

Study Guide

The
Epistles
of John

by Gerald Paden

SUNSET
International Bible Institute



THE EPISTLES OF JOHN



INTRODUCTORY NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES

Arranged for study by
Gerald Paden & Virgil Yocham
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The Epistles of John Study Guide

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without the written permission of the publisher except in the case of brief
quotations within critical articles and reviews, including translation.

DISCLAIMER

The textbooks used in this course were selected because we consider them
two of the best available and well adapted to this course of study. **I,II,III**
John by: Morris M. Womack (College Press) and ***The Epistles of John*** by
Gerald Paden, Sunset Institute Press will assist you in your study of these
epistles. As with all books written by men, there may be some things with
which you and I would not agree. The principle, “use what is good and
discard what is not good” applies to all textbooks used with our courses.
Please be wise enough to discard any and all teaching that is not biblical.

Instructions and Requirements for Level II Students (Non-Transferrable)

Each lesson is built around the instruction on either the VHS tape, DVD, CD, or audio cassette tape. Listen to the lecture on the tape as you follow along in the course Study Guide book.

Tests: There will be two major tests to complete for this course. The Mid-term Exam is to be taken at the end of lesson six (6) and the Final Exam at the completion of the course. All assignments must be finished by the time of your final test. Each test has to receive a grade of 70 or higher to pass this course. (**The two tests will be 85% of your final grade**)

Memory Work: Memory verses are to be done as you go through the study. Either write your verses out during the test, in the presence of the administrator, correct them with a different colored pen and turn them in with the mid-term or final test or quote them to the administrator during the course and he will keep track of the verses completed and report them to us. (**5% of your final grade**) All memory work must be completed to pass this course. You have only 12 memory verses.

Due by the Mid-term test: (6 verses)

1 John 1:5-10

Due with the Final test: (6 verses)

1 John 2:15-17, 3:1-3

Assignments:

- Read all three epistles of John three (3) times during this study. (**5% of your final grade**)
- Complete all the Self-exams at the end of the lessons and show them to your Test Administrator (**5% of your final grade**)

Grade Scale:

Reading and Memory work:	10%
Self Exams	5%
Two tests:	<u>85%</u>
TOTAL:	100%

Instructions and Requirements for Level III Students (Transferable)

Each lesson is built around the instruction on either the VHS tape, DVD, CD, or audio cassette tape. Listen to the lecture on the tape as you follow along in the course Study Guide book.

Reading: Two books will be required: **I, II, III John**, by Morris M. Womack, College Press, and **The Epistles of John** by Gerald Paden, Sunset Institute Press. These books must be read in their entirety by the time the course is completed and a one page evaluation written for the book by Morris M. Womack. You must also read the the Bible books, **I,II&III John** four times during this course of study. (**10% of your final grade**)

Memory Work: Memory verses will be done on the honor system.

You are asked to write your verses from memory in the presence of the administrator. Correct the memory work with a different colored pen and turn it in with the appropriate test.

Or you may quote your memory verses to the administrator during the course and he will keep track of the verses completed and report them to us. Please be diligent in doing your memory work. All memory work must be completed to pass this course. You will have fifty-one (51) verses to memorize. (**This will be 10% of your grade**)

Due at the Mid-term test: (28 verses)

1 John 1:5-10; 2:1-6, 9-11, 15-17, 28-29; 3:1-3, 11-15

Due with the Final Exam: (23 verses)

1 John 4:1-3, 7-11, 19-21; 5:4-5, 13-15; 2 John 9-11; 3 John 5-8

Outlines: A three or four-point outline (with verses) will be required on each of the seven chapters to be studied in this course. These outlines will be due by the end of the lessons covering the chapters and are to be sent in with the final exam.

Research Papers: (20% of your grade) There will be three research papers required in this course.

These papers should be two to three pages in length. The assigned papers are:

- a. ***The Anointing*** (1 John 2:20, 24, 27) due at the end of the course.
- b. ***The Child of God Cannot Sin*** (1 John 3:6-9) due at the end of the course.
- c. ***The Sin unto Death and Not unto Death*** (1 John 5:16) due at the end of the course.

Each paper is to have at least two (2) research sources and sent in with your final exam.

You must complete all the “Self-Exam” questions in your Study Guide and you must complete both the Mid-term and Final Exams with a grade of 70% or above.

