Darkness makes one stumble through life – Jn.11:9,10
- 4) Darkness refers to evil behavior – Jn.3:19-21
- 5) Walking in darkness is to hate one's brother – 1 Jn.2:9-11
- 6) Darkness means a person is focused upon evil – Mt.6:22,23
- 7) Walking in darkness is being an unbeliever & unfruitful toward God  
2 Cor.6:14; Eph.5:11
- 8) Darkness means the influence & power of Satan – Acts 26:18
- 9) Darkness describes the punishment of hell – Eph.6:12; 2 Pet.2:9

### Three Misconceptions Of Man - #1

#### Introduction

John's testimony - Jesus came to earth so that man might have fellowship with God & His Son Jesus Christ. However, man already thinks that he has fellowship with God. He already worships God & feels safe & acceptable in his religion. He does not need someone to show him how to become acceptable to God. He can do it on his own & resents being told that he is wrong & has no merit with God or is unacceptable to God as he is. He feels sufficient within himself. This passage strikes at these objections & reveals their fallacies. In the next three studies we will discuss three common misconceptions people make – That man can have fellowship with God & still walk in sin; That man is not totally depraved & sinful; That man can become righteous & sinless on his own. This study will focus on the misconception that man can have fellowship with God & still walk in sin.

#### 1 Jn.1:6-2:2

##### 1. Walking in darkness

###### a. Without Jesus Christ man walks in the darkness about God.

- 1) Man cannot see, hear or touch God. He exists in the physical world & is limited. He can know only what his physical senses reveal to him – what is in the physical material world. Jn.1:18
- 2) Man has absolutely no way to penetrate into the spiritual world on his own. All his technology & science; all his intellectual & creative reasoning are useless in penetrating into the spiritual realm. Jn.14:6
- 3) No matter what a person claims, no matter how religious they are, without Jesus Christ they are in the dark about God & walk in darkness.

###### b. The only way man can ever know God much less fellowship Him is to have God leave the spiritual realm & enter the physical realm & reveal Himself. This is exactly what God did through Jesus. Jn.1:1-18

###### c. See the foolishness of man in rejecting Jesus

- 1) He thinks he can find God on his own – relate to Him & be good enough to secure His approval & fellowship.
- 2) Believes that through his mind & physical senses he can find out enough about God to be acceptable on his own.
- 3) Believes that he can use his body & energy & do enough to please God. If he believes in God & does mostly right, then his belief & good deeds will put God in his debt & God will never reject him. Therefore he can reject Jesus & still be acceptable to God.

###### d. Scripture says to think & act this way is a lie & not following truth.

- 1) No matter how great the mind, or how tremendous the good work, it's still not truth. All the approaches man uses to get to God are worthless without Jesus Christ – He is the only way.

- 2) If we are to ever know God or walk in His ways He must reveal Himself & His ways to us.
- 3) For a person to be saved, he cannot walk in darkness about God. He must have the revelation that comes only from Jesus Christ. We have to choose – continue to walk in the darkness of the world or come into the light through Jesus Christ.

**e. Other scriptures**

- 1) Acts 17:23 For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you. (NIV)
- 2) John 1:5 The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. (NIV)
- 3) John 1:10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. (NIV)
- 4) John 3:19-20 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. (NIV)
- 5) John 4:10-11 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? (NIV)
- 6) John 14:9-11 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. (NIV)
- 7) Prov. 4:19 But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble. (NIV)

**f. Darkness also has symbolic meanings in scripture**

- 1) Moral depravity – Ps.82:5; Prov.2:13
- 2) Punishment from God – Mt.8:12

**2. Walking in the light**

- a. The light of God is the revelation of Himself. Jesus came to show us exactly what God was like. Though Jesus & only through Him we find how God wants us to live & exactly what He expects of us. Jn.1:18; Heb.1:1-4

- b. Therefore walking in the light means to accept the revelation of Jesus about God & follow Him. It is listening to Jesus & striving to follow Him doing exactly what He says to the best of our ability.
  - c. The result of walking in the light.
    - 1) We have fellowship with God & His Son Jesus Christ
    - 2) We also have fellowship with other believers because we are walking together.
    - 3) The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. **Note** - Cleanses is in the present tense which signifies a continual cleansing.
  - d. **A point often missed** is, that man is a sinner & he cannot erase the sins of his past. He has no way to pay the penalty for them, yet that penalty must be paid. God is a just God & justice does not allow sin to go on unpunished. The payment for sin is death & someone who is perfect must pay that debt. God only accepts perfect sacrifices (without blemish). Jesus came to pay that price. He came & lived a perfect life so that His death might be accepted by God as a payment for our sins. His blood covers our sin & we are presented before God as righteous. Rom.5:8,9; 2 Cor.5:21; Heb.9:14; 1 Pet.1:18,19
  - e. **Light also has symbolic meanings**
    - 1) Holiness & righteousness
    - 2) The presence of God
3. **Final thought** – man can't walk in darkness & light at the same time. He must make a choice & the only choice one can make to walk in the light is to accept the revelation of Jesus about His Father & follow Him. Jn.14:6; Acts 4:12

## Three Misconceptions Of Man # 2

### Introduction

Last lesson we began a discussion of three misconceptions that man has about his status with God. The first misconception John mentions is, that man could walk in sin & still have fellowship with God. To this thought John responds with a definite no. God is light & in Him is no darkness at all. He does not fellowship with darkness or with those who walk in darkness. In this lesson we will consider the other two misconceptions John speaks about.

### 1 John 1:8,9

#### 1. Saying - I have no sin

- a. Heb.2:3 – some choose to ignore the salvation offered by God through Jesus
- b. Feel they are OK because they are good enough without Jesus
  - 1) Feel sin has no power over them
  - 2) Conduct doesn't matter (once saved always saved)
- c. **Note** – sin is singular not plural
  - 1) Means sin as a root or a part of their nature
  - 2) No need for Jesus because no sin nature (can stop sin on own)  
Discipline is all that they need – in self the power to overcome
  - 3) Forget that sin means – imperfections; falling short & missing the mark

#### 2. John says these people only deceive themselves

- a. Rom.7:14-23 – honest people admit this struggle
- b. Flesh with its desires so easily gives in – always pulling at us
- c. **Man so easily makes excuses for whatever sin in life**
  - 1) **Cause is external not internal** – up bringing; parents; society; environment; education or the lack of it; associates etc.
  - 2) Therefore man not responsible or accountable for his sin – disease etc.
  - 3) Someone or something else made him do what he did
- d. Scripture says everyone falls short  
Mt.7:21-23; Rom.3:23; 5:12; Gen.6:5; Prov.20:5; Isa.64:6

#### 3. If we confess our sin

- a. **Confess** = admit our guilt & personal responsibility for wrongdoing
  - 1) Not try to excuse or flower up (make not look as bad)
  - 2) Some try make sin look more attractive (Gay; an affair; a disease etc)
  - 3) Some want to make excuses so not appear as bad
- b. **Note promises**
  - 1) Forgive all unrighteousness – both those we confess & those we don't -
    - a) Some sin we recognize & confess while others we don't even recognize much less confess
    - b) Not perfect even in our repentance or our confession of sin
  - 2) God is faithful & just – He keeps His word – does exactly what He says

c. Other scriptures

Eph.1:7; Prov.28:13; Isa.43:25; 53:6,7; 55:7

## 1 John 1:10-2:2

### 1. Third misconception – I have not sinned

- a. Righteous enough on own to enter the presence of God
- b. May accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but not as their savior
  - 1) Follow His teachings but not His deity – good man
  - 2) Died only as a martyr, not as a sacrifice for sin
  - 3) Can achieve sinless ness on own
- c. **To them sin is only a gross violation of law** – something all society condemns
  - 1) Rape; murder; fraud; abuse
  - 2) Refuse to see sin as any imperfection or shortcoming
- d. Questions
  - 1) Who fails to use their mind properly all the time?
  - 2) Who fails to live up to their full potential all the time?
  - 3) Who fails to act lovingly at all times?
  - 4) Who fails to have pure thoughts at all times?
  - 5) Who fails to act patiently all the time?
  - 6) Who fails to act selfless all the time?
  - 7) Who fails to worship properly all the time?
- e. Eccles.7:20; Gen.6:5; Ps.53:3

### 2. John's admonition – Keep on struggling to not sin

- a. Even though we are all prone to sin – God's goal for us is to live above sin  
Rom.6:12; Jn.5:14; 8:11; Isa.55:7; Eph.4:22
- b. We live in a corrupt world; in a body whose nature is to sin; so easily corrupted
  - 1) Don't give in to sin – the world around us
  - 2) Struggle to bring every thought captive to Jesus – 2 Cor.10:3-5
  - 3) Struggle to live a s good a life as you can – please God in everything
- c. Heb.12:1; 1 Pet.2:11

### 3. If we sin we have an advocate

- a. **Advocate** – someone who comes along side to help
  - 1) Jn.14:16 – Holy Spirit called our advocate too (comforter)
  - 2) Someone to plead our case before God
- b. **What does Jesus plead?**
  - 1) **Our** reputation? Goodness? Works? Not guilty? Personal holiness?  
Lived as well as we could? Sincerity? Tried hard?
  - 2) Pleads His righteousness; His sacrifice –  
Rom.8:34; Heb.2:17; 4:14,15; 7:25,26; 9:24
- c. **Propitiation** – sacrifice; covering; satisfaction; payment; appeasement
  - 1) His sacrifice turns away God's wrath – appeases His justice
  - 2) His sacrifice fully satisfies God's justice

- 3) **Note** – His sacrifice is sufficient for the whole world – all men  
All men of all time
- 4) To be covered one must accept Jesus as his covering
- d. **Realize** – God is the one who must be appeased. He is holy, man is sinful
  - 1) God does not need to be reconciled to us – we are the ones who rebelled
  - 2) Must come to God on His terms – Jesus – Jn.14:6

#### 4. Visible evidences of moral impurity in our lives

- a. **Problem** – a man's morality tends to dictate his theology – make excuses
- b. **Evidences we are morally corrupt**
  - 1) Claiming that under grace we are free to do as we want – Jude 1:4  
Rom.6:1
  - 2) Despising submission & speaking evil of those in authority  
Jude 1:8; 2 Pet.2:9,10
  - 3) Scoffing at spiritual truths which we do not comprehend – Jude 1:10
  - 4) Complaining about moral strictness & seeking to develop new philosophies – Jude 1:16; 2 Pet.2:18,19
  - 5) Arguing about things that contradict God's word – Titus 3:9-11
  - 6) Appearing to be religious but condoning sin in your life – 2 Tim.3:1-5  
(compromising with sin; excusing it in your life)

#### 5. Steps to conquering sin

- a. **Must be in Jesus** – Jn.15:5
- b. **Learn to hate evil** – Rom.12:9
  - 1) Minimize it's benefits (last only a season Heb.11:25)
  - 2) Magnify its consequences – Ex.34:7 (3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> generation affected)
  - 3) Make no provision for the flesh to fulfill lusts – Rom.13:14
- c. **Manifest complete repentance**
  - 1) Agree with God – confess with no excuses (accept full responsibility)
  - 2) Identify the root cause for your sin – independent spirit (pride)
  - 3) Visualize the spiritual consequences – I nailed Jesus to the cross
- d. **Learn to walk with God's Spirit**
  - 1) Continually be filled – Eph.5:18,19
  - 2) Stop grieving, quenching & resisting Him
  - 3) Resist Satan – James 4:7
  - 4) Seek to be fully cooperative with God's Spirit (obey quickly)  
Extent do = power – Lk.4:14; Col.1:29
- e. **Increase your spiritual alertness** – Heb.5:14
- f. **Seek to transform thought patterns** – Rom.12:2
- g. **Discern cycles in life** – circumstances & times we more vulnerable

## Proof That One Really Knows God # 1

### Introduction

In our day & age many claim to know God, but in reality they have no clue what God is really like. They choose to make God in their image & then act like what they believe is the truth about God. John presents seven tests about knowing God in this second chapter of 1 John. Just as James did in his book John states that if one really has a relationship with God it will be evident in his life. It will not just be words, it will be seen in his lifestyle.

