

Right Thinking = Right Living

A Study of the Truths of 1st John

Pastor Bob Reeve

Session #1 (Leader's Resource)

OVERVIEW:

- Authorship—John the Apostle, one of Jesus' closest friends—in Ephesus; also wrote 2 John, 3 John, the Gospel of John, and Revelation.
- Date—90 AD; 60 years after the ascension
- A loving letter of pastoral concern
- A declaration against potentially devastating heresies (specifically “Gnosticism”) attempting to invade the truths of God's revelation.
 - Gnosticism comes from the Greek word *gnosis* and it's based on the idea that some people had secret knowledge that they had ascended above the “elite” to the high levels of secret knowledge. Remember Paul said in 2 Corinthians 10:5 again, **"It's every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God."**...this is the threat that “Gnosticism” presented.
 - **A philosophical dualism.** Philosophical dualism was an erroneous philosophy, still around today, that **all material substance is evil.**
 - Material things—anything physical, fleshly, congruent or tangible-- is viewed as evil, therefore matter is always evil. It can never be good, says Gnostic philosophy (and says New Age philosophy today), **so therefore what you do physically is meaningless**
 - Gnosticism's deception is that he is good, inherently good but he is incarcerated, in prison in a bad material body and the only way that you can ever sort of win over that bad incarceration, your only hope of salvation is **through self-knowledge.**
 - And **you are saved by coming to know your good god-self.**
 - **Gnostics believed that because material is bad, because the physical is bad, the true good God would never live in a material body. Therefore, the incarnation couldn't happen because the good God would never come and incarcerate himself in a material body.**
 - So the Gnostics denied the incarnation. That's why John counteracts in chapter 4, **"Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,"** because these people in this sort of incipient Gnosticism were denying that Jesus came in the flesh because of this philosophical dualism in which they lived.
 - Here's the practical issue... They wanted to live as rotten as one could possibly live and still feel good about themselves so they invented the system. ...If you...if you love darkness rather than light and you wanted to just sin to the max, but you wanted to feel good about doing it, in order to alleviate your guilt, you invent, you concoct a very sophisticated system that says, "Inside I'm good, inside I'm God."

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- "Well, what is modern Gnosticism?" The New Age Movement...any form of mysticism, any concept in the mind of man that is elevated above the Word of God, any mystical system, any religious system, any cult, any false system, any theory, any viewpoint elevated above the truth.
- Gnosticism then...
 - Attacks Jesus Christ, and the fact that God came in human flesh.
 - It attacks the diagnosis of man, that he is a sinner in need of a Savior.
 - It assaults the responsibility to love, thus it wipes out the substitutionary atonement, wipes out obedience, holiness, righteous and the law of God, and it wipes out the necessity of loving relationships.
- These people lived to gratify their appetites, to gratify their lusts without limit. Physical purity was meaningless. In fact, in their eyes didn't even sin at all. When they said, "We have not sinned," if you say you have no sin they're saying, "In my inner person I have no sin, it's just my material body."

Summary:

Essentially, this horrific heresy denied that God could ever become flesh because all flesh was evil, and it denies any connection between behavior and belief. That what you do has nothing to do with what you believe.

These are both dangerous and entirely fallacious concepts about who Jesus was, and how we should live.

Right thinking equals right living, wrong thinking equals terrible living and probably eternal separation from God.

<< Verse by verse review following the video teaching (use if you want to review in depth, if not, just proceed to the discussion questions provided after this section.) >>

1 John 1:1-2:2 Intentional Truths to be seen:

1. Right thinking is founded in real revelation. V. 1-2

¹That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—² the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—

- The authority of the author, the Apostle John
 - First hand experience
 - Eternal truth of Jesus
 - The Word of life –message and Man—incarnation
- John's 4 experiences of certainty revealed in these words:
 - **Heard**...John talked with Jesus
 - **Seen**...John saw Him daily for several years

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- "What we have seen with our eyes." The word is *horao*, refers to the physical act of seeing. It's just reality, nothing mystical about this. He's not saying, "You know, I had a vision, I saw a ...I saw a phantom appearance of God."
- **Beheld**
 - It means to look long at, to look long at, not just a glance, not just a sort of objective look, but a searching gaze.
 - John 1:14, "**The Word became flesh and we beheld His glory.**" We looked closely at it. We looked deeply at it. You can imagine that. You know, I mean, there was the reality in the travels of the Lord with His Apostles that they were seeing what was going on with their eyes. They were experiencing all of it.
- **Handled**
 - In the original Greek language, means to grope, to feel after like a blind man. A blind man takes a page of Braille and the smallest little bumps and bends that he feels translate into meaningful words. That's John. Jesus used this word in Luke 24:39 when He said, "**Handle Me...handle Me and realize that a spirit doesn't have flesh and bones as you see Me have.**"
 - Notice that John doesn't say, "I have heard," and "I have seen," and "I beheld," and "My hands handled." He says, "**We,**" and "**Our,**" because he's including himself with the Apostles. We all were there. We all heard, saw, looked intently into and handled the Word of Life.

KEY POINT Jesus is no mirage, no phantom, no Spirit—He was and is the incarnate Son of God. Jesus is not in invention

of religious folk, but the real Lord, King, and Savior of all mankind.

2. God's plan for us is a joyous connection to Him and to one another. V. 3-4.

³ that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.

- On the basis of John's authority and first hand experience, true fellowship is available.
- Fellowship with one another, fellowship with the Lord
- Fellowship is the word *koinonia*, basically means **partnership**.
- So the way to understand this is that the preaching of the gospel produces faith and a person who puts their faith in Christ enters into a real partnership with other believers. It is a real sharing of life.
- 1 Corinthians 1:9 uses it in this context, "**God is faithful through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.**" That is partnership. When you were saved you were called into partnership with Christ. "**He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit,**"

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- 1 Corinthians 6:17. "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live yet not I but Christ lives in me." This is the partnership.
- The promise of joy—joy based in truth, in authority.
 - Joy found in the assurance of the apostle's direct contact with Jesus
 - John 15:11 "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.