Grade Value Percentage:

Readings:	10%
Research papers:	20%
Memory work:	10%
Tests:	60%
TOTAL	100%

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LESSON ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLES

INTRODUCTION:

Pou are going to find the study of the letters of the apostle John a very interesting study because the topics that he will be developing in this first letter, called 1 John are of extreme importance to the Christian. He will be discussing the very nature of God, His oneness, and in particular, the moral nature of God. He will discuss the love of God and the way it has influenced the redemptive picture as it relates of Jesus Christ, our great high priest and sacrifice. He will also present the person of Christ. The reason a discussion on the “person of Christ” is because He is both human and divine and the long-awaited Messiah the Hebrew Scripture had promised in ages past. You are going to find that there were people in the days of the writing of First John that denied both His deity and his humanity and that certainly did not want to admit that He was the Messiah of the Old Testament. So the Apostle John will have to defend the very nature of Christ in his deity/humanity and in his Messianic function.

He will discuss the question of morality. There are some strange ideas that are being taught when John begins to write this epistle or this letter that discuss the implications of sin, of immorality. There are some that would even deny that it is a matter of deep concern because they believe that sin really makes no difference. That sin is just a function of the body and does not in any way contaminate the soul. So the apostle John will have to take that doctrine to task and there will be two different extremes that he will be dealing with as he discusses the issue of morality.

John will also have to identify those that are teaching these errors about Christ and about God and about morality. He will call them anti-Christ because they are contrary, their message is contrary and destructive to everything that Jesus came to accomplish and everything that He Himself is and everything that He did. They are the source of all religious error, these individuals that are called antichrist

LESSON AIM: To lay a foundation on which to build a meaningful study of the Epistles of John.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

Examine some basic problems with which John deals and the primary sources and nature of Gnosticism in the first century. You will see John's approach in challenging and refuting the doctrines of the Gnostics.

SUBJECTS PRESENTED IN FIRST JOHN

A. Identifying the Gnostics

1. Definition: “A group of people, more or less philosophers, in New Testament times that thought that they knew everything.”
 - a. The word “gnostic” comes from the Greek word “GNOSIS” which means “to know.”
 - b. They claimed to know everything.
 - c. They depended more upon human speculation than divine revelation.
 - d. They just assumed that because they thought of some idea and it seemed to fit well into their philosophy then it must be a product of divine revelation.
 - e. They considered themselves the wise people, the ones that knew it all.
 - 1) They claim to know God but they do not know Him.
 - 2) They claim to know Jesus but they have never really understood His person nor His nature.
2. These are identified by John as “anti-christ.”
3. John will tell us that their attitudes and their sources of knowledge are totally human and has nothing to do with the word of God.

B. John’s Presentation of the New Birth

He will build the new birth on three fundamental pillars.

1. ***The pillar of morality.***
 - a. The Christian has a moral standard by which he lives (1 John 3:9). “*He that is begotten of God sins not.*”
 - b. That verb “sins” is a present tense verb defining the fact that a Christian cannot, will not and does not **practice** sin in his life.
2. ***The pillar of love.***
 - a. The Christian lives by the standard of love (1 John 4:7). “*He that loves is begotten of God.*”
 - b. John tells us that the new birth has its roots on the pillar of love.
3. ***The pillar of faith.***
 - a. The Christian lives by the standard of faith (1 John 5:1) “*He that believes in Christ is begotten of God.*”
 - b. Faith becomes one of the foundation ingredients for the new birth.

C. John’s Presentation of the Truth

1. The fundamental source of truth.
 - a. True knowledge comes only by revelation.
 - 1) Jesus Christ is the initial source of that knowledge.
 - 2) True knowledge was transmitted to the apostles.
 - 3) The apostles in turn shared that knowledge with their readers.
 - 4) In order that their readers, too, may have a true relationship with the Father (1 John 1:3). “*. . . so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.*”

- b. Gnostics claimed to know more than the apostles.
 - 1) These men that had never even seen Jesus Christ.
 - 2) These men that knew nothing about His message.
 - 3) Theirs was a false knowledge (1 Timothy 6:20). "*O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:*"

D. John's Presentation of Sin

- 1. The nature and source of sin.
 - a. Its roots are in the ". . .lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the vain glory of life."
 - b. It has to do with human appetites. Therefore sin has its roots in human nature.
- 2. The practice of sin.
 - a. God has solved the sin problem with the sacrifice of Christ Jesus.
 - b. How can an individual who does have sin occasionally appearing in his life maintain his relationship with God, enjoying uninterrupted fellowship and not live under the menace of sin?
 - c. God has the blood of Christ that will cover our sins.
- 3. Conditions for cleansing our sins.
 - a. Walk in the light as God reveals light in order to have fellowship with God (1 John 1:7).
 - b. A child of God cannot live like the devil and still have fellowship with God (1 John 3:8-9).
 - c. Any individual who has not settled the practice of sin in his life belongs to the devil.
 - d. The man that does not practice sin has fellowship with God (1 John 3:9).