### 1 John 2:3-6

#### 1. Test # 1 – Do we keep His commandments?

- a. The only way that man can ever really know God is that God somehow reveals Himself to us.
  - 1) Man lives in the physical realm & God in the spiritual realm. Man cannot understand God with His physical senses alone, he needed help. This is what God did in sending Jesus.
  - 2) Scriptures
    - Jn.1:18 – no one ever seen God – Jesus manifests Him
    - Jn.12:45 – Seen Me = seen Him that sent Me
    - Jn.14:7 – Know Me = know My Father
    - Col.2:9 – In Him dwells the fullness of God
    - Heb.1:3 – the exact image
  - 3) Thus to know God means that we must know Jesus.
- b. In addition to this, John says that we must keep God's commands. What commands?
  - 1) 1 Jn.3:23 – believe in name of Jesus & love one another
  - 2) Jn.13:34,35 – new command = love one another as I love you
  - 3) Rom.13:8-10 – love does no wrong to neighbor
- c. No matter what a person may say, he does not know God if he has never given his life to Jesus Christ. And he does not know God if he criticizes, grumbles, and backbites his brother and commits adultery, kills, steals, lies, covets, or does anything else against his brother. If a person really knows God, then he wants to please God.
- d. Some people seek to know God, but they do it in the wrong way.
  - 1) Some speculate about God. This is the route most people take in trying to know God. They imagine what God is like and hold that image in their mind and try to live by what they imagine. They have their own teachings and their own images of what God is like, and they govern their lives by that image.
  - 2) Some try to seek and know God by mystical or emotional experiences. They seek to know the spiritual world and its focus through spiritists, astrology, séances, magic, and a host of other man-made mystical experiences.

## 2. He that says, “I know Him” & not keep His commands is a liar

- a. His knowledge of God—what he thinks God is like—is false. His image of God and the ideas within his mind of God are not true. They are false, counterfeit, not genuine. The person does not know God at all.
- b. Mt.7:21-23 – must do will of Father
- c. Mk.7:6-8 – focus on mans rules – vain worship

## 3. Whoever keeps His word

- a. The only way to know anyone is - to get near them, & to study them, learn all about them—all about their will, desires, and wants, their nature and thoughts and behavior.
- b. The same is true with God. The only way to know God is to get near Him and study Him, learning all we can about His will, desires, and wants; all about His nature and thoughts and behavior.
- c. **Note a most wonderful result:** the person who keeps God’s Word has **the love of God perfected in his life.**
  - 1) **What does this mean?** When we draw near God and begin to keep His Word, we begin to *establish a relationship* with God. It is just like a boy who meets a girl and begins to draw near her. He begins to know her and to develop affection for her, and the more he associates with her, the more he loves her.
  - 2) So it is with God. The more we draw near Him and keep His Word and please Him, the more we learn about Him and love Him.
  - 3) **The word “keep” (terei) is continuous action.** It means to continue on and not to stop. It means day-by-day obedience. If we keep God’s Word day by day, then we learn more and more about God; we learn to love Him more and more. His love becomes perfected, completed, and fulfilled in us.
  - 4) Scriptures
    - Mt.12:50 – does my will is my brother
    - Jn.14:23 – does my will – come make abode with him
    - Jn.15:10 – keep command – abide in His love
    - Jn.15:14 – my friends if do what I say

## 4. Say abide in Him ought walk as He walked

- a. The word “walk” (peripatein) is continuous action. It means to keep on walking; to continuously walk.
- b. In fact, the word *ought* means debt, constraint, obligation. The person who professes Jesus Christ, who claims that he knows God, is obligated to walk as Jesus Christ walked. He is in debt to walk as Christ walked.
- c. Jesus always sought to please His Father in everything. Whatever He did was in line with His Father’s will.
- d. Scriptures
  - Mt.16:24 – deny self & follow me
  - Phil.2:5-7 – have this mind in you which was in Christ

## 1 John 2:7-11

### 1. Test # 2 – Love one’s brother

#### a. Do we love our neighbors?

- 1) If we criticize, grumble, gripe, backbite, ignore, neglect, curse, abuse, slander, hate, or mistreat our neighbors in any way, then we do not know God.
- 2) No matter what we may claim nor how loudly we claim it, we do not know God if we do not love our neighbors.
- 3) God is love; therefore any person who truly knows God is bound to love. Loving others is a strong test of our knowledge of God. We can tell whether or not we know God by testing our love for others.

#### b. Note three significant facts.

- 1) This is not a new commandment. One of the very first things that God ever said to man was this: man must love his neighbor (Lev.19:18).
- 2) The commandment is a new commandment. What is so new about love? Jesus Christ!
  - a) Jesus Christ gave love a new meaning. He loved all people – good, bad, righteous & unrighteous.
  - b) This was a totally new concept of love. Man has always felt free to mistreat others, especially those who had mistreated him.
  - c) But Jesus Christ has shown that we cannot mistreat people *no matter what they have done*, that we must love everyone no matter who they are. Mt.5:43-45
- 3) Love is now made known by the true light that shines and erases the darkness (1 John 2:8).
  - a) The darkness refers to man’s old idea of love - that he could react against anyone who mistreated him.
  - b) But Jesus Christ, who is the light of the world, has now shone forth the truth.

### 2. If we hate our brother we walk in darkness

- a. We say, “Oh, I don’t hate my brother. I just don’t like him. I don’t know how to get along with him.” Or, “He just turns me off: his appearance, his behavior.” Or, “He did me wrong; he mistreated me.” Whatever the reason, it is not love.
- b. No man walks in the light of God, no man knows God, unless he loves his neighbor—even the neighbors who stand against him.
- c. **Two wonderful things are said about the person who loves his brother.**
  - 1) He is a man who abides *in the light*, that is, *in Christ*. This man lives and walks in Jesus Christ. He walks in love just as Jesus Christ walked in love.
  - 2) There is no occasion of stumbling in him. There is nothing in him to make him stumble, nothing to trip him up in life, nothing to make him fall and hurt himself or destroy his life.

d. **Several things are said about those who hate their brothers**

- 1) He is in darkness and walks in darkness. He is not in the light, not in Christ. Therefore, he does not know God.
- 2) He has no direction and is blind. He does not look beyond this life and he is blind to it. He sees little if any meaning to life other than getting all he can of its comfort, pleasures, and possessions.
- 3) **Thought** How often a person has opposed a good project simply because he was upset with the leader. The great good of the project is often clearly visible, but hatred blinds the mind and more tragically the heart—so much so that a person makes a fool out of himself without even knowing it. But more tragically, he often causes damage and division among people, and his soul is doomed to be in darkness forever—forever separated from the light of God and of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

## 1 John 2:12-14

### 1. Test # 3 – Spiritual growth

- a. Notice that three groups of people are addressed by John—*little children, fathers, and young men*. Notice also that each one is addressed twice.
  - 1) In 1 John 2:12-13 John uses the present tense and says “I am writing to you.”
  - 2) In 1 John 2:14 he uses the past tense and says, “I have written to you.”
  - 3) Two questions immediately arise: Who are these people and why does John change tenses?
- b. **First, who are the people John is addressing?** Is he addressing the various age groups in the church: the children, the aged fathers, and the young men? Or is he talking about stages of spiritual growth?
  - 1) Now note a significant fact: there are within the church other adults other than fathers and young men. There are full grown men who are aged and there are women.
  - 2) It is doubtful that John would be referring to the various age groups within the church and addressing only the fathers and young men among the adults.
  - 3) **This points rather strongly to John’s classification being the stages of spiritual growth.**
- c. If you really know Christ, then you have grown in Christ; you have developed and matured stage by stage. If you have not grown in Christ, you do not know God. If a person is *truly born again* in Christ, then he begins to live and walk *in Christ*. If he is *truly converted* over to Christ, then he is a follower of Christ; he focuses upon Christ and grows in Christ.

d. The following chart will help us to grasp what John is doing.

I AM WRITING this part of the letter...	Reasons for writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To the little children among you, that is, the newborn Christians</li> <li>• To spiritual fathers among you, that is, the spiritually mature with a deep and rich knowledge of God</li> <li>• To the young men among you, that is, the mature believers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because your sins are forgiven</li> <li>• Because you have known God and have been faithful from the beginning</li> <li>• Because you have overcome the wicked one</li> </ul>

I HAVE WRITTEN the first part of the letter...	Reasons for writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To little children among you, that is, the newborn Christians</li> <li>• To spiritual fathers among you, that is, the spiritually mature with a deep and rich knowledge of God</li> <li>• To the young men among you, that is, the mature believers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because you have known the Father</li> <li>• Because you have known God and have been faithful from the beginning</li> <li>• Because you are strong, have the Word of God abiding in you, and have overcome the wicked one</li> </ul>

e. No matter who the believer is, how weak or strong he is, this message applies to him. This is a message for the whole church.

- 1) There are *little children*, people who have just received Jesus Christ and begun to follow Him. If you are a newborn Christian, remember this: your sins are forgiven.
- 2) But note why: “for his name’s sake.” God forgives our sins *for Christ’s sake*. He cleanses us for the sake of Christ far more than He does for us. Because of what Christ has done, for His sake, God has forgiven our sins.

- 3) There are *fathers*, spiritual fathers, believers who are spiritually mature with a deep and rich knowledge of God. Never forget where you have come from, never forget how you grew in Christ. Jn.8:31,32
- 4) There are *young men*, mature believers in the church. These must remember how far they have come. They have come a long way: they have fought a long battle and they have now overcome the wicked one. The wicked one used to attack them right and left, at every turn. He attacked them with every temptation imaginable, but especially with the sins that were so common before their conversion.
- 5) Satan does not want to lose us or our loyalty to sin; he wants to cause God as much pain as possible. Therefore right after we accept Christ, he attacks us with far greater force than ever before.
  - (a) But the mature believer overcomes. However, he must remember how he overcame, for Satan stays after the believer as long as he is on earth.
  - (b) The attacks perhaps are not as often nor as fierce as when the believer was younger, but the believer must stay strong or else he will be caught off-guard and fall into sin.
  - (c) The mature believer must always remember how he overcame the wicked one and continue to combat him in the Word.

f. How do believers overcome Satan?

- 1) By drawing near God and asking for wisdom. James 1:5
- 2) By using God's Word, quoting it over and over in their minds, to conquer the temptation. Lk.4:8
- 3) By learning and knowing that God allows temptation to teach endurance. James 1:2-4
- 4) By not yielding their bodily members to sin. Rom.6:11-13
- 5) By clothing themselves with the armor of God. Eph.6:13
- 6) By being on guard and watching for the tempter's temptations. 1 Pet.5:8
- 7) By submitting to God and resisting the devil. James 4:7
- 8) By not giving in to the enticement of sinners. Prov.1:10
- 9) By not entering into the path of the wicked. Prov.4:14

**2. Why John changes tenses – so we will always remember our relationship to God**

- a. What John has written has been written to stir up their relationship to the Father. Believers, no matter their stage of spiritual growth, must never forget who it is they know: God the Father.
- b. *Little children*, young believers, must remember that they have known the Father & have just been adopted into the family of God. God Himself, the Supreme Force of the universe, is not some abstract energy way off in outer space. God is a Person and He desires to relate to man. He wants to become a Father to people. He wants to adopt people as His children, to have people believe in Him and trust Him to look after them.