3. God is light, providing illumination for how we live and think. V. 5.

⁵This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

- His message and our declaration is that God is light, meaning no darkness at all!
 - No darkness...which is both a force and a realm
 - John 4:24 God is spirit
 - 1 John 4:8 God is love
 - 1 John 1: 5—God is light
 - We do know in the Old Testament that God appeared as light. That He manifested Himself, for example, to the children of Israel in the account that's given to us in the book of Exodus when Moses went up into the mountain while they were wandering in the wilderness to receive from God the Law. You remember God told Moses that he should go and lead the people. Moses was fearful about his ability to do that and he said, "I'm not going to do that unless You go with me, Your presence goes with me." To which God responded, "My presence will go with you," to which Moses responded, "How am I going to know that? Show me Your glory?"...or His light!
 - Do you recall the account in Exodus 33 and 34, how God tucked Moses in a cave or the cleft of the rock and then God allowed a portion of His glory to pass by? Not the full glory because God said no man can see Me and live. And the glory that Moses saw was light. In fact, the light that emanated from the presence of God, got on the face of Moses so that when he came down the mountain to speak to the children of Israel, his face was shining with the reflection of that light.
 - God manifest Himself to Moses as light. He manifested Himself to the children of Israel by leading them during the day, you remember, by a cloud, a cloud of light, as it were, in the sky, and at night, another form of light, a pillar of fire by which they were led.
-
- New Testament that Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration allowed the disciples to see who He really was and He manifested Himself as light. He was transfigured before them as shining light that nearly sent them into a coma of terror.

Note the following verses:

- 1 Timothy 6:15 and 16, "The blessed and only sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of Lords who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light."
- 2 Corinthians 4:6
- John 3:19-21
- Proverbs 6:23
- Psalms 119:130

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4. Sin is a problem for which God has provided the solution.

NOTE: These verses are also calculated to debunk the lies of the “Gnostics” who did not believe in “sin” while maintaining the intimacy with God was possible while embracing sinful behavior.

a. Live in His light. V. 6-7

⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

- First “if we say”...that
- Walking with God and sinning...is a lie from the pit of hell.

⁷ But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

- In the light is fellowship
- In the light if fruitfulness
- In the light is freedom and forgiveness

b. Confession leads to freedom. V. 8-9

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

- Second “if we say”
- No sin—we are walking in deception
- Note Romans 3:23, *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The beauty of honesty before God

- To know these truths about God and us is the essence of what confession is.
- It is "good for the soul."
- Confession is,
 - First, the acknowledgment of sin—not the acknowledgment that there is sin, or that sin is wrong, but that *"we have sinned against God in thought, word, and deed."*
 - Second, then, confession means that we know God as light, as the measure of truth and righteousness by which we fall short.
 - Third, when we confess our sin, we adopt a stance of dependence toward God.
 - Fourth, confession implies a turning to God, a desire to conform ourselves to God's character. Confession does not mean that we say, "I did it again; that's just the way I am." Confession means that we say, "Forgive me, for I have done it again; but I don't want to do it again. Please help me to live within the light of God's truth." Confession is a resource to bring our whole life into conformity with God's will.
- Finally, we must always remember that confession is both personal and corporate. In confessing our sins, we acknowledge our place in the company of confessed sinners. Together we stand, on common ground, before God who accepts and forgives all of us. Confession can never be something by which we gain the upper hand over another brother or sister. It certainly is no mark of superiority to confess our sins. It is, rather, simply an acknowledgment of who we are.

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- What God wants of us, then, is sincere commitment to walking in the light and honest confession of our sin.

- c. Sin's deception puts us in opposition to our loving Creator. V. 10
¹⁰ **If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.**
 - **Third "If we say"**
 - We call God a liar, and we are liars.
 - Again, Gnosticism taught that there was no such thing as sin. This is the equivalent of calling God a liar.

- d. Jesus is the Liberator. 2:1-2
2:1 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.
 - Sin is never to be taken lightly, but when you do, you have the Advocate—your "legal representation" in the face of the accuser (satan)² **And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.**

About "propitiation": **"And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."**

The word *propitiation* carries the basic idea of appeasement or satisfaction, specifically toward God. Propitiation is a two-part act that involves appeasing the wrath of an offended person and being reconciled to Him.

The Bible teaches that God Himself has provided the only means through which His wrath can be appeased and sinful man can be reconciled to Him. In the New Testament, the act of propitiation always refers to the work of God and not the sacrifices or gifts offered by man. The reason for this is that man is totally incapable of satisfying God's justice except by spending eternity in hell. There is no service, sacrifice, or gift that man can offer that will appease the holy wrath of God or satisfy His perfect justice. The only satisfaction, or propitiation, that could be acceptable to God and that could reconcile man to Him had to be made by God. For this reason God the Son, Jesus Christ, came into the world in human flesh to be the perfect sacrifice for sin and make atonement or "propitiation for the sins of the people" ([Hebrews 2:17](#)).

An important part of Christ's saving work is deliverance from God's wrath; Jesus' propitiation on the cross is the only thing that can turn away God's divine condemnation of sin. Those who reject Christ as their Savior and refuse to believe in Him have no hope of salvation.

LEADERS—here are the questions for short discussion and my suggested answers. Getting people to share is always more valuable than just giving answers.

Questions for you to consider:

1. What points from the teaching touched you?

Leaders...allow for as many responses as possible in this first question, even if you don't get to any of the others. This is where the Word gets applied to people's hearts.

No recommended answers here...

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2. What do think were some of the Apostle John's reasons for writing this letter?

Leaders...here are the "intentional truths" or what we think is probably most important reasons for this letter of 1 John:

- To prevent the spread of dangerous and inaccurate thinking (theology) about Jesus.
- To share His first hand experience of knowing Jesus
- To clarify the foundational aspects of walking with Jesus in fruitfulness including:
 - God's desire to know each of His
 - God's plan for people to love and be in fellowship with one another.
 - Jesus' incredible sacrifice to save us from our sin.
 - Making plain the reality and devastation of sin.
- To share the simple beauty of God as light, love, and life.
- To remind all of the followers of Jesus to "walk in love".

3. Is sin really an issue for the follower of Jesus? In what ways?

Leaders...sin is a devastating reality in the life of every human and only Jesus can set us free.

Sin is real!

Sin must be dealt with...which only God can do through Jesus.

Your words, actions, thoughts, and behaviors do directly affect how you experience God and others.

4. Does it seem contradictory to you that John says we should never sin, and yet also writes that if we do sin then Jesus is the One who has already provided for our forgiveness? How do you reconcile these two concepts?