E. John's Presentation of the Arch Enemy, Satan

- 1. Satan tempts God's children to hate one another.
- 2. Satan tempts God's people to commit sins.
- 3. Satan uses error to deceive people and then lead them to condemnation.

A DISCUSSION OF GNOSTICISM

A. The Origin of Gnosticism

- 1. **Zoroaster** – a great religious leader in Persia.
 - a. He taught that there was not one God but two.
 - b. A number of opposing qualities that the philosophers of our world tried to harmonize.
 - 1) The principle of life – but it has its counterparts, its very opposite in death itself.
 - 2) There is the human soul. There is the physical body, but the soul does not terminate with the termination of the physical body.
 - 3) There is purity, morality, and then there is sin.

2. The Zoroastrian or Persian system was based on the assumption that there existed **two original and independent powers of good and evil, of light and darkness.**
 - a. There is the god of the physical body. He is the god that created matter. Matter is evil according to him. Matter is eternal and this god created man out of this flawed material and therefore the physical body is basically corrupt.
 - b. There was another god that created the soul of man. He would be the good god. The ways these philosophies begin to explain themselves and to penetrate into the New Testament church and diminish the truth of Jesus Christ with the infusion of error or with a mixture of error, is they began to say that whatever we do by way of sin just influences the physical body and would be of interest and concern only to the God of matter.
 - c. The gnostic concept of two gods.
 - 1) The God of good is the God of the New Testament, the God that Jesus would represent, therefore He is the God of love.
 - 2) The God that is over matter would be the God of the Old Testament because He is the God that created matter.
 - a) He is the God that brought the flood upon the people.
 - b) He is the God that exterminated the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.
 - c) He is the God that is judicial.
 - d) He is the God that is vindictive and therefore He is the God of evil.
 - e) He is the God of the physical body. He is the God that exterminated the Amalekites and other nations of people.

B. Nature of Gnosticism

Note the following characteristics of the gnostic system:

1. A claim on the part of the initiated to a **special knowledge** as superior to faith and as the special possession of the more enlightened. Ordinary Christians did not possess this secret and higher doctrine.
2. The essential **separation of matter and spirit** – matter being essentially evil and the source from which all evil has arisen.
3. An attempt at the solution of the problems of creation and of the origin of evil by **the conception of a Demiurge** (that is, a creator or artificer of the world as distinct from the Supreme Deity). It should be observed that this conception merely concealed the difficulties of the problem, and did not solve them.
4. A **denial of the true humanity of Christ** – a docetic Christology which looked on the earthly life of Christ (and especially His sufferings on the cross) as unreal.
5. The **denial of the personality of the supreme God** and a **denial also of the free will of man.**
6. The teaching, on the one hand, of **Asceticism** as the means of attaining to

spiritual communion with God and, on the other hand, of an **indifference which led directly to licentiousness.**

7. A **syncretistic tendency** which combined certain more or less misunderstood Christian doctrines, and various elements from Oriental, Jewish and other sources.
8. The scriptures of the Old Testament were ascribed to the Demiurge or inferior Creator of the world, who was the God of the Jews, but not the true God.

NOTE: Some of these characteristic ideas are more obvious in one and some of them in others of the gnostic systems.

C. The Church and its Battle with Judaism

1. The early church was born and rooted in the soil of Judaism and began its existence peacefully coexisting with Judaism (cf. Acts 2:46-47).
 - a. The Jews looked upon the church as an extension of, or, an addition to, or, even an improvement of Judaism (cf. Acts 5:13).
 - b. The people approved Christianity because they had not recognized it as a separate organism.
 - c. Then with the preaching of Stephen (Acts 7) opposition grew and the schism was complete.
2. Since the church grew up in Jewish soils, it was inevitable that those converts from Judaism to Christianity would try to mold Christianity to their way of thinking and try to fit the doctrines of Christ into a Jewish mold just as the Jews tried to fit the earthly ministry of Christ into their way of thinking (John 6:15).
 - a. There developed a very strong Jewish *syncretism*, that is, they tried to restructure Christianity according to Jewish customs and even Jewish law (cf. Acts 15).
 - b. The church was considered a Jewish sect (Acts 24:5; 28:22).
3. Therefore, the first battle against false doctrine that the apostles had to fight was against Judaizers.
 - a. The books of Romans and Galatians were written to counter Judaism.
 - b. With the writing of these two books and the destruction of Jerusalem, (70 A.D.), Judaism pretty well came to an end.
 - c. The church then had a clear, separate life from Judaism.