- c. *Fathers*, the believers who have a deep and rich knowledge of God, must always remember that they have known God who is from the beginning. They must remember everything that has been said to them & in addition, they must never be lifted up with pride—no matter how long they have walked with God. No matter how deep and rich the believer's knowledge of God is, there is so much more to know. God is eternal and He has an eternity of experience for us to learn about. Therefore, we must never be lifted up with pride as though we know God and have arrived.
- d. *Young men*, the mature believers, must remember three things.
- 1) Mature believers must remember that they are strong. They must know their strength and be assured and have confidence in the strength they have gained.
    - a) But mature believers must remember where their strength comes from and how they became spiritually strong: all through Jesus Christ.
    - b) Note: believers must never trust the power of the flesh, of mental determination. The flesh and the mind fail. Neither can be consistently strong in controlling the flesh. Both mind and body will eventually weaken and fail in spiritual warfare. Jn.15:5; 2 Cor.3:5; 2 Cor.12:7-10
  - 2) Mature believers must remember that the Word of God abides in them. This is the key to spiritual growth and to pleasing and securing the approval of God.
    - a) No matter what a person may think or say, there is no spiritual growth apart from God's Word.
    - b) No person pleases or secures God's approval without studying and living in God's Word.
    - c) Mature believers must never forget this, and they must continue to give their lives to studying and living in the Word of God. Acts 20:32; 2 Tim.2:15; 2 Tim.3:16; 1 Pet.2:1,2
  - 3) Mature believers must remember that they have overcome the wicked one.

## Proof That One Really Knows God # 2

### Introduction

In our last lesson we began a discussion of John's seven signs that one really knows God. For John knowing God meant that there had to be a change in one's life to match that confession. One could not just intellectually know God & truly know God. His previous tests were - are you keeping His commands; do you love your brother & are you growing spiritually. In this lesson we will look at the other four tests.

### 1 John 2:15-17

#### 1. Test # 4 – Do we love the world.

##### a. Means

- 1) **Not** – do we appreciate the beauty, resources & splendor of the heavens & the earth. God has given these to us to use & enjoy & to appreciate.
  - a) God's creation is good – Gen.1:31
  - b) Not mankind – God loves man – Jn.3:16
- 2) **Idea** – placing the possessions & pleasures of this world before God. When the physical things in life are of prime importance to us & we build our lives around them. That we are more attached to these than we are to God.
  - a) God not want us loving sin or evil – what Satan dominates
  - b) Just as phrase “world of sports” describes domain in which sports dominates, so “this world” refers to where sin dominates.

##### b. Scripture

- 1) Rom.12:2 – be not conformed to the world
- 2) Gal.6:14 – crucified to world
- 3) 2 Tim.2:4 – not entangle self with world

#### 2. Three things in particular that makes up the world

- a. **Lust of the flesh** – has to do with desires & urges that are out of control. When they begin to rule us & we become their slaves – Rom.6:15-18
  - 1) Not all desires are wrong. God made us physical & desires are there to help us survive & live in this world.
  - 2) It's when these desires consume us & we begin to indulge them & give them control of our lives that we sin.
  - 3) The works of the flesh – Gal.5:19-21
- b. **Lust of the eyes** – has to do with wanting all that one sees. We desire what is forbidden by God & we want to consume it on ourselves. To sum it up in a word – covetousness. A modern day expression would be materialism.
  - 1) Mt.6:23 – eyes full of evil
  - 2) Lk.12:15 – life not consist in abundance of one's possessions
  - 3) How serious is this – Eph.5:5-7; Col.3:5-7

c. **The pride of life** – person whose focus is primarily self-centered & being self sufficient.

- 1) Wants all the attention directed upon himself & feels completely capable of handling life himself. It is a person who feels that self-image, public image, ego and personal strength are the basis of life; a person who feels little if any need for God.
- 2) Feels that this world is an end within itself, that there is probably nothing beyond this life; therefore, he is to get all the comfort, pleasure, luxury, honor, and glory that he can while here.
- 3) This would include pride based upon such things as - age; experience; ancestry; past accomplishments; money; position; power etc.
- 4) Rev.3:17; Prov.27:1

### 3. A few passing observations

- a. Each of these three things often strikes harder at different times in our lives.
  - 1) Young most often affected by the “lust of the flesh”
  - 2) Middle aged usually affected by the “pride of life”
  - 3) Aged more likely plagued with the “pride of life”
- b. There seems to be a tendency among us to consider the “lust of the flesh more serious than the others.
  - 1) Which is worse – fornication or covetousness? Col.3:5; Eph.5:5
  - 2) Which consider more serious – adultery or jealousy?
- c. If we are not careful while standing strong against immorality we will allow materialism & pride to sneak in the back door.

### 4. Results of loving the world

- a. **Love of the Father is not in him – impossible to love the Father**
  - 1) More attached to world than to God
  - 2) No longer worship God regularly; more attached to the world’s mission than God’s mission; consumed by the world’s pleasures & possessions
  - 3) James 4:4 – friendship with world = enmity with God
  - 4) Mt.6:24 – can’t serve 2 masters
- b. **To see why let’s define “the love of the Father”**
  - 1) Jn.14:15,21 – if love me = keep my commandments
  - 2) Jn.15:10 – if keep commands remain in His love
  - 3) 1 Jn.5:3 – love for God = keep commandments
- c. **If we love the world we can’t keep God’s commandments**
  - 1) If driven by lust of flesh – will defraud others – 1 Thess.4:3-6
  - 2) If ruled by lust of eyes – won’t help the needy – 1 Jn.3:16,17
  - 3) If filled with pride of life – never put others 1<sup>st</sup> – Phil.2:3,4

### 5. The world & it’s desires are temporary

- a. Everything is running down – dying – James 4:13,14
- b. One day everything be destroyed – 2 Pet.3:10

c. Only what is of God is eternal – Jn.5:24; Rev.22:14

## 1 Jn.2:18-23

### 1. Test # 5 - Warning concerning the antichrist's – are we on guard against?

- a. Note the word is plural not singular – speaking of false teachers
- b. Note the tenderness in which John writes – calls them “little children”
- c. They are facing a critical time – problem very real in John's day
  - 1) Those who raise questions & cause doubts & unbelief
  - 2) John is the only NT writer to use term “antichrist”
    - a) Term commonly used today to refer to one individual who is supposed to appear in the “end times”. An individual who will arise & lead many people astray before Christ comes again. Lawless one referred to in 2 Thess.2
    - b) Actually as John discusses these antichrists he introduces a very important point – how can we really be sure about the source of truth & not make ourselves the standard of right & wrong?
    - c) Truth does not originate in man – it comes from God

### 2. Term “last hour”

- a. Refers to an end of an era, not the end of time!
  - 1) Acts 2:17 – in last days pour out Spirit (was happening then)
  - 2) Heb.1:2 – in last days spoken to us by His son
  - 3) 2 Pet.3:3 – last days scoffers come
  - 4) **Idea** – transition time – new condition being introduced by the people John refers to as antichrists.
    - a) Jn.4:23 – hour coming & now is (transition in worship)
    - b) Jn.5:25,28 – transition – Son the one listen too
  - 5) Last hour is to come with antichrists & they are already here – vs.19
- b. Paganism is beginning to affect Christianity – Gnosticism
  - 1) Pagan philosophies are being introduced
  - 2) Christianity is being pagan-ized (Christmas tree etc.)
  - 3) Before Jewish traditions were dominant, but now pagan traditions will seek to change the gospel.
  - 4) People will be teaching that sin doesn't matter – that knowledge is earth centered not heaven centered.

### 3. Identifying the antichrists

- a. Those introducing different doctrines on immorality & attitudes about Jesus
- b. They went out from us – not really belong to us
  - 1) Claimed have fellowship with Jesus but walked in darkness
  - 2) Claimed to know God but not keep commandments
  - 3) Not hold to apostles teaching – invented own doctrines
  - 4) Denied the humanity & deity of Jesus

- c. Look today & see the religious groups claiming to be Christians that allow immorality (homosexuality, incest etc.)
    - 1) Jehovah Witnesses deny the deity of Jesus
    - 2) Those who have added commandments - forbid marriage & certain foods
  - d. Mt.7:15-23 – false prophets – identify by fruit in life
  - e. 2 Cor.11:13-15 – Satan appear as an angel of light
  - f. 1 Tim.4:1,2 – some listen to doctrines of demons
  - g. 1 Tim.6:3-5 – think godliness is a way to wealth
  - h. 2 Tim.4:1-4 – follow lusts – teachers favoring those lusts
- 4. God provided us protection from false teachers – “an anointing”**
- a. Some say this is a reference to a special anointing from the Holy Spirit
    - 1) 2 Cor.1:21,22 – anointed & sealed with Holy Spirit
    - 2) Jn.16:7-11 – given to teach us all truth
    - 3) **Problems**
      - a) **If so** – each have a direct hotline to revelation
      - b) Holy Spirit is never referred to as an “it” – Vs.27 (called “He” Jn16:13)
  - b. **Note** – not say you “**have been** anointed” but says you “**have** an anointing”
    - 1) 1 Jn.2:2 – we have an advocate = Jesus
    - 2) 1 Jn.2:27 – anointing remains in us & teaches us = Holy Spirit
    - 3) Holy Spirit uses the word to bring us to completion – 2 Tim.3:16,17
    - 4) We are to remain in Jesus’ word – Jn.8:31,32; Jn.17:17

### **1 Jn.2:24-27**

#### **1. Test # 6 - Does the gospel abide in you?**

- a. How we live shows quicker than anything else whether or not we are Christians
  - 1) Regardless of what we know or feel – if not live truth not know God
  - 2) Regardless of what others may think or suppose – lifestyle matters
- b. What you have heard from the beginning refers to the gospel
  - 1) Unless remain in it – not His
  - 2) Remain = abide; dwell; at home
- c. Col.2:6; 1 Jn.2:6

#### **2. The promise – eternal life**

- a. Has nothing to do with time – time immaterial where God is – not limit Him
- b. Has to do with position – quality & what life really is – is found only in God
  - 1) Jn.17:3 – know Him
  - 2) Jn.5:24 – believe in Me has eternal life

#### **3. Always be those who try to deceive you – be on guard**

**1 Jn.2:28,29****1. Test # 7 – Abiding In Christ**

- a. **Abide** = dwell, continue, sojourn, rest in or upon
  - 1) Idea is being at home, permanent or settled
  - 2) Dwelling in Christ is living a life like He showed us to live – seeking to be right with God & man.
  - 3) 1 Jn.4:15,16 – acknowledge Jesus is God’s Son lives in (abides)
  - 4) 1 Jn.2:6 – claims to live (abide) in Him must walk as Jesus did.
  - 5) Jn.8:31,32 – If abide in My word you are My disciples
  - 6) Jn.15:5 – abide in Him fruitful
  - 7) 1 Jn.4:12,13 – abide in Him we love others
- b. **Results of abiding in Him**
  - 1) **Confidence when He appears**
    - a) **Means** boldness & assurance
    - b) Idea - unshakeable boldness & assurance
  - 2) **Not shrink away in shame**
    - a) **Ashamed** – sense of guilt & disgrace & embarrassment
    - b) There will be those who will be ashamed when Christ appears

**2. Proof one abides in Christ – living a righteous life**

- a. Mt.7:16-18 – know them by their fruits
- b. Mt.7:21-23 – not all who say Lord enters kingdom – must do will of Father

## God's Incredible Love

### Introduction

John has impressed his readers that they have all the spiritual information that they need & that this information has come to them through Jesus Christ. They have an anointing (2:20) & John encourages them to stay with what they have been given (2:24), what they have already heard. He also encouraged them to not listen to those who deny Jesus & claim to have additional information (2:27), because they have nothing to add to truth. They had already received everything they needed spiritually to be right with God from Jesus. He is the one who has the ultimate knowledge. Now John turns to the subject of love & shares several truths about the subject of love in the next two chapters.