Leaders...

Here are the verses that we're referring to:

⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him, **and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.** ⁷ But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. 2:1 My little

*children, these things I write to you, **so that you may not sin**.....*

*Note the contrast of **the bold verses** with the underlined sentence...there is a clear tension about sin and fellowship with God.*

Here is our approach to this:

- Only Jesus can save you from the "penalty of sin" which He does through grace. That is the gift of salvation.

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- *But the “presence and reality of sin” affects our fellowship on daily basis with God and others, and for that reason we need to confess it and get rid of it.*
- *Ultimately, it is our desire to live free of sin’s power, and accomplish what Paul said in Philippians 1:6 ⁶ **being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;** And also Philippians 2:12 b-13 **...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.***

5. Fellowship is connected to “walking in the light.” Why do you think this is true?

Leaders...as mentioned in the previous answer, fellowship with God and others is directly connected to thinking and living the right way.

You can't offend God or others with your sin and be in good relationship. Sin is always destructive...God's ways are always better!

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Session #2 (Leader's Resource) **1 John 2:3-14**

Focus for this session:

There are three great themes in this brief section that are so important:

1. The value of obedience to the ways of God. (vv. 3-5)
2. The absolute truth of love, light and fellowship. (vv. 6-11)
3. The Levels of Spiritual maturity described in a brief comparison with natural growth. (vv. 12-14)

We've prepared a chart for the final point that we believe is very valuable and perhaps worthy of your focus in this session.

That said, listen to the Holy Spirit and let Him lead your group.

OVERVIEW for the Video Teaching

Review:

- Settle key foundational elements
- Very practical and effective for foundations, yet “layered”—counteracting real threats to an emerging church
- Letters were circulated
- JOHN—the last living Apostle; 90 AD; 60 years after ascension; Original 12—probably around 80 at this time
 - NOTE: John **tender and tough** exhortations or “flavor”—even in the apostle’s 80s
 - Written to counteract the “antichrist” spirit trying to invade Kingdom work—nullify or limit God’s work and power
 - Gnostic threat—matter is not “real” or doesn’t matter;
 - “The spiritual realm” or enlightenment or knowledge is the only “real” dimension
 - So—Jesus wasn’t God incarnate—God would never occupy a material body; Jesus was really just a spirit or apparition
 - And—it doesn’t matter what you do with your body.
 - Gnosticism—does not take root because there is no connection to caring—such unloving people.
 - Every generation has attacks, and threats.
 - The root of attacks against the things of God—“I want to do what I wanna do, and nobody is going to tell me anything”
 - John is the opposite of that, and in this letter addresses key issues.

Video Teaching Outline

Following principles for your consideration:

- First of all, spiritual growth has nothing to do with your standing before God in Christ.
- Secondly, spiritual growth has nothing to do with God’s love for you. God doesn’t love you more, or like you better, if you’re mature.

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- Thirdly, spiritual growth has nothing to do with time. It is not measured by the calendar.
- Fourthly, spiritual growth is not related to information or comprehension. It is related to transformation and apprehension.
- Fifthly, *spiritual maturity* has nothing to do with activity, even church activity or Christian ministry activity; however many times spiritual growth only moves off of a plateau when you begin to serve, give, and contribute to the body of Christ.

Lessons from 1 John, chapter 2:3-14

1. Actions really do speak louder than words. Vv.3-5.

3 Now by this **we know** that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.

4 He who says, "**I know Him,**" and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this **we know** that we are in Him.

40 times in the little tiny epistle here he uses some form of the word "know."

Key verse in : 1 John 5:13, "**That you may know that you have eternal life.**"

Key Ideas:

- Note again the use of the word "know"
- Jesus talked a lot about obeying God's ways—His commandments.
- The Gnostics didn't believe in obedience, just mental ascent—this is entirely rejected by the Apostle.
- You cannot separate belief from behavior!
- Obeying God's Word, reveals the fact that we love Him!

2. The primary manifestation of a follower of Jesus is **love**. Vv. 6-11.

6 He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

7 Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning

8 Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.

9 He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now.

10 He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

11 But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

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About the Apostle John and his view of love:

John uses “brethren” or “beloved” or little children. He loves his flock.

He wasn't always, I suppose, known as a man of love, being once called even by Jesus Himself, a son of thunder, (Mark 3:17).

On one occasion in his early training wanted to call down fire from heaven to incinerate a whole village of people because they didn't comply with what they thought he should.

Luke 9:53-55 **53** But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. **54** And when His disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did? **55** But He turned and rebuked them, and said, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of.

John was not then, we could say, by nature a tenderhearted man, but he had been seriously tenderized by the mighty work of God in His life.

And so he becomes known to us as the apostle of love by the fact that he wrote so much about it, both in his epistles and in the gospel of John and because of the fact that he expresses affection and love so readily and so easily both toward the Lord and toward others.

Key Ideas:

- Notice the connection between walking in the light, and being in good relationship with fellow believers. The opposite is equally true, darkness means separation from God and friends.
 - This is NOT a new commandment but the same original and great commandment...Love the Lord your God with all your heart soul mind and strength, AND love your neighbor as yourself.
3. Walking in His love precipitates spiritual growth. Vv. 12-14
(see next page)

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Stages of Growth Chart

Stage of growth	Natural developmental issues	Spiritual developmental issues	Goal	Vulnerabilities or dangers
Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Healthy foods -Love and acceptance -Protection -Training -Instruction -Nurture -walking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -“pure milk” of the Word (1 Peter 2:2; 2 Tim 3:15) -Assurance -growth -Basic of healthy walk with Jesus -Heb. 5:12-14 -Eph 4:13-16 -Heb 12:5-11 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Know the Father -Secure in the Family -Move towards independence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -failure to thrive -“stolen” by the enemy -doubts leading to disconnection -
Fathers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -reproduce -guide -guard -provide -direct -discipline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -secure -reproduce -sound in faith -guide -guard -Heb 12:5-11 -1 Cor. 4:14-16 -Philippians 2:19-22 - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -reproduce -legacy minded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -infertile -insignificance -fatigue -indifference -
Young Men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -physical maturity -strength -independence -stability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -solid -ready to “stand” -overcome -know the enemy’s tactics -2 Tim 2:22, (personal mastery) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -victorious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -rebellion -defeated

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LEADERS—here are the questions to spur discussion and my suggested answers. Getting people to share is always more valuable than just giving answers.