D. Three Major Paganizing Influences

1. **Grecian philosophers.**
2. **Persian mysticism** – introduced dualism.
3. **Oriental asceticism** – introduced monasticism and the transmigration of soul.

All of these religions tried to restructure Christianity and tried to make it fit into their philosophic, mystic, monastic concepts.

E. The Opposition of the Apostles to Gnosticism

1. Colossians:
 - a. Paul defends the divinity of Christ (Colossians 1:13, 15-18; 2:9).
 - b. Paul speaks against asceticism (Colossians 2:20-22).
2. First and Second Timothy: “... knowledge that is falsely so called . . .” (1 Timothy 6:20).
3. The Epistles of John: John’s answer to Gnosticism will be discussed in the study of the letters themselves.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON ONE:

1. Write a short explanation of your concept of the reason/s John wrote this first epistle and the problems he addresses in the book.

2. List the three pillars of the “new birth.”

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

3. John presents facts about sin. List these three facts.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4. What three things does John present concerning our arch enemy, Satan?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

5. John, writing to Christians, presents what four conditions for cleansing our sins?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

6. Complete this sentence: “The first battle against false doctrine that the apostles had to fight was against _____.”

LESSON TWO

FELLOWSHIP IS ROOTED IN APOSTOLIC WITNESS TO JESUS

INTRODUCTION:

Jn the first chapter, John discusses the issues relative to fellowship between the Creator and the creature. He affirms the reality of it, the immoral actions that preclude it and the way the blood of Calvary establishes and maintains it.

The apostle will present the foundation of the argument that he will be using throughout the rest of the book. And he will tell us that God does fellowship man in the human body because that is one of the fundamental doctrines that those people that claim to know everything denied. They would teach that the good God cannot fellowship any individual that has a physical body. And so John will begin way back in the Garden of Eden. When God had created man in the beginning, had created the world, had pronounced His concept or His evaluation of the creation He said, "It is good." And in Genesis chapter 2 God would come down in the Garden of Eden and He and Adam and Eve would walk together and enjoy intense communion. So it was possible for God to have fellowship with physical man because matter was not evil. God had made it. Hebrews 11:3 tells us that God created the world Himself, the same God that had originated Adam in the beginning. Therefore there was no evil that was built into the world itself. John tells us that there did exist fellowship between God and man in the beginning of time. In the real person of Jesus Christ that fellowship, not only can be, but is in reality restored.

LESSON TEXT: 1 John 1:1-7

LESSON AIM: To learn of the possibility of fellowship with God and that fellowship is based on the moral nature of God and its foundation is the blood of Jesus Christ.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. Learn that any real doctrine or teaching has its origin in a real person and is delivered out of revelation and not out of human precepts.
 2. Study about the holiness of God as seen in His moral character.
 3. Examine the truth that "walking in the light" is synonymous with walking in the way of the revealed word of God.
 4. Come to know that "walking in the light" and being "cleansed" is a continuous process and does not mean to walk sinlessly.
-

JOHN'S PRESENTATION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF LIFE

A. John's Eyewitness Testimony

1. That which was from the beginning (v. 1a).
 - a. “*That*” – John begins this epistle with a demonstrative pronoun.
 - 1) This is similar to the beginning of the Gospel of John – “*In the beginning was the Word.*”
 - 2) The Word that was in the beginning was really a person even in the beginning.
 - b. “*From the beginning*” (Gk. *ARCHE*). This would be the same beginning as in Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1 (cf. Colossians 1:16 and Hebrews 1:10).
2. That which was from the beginning then is probably an expression of the divinity of Christ.
3. Note how verses 1 and 2 begin: “. . . *that which was from the beginning* – “. . . *the life was manifested*. . .”
 - a. The “*was in the beginning*” proceeds the manifestation.
 - b. “*The manifested*” is when the Word was made flesh.

B. John's Stress upon the Reality of the Manifestation of the Divinity of Christ

1. There is multiple eyewitness