### 1 John3:1-3

#### 1. The incredible love that God has lavished upon us.

##### a. KJV - behold

- 1) Pay attention to, perceive or experience something; look with intense & earnest consideration. (Mt.6:26)
- 2) John wants to impress them with the love God has bestowed upon them.
- 3) See how great a thing that this is to you.

##### b. Why is God's love for us so amazing?

- 1) God has lavished this upon us
  - a) **Means** – to give or bestow something freely & abundantly
  - b) Here is a gift for which we are totally undeserving – He decided
- 2) We are so undeserving – Rom.5:6-10
  - a) Powerless & ungodly sinners
  - b) Enemies of God
- 3) Allowed to become children of God
  - a) Not just redeemed & saved from His wrath, but children
  - b) Allowed to become a part of His family & situations
- 4) Eph.3:17-19 – love so difficult to comprehend – beyond comprehension

##### c. Question – how do you picture God?

- 1) Distant, unreachable, unconcerned, vengeful, hovering over us looking for any mistake & flaw so that He might pour out His wrath upon us?
- 2) God says that God is just the opposite – He loves us with an incredible love that is beyond anything we can even begin to comprehend.
  - a) He cares & wants to help us
  - b) He has given us an awesome privilege – to become His child
  - c) Jn.1:12 – those who received Him given power to become
  - d) Rom.8:15 – received the spirit of son ship
  - e) 2 Cor.6:17,18 – you shall be my sons & daughters
  - f) Gal.4:4-6 – might receive full rights as sons

## 2. We are called children of God

### a. What an honor that God would even take notice of us - sinners

- 1) Ps.8:1-4 – created lower than angels & crowned with honor
- 2) World doesn't recognize us as such
  - a) They have no appreciation for us
  - b) Often mocked, ridiculed & ignored – even abused & persecuted
  - c) See us as a threat to their way of life
  - d) See us as fanatics & fools
- 3) Reason world not know us – never knew Jesus
  - a) Never recognized Him for who & what He was
  - b) To them He was just a man, one who violated their traditions

### b. What we shall be

- 1) **Not yet fully revealed**
  - a) Because of our inability to comprehend
  - b) Promised a spiritual body – 1 Cor.15:42-44, 50-53
- 2) **We shall be like Jesus**
  - a) 1 Cor.15:49 – bear His image
  - b) Phil.3:20,21 – transformed to be like Him

## 3. What we should be as children of God

### a. Motivated by our hope (earnest expectation)

- 1) Hope ought to move us to be accomplishing things now
- 2) Our lives ought to change because of the great things God has already done for us in Jesus.

### b. Diligently involved in purifying ourselves

- 1) Purify – make clean, sanctify; closely related to word holiness
- 2) Involves the idea of being set apart for a holy purpose
- 3) Thought – what we should pursue – Heb.12:14
- 4) We know that one day when Jesus returns we will be changed, but even now that should be our goal – to become more & more like Him

### c. How do we accomplish this?

- 1) Appropriate the blood of Jesus – 1 Jn.1:9; Eph.5:25-27
- 2) Remove ourselves from things that defile us – 2 Cor.6:16-7:1
- 3) Mt.5:8; 2 Tim.2:21; Heb.12:14; James 4:8; 2 Pet.3:11

## Sin & It's Enslavement

### Introduction

As John begins to discuss the Love God has shown to us through Jesus Christ, he focuses upon the response that we ought to have toward this love – purifying ourselves. Through the blood of Jesus, God has provided us with a tremendous opportunity – to become His children & to live a righteous life before Him. God wants a holy people, a people without spot or blemish, and for this to become a reality in our lives we have to have the proper attitude toward sin and the things in life that would defile us. In this section John discusses turning away from sin & it's enslavement.

### 1 John 3:4-9

#### 1. Definition of sin

- a. **To most people**, sin is thought to be the gross sins of society, the crimes that make the headlines of our newspapers and telecasts. The sins committed by ordinary people are not thought to be that serious. In fact, most people think that what little wrong they do could never be interpreted as sin. Therefore, to them they only make a mistake; have a shortcoming, are guilty of failure; had a psychological quirk; made a bad decision; committed an irrational act or are guilty of committing a social flaw. To them they are not really sinners.
- b. **Meaning of sin** – literally “to miss the mark”
  - 1) As when an archer misses the center of the target
  - 2) Therefore sin is some kind of action (or the lack of action) in which one fails to meet the goal that God intended in their life.
  - 3) Rom.3:23 – all man are sinners in that they do not live perfect lives before God (see also Rom.3:10-18; 1 Jn.1:8; Isa.53:6)
  - 4) **As defined by John** sin is “lawlessness” or a transgression of the law
    - a) Word literally means “the violation of the law”
    - b) Idea is when one does what is forbidden
    - c) James 4:17 – **James also adds** the idea of failing to do the good that God commanded (such as failing to love one another). While we may not do ill toward others, failure to do good is just as much a sin.
  - 5) **Both of these definitions** show that sin is the failure to meet a certain standard – to miss the mark.
    - a) In John's case, that standard is the Law of God
    - b) James sees it as failing to do the good one knows to do
- c. **Failure to understand the true nature of sin** is one reason why there is so much apathy toward the subject today. We fail to see that every time we sin we adversely affect our relationship with God, others & even ourselves.
  - 1) Sin is choosing to go one's own way in life, doing one's own thing instead of doing what God says.

- 2) Sin is living like one wants instead of living like God says.
  - 3) Sin is disobeying God, not doing what God says to do and doing what God says not to do.
  - 4) Sin is disbelieving God instead of believing what God says.
  - 5) Sin is ignoring God and neglecting God instead of following and worshipping Him as He says.
  - 6) Sin is rebelling against God instead of doing what God says.
  - 7) Sin is rejecting God and denying God instead of confessing God and becoming a follower of God.
- d. **God is perfect.** Therefore, only perfection is acceptable to God. This is shocking; nevertheless it is true.
- 1) If God lets anything less than perfection into heaven, then heaven would no longer be perfect. Therefore, God can never accept anything other than perfection.
  - 2) This is what sin is: imperfection—coming short of God’s glory and of God’s perfect nature. Consequently, man not only does things that come short of God’s perfection; man himself is short of God’s nature.
- e. **Additional thoughts on sin** - there are a number of Hebrew and Greek words for sin in the Bible. A literal translation of the major words will show the meaning of sin.
- 1) Sin is unbelief, the failure to believe God - Matt.13:58; Matt.17:20; Rom.3:3; 4:20; 11:20, 23; 1 Tim. 1:13; Hebrews 3:12, 19.
  - 2) Sin is missing the mark, coming short of the glory of God - Rom.3:23
  - 3) Sin is error, making a mistake; a wandering off of the right path (Romans 1:27; James 5:20; 2 Peter 2:18; 2 Peter 3:17; Jude 11).
  - 4) Sin is ungodliness and unrighteousness (Rom.1:18; 11:26; 2 Tim. 2:16; Titus 2:12; Jude 15, 18).
  - 5) Sin is stepping outside the law - Rom.3:23;4:15; 5:13, 20; Hebrews 2:2; Hebrews 9:15.
  - 6) Sin is trespassing, intruding where one should not go - Eph. 2:1
  - 7) Sin is disobedience, a refusal to listen and hear and do - Eph. 2:2; 5:6; Col. 3:6
  - 8) Sin is lawlessness, rebellion, a rejection of God’s will and law (1 John 3:4).
  - 9) Sin is iniquity, an inward contempt that leads to the continual practice of sin (Matt.7:23; Rom.6:19; 2 Thess. 2:3. Cp. Romans 1:21-23.)
  - 10) All men have sinned (Romans 3:23). Sin first entered the world through Adam (Romans 5:12). Because of sin, all men are spiritually dead, forever, and are destined to die physically (Romans 6:23; cp. Genesis 2:17; Genesis 3:19; Ezekiel 18:4, 20). But there is a deliverance from sin and from its penalty—the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12; Hebrews 9:26).

## 2. Jesus came that sin might be done away with

### a. In Him there is no sin – Jesus lived a sinless life, a life of absolute perfection.

- 1) When we really believe in Jesus Christ (accept Him as our Lord), God counts the sacrifice that Jesus made in His death for us.
- 2) God no longer sees our sins, for Jesus Christ took them and died for them. They are thereby removed from us, and we are counted free of sin.
- 3) They are gone forever because Jesus Christ took them upon Himself and died for them. Consequently, being free of sin, we become acceptable to God.

### b. No one who lives in Him keeps on sinning

- 1) To continue to walk in sin undermines the purpose Jesus came.
- 2) When we truly understand this we begin to see how terrible sin is in God's eyes. Our goal must be to refrain from sin.
- 3) Christ paid such an enormous price to take away our sins that we want to please Him. We dare not do anything to hurt Him or cause Him pain; therefore, we do all we can to please Him.

### c. No one who continues to live in sin knows Jesus

- 1) **This does not mean** that we have to be perfect to be saved from sin.
- 2) **In Greek it means** - if we continue in sin, if we go on sinning and sinning, practice sin, then we do not really know Christ.
- 3) **A true believer is still short of God's glory**; he still sins. (1Jn.1:8-10)  
He is still human flesh; therefore, he cannot keep from sinning—not all of the time, not perfectly.
- 4) **However**, sin is not the dominant focus of his life. He does not keep his mind on the comforts and pleasures and possessions of this life.
  - a) His focus is Jesus Christ and His mission of righteousness and salvation.
  - b) He gives of himself, all he is and has, to reach people for Christ and to minister to the desperate needs of the world.
  - c) He works and labors and then keeps on working and laboring for righteousness and love upon the earth.
- 5) **But note**: the person whose focus is still on the world and its pleasures and possessions—the person who continues to sin—that person has not seen Jesus Christ, neither known Him.
  - a) Once a person sees Jesus Christ, once a person really knows Christ, that person focuses upon and gives his life to Christ.
  - b) He turns away from sin and turns and follows Jesus Christ. He abides in Christ. He lives and moves and has his being in Christ, in all that Christ taught.
- 6) John is concerned with practicing sin, continuously engaging in it

### d. We can be deceived about the matter of sin and righteousness.

- 1) Many think that they are saved and acceptable to God because they have - professed Christ; been baptized; joined the church; attended church; fellowshiped with Christians; read the Bible & pray.

- 2) They think that if they do these things they can live like they want.
- 3) They think that they can go ahead and enjoy a few of the worlds pleasures and continue to seek after more and more of the worlds comforts and possessions.
- 4) They think that God will still accept them. But note this verse:  
**“Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous”**  
(1 John 3:7).
- 5) The only person who is acceptable to God is the person who lives righteously, who follows after the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The demand of Jesus Christ is clear.  
**“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me”**  
(Luke 9:23).

e. **He who does what is sinful is of the devil**

- 1) Sin is of the devil, he has sinned from the beginning – Jn.8:44
- 2) Those who practice sin are his children, they do the desires of their father – demonstrating his dominate influence in their lives.
- 3) Satan was the 1<sup>st</sup> to rebel against God & so is the father of sin. All who make sin a practice in their lives are following in his footsteps. Morally & spiritually they are his offspring.
- 4) Our sin separates us from God & causes us to die & brings God’s judgment upon us. Eph.2:1-3

f. **Jesus appeared to destroy Satan’s work** & one born of God will not continue to live in sin.