Questions for you to consider:

1. What points from the teaching touched you?

Leaders...allow for as many responses as possible in this first question, even if you don't get to any of the others. This is where the Word gets applied to people's hearts.

No recommended answers here...

2. Look up these statements by Jesus and talk about them?

John 14:15

John 15:10

Matthew 5:17

Matthew 6:33

Matthew 7:12

Luke 12:15

Matthew 22:37-40

Leaders...invite different people to look up and read these verses, and let comments flow naturally.

3. What do you think may have happened in the Apostle John's life to cause him to shift from a "son of thunder" to the "Apostle of love"?

Leaders...this is an open ended and subjective question actually geared to get people thinking about their own transformations from critical to kind, from mean to gentle, from angry to peaceful, and from "thunderous" to "loving".

My own thoughts is that the arrival of the Holy Spirit changed all the Apostles dramatically and this baptism of love penetrated their hearts in love for all mankind.

Equally important is the fact that Jesus demonstrated this great love overwhelmed John and the rest of the Apostles. As Paul said, Romans 5:8 ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

4. Review and discuss in depth the Stages of Growth Graph.

- Where do you feel like you are?
- Do you think we "arrive" and are at the same level always?
- What spiritual dangers are possible at each phase?

Leaders...spend some time familiarizing yourself with the Stages of Growth Graph. It is not complicated, but lends itself to great reflection and discussion.

Let people volunteer to talk but don't insist. It's always awkward to gauge our own growth, and some people are excessively hard on themselves.

Use the graph to focus on the opportunities at each stage and encourage all that they can become fruitful at any age at any time in their spiritual growth journey.

And remember...have fun!

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Session #3 (Leader's Resource) **1 John 2:15-27** **“Do's and Don'ts”**

Focus for this session:

There are three great themes in this brief section that are so important:

1. **Don't** love the world. Vv. 15-17
2. **Don't** believe the lie. Vv. 18-23
3. **Do** abide in the anointing. Vv. 24-27

OVERVIEW for the Video Teaching

Much of 1st John is sort of “stream of consciousness” from the Apostle, yet he is crystal clear about what it takes to walk purely in the Lord.

In this short section, the reader is encouraged to think clearly about their relationship to the world, their alertness to the lies, and the confidence to walk to close to the Lord, and trust the Holy Spirit's anointing for discernment.

<< Video Teaching Outline >>

Lessons from 1 John, chapter 2:3-14

1. 15-17 Don't love the world.

v. 15 **Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**

NOTE: It is important to clarify here that the Apostle is not talking about the “people” that make up the world, but the world “systems,” influences, patterns, and inherent evil. Otherwise, how would we reconcile this comment with John's own words from the Gospel of John 3:16, “**For God so loved the world that He sent His only son...**”?

The destructive nature of the ***world's system***

What is the world? We saw that last week, the system of evil, the system of lies and deceptions and falsehoods, and the evil conduct that goes with it. All the ideologies raised up against the knowledge of God—SEE: 2 Corinthians 10:5, *any ungodly idea*.

The **world is the system of rebellion** toward God run by Satan, set up on earth as the very antithesis of the gospel of salvation. We give no supreme affection to that and, at the same time, say we love God and love Jesus Christ. The two are mutually exclusive.

The world is hostile to godliness because it is dominated by

- carnal ambition,
- pride,
- greed,
- self-pleasure,
- evil desire.

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Its opinions are wrong. Its aims are selfish.

- Its pleasures are sinful.
- Its influences demoralizing.
- Its politics are corrupt.
- Its honors are empty.
- Its smiles are fake and its love is fickle.

ILL> Paul's disciple Demas...the defector who loved the way of the world...

2 Tim 4:10 **for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica**

Demas was associated with some very formidable men, preachers of the Word of God, faithful men, men of prayer, church planters, men who suffered. But, he loved the world. He loved the system of the world, human wisdom, human thought, human ideologies.

James 4:4 **Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.**

v. 16 **For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.**

The entrapments of the world –three gateway or access points.

- a. The lust of the flesh
- b. The lust of the eyes
- c. The pride of life

Example of the first sin of Eve:

- She wanted to eat the one thing forbidden...**lust of flesh**
- And then she also **saw** that the tree was desirable...**lust of the eyes**
- And to make one wise...**Pride of life.**

- There was physical impulse.
- There was an emotional impulse.
- There was an intellectual impulse.

What or who is our problem? We are!

Jer. 17:9 **"The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?"**

Gen. 6:5 **Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and *that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.***

That is where sin originates. It is in you, in your heart. And from out of the heart, inside of you, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness, all these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.

v. 17 **And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.**

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Key Point: Keep your eyes on eternity, not the temporal!

See: 1 Cor. 7:31 **and those who use this world as not misusing it. For the form of this world is passing away.**

2. Don't believe the lie. vv18-23

v. 18 **Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.**

- There are moral tests that define true Christians. It is their obedience to the Word of God and their love for God for others and the fact that they don't love the world that marks them.
- *So true Christians are marked morally, they're marked in terms of their theology and their doctrine. And, in this particular section, the emphasis is on the doctrine of Christ.*
- *True Christians embrace love, serve Christ, those who do not are termed antichrists.*

For reflection:

- The last hour—what does that mean?
- The “antichrist spirit” as opposed to “THE Antichrist”

v. 19 **They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out* that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.**

- First of all, the antichrists can be recognized because they leave.
- They defect. Maybe not all of them defect in our lifetime, or in our observation. But those who defect are antichrists.

v. 20-21 **But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things.²¹ I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.**

- Connect to the truth **you already know**
- Counterfeits are exposed when compared to the genuine.

v. 22-23 **Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. ²³Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.**

- The “antichrist spirit” begins with an inaccurate perspective of Jesus.
- Secondly, they deny the faith.
- Any denial of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scripture, God in human flesh, the Lord and Redeemer, is characteristic of an antichrist. They might accept Jesus as a good teacher or religious leader, an angel, an emanation from God, a prophet, --but this is far short of an accurate perception of who Jesus truly is.