- 1) **Satan’s power & influence** have been destroyed
  - a) Heb.2:14-18
  - b) Rom.8:32,33
  - c) Men no longer have to fear death or Satan. Satan can no longer keep us separated from God.
  - d) Satan no longer has the power to keep us enslaved in sin. Now the Holy Spirit indwells us & we have become a temple of God – a holy people – 1 Cor.6:19,20; 1 John 4:4
- 2) **Why is this true** – His seed remains in him
  - a) This clearly involves the word of God – James 1:18; 1 Pet.1:22,23
  - b) As long as one allows the word of God to influence his life he will not continuously practice sin. Instead he will strive to practice righteousness.
  - c) God’s divine nature has been planted within us & we cannot go on sinning. – 2 Pet.1:3,4
  - d) He will continue to pester & provoke us & convict us through His word & His Spirit that we cannot stand to live in sin.
    - (1) However if we continually resist Him we will be lost
    - (2) 2 Pet.1:8-11; Heb.6:1-8; 10:26-31

- 3) Barclay in his commentary says - *“John is not setting before us here a terrifying perfectionism, in which he is demanding a life which is totally and absolutely without sin; but he is demanding a life which is ever on the watch against sin, a life which ever fights the battle of goodness, a life which has never surrendered to sin, a life in which sin is not the permanent state, but only the temporary aberration, a life in which sin is not the normal accepted way, but the abnormal moment of defeat. John is not saying that the man who abides in God cannot sin; but he is saying that the man who abides in God cannot continue to be a consistent and deliberate sinner”* (The Letters of John and Jude, p.96f).
- 4) In Jesus the idea is that sin is to be gone forever.
- (a) Christians must try to make that true, and, with the help of Christ, they must struggle to avoid individual acts of sin, occasional lapses into that which is wrong, temporary departures from goodness.
  - (b) In point of fact all men do have these lapses, and, when they have them, they must humbly confess them to God, who will always forgive the penitent and the contrite heart.
  - (c) But, in spite of that, no Christian can possibly be a deliberate and a consistent sinner; no Christian can make sin the policy of his life; no Christian can live a life in which sin is dominant and decisive in all his actions. He may have lapses, but he cannot live in sin as the very atmosphere of his life.”
- 5) 1 Jn.1:6-10; 2:1,2; Heb.12:14; 1 Pet.1:16; 2 Pet.3:11

## Children of God Vs. Children of the Devil

### Introduction

John has been discussing the difference between children of God & children of the Devil. Children of God focus their lives on obeying God & do not practice sin. They may sin, but they do not make it habit, or continually walk in unrighteousness. However, children of the devil do make sin a practice & do not seek to repent & be obedient to God. In this section John continues to contrast the difference by bringing up two other practices, the practice of living righteously & having brotherly love.

### 1 John 3:10-17

#### 1. Who is a child of the devil?

##### a. One who does not do what is right

- 1) God is holy, righteous & pure – 1 Pet.1:13-15
- 2) Therefore anyone who does not seek to live as He is, is not fit to be in His presence & cannot be His child.
  - a) Their life stands for all that opposes all that God stands for.
  - b) The things they do are against His nature
- 3) John says – all you have to do is examine a person's life & see if they are a child of God or a child of the devil – what do they practice?

##### b. One who does not love his brother (fellowman)

###### 1) Love means

###### a) 1 Cor.13:4-8

- 1) Being patient with others
- 2) Being kind in our actions toward others
- 3) Not being envious of what others have & are achieving
- 4) Not being boastful or arrogant toward others
- 5) Not being rude
- 6) Not being selfish
- 7) Not being angry & holding grudges
- 8) Being forgiving
- 9) Not delighting in evil
- 10) Rejoicing when truth prevails
- 11) Seeking to be protective & trusting of others
- 12) Being hopeful & persevering in relationships

###### b) Rom.13:8-10

- 1) Doing no harm to another person
- 2) Fulfilling the principles of the Law toward others

#### 2. Do not be like Cain

##### a. Cain did not love his brother - therefore he murdered him

1. Cain wanted acceptance from God without being obedient
  - a) Thought he could bring any sacrifice to God & it be acceptable
  - b) Was angry that others had a greater devotion to God than he did

2. Not happy when his brother's sacrifice was accepted
3. Took out his anger toward God on his brother

**b. Love does not persecute the righteous**

1. Means we will not even dislike another
2. Love does not – criticize, abuse, backbite, gossip, spread rumors, down grade, hurt, attack, destroy, talk about, murder etc.
3. Love cares & wants the best for others

**3. Don't be surprised that the world hates you**

**a. Perhaps the most misunderstood concept about Christianity**

1. We seek to do right to others & expect them to respond accordingly
2. When they don't – we react instead of expecting mistreatment
3. Warned over & over this will happen – still surprised

Jn.15:18-25; 17:14; Mt.24:9-13; 1 Jn.3:1; 2 Tim.3:10-13

**b. Satan rules & has tremendous influence over the world**

1. Satan hates God & His Son Jesus
2. Rev.12:12:12 – filled with fury against all who follow Jesus

**c. This hostility against all who seek to honor God began with Cain**

1. Satan had already got Adam & Eve to rebel
2. How dare Abel seek to be right with God – influenced Cain

**4. Love – the evidence we have passed from death into life**

**a. Death** = spiritual life & death, not physical

**b. Love** - mark of true conversion – manifests that Jesus & His Spirit are in us

- 1) Jn.13:34,35
- 2) Love not the cause for eternal life, but the proof we have it
- 3) If love not prevalent in life – sign not saved – not His – 1 Cor.13:1-3

**c. Lack of love means** we still abide in spiritual death – 1 Jn.2:9,11

**5. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer**

**a. Hate** – to pursue one with hatred; to detest

**b. In God's eyes** Anger, bitterness, and contempt are just as serious as murder.

1. Why? Because the person who hates has the very same feelings and spirit that the murderer does—a spirit of anger, bitterness, and contempt.
2. The murderer reacts differently, more violently, but the heart of both the hater and murderer is the same.
3. God looks and judges by the heart.
4. Mt.5:21,22

**c. No murderer has eternal life** – the implication is that one who hates his brother does not have eternal life either.

1. A person who has negative feelings swirling within his heart, who has allowed his heart to become hardened; has cut off fellowship with his brother – is also cut off from God
2. He has destroyed himself spiritually

**6. Jesus defined love for us**

- a. **Love** = active good will
- b. **Jesus demonstrated this in giving His life for us**
  - 1) Laid down His life – Rom.5:6
  - 2) Willingly did this when we were unable to help ourselves
- c. **God wants us to love people just like Jesus did** – Jn.13:34,35
  - 1) Not matter if deserving or not
  - 2) Because they are God's creation is all that matters
- d. **Difference between God's children & Satan's children is love** – Satan's children hate & destroy life, while God's children love & willingly lay down their lives for others.
- e. **Brotherly love means sacrificially serving others**

**7. An example of not loving**

- a. To have what another needs & refuse to help
- b. To only talk about helping, but never following through
- c. World's goods = necessities of life
- d. God's love does not exist in a person who refuses to help another in need when they have the ability to help them.
- e. Lk.12:33; Acts 20:35; Rom.12:9-13; Gal.6:10; 1 Tim.6:17-19; Heb.13:16

## Loving In Deed & In Truth

### Introduction

Do we really love God? John addresses this question throughout chapter three & the rest of his book. Really loving God is far more than just saying that you love Him. Real love is something that is demonstrated over & over in lifestyle far more than in words. One can say anything, but real love will demonstrate itself. John has already shared things like seeking to be pure & not practicing sin as well as loving our brothers. In this section John shares that real love for God will show itself in living & loving as Jesus did.

### 1 John 3:18-24

#### 1. Don't merely love in theory

- a. Amplified version - **“Little children, let us not love [merely] in theory or in speech but in deed and in truth - in practice and in sincerity”**
- b. **It's easy to say we love others**, but God wants us to love sincerely
  - a. Most people feel for others that are suffering needs – some will act
  - b. Yet if that person has done evil against them, feelings change.
    - 1) Attitude is no longer compassion – deserve it
    - 2) Just reaping what they sowed – made bed, lie in it – God is judging them
  - c. Jesus demonstrated love in loving the unlovable – Rom.5:6-8
  - d. John wants us to love as Jesus loved – even the unlovable
- c. When we can grow to love the unlovable (our enemies) than we are going beyond mere words & theory. There should never be any question or doubt about our loving one another – Jn.13:34,35
- d. **Brotherly love means** – to willingly sacrifice for another. Although we may never have the opportunity to die for another as Jesus did, we do have opportunities to demonstrate our love in meeting everyday needs. To fail to do that, demonstrates that we do not love God.
- e. **Question** – are we willing to sacrifice what we might have spent upon ourselves to meet the needs of others? If not, the love of God is not in us.
- f. Fine words will never take the place of fine deeds & the talk of Christian love will never take the place of actions that demonstrate that love.

#### 2. Do we belong to the truth?

- a. **In the human heart there are always times that we have some doubt.**
  - 1) Am I really doing the will of God?
  - 2) Is there some way that we might be fully assured? John says – yes
  - 3) That assurance comes when love is truly demonstrated in our actions
  - 4) We may be conscious of many sins, but if we are conscious of love for our fellow man, then we are not far from Jesus.
- b. **Christianity is far more than just being coldly correct.**
  - 1) The Scribes & Pharisees were coldly correct, but Jesus calls us to go far beyond them in our righteousness – Mt.5:20

- 2) Focusing upon the letter of the law is not enough; God wants us to focus on fulfilling the intent of the law.
  - 3) Gal.5:22-26 – there are no limits to how far we can go in living out the fruit of the Spirit. We can be as creative as we desire & practice these in abundance.
- c. **Question** – when a group of Christians are faced with a need in the life of another; is the love of Christ demonstrated when they merely pray about that need & yet do nothing to meet that need & yet they have thousands of dollars in the bank that could be used to meet those needs? Can they be assured that they are in God’s will?

### 3. Having our hearts at rest in His presence

- a. **Everyone’s heart condemns him or her sometimes.** God wants our hearts to be sensitive concerning the sin that is in our lives.
  - 1) When we are in the presence of a sinless God we will feel guilty
  - 2) That sensitiveness is to motivate us to change – to repent
- b. **What does phrase “God is greater than our hearts” mean?**
  - 1) If our heart condemns us, realize that God is infinitely greater than our heart, so how much more must this holy & all knowing God condemn us?
    - a) If we take this meaning, we are left with nothing but fear & dread concerning being in the presence of God.
    - b) John’s context is confidence, not fear & dread, so it must mean something different.
  - 2) Our hearts condemn us – that’s inevitable; but God is greater – He knows not only our sins, but also our love, our longings & motivations.
    - a) This knowledge gives Him sympathy & understanding.
    - b) He knows we are limited & accepts not only what we have been able to accomplish, but also what we meant to do or would do if we had the opportunity & can forgive us & accept us as we are.
  - 3) God wants us to be filled with comfort & assurance as we walk faithfully with Him.
    - a) Therefore He continually cleanses us from sin – 1 Jn.1:7
    - b) He also wants us confident that we will be cleansed as we strive to confess & deal with any sin in our lives – 1 Jn.1:8-2:2
    - c) In addition, as we strive to demonstrate our love for Him by loving others, (as imperfect as that demonstration may be) He still assures us & wants our hearts to be confident.
  - 4) Man can only judge by actions, but God looks deeper – at the heart. God sees the longings that never became deeds, the dreams & intentions which never came true.
    - a) David wished to build a Temple for the Lord, but that dream never came to fruition. It was denied him – 1 Kings 8:17,18

- b) We too may long to do things for God but are never given the opportunity; but rest assured God knows the heart.
- 5) If in our heart there is love, then, however dim & feeble or imperfect & helpless that love may be, we can still confidently enter His presence – He knows our heart.
- 6) God's perfect knowledge should not bring us fear, but hope.

#### 4. Brotherly love leads to confidence in prayer

- a. When our hearts do not condemn us we have confidence before God. The context is, loving others as Jesus loved us; so this confidence John speaks of is because we are striving to love one another.
- b. Therefore we can come into His presence knowing He accepts us & wants to answer our prayers. We have no need to doubt that He will accept us.
- c. We know that we are pleasing Him. Command keeping, is one condition of answered prayer, as is also abiding in His love & loving one another.  
Jn.15:9-17

#### 5. God's command – believe in the name of His Son; love one another

- a. **What does it mean to believe *on the name* of someone?**
  - 1) A person's name stands for what he is, for the kind of person he is and for the kind of things he does; not simply the name by which he is called.
    - a) It means the whole nature & character of that person as far as it is revealed to us.
    - b) Ps.124:8 – “Our help is in the name of the Lord”
      - (1) **Not mean** – our help lies in the fact that God is called Jehovah
      - (2) **Means** – our help is the love, the mercy, the power & the compassion, that has been revealed to us in the nature & character of God.
  - 2) Therefore, to believe on the name of Jesus Christ means to believe in all that He stands for and in all that He is.
    - a) We believe that He is the Son of God
    - b) We believe that He perfectly reveals God to man
    - c) We believe that He completely saves us by His sacrifice of Himself on the cross.
    - d) We accept Jesus for what He really is.
- b. **Must love one another as He loved us** – Jn.13:34,35
  - 1) Love in that same selfless, sacrificial & forgiving way
  - 2) We are His body here on earth & should live as He did
- c. **Putting these two commandments together shows that the Christian life depends upon both the right belief as well as the right conduct.**
  - 1) You cannot have one without the other
  - 2) There is no such thing as Christian theology without Christian ethics.
  - 3) Also there is no Christian ethic without Christian theology

**6. How we know He lives in us – by the Spirit He gave us**

- a. My opinion - Bad place for a chapter break – thought continues into chapter 4
  - 1) Chapter breaks are not inspired
  - 2) There are there to help us find certain areas
- b. John doesn't want his readers listening to or following false teachers.
  - 1) 1 Jn.2:18-27 – warned them of antichrists
  - 2) Great danger in 1<sup>st</sup> century of false manifestations of the Spirit of God
  - 3) Many diverse manifestations & a testing of those was needed
- c. We will discuss this in greater detail in the next lesson

## Don't Believe Every Spirit

### Introduction

Teachers who claim things like, “God told me this” or “God revealed this to me” or “I got a word from the Lord, a Rhema” & do not keep their message in line with the Apostles teachings, are not motivated by the Spirit of God. Whoever speaks for God must have a message that lines up with the revealed word of God or his message is not motivated by God's Spirit. John warns – do not believe every spirit, every individual that comes along & claims to be a spokesman for God. He asserts, we must test the spirits, the teachers & prove that their message is of God.

### 1 John 4:1-6

1. 1 John 3:24b - And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us. (NIV)
  - a. My opinion – this verse should be in chapter 4, not at the end of chapter 3
  - b. John begins a new thought – how the Holy Spirit affects us as Christians
  - c. How we know Jesus lives in us – His Spirit
    - 1) Rom.8:1-17
      - a) Set free from law of sin & death
      - b) The righteous requirements of law are fully met when we live according to the Spirit
      - c) Test – minds are set upon what the Spirit desires; mind under the control of the Spirit – seek to please God
      - d) If don't have the Spirit are none of His (not of God)
      - e) If have the Spirit
        - (1) Body is dead because of sin, but spirit is alive
        - (2) God will give life to your body through His Spirit
      - f) Our obligation – put to death the misdeeds of the body by His Spirit (to be led by the Spirit)
      - g) You received the Spirit to draw you close to God as His children
    - 2) John 14:15-21
      - a) If love Jesus we will obey Him
      - b) Jesus will send another counselor to be with us forever – the Spirit of truth (not leave you as orphans)
      - c) World not accept Him – we know Him for he lives in us
      - d) Jesus will manifest Himself to us through Him
    - 3) Gal.5:16-25
      - a) If we live by the Spirit we won't gratify the desires of the flesh
      - b) The acts of our sinful nature are obvious (when flesh controls)
      - c) The Spirit of God being in control of our lives is seen when the fruit of the Spirit is evident

## 2. Do not believe every spirit

### a. Don't believe everything you hear or see

- 1) **Propaganda** – everywhere you turn – people saying, showing things that are not true to sway you to their way of thinking.
- 2) Is true spiritually too – are many false teachers
  - a) Not just a few = are many
  - b) Will claim to be of God – persuasive, personal, attractive, appealing, full of enthusiasm
  - c) 2 Cor.11:3,4,13-15
    - (1) Serpent is cunning & seeks to lead you astray
    - (2) Does this through your accepting a different message
    - (3) Masquerading as servants of righteousness
    - (4) Are serving Satan not God
- 3) Other passages
  - a) Rom.16:17,18
    - (1) Watch out for those who cause divisions (divisive)
    - (2) Not serving Jesus but their own agenda
    - (3) Use smooth talk & flattery to deceive the naïve (innocent & unsuspecting; distrust no one; gullible)
  - b) 2 Tim.3:12,13 – things are just going to get worse (deceptions)

### b. Background surrounding John's warning

- 1) In early church the actions of the Holy Spirit brought with it some complications.
  - a) Were so many diverse spiritual manifestations – 1 Cor.12
  - b) Some testing or touchstone was necessary
- 2) Even in OT find problems with some who called selves prophets
  - a) Deut.13:1-5
    - (1) Able to do miraculous signs & wonders
    - (2) God allows as a test – will you really follow God
    - (3) They preach rebellion against God (another way OK)
    - (4) Were to be put to death
  - b) Spiritual power was there, but it was evil & misdirected
- 3) In NT times - believed by masses that the spiritual world was very near
  - a) Every rock, tree, lake, river & mountain had its god or demon
  - b) These spiritual powers were always seeking entry into men's bodies & minds.
  - c) Never been a time since when men were as conscious about spiritual powers.
  - d) Saw the universe as a battleground between the forces of light & darkness.
- 4) In NT church indwelling of the Spirit more visible phenomenon
  - a) Acts 8:17,18 – Simon saw laying on of hands brought Spirit
  - b) Acts 10:44-46 – Cornelius & those with him spoke in tongues

- 5) Best commentary on this situation – 1 Cor.14
  - a) People spoke in tongues (messages in a foreign language) had to be interpreted because most or all not understand language
  - b) Prophets not wait for others to finish & shouted out message as if theirs more important than one speaking
  - c) Made their assemblies very confusing (like mad men)
- 5) Problem continued on into the next centuries
  - a) Book – “the didache” or “the teachings of the 12 apostles” had regulations about how to deal with wandering apostles or prophets. “Not everyone who speaks in a spirit is a prophet, he is only a prophet if he walks in the ways of the Lord.”
  - b) In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century – Montanus claimed he was nothing less than “the promised paraclete” & that he had messages from God that the apostles could not bear – Jn.16:12-16
  - c) People were swept away with a kind of self-hypnosis & appeared possessed by the Spirit. Men would delude themselves thinking they had a message from the Lord.
- 6) Even today people are being caught up into this because they are looking for our assemblies to be more exciting & less apathetic.

### 3. Test the spirits to see if they are from God

a. **From God** = is their source & origin in God

b. **How you recognize the Spirit of God**

1) **Acknowledges that Jesus is the Christ**

- a) He is the center of history – one for whom all history was prepared
- b) One whom Abraham & all Israel prepared the way for
- c) One who came in the fullness of time
- d) One who was the fulfillment of all the prophecies
- e) He came not only as a sacrifice but to reign in God’s kingdom

2) **Acknowledges that Jesus came in the flesh**

- a) What the Gnostics could never accept
  - (1) Felt - matter was altogether evil – therefore body is evil
  - (2) Therefore the incarnation was an impossibility because a holy God could never take flesh upon Himself
- b) This is at the very heart of the Christian faith
  - (1) Jesus could never be our pattern or example if He were not flesh & blood. If He did not live under that same conditions as men He could not show men how to live, because life for Him would be completely different than life for men.
  - (2) He could never be the High Priest the writer of Hebrews speaks about – Heb.4:14-16
  - (3) Unless He was flesh He could never destroy the one who held the power of death – Heb.2:14,15

(4) Denies the possibility of the consecration & dedication of the body to God (a Temple of God 1 Cor.6:19,20)

**3) Listens to the apostles**

a) The man whose source & origin is of God welcomes the truth

(1) Jesus taught

(a) Mt.10:40 – if receive you they receive Me

(b) Lk.10:16 – if listens to you they listen to Me

(c) Jn.13:20 – accepts one I send = accepts Me

(2) Early church practice – Acts 2:42

(3) 1 Cor.14:37 – apostles words are commands of Lord

(4) Apostles recognized fellow apostles writings –  
(agree with one another) - 2 Pet.3:15,16

b) The man whose source & origin is the world rejects the truth

(1) His aim is the exaltation of self not God

(2) He believes that material things are the only things that matter (unseen things are immaterial)

**c. Victory we have in Christ**

1) One in us is greater than one in world. Satan did his worst to Jesus & was defeated at the cross – Col.2:15

2) That victory belongs to all Christians – Eph.6:10-18

3) Remember whenever things look hopeless – Jesus won & so do we  
Rom.8:28; 1 Jn.5:4

## The Importance Of Loving One Another

### Introduction

Love is a word that is often so casually used that we are often unaware of its importance. We speak of loving many things – sweets, people, cars, houses & all sorts of pleasures. John speaks of love as being of supreme importance, because unless we love one another it is impossible to love God. As we examine the rest of chapter four John presents several concepts about love, God, Jesus & the Holy Spirit that we will examine.

### 1 John 4:7-21

#### 1. Love is from God

- a. God is the origin of love. Human love is only a reflection of something that is divine in nature. Without this revelation from God man would be consumed by his passions & desires & would never express love.
- b. Love has a double relationship to God
  - 1) It is only by knowing God that we learn to love
  - 2) It is only by loving that we learn to know God
  - 3) In other words - Love comes from God & leads us to God
- c. When we love one another, people see two things:
  - 1) People see that we are born of God, that we have the nature of God, that God has put His divine nature into us.
  - 2) People see that we know God. They see that we have been talking to God and learning about God; that we are doing what God says, carrying out His instructions, and that we are actually taking on the very nature of God.
- d. But note a significant fact: the person who does not love others reveals something as well: that he does not know God (1 John 4:8).

#### **Actions of one who does not love God**

- |                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| * Lives selfishly  | * Steals          |
| * Hoards           | * Neglects others |
| * Discriminates    | * Abuses          |
| * Is prejudiced    | * Criticizes      |
| * Elevates himself | * Backbites       |
| * Gossips          | * Hates           |
| * Anger & Rage     | * Murder          |

There is no demonstration of love, concern or care for others. Their life is lived to bring hurt, pain & destruction. This is not of God, it is of Satan & therefore they do not know God.

- e. Because God is spirit, no one can see God; what we can see is the effect of God
  - 1) We cannot see the wind, only what the wind can do
  - 2) We cannot see electricity; we see only what electricity produces
  - 3) The effect of God is love

## 2. God manifested His love for us in Jesus

- a. In Jesus we see God's love for us fully demonstrated
  - 1) His love for us held nothing back – Rom.8:32
  - 2) It is totally undeserved – Rom.5:6-8
- b. When we look at the world & all of mankind we see all sorts of evil & destruction. If all we ever looked at were the creation, we would find it difficult to fully sense the love God has for us, but in Jesus it is fully demonstrated. He spared no expense to bring us back to Him.
- c. John's conclusion – "if God so loved us, we ought to love one another"
  - 1) Loved us when we were obstinate, disobedient, ignored Him & rebelled
  - 2) If He went to such great lengths to love him, we ought to love them too

## 3. Loving one another proves God's Spirit dwells within us

- a. No one has ever seen God, but God is known by His presence - love
- b. Notice what happens when God begins to dwell within us (1 John 4:12).
  - 1) We love one another and God's love becomes perfected, that is, complete and fulfilled in us.
  - 2) We just grow and grow in love. We mature more and more, ever completing and perfecting the love of God upon earth.
- c. Notice one other thing: How do we know that we dwell in God and He in us (1 John 4:13)?
  - 1) By the Holy Spirit whom He has given to us.
  - 2) If we have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, He bears witness with our spirit. Rom.8:16 It is impossible for God to be living within the body and life of a person and the person not know it. It is the Spirit of God who tells us that we have been saved and are in God and God in us.
  - 3) If a person does not have the witness of God's Spirit within him, he needs to evaluate his conversion. The likelihood is that he has never been saved. Even if he is temporarily in a backslidden state, the Holy Spirit is convicting and bugging him to repent and turn back to God. Jn.16:7-11; Rom.8:11

## 4. When love comes, fear leaves

- a. Fear is the characteristic emotion of one who expects to be punished
  - 1) If our concept of God is just that He is judge, king & lawgiver we will live in fear.
  - 2) When we are filled with the concept of God's love, fear gets swallowed up by that love.
  - 3) In its place is a different kind of fear – a fear of grieving the one who so loved us.
- b. As Christians we are delivered from the fear of judgment.
  - 1) All will be judged – Mt.12:36; 25:31,32; Rom.14:10; 2 Cor.5:10; Heb.9:27; Rev.20:12
  - 2) Those in Christ do not need to fear that day – Rom.8:1,34,35; Heb.4:16

c. There is no fear in love.