3. Do abide in the anointing. Vv24-27

v. 24 **Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.**

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- First of all, abiding intercepts deception.
- So how can you tell a true Christian from an antichrist? A true Christian is not deceived.
 - They may doubt,
 - they may question,
 - they may be temporarily led astray,
 - they may be enticed in their spiritual infancy or instability.
- But a true believer will not abandon the truth.
 - There may be a time of testing,
 - there may be a time of wandering,
 - there may be a time of questioning and doubting.
- Doubt is not denial.
- Abide in truth— Both the **Written (the Bible) and living Word (Jesus Himself)**

v. 25 **And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life.**

- Your eternal life depends on your ability to discern, and abide in truth.

v. 26-27 **These things I have written to you concerning those who *try to deceive you*.²⁷ But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.**

The “antichrists” in John's day used to use two words to describe their religious experience. The two words that they preferred using were **knowledge and anointing**.

And these sort of self-styled super Christians sought to appear more intellectual, more erudite, more exalted, more transcendent, more lofty, more in the knowledge saw themselves as the knowing ones—that's where the term "Gnostic" later came from.

They were “in the know,” they had the true and elevated and secret and esoteric and divine knowledge.

And they also saw themselves as the **anointed**. They had received a special anointing from God, a special touch, a special designation, and a special elevation that gave to them a superior knowledge, putting them on a higher level than everybody else.

John rebuts them by saying, "We have an anointing from the Holy One," as if to say, you've got an anointing all right, but it is not from the Holy One, it's from the utterly unholy one.

- The warning against deceivers
- They come into the church; they are not truly in the fellowship. They deny the faith, that is they deny the reality of Jesus Christ, and that is central to the gospel.
- That means denial of the Trinity.
- You deny the deity of Christ, so you have the wrong Christ.
- You are thereby calling the Holy Spirit a liar because the Holy Spirit testifies of Christ.

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This text refers to the Holy Spirit. You have an anointing--you have the touch of God, **the ointment of God** on you and that ointment is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has taken up residency in you.

- 2 Corinthians 1: 21 says, "Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God."
- We were anointed by God and what was the anointing? "He gave us the Spirit in our hearts." You're not lacking in anything. You're not on the short end of divine privilege and power. You have the Holy Spirit! Remember Jesus said, after the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you shall receive power.
- Anointing is there to protect you from "teachers" who would lead you astray.

Eph 4:11 **And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,**

Rom 12:7 **or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching;**
Eph 1:17-18 **that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,**

LEADERS—here are the questions to spur discussion and my suggested answers. Getting people to share is always more valuable than just giving answers.

Questions for you to consider:

1. What points from the teaching touched you?

Leaders...allow for as many responses as possible in this first question, even if you don't get to any of the others. This is where the Word gets applied to people's hearts.

No recommended answers here...

2. What is it that makes us so susceptible to the ways of the world?

Leaders: Possible discussion might be around...popularity, being liked, power, money, and the "realities of the nice life" etc.

3. Review the three common "access points of temptation"

- The lust of the flesh
- The lust of the eyes
- The pride of life.

Leaders: refer to the teaching section in verses 15-16

4. Discuss the importance of the "inner anointing" highlighted by verse 27, But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you..." and the obvious organization of gifting of the church as revealed in Ephesians 4:11.

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Session #4 (Leader's Resource) **1 John 2:28-3:23** **“Your New DNA”**

“DNA is a [nucleic acid](#) that contains the [genetic](#) instructions used in the development and functioning of all known living [organisms](#).”

It has become common knowledge that all life forms consist of DNA, which is the code for how a particular expression of a living entity develops.

Jeremiah 1:5a **“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you...”**

The Bible speaks so frequently about our new birth, about our new spiritual lineage, and about our new status in God, that it is no stretch of the imagination to assume that when we become a follower of Jesus, something in our Creator's original intent and design is repaired. Maybe the DNA code that defines us in this world is repaired and added to by the Father to prepare us for higher living now, and unimaginable living in eternity.

Today's study makes the indisputable connection between Father and His children, and between our behavior and our redeemed nature.

Here are some thoughts about your new DNA:

1. Vv. 2:28- 3:3— Your new DNA makes you like your **Father**
2. Vv. 3:4-7-- Your new DNA closes the door on **sin**
3. Vv. 3:8-10- Your new DNA makes you **dangerous** to the devil.
4. Vv. 3:11-15-- Your new DNA opens the door to real **living**.
5. Vv. 3:16-23-- Your new DNA makes you **invaluable** to others...that's the power of love.

1. Vv. 2:28- 3:3—Your new DNA makes you like your **Father.**

²⁸ And now, little children, abide in Him, that **when He appears we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.**

NOTE: The early church had a clear expectation that Jesus would return, and that as His children we should be happy and ready to meet Him!

- *Some will be excited and happy, “confident,” bold, plain, free, Hebrews 4:16, Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Hebrews 10:19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,

- *While others will recoil in embarrassment, literally “shrink away in shame”. See Rev.6:15-17 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders,^[a] the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?*

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Key Point: He is coming, count on it and have confidence, because you are His child.

²⁹ If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.

- Born of Him = God the Father
- The Father's DNA
- So, your "righteousness" is evidence of your DNA, it is **not** the cause of it.
- In other words, I'm righteous because God is My Father; NOT I'm righteous so that God can be my Father.

Key Point: I resemble my Father, it is my new nature; those who don't look like the Father have a different "daddy"

3:1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

- The wonder of the Father in making us His sons.
- "What manner" = completely alien; foreign; this astonishing love
- "bestowed"—not just exhibited, but experienced
- world does not know Him, or us
 - Col 3:3 **For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.**
 - Rom 8:19 **For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.**

Key Point: The amazing love of our Father and, like Him, the world system refuses to embrace us.

² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

- No matter what the world thinks, you are His child.
- NOTE: What **we are now** is not apparent to the world, AND what we **shall be** is not completely revealed to us.
- There are many things about the future which we do not yet know.
- What do we know?—We are being changed!
 - 2 Cor 3:18 **But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.**
 - Our bodies—
 - Phil 3:21 **who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.**
 - 1 Cor 15:49 **And as we have borne the image of the *man* of dust, we shall also bear^[a] the image of the heavenly *Man*.**

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Key Point: Just as the world does not understand the transformation of the believer, so we too are not able to fully comprehend what is ahead of us.

³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

- “**hope**”—the confidence in the Christ of eternity
- Purity—“freedom from moral strain” so that the element in holy character which is wrought out by the discipline of temptation.
- Pure like water you would drink
 - Like food you would eat
 - Like relationships you’d like to have
 - **PURE IS BEST!!!**
 - pure gold
 - pure oil
 - pure means not polluted
- **Only Christ** purifies us from sin’s stain;
 - 1 John 1:7 **But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.**
- **But only we** can participate in purifying ourselves from its power

2 Cor. 7:1 **Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.**

1 Tim. 5:22 **Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people’s sins; keep yourself pure.**

James 4:8 **Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.**

1 Peter 1:22 **Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit^[a] in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,**

Key Point: we are pure because He is...and in that is freedom, goodness, usability.

2. Vv. 3:4-7—Your new DNA closes the door on sin.

⁴ Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.

- The universality of the human condition (Gnostics believed the “enlightened” were above such implication)
- Sin defined in its very **nature** is lawlessness—transgression of God’s laws (laws which are intended to protect you from destruction); sin is lawlessness;
 - Rom 14:23 **But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin**
 - James 4:17 **Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.**
 - 1 John 5:17 **All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death.**

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Key Point:

- Sin is not just disregarding God's law, it is the force of the disregard of the law
- Lawlessness is the essence, not the result, of sin

⁵ And you know that He **was manifested** to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.

- Just as Jesus was free from sin, so too His work on the Cross in allowing us to become part of God's family frees us from the penalty of sin—technically it should have not hold on us.
- When you love Christ, you'll hate sin
- On "taking away sin":
 - John 1:29 **The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who **takes away** the sin of the world!"**
 - Heb 9:26 **He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared **to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.****
- On "bearing sin":
 - 1 Peter 2:24 **who Himself **bore our sins** in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.**
 - Heb 9:28 **so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.**

Key Point: Jesus destroys sin; He is perfect.

⁶ **Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.**

- The logical consequence = Jesus took away sin, and if you're in Him, it is taken away from you also!
- When you are not abiding—you're sinning;
- Sin and Christ are irreconcilably at enmity with each other--Christ in His sinless Person and saving work is fundamentally opposed to it.

Key Point: When you are like Him...sin has no place; no dominion.

⁷ **Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.**

Key Point: There is no form of "righteousness" which ignores behavior!

3. Vv. 3:8-10—Your new DNA makes you **dangerous to the devil.**

⁸ **He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.**

- Sin's **origin**
- Satan's rebellion birthed sin
- Satan is always an enemy and a foe
- Satan's character = sin; Son's character = Save
- Satan's works

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- Morally = rebellion
- Physically = disease
- Intellectually = deception and error
- Christ came to break these chains
 - To render ineffective, inoperative, overthrow
- As our understanding of the nature, origin, and effects of sin are more clearly realized, we become less tolerant of it in our own life.

Key Point: Jesus came to destroy sin in every manner possible.

We are saved from sin's **penalty**.

We are being set free from sin's **power**.

And, ultimately, we will be delivered from its very **presence!**

⁹ **Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.**

- Clearly it is the abiding in sin, the mindless practice of sin that is referred to; our lives are to be regularly held to evaluation by the Holy Spirit.
- Not able to sin habitually—without any consequence or conviction.
- The key is the *incongruity* of sin for the follower as opposed to the impossibility of it.

KEY POINT: “His seed”

The new birth involves the acquisition of a new nature through the implanting within us the very seed or life-giving power of God. Birth of God is a deep radical inward transformation. Moreover, the new nature received at the new birth remains. It exerts a strong internal pressure towards holiness. It is the abiding influence of “his seed” within everyone who is born of God which enables John to affirm, without fear of contradiction, that he cannot go on living in sin.

- 2 Cor 5:17 **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**
- 2 Peter 1:4 **by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.**

¹⁰ **In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.**

- And here it is, the re-visitation of the imperative of love...
- Yes, Jesus was without sin...because He is love in essence.
 - Love of God
 - Love of others.
- If God is your Father...you will love. If not...then not...
- Your behavior reveals your lineage...the seed that is in you.
- Just a righteousness towards God effects moral change in behavior, righteousness towards others is simply love in action.

4. Vv. 3:11-15—Your new DNA opens the door to real living.

¹¹ **For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another,**

- Never a “new” message...as opposed to the “new message of the heretics...”

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¹² not as Cain *who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.*

- Here we get some insight into Cain's sin...he had embraced a different DNA

¹³ Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you.

- Just as Cain hated the "righteousness of Abel," so it's no wonder that the world will hate your righteousness.

¹⁴ We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love *his* brother abides in death. ¹⁵ Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

- Again...as Cain brought death, so too does hate bring death
- There is no DNA of the Father in you if you hate others.
- Love is the DNA of heaven
 - The first "fruit" of the Spirit—Galatians 5
 - The greatest of these is love—1 Cor. 13
 - Love is the demonstrator of faith

5. Vv. 3:16-23—Your new DNA makes you *invaluable* to others...that's the power of love.

¹⁶ By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.

- John learned love from Jesus!
- Note the contrast between "Cain" killing his brother, and Jesus laying down His life for us!

¹⁷ But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

¹⁸ My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

- Like 2 oars in a boat...love is a way of life that requires not just compassion, but action!

	Hatred	Love
Originates from...	Devil	God
Results in...	murder	Self-sacrifice
Evidence of ...	Spiritual death	Eternal life

¹⁹ And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. ²⁰ For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. ²¹ Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.

- And here John introduces the "heart"...as a sort of gauge or barometer of our spiritual life.
 - Even when you're insecure...God knows you
 - Or, confident...our confidence is only in HIM!

²² And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. ²³ And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

- His blessings flow, when we abide in Him...as His children!

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LEADERS—here are questions to spur discussion and suggested answers. Getting people to share is *always* more valuable than just giving answers.

Questions for you to consider:

1. What points from the teaching touched you?

Leaders...*allow for as many responses as possible in this first question, even if you don't get to any of the others. This is where the Word gets applied to people's hearts.*

No recommended answers here...

2. Only Christ purifies us from sin's stain; however, only we can participate in purifying ourselves from its power. What are some examples of how we can do that?