- 1) If we really love someone, there is no need to fear him. In fact, we will not fear him. If we love the person, sacrificially give him our very best, then we have done all we can. Our lives and what we have done are in God's hands.
- 2) We will rest assured that we can do no more. A peace, an assurance, will sweep over our soul. Even if some people react against us and persecute us and martyr us, God will give us such a deep sense of His presence—so deep that we will be flooded with peace and assurance. This is what Peter calls “the spirit of glory and of God” that rests upon the believer when he is reproached. 2 Tim.4:16-18
- 3) 1 Pet 4:13-14 - But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. (NIV)
- 4) Realize - only a love that is growing will be blessed by God.
  - a) A believer cannot love one person and hold feelings against another person. This is not love. True love is impartial.
  - b) A person who really loves, loves everyone. There is no such thing as a heart filled with love and hate. The two are incompatible.
  - c) Therefore, the only believer who knows the peace and assurance of God is the believer who is being perfected in love, the believer who is growing and growing in love, fulfilling and completing his love.

## 5. Love of God & love for man are indissolubly connected

- a. 1 John 4:7,11,20,21
- b. The only way to prove that we love God is to love men whom He created. That love must be demonstrated in our lives or we are living a lie. 1 Cor.13:1-8

## 6. The statement “God is love” answers many questions

- a. It explains the creation
  - 1) Why would God create a world that would only bring Him heartache?
  - 2) See Gen.6:1-5 – so grieved, ready to completely destroy
  - 3) The answer – the creation is essential to God's nature
    - a) Because God is love, He cannot exist in isolation
    - b) For love to be love, it must have someone to love & someone to love it
- b. It explains mans free will
  - 1) Unless love is a free response, it is not love. Forcing someone to love you is not love. Love must be spontaneous.
  - 2) God could have created us as robots, with no more choice than a machine, but no relationship could exist between us.

- 3) God had to deliberately limit Himself & endow man with a free will that the purpose of creation might be fulfilled.
- c. It explains the providence of God
  - 1) God could have created the universe & wound it up & simply walked away & left it to do what it would.
  - 2) But because He is love, He created it with a need of constant care.
- d. It explains redemption
  - 1) God could have left man to the consequences of his sin. Man would simply die & eternal justice would be exacted.
  - 2) His nature of love drove Him to seek & save that which was lost. He had to find a cure for sin that He & man might have fellowship.
- e. It explains life beyond the physical
  - 1) God could have created us to have just a brief lifespan & die. We would be like the flowers that we plant each year – here for just a short time & then have to be replaced.
  - 2) His love moves Him to give us eternal life

## 7. What these passages tell us about Jesus

- a. He is the bringer of life – vs.9
  - 1) There is a world of difference between existence & life. All men have existence, but not all men have life.
  - 2) Jesus gives us a reason to live – life becomes a great adventure
  - 3) Jesus also gives us the strength to live – to master life’s frustrations
  - 4) Jesus also gives us the peace, serenity & contentment needed in life
- b. Jesus is the restorer of a lost relationship with God – vs.10
  - 1) He is our atoning sacrifice
  - 2) Our sin broke our relationship with God, but Jesus made it possible for us to enter a new relationship of intimacy, peace & friendship with God. He broke down all the barriers.
- c. Jesus is the savior of the world – vs.14
  - 1) Without Jesus men are only conscious of their own weaknesses & helplessness. Man cannot save himself from his sin, habits, temptations or his fears.
  - 2) Jesus is the answer for all those problems
- d. Jesus is the Son of God – vs.15
  - 1) Jesus has a relationship with God that no other person can have or ever will have. He is God’s only begotten Son
  - 2) He alone can show man what God is like or bring man to God. Only through Him can man perfectly know God or be in a perfect relationship with God.

## 8. What these passages teach us about the Spirit

- a. Because of the Spirit we know that we dwell in God – vs.13
- b. Because of the Spirit we seek God, become aware of His presence & have the certainty that we are at peace with God. Rom.8:15,16

## Faith In The Son Of God

### Introduction

John continues with his discussion of the love of God in chapter 5. He has shown us that human love is a reaction of God's love, because God is the origin of love. He has also shown us that God wants this love to be perfected in us by loving one another as He loves us. Our love for God & our love for one another are inseparable.

### 1 John 5:1-12

#### 1. Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God

##### a. Believes that Jesus is the Christ = Messiah or Anointed One

- 1) Present tense verb = present tense conviction
- 2) James 2:14ff – belief must become action

##### b. Born of God

- 1) **Means** – a spiritual birth, regeneration, a renewal of one's spirit
- 2) Such a radical change has taken place that it could only be described as a new birth.
- 3) **How this birth takes place**
  - a) By water – Jn.3:3-6
  - b) The will of God through the word of truth – James 1:18
  - c) By the word of God – 1 Pet.1:23
  - d) By Jesus – Jn.1:10-12
- 4) **One proves they are born again by:**
  - a) Doing righteous acts – 1 Jn.2:29; Eph.2:10; 4:24
  - b) By not practicing sin – 1 Jn.3:9; 5:18
  - c) Loving other believers – 1 Jn.4:7
  - d) By overcoming the world – 1 Jn.5:4

#### 2. Everyone that loves the Father loves His child as well

- a. In nature a child naturally loves the parent. He also naturally loves the brothers & sisters that the father begets.
- b. The verse literally says "Everyone who loves him who begat loves him who was begotten of him".
- c. As Christians we are born into God's family & are to naturally love each other.

#### 3. How we know that we love the children of God

- a. By loving God & carrying out His commandments
  - 1) **Do we really believe God** – if we keep His commandments we do; if we do not keep His commandments we don't.
  - 2) **Do we really love God?** The answer is the same as before
- b. The only way one can prove his love is to seek to please & bring joy to the one we love.

#### 4. His commandments are not burdensome

- a. Note: some people feel that God's commandments are grievous, a real burden.
  - 1) They feel that the commandments of Scripture restrict them too much, and keep a person from the pleasures and possessions of the world.
  - 2) They feel that to be a Christian disallows a person from having fun and enjoying life.
  - 3) To them the demands of God are just too large a price to pay, that demanding all one is and has is too much to ask of a person.
  - 4) Man is the one whose commandments are grievous – Mt.23:4
- b. Yet just the opposite is true – God's commandments are not grievous
  - 1) When God commands us He also provides the strength to comply
    - a) Never leaves us alone to struggle – Heb.13:5,6
    - b) Always within us providing the strength – Phil.2:12,13
  - 2) For love, no duty or task is too great or demanding
    - a) What's hard to do for a stranger is easy to do for one we love
    - b) Love turns a burden into a privilege; an opportunity
  - 3) Mt.11:28-30

#### 5. Everyone born of God overcomes the world

- a. **Believers overcome the trials & difficulties of the world**
  - 1) Jn.16:33 – in world have tribulation – be of good cheer; Jesus overcame
  - 2) 1 Cor.10:13 – tempers them & provides a way of escape
  - 3) 2 Pet.2:9 – Lord knows how to deliver the godly
- b. **Believers overcome all the forces of evil**
  - 1) Rom.8:35, 37-39 – more than conquerors
  - 2) Isa.41:10 = fear not
  - 3) Gal.6:10-18 – armor of God
- c. **Believers have victory over sin & Satan**
  - 1) Rom.6:1-7 – no longer its slaves
  - 2) Rom.6:11-14 – no longer under law
  - 3) Col.2:15 – disarmed Satan & the forces of evil
- d. **Believers have victory over death**
  - 1) Jn.5:24 – passed from death into life
  - 2) Heb.2:14,15 – delivered from fear of death
- e. **Believers have victory over judgment**
  - 1) Jn.3:16-18 – Jesus came to save not condemn
  - 2) Rom.8:1 – no condemnation for those in Christ
  - 3) Rom.5:8-10 – died for us while we were yet sinners
- f. **Believers have victory over fear & despair**
  - 1) Jn.14:27 – let not heart be troubled
  - 2) 2 Tim.1:7 – not given us a spirit of fear

#### 6. He that came by water & the blood

- a. **Saying** – Jesus was divine “before, during & after” both His baptism & the cross.

- b. **Background** – the Gnostic belief that Jesus was only a man & that the divine being only came upon Him at His baptism & left Him before He came to the cross. So John writes – Hew came by (through) the water & the blood
- c. **Jesus is shown to be the Christ through the water & the blood**
- 1) Water = baptism
    - Jn.1:32-34 – Spirit came in form of dove
    - Mt.3: 17; Mk.1:11 – voice of God saying this is My Son
  - 2) Blood – refers to the cross & death (Rom.1:4 – resurrection proves)
- d. **Three witnesses – water, blood & the Spirit**
- 1) The witness of the Spirit
    - a) Conceived by the Spirit
    - b) Performed miracles by the power of the Spirit – Lk.5:17
    - c) Led by the Spirit into the wilderness – Mt.4:1ff
    - d) Led by the Spirit to the cross – Heb.9:14
    - e) Raised from the dead by the Spirit – Rom.1:4
  - 2) Other ways that God witnessed about Jesus
    - a) 330 specific prophecies in the OT
    - b) At birth the verbal expressions of the angels
    - c) At baptism – Holy Spirit as dove & voice of God
    - d) Mt. Of transfiguration – voice this is My Son
    - e) Miracles performed by Jesus – Acts 2:22; Jn.20:30,31
7. **The witness of God is greater than the witness of men**
- a. Many accept the witness of men; yet reject the witness of God
    - 1) Men can only interpret the facts & sometimes they exaggerate & twist them. Man interpretations can never be completely free of opinion & personal interests. Some will even lie & deceive as they share.
    - 2) God’s witness is always true. He cannot lie or deceive; He is truth, always truth. Therefore His record of Jesus ought to be accepted.
  - b. God implants His witness within the heart of the believer
    - 1) Rom.8:16,17 – Spirit bears witness with our spirit
    - 2) 2 Cor.1:21,22 – given us the earnest of the Spirit
    - 3) Gal.4:4-6 – sent Spirit crying abba father
  - c. God’s witness is clearly stated “ He who has the Son has eternal life, he who does not have the Son has not life”.

## Confidences In Christ

### Introduction

John has tried to instill his faith in Jesus into those he writes too. He personally witnessed Jesus in the flesh & although those he wrote had not, he wants them to know the certainty of this Jesus becoming a man & dying for their sin. Throughout his book he has used the thought of confidence & assurance as he talked about the Christians faith & lifestyle. Knowing Jesus changes many things – attitudes, actions, lifestyles etc. As he finishes his thought he continues to discuss several things we can have confidence in as we approach God.

### 1 John 5:13

#### 1. Eternal life is in Jesus – vs.11,12

- a. He who has the Son has life – not have the Son = no life
- b. Life is only in Jesus – apart from Jesus there is only existence
  - 1) God created man in His image – capable of possessing many of the qualities of God which includes living eternally.
  - 2) However, apart from Jesus that means just mere existence
  - 3) Only in Jesus is there any real life

#### 2. Eternal life – it's characteristics

- a. **Means** – far more than lasting forever
  - 1) A life that just lasted forever might well be a curse, not a blessing
  - 2) Eternal life is more about a quality of life than it is duration of life
- b. **Eternal life God offers has certain characteristics**
  - 1) **Serenity** – a life liberated from fear & frustration. God gives us victory over the circumstances of life & temptations of sin.
  - 2) **Purity** – in God there is holiness which means we have victory over sin & the soiling infections of the world.
  - 3) **End of bitterness & hatred** – in God there is love & therefore we can rise above bitterness & hatred.
  - 4) **Life** – victory over death, which means having a life that is indestructible.

#### 3. How we can know that we have eternal life

- a. **If we believe in the name of the Son of God** – deliberately trusts in Him
  - 1) No salvation apart from Jesus – Jn.14:6
  - 2) Not casual mental assent – prepared to suffer  
James 2:19; Heb.10:32-37
- b. **Jesus is honored as Lord in your life** – keep His word
  - 1) 1 Jn.2:3-5
  - 2) Jn.8:31,32,51
  - 3) Jn.14:21,24; 15:9-14

- c. **When we are walking after the example of Jesus**
  - 1) 1 Jn.2:6
  - 2) Jn.8:12; 14:12
- d. **When we love the Father & His will & not the world** – 1 Jn.2:15-17
- e. **When we habitually practice righteousness** - 1 Jn.2:29; 3:8-10
- f. **When we love the brethren** – 1 Jn.3:14-19; 4:8-16; Jn.13:34,35
- g. **The consciousness of the indwelling Holy Spirit** – 1 Jn.3:24; 4:13; 5:10
  - 1) One can fool himself into thinking this is real unless he possesses the other evidences which John cites. It is mere presumption if we are not manifesting the previous evidences.
  - 2) Not every inner witness is authentic. There is a real danger of being deceived by ourselves & deceiving spirits – 1 Tim.4:1; 1 Jn.4:1
  - 3) No fellowship with God is possible when we walk in darkness.

## **1 Jn.5:14,15**

### **1. Confidence we have in prayer**

- a. **Confidence** – originally meant freedom to speak boldly
  - 1) In Jesus we have confidence to speak boldly to God – Heb.10:19ff
  - 2) God is ready to listen – more ready to listen than we are to pray
  - 3) Never need to force our way into His presence or compel Him to pay attention. He is waiting for us to come into His presence.
- b. **For prayer to be answered, it must be according to His will**
  - 1) 1 Jn.3:22 – we receive what asked because we keep His commands
  - 2) Jn.15:7 – must remain in Jesus – closer we are to Him the more we will pray right
  - 3) Jn.14:14 – in His name (for His sake)
  - 4) 1 Jn.5:14 – (His will be done **not** His will be changed)
  - 5) Prayer rightly done is not something whereby we seek our desires, but where we seek to redirect our minds to seek His will.

### **2. God's will for us**

- a. That we have the fruit of the Spirit – Gal.5:22,23
- b. That we have the necessities of life – Mt.6:31-34
- c. That we be protected & delivered from the trials of temptation – 1 Cor.10:13; Heb.13:6
- d. That we be delivered from the fear of condemnation & death – Jn.5:24; Heb.2:14,15

## The Sin Unto Death

### Introduction

In scripture there are many passages that are difficult to understand & this is one of them. There are almost as many different interpretations as there are words in the passage. One thing stands out very clearly; this passage is a severe warning to all Christians about the severe consequences of sin. We must always seek to walk ever so righteously & continually trust Jesus to grant us the power to overcome sin.

### 1 John 5:16,17

#### 1. Several passages issue a severe warning about the dangers of sinful behavior

- a. 1 Cor.3:11-15 – speaks of the loss of all reward except bare salvation of self
- b. 1 Cor.5:1-5 – behavior destroys the flesh
- c. 1 Cor.9:27 – causes one to become a castaway
- d. 1 Cor.11:29,30 – cause death of a believer
- e. Heb.2:1-3; 12:25 – merits no escape
- f. Heb.6:1-4 – prohibits one from ever repenting
- g. Heb.4:1 – causes one to miss God's rest
- h. Heb.10:26,27 – prohibits future sacrifice for sin & merits terrible punishment

#### 2. The sin unto death

##### a. Two basic positions concerning the sin unto death

- 1) The sin unto death is only committed by one pretending to be a believer
- 2) The sin unto death can be committed by a believer

##### b. Word brother – can mean one who is a true believer or one who is making a false profession – idea is church member

##### c. Words life & death must correspond – if it is spiritual life & eternal life that God gives then the sin unto death has to refer to spiritual & eternal death. In the context the life John speaks about is spiritual, so the death must be spiritual. – Jn.5:12

##### d. Problem passages

- 1) Jn.10:28,29 – no one can pluck them out of my hand
- 2) Rom.8:29 – one God foreknew He predestined
- 3) Phil.1:6 – God will finish the work He has begun in you
- 4) 1 Pet.1:5 – we are kept by God's power
- 5) 2 Tim.1:12 – Persuaded He is able to keep what entrusted to Him
- 6) Jude 24,25 – able to keep you from falling
- 7) 2 Pet.1:10 – do these things you will never fall

##### e. There is a difference between sinning willfully & sins of ignorance.

- 1) Heb.10:26; 5:2
- 2) Jesus spoke of the unpardonable sin – Mk.3:29  
(attributing to Satan the manifest work of the Holy Spirit)

#### f. Barclay's definition

- 1) Sin which is going toward death, if continued in must finish in death
- 2) It means – persistent; obstinate; deliberate; cold blooded; purposeful sin
- 3) Committed by the person who persists in; rejoices in; has no regret in; glories in; boasts in; is proud of & delights in that sin

#### 4) Quote

*“Now in life it is a fact of experience that there are two kinds of sinners....So long as a man in his heart of hearts hates sin and hates himself for sinning, so long as he knows that he is sinning, he is never beyond repentance, and, therefore, never beyond forgiveness; but once a man begins to revel in sin, and to make sin the deliberate policy of his life, and loses all sense of the terror and the awfulness of sin, and also the feeling of self-disgust, he is on the way to death, for he is on the way to a state where the idea of repentance will not, and cannot enter his head.*

*“The sin unto death is the state of the man who has listened to sin so often, and refused to listen to God so often, that he has come to a state when he loves his sin, and when he regards sin as the most profitable thing in the world”*

*(The Letters of John and Jude, p.142).*

### 3. Those who say that the sin concerns only physical death

- a. They sin so deeply that God must discipline them severely & take them home
- b. In spite of the pull of the Holy Spirit these believers will never repent.
  - 1) They are so rooted in sin that their service on earth is forever ruined & they are useless to the cause of God.
  - 2) They have brought disrepute & dishonor to the name of Jesus
  - 3) If allowed to live they will only continue to abuse the name of Jesus
- c. God knows this & He still loves him or her & has determined that no believer will be plucked from Jesus' hand so He lovingly disciplines them & brings about death & takes them home.
- d. Several examples of such happenings
  - 1) Moses death – Deut.32:48-52
  - 2) Israel & the golden calf – Ex.32:1-35
  - 3) Man who picked up sticks on Sabbath – Num.15:32-36
  - 4) Nadab & Abihu – Lev.10:1,2
  - 5) Korah – Num.16:31-34
  - 6) Achan – Joshua 7:16-26
  - 7) Uzziah – 2 Sam.6:1-7
  - 8) Ananias & Sapphira – Acts 5:1-11
  - 9) Those taking Lord's Supper unworthily – 1 Cor.11:27-30

#### e. Oliver Greene says:

*“What IS ‘the sin unto death’? The best place to find the answer is in Paul's letter to the church at Corinth. If you will study 1 Cor. 11 in its entirety, you will find that some of the believers were grievously misbehaving at the Lord's table, making gluttons of themselves and drinking until they became intoxicated....’FOR THIS CAUSE many are weak and sickly among you, AND MANY SLEEP (are dead).’*

*“Paul also warned the Corinthian Christians that if they would judge themselves, repent of their misbehaving in the house of God and straighten up, God would not be forced to judge them; but if they did not judge themselves, God would have no alternative but to judge and chasten them, that they should ‘not be condemned with the world’ (1 Cor. 11:32).*

*“The ‘sin unto death’ therefore is continually rebelling against light. When a believer knows what he should do, when he is convicted that he should do it, and yet he refuses to obey the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, he is in danger of committing the sin unto death.*

*“We have another instance of this in 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, when immorality was found in the church. A young man had taken his father’s wife and was guilty of fornication. There are those who will not agree that this young man was saved and had committed the sin unto death, but Paul clearly told the other believers in the church what action they should take in the matter:*

*“In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of Lord Jesus Christ, to DELIVER SUCH AN ONE UNTO SATAN, FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FLESH, THAT THE SPIRIT MAY BE SAVED IN THE DAY OF THE LORD JESUS’ (1 Cor. 5:4, 5).*

*“Beloved, it is clear that the sin unto death has nothing to do with the salvation of the soul; it has to do with the destruction of the body. Such a person will ‘suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire’ (1 Cor. 3:12-15). All reward is lost, and such a one will stand before God empty handed. What that will mean, I confess I do not know; but according to the passage from 1 Corinthians, the person who loses his reward will ‘suffer loss’ - not loss of soul and spirit, but loss of eternal reward” (The Epistles of John, p.211).*

Oliver Greene gives an excellent illustration in the life of Abraham:

*“But ‘there IS a sin unto death,’ and when a believer has committed that sin there is no point in praying for him. In the life of Abraham we find an illustration of a time when it was useless to pray. In Genesis 18:20-30 God revealed to Abraham that He was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham knew that his nephew Lot and his family were living in Sodom, so he drew near to God and asked, ‘Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?’ The Lord replied, ‘If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.’ But there could not be fifty righteous men found in all of Sodom - and Abraham continued to pray until the number was reduced to ten - just ten righteous people in the great city of Sodom. And the Lord said, I will not destroy it for ten’s sake.’ But God knew that ten righteous ones could not be found in the city, and Genesis 18:33 tells us that ‘THE LORD WENT HIS WAY, as soon as He had left communing with Abraham.’*

*“With God there is a stopping place, a limit; and Abraham had reached that limit in his intercession for Sodom. God ceased communing with him and left him. What God actually said in departing was, ‘Abraham, there is no need to pray any longer. There is no need for you to make further request. Pray no more for Sodom, for that city must be destroyed!’ When a city or an individual has committed such sin, there is no reason for any Christian to pray for that city or that individual.*

*“There are times when we should no longer pray for certain people, there are times when we should no longer witness to certain people. Concerning things spiritual Jesus said, ‘Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you’ (Matthew 7:6)” (The Epistles of John, p.210f).*

## **Conclusion**

1. Whatever our position, we must always remember this: the answer to sin is repentance and confession. As long as a person is still alive, he can repent and confess his sin and God will forgive him and restore him into the fellowship of His dear Son. As long as we are living, there is still hope; there is assurance of forgiveness and cleansing if we will only repent and confess.
2. God always gives us the freedom to choose. Even as Christians we are free to choose. No one can take us out of Jesus’ hand, but we can choose to leave Him. If we continue to sin, it brings grave consequences & we must always be alert.

# A People of the Book

*Where Truth and Love Abound*



## Our Service Schedule

Sunday:	10:00 a.m.	Bible Study (classes for all ages)
	11:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.	Worship
Wednesday:	7:00 p.m.	Bible Study (classes for all ages)

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