Leaders: *As we walk with the Lord, we develop a distaste for sin and a hunger for God. We become more sensitive to: what we say, our attitudes, where our minds go, etc.*

Possible discussion might be around...being aware about what we allow in our lives and purifying ourselves from...coarse language/conversations, certain types of entertainment (ex. television, internet, social media, etc.), hanging out in certain places, unhealthy relationships, etc.

3. Discuss why, when we are born again, it is impossible to abide in Christ and to abide in sin.

Leaders: *Jesus came to take away our sins; therefore, we cannot both live in Christ and live in sin. When you love Christ, you will hate sin.*

4. According to verses 3:11-15, how does our new DNA open the door to real living?

Leaders: *refer to the teaching section in verses 3:11-15... the tragic result of Cain embracing sin and rejecting life; however, our new reality is that we pass from death to life...we have the DNA of the Father, we have the fruit of the Spirit, we have the gift of love in our lives, as well.*

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Session #5 (Leader's Resource) **“Right Living Means Right Loving”**

1 John contains all the basics of how to think and live right. The repetitive message of this short epistle is simply, *God is love and he who is born of God will love others.*

The connection between how we think and how we live has been proven many times. Your mind is the thought and control center of your physical being. **“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he”** (Proverbs 23:7). There is no separation between thoughts and actions.

This is the exact point that the Apostle John is making both to counteract those who held that behavior was not indicative of the mind, and to encourage believers by explaining how to walk in a daily relationship with the Lord. Bottom line is, *how you think is how you live!*

In this section of 1 John, the next logical step for a follower of Jesus is clearly this: **right living means right loving**. If you think right, you will live right, and love will be the mark of your life.

As a side note, there are several verses in the midst of the flow of thought that are principles and promises for you to claim. As we work our way through these portions of Scripture, ask the Holy Spirit to let you see these “pearls.”

Breaking the passage into five sections, we see five main points about “right loving.”

- Right living means operating in overcoming power.
- Right loving is the DNA of heaven, and all its citizens.
- Right loving is renewed through abiding in Him.
- Right loving is always expressed in human relationships.
- Right loving is obedient.

Right Living Means Right Loving

1. Right living means operating in overcoming power

1 John 3:24-4:6

3:24 Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

² By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God,

³ and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

⁴ You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

⁵ They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them.

⁶ We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

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Key verse: ⁴ You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

- We are to overcome...not be overcome.
- Vs. 6 clearly says that we “hear” God, and He hears us. This is a stark contrast to the “spirit of error...the spirit of the world...the Antichrist spirit.”
- Clearly, the intent is for the confidence of the Spirit to rise up in each believer, facilitating a rejection of the lies of the enemy.

2. Right loving is the DNA of heaven, and all its citizens.

1 John 4:7-11

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Love is the essence of our Father, **not** an attribute.

- Everything God does, is loving.
 - His mercy, grace, kindness...and His justice, judgment, wrath—it’s all loving.
- Love as God’s character.

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

- God gives us His DNA as members of His Kingdom family.

⁸ He who does not love does not know God, **for God is love.**

- 3 other NT statements about God’s nature to go along with “God is love.”
 1. He is Spirit. John 4:24 **God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.**
 2. God is Light. 1 John 1:5 **This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.**
 3. God is a “consuming fire.” Heb 12:29 **For our God is a consuming fire.** (see Deut 4:24)
- God is not just “loving”—that loving actions are just one of the many things He does; rather that all His activity is loving activity—if He judges, He judges in love.
- In love, sin is not condoned, but exposed; not accepted, but consumed.

⁹ In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.

- The love of God is supremely expressed (manifested) in Jesus. No greater gift of God is conceivable because no greater gift was possible.
- This is God’s unspeakable gift,
 - 2 Cor 9:15 ⁵ **Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!**
 - Romans 8:32 ³² **He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?**

¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the **propitiation** for our sins.

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- Propitiation = completely “satisfies” the holy, just righteous nature of God; what is needed to satisfy the requirement of heaven/God through the Cross.
 - **Redemption** is God’s work satisfying the “legal” ownership so that the enemy has no claim.
 - **Propitiation** satisfies God’s holy nature, paving the way for us to be in His presence and not be consumed.
- God’s love exceeded our “un-lovability”; we were not in any sense “lovable,” but we were worth saving—He did so willingly out of His love.

¹¹ **Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.**

- The Cross precipitates action on our part—once you understand God’s incredible love toward you, you can never return to that life of disconnected selfishness, ignoring others

3. Right loving is renewed through abiding in Him.

1 John 4:12-16

¹² **No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God **abides** in us, and His love has been perfected in us.**

¹³ **By this we know that we **abide** in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.**

¹⁴ **And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.**

¹⁵ **Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. ¹⁶ And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who **abides** in love abides in God, and God in him.**

Notes:

Vs. 14 The Gospel summarized in one sentence!

- Personal witness—John the Apostle.

¹⁵ **Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God **abides** in him, and he in God.**

- The decisive confession—a statement of belief on the evidence, and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁶ **And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who **abides** in love **abides** in God, and God in him.**

- the only way to love, to believe, is through the indwelling, abiding of God.

4. Right loving is always expressed in human relationships.

1 John 4:17-20

¹⁷ **Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. ¹⁹ We love Him because He first loved us.**

²⁰ **If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? ²¹ And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.**

- Perfect does not mean flawless, but developed and mature.
- We have boldness because of love.
- We too are His children, “in whom He is well pleased”—just as He was well pleased with the Son.

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18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

- Love banishes fear—confidence of preceding verse
- We love God, but we can approach Him—through Jesus.
- Fear itself is a torment—its own punishment.

19 We love Him because He first loved us.

- Agape godlike love does not reside in our fallen nature; ‘over very capacity to love, whether the object of our love be God or our neighbor is due entirely to His prior love for us and in us.

20 If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

- **3 lies** in 1 John
 1. to claim to know God and walk in darkness
1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.
 2. to claim to know God and deny the deity of Jesus. 2:22,23 ***22 Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. 23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.***
 3. HERE in 4:20—to claim to love God and hate your brethren.

Question: Can we claim success in the difficult realm of the invisible, and fail in the easier realm of the visible?

21 And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.

- The great commandment
 - Matt 22:37-40 ***37 Jesus said to him, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”^[a] 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”^[b] 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.***
- Jesus joined these two truths—we can never separate them.

5. Right Loving is obedient.

1 John 5:1-3

1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has become a child of God. And everyone who loves the Father loves his children, too. 2 We know we love God’s children if we love God and obey his commandments. 3 Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome.

5:1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him.

- Our new birth is evidenced by the new family

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.

- Love of others in expressed in obedience

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³ For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

- Love is not an emotional experience, but moral obedience.
- Agape is active and practical
- His commandments are not irksome
- Pharisees' heavy burdens---
 - Matt 23:4 For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay *them* on men's shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers.

Practical thoughts about "right loving"

- Love is spelled T-I-M-E
- Respond, don't react
- Agape/unconditional love means giving when nobody else is, and not resenting them for it.
- What about when I feel wronged—or I am wronged?
 - Offended...no bigger waste of time
 - Perhaps it is just yours to bear, Matt 5:40-42 ⁴⁰ If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have *your* cloak also. ⁴¹ And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. ⁴² Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.
- Sometimes, the appropriate, right, and loving action seems uncaring, unloving or mean:
 - Doing things for people that they can and should do for themselves—that's not love.
 - Asking people to do what they've agreed to do—that is love.
 - Making a boundary, rule, or guideline and then enforcing the consequences of not obeying—that's love.
 - Having been faithfully obedient only to see a party thrown for the return of the disobedient—(Prodigal son and his older brother—Killing a fattened calf for the wayward brother)—that requires a loving attitude.
 - Withdrawing your attention, affection when another is acting out—ignoring temper tantrums—good parenting is always loving and usually difficult.
 - Not providing shelter or money to the addicted or unrepentant defiant friend or family member—tough love.
 - Denying resources to the "needy" friend or family member—do what you can do, but never to facilitate dysfunction—still loving
 - Not providing parental discipline is just as abusive as wrong discipline—not loving.
 - Setting boundaries and enforcing them—loving.

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Session 6 (Leader's Resource) **Final Admonitions** **1 John 5:4-21**

Review/Overview

- The last living Apostle, John, is about 80 years old writing from Ephesus to the churches in Asia Minor warning them against the apostasy creeping into the young fellowships regarding lies about the incarnation, salvation, sin, and blood atonement.
- This heresy later became known as 'gnosticism'—knowledge is supreme, the material world is inconsequential; therefore, sin is on no importance.
- Main themes:
 1. **Think right**—keep to the truth
 2. **Live right**—obedience
"Obeying God's words is the direct connect to His rewards."
 3. **Love right**—fellowship.

Your focus, direction, and aim is just as important as the effort.

Roy "Wrong Way" Riegels played for the University of California, Berkeley football team from 1927 to 1929. His wrong-way run in the 1929 Rose Bowl is often cited as the worst blunder in the history of college football.

In a relativistic world, pre-occupied with self, expediency, and a "whatever works for your attitude," believers are called to comprehend and apprehend the clear truth of the written and living Word. The message is clear. Our faith—both our belief system and our relationship with the King—is based on the incarnation of the Son of God. To disavow this reality is to invite complete separation from His life-flow.

Embracing Jesus as the truth provides release from the prison of this world's system, freedom from the enemy's rule, and entrance into the fullness of life both now and for eternity.

We have called this "right thinking" which is directly connected to "right living."

Here are five key points out of today's study:

1. Jesus is the victory over the enemies of our soul. Vv 4,5.
2. God always supplies evidence (witnesses) to His redemptive effort. Vv 6-9.
3. The Word provides unequivocal assurance about eternal life. Vv 10-13.
4. Jesus supplies confidence as we pray. Vv 14-17.
5. The Truth shall keep you free! Vv18-21.

1. Jesus is the victory over the enemies of our soul. Vv 4,5.

⁴ For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

⁵ Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

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- Overcomers—prevail, conquer, defeat, beat, trounce, winning despite obstacles
- Being born of God is the only escape of the world's system.
- Overcomers by faith—faith is not a “religion” or system of belief; it is the active trust placed in our Lord.
- We overcome all that is opposed to the goodness of God.
 - Rom 12:21 **Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**
 - 2 Peter 2:19 **While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.**

Listen to what the Apostle reveals through Jesus in Revelation:

Revelation 2:7

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.”

Revelation 2:11

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.”

Revelation 2:17

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.”

Revelation 2:26

And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—

Revelation 3:5

He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

Revelation 3:12

He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.

Revelation 3:21

To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Revelation 21:7

He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

2. God always supplies evidence (witnesses) to His redemptive effort. Vv 6-9.

⁶This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.

⁷For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.

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⁸ And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.

⁹ If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son.

NOTE: the water and the blood...meaning Jesus came in the flesh, and His blood (life) was offered in exchange for our life of death.

- Matters of faith can always be tested in the evidence of the natural...but are realized only by the revelation of the Holy Spirit.
- 2 or 3 witnesses
 - Deut. 19:15 One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or **three witnesses** the matter shall be established.
 - Matt 18:16 But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or **three witnesses** every word may be established.'

3. The Word provides unequivocal **assurance about eternal life. Vv 10-13.**

¹⁰ He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.

¹¹ And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

¹² He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

¹³ These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may *continue to* believe in the name of the Son of God. We have eternal life.

- By this you know...you have eternal life
- God wants you to know and have confidence in where you stand with Him both now and for eternity—that's called assurance.

4. Jesus supplies **confidence as we pray. Vv 14-17.**

¹⁴ Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

¹⁶ If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *which does not lead to death*, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not *leading to death*. There is sin *leading to death*. I do not say that he should pray about that.

¹⁷ All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not *leading to death*.

- Prayer answered
- Prayer is pertinent and powerful.
- Your prayers are answered
- Our prayers are powerful and vital in how the Spirit operates in and through us.

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- God hears every prayer...Revelation 5:8 **Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the **prayers** of the saints.**

NOTE: about the “sin” of a brother, and the “sin leading to death”. The only sin that is unforgiveable is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit—or rejecting the truth and work of the Spirit. What is His work? To bring people to a saving faith in Christ. So the sin leading to death is rejecting Christ as Savior and Lord.

5. The Truth shall keep you free! Vv18-21.

¹⁸ We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.

¹⁹ We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies *under the sway of the wicked one*.

²⁰ And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, **that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.**

²¹ Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

We know truth

Truth: This is what is real.

We are complete and whole only in Jesus who is the truth.

Close:

I have one question for you today...do you know what eternity holds for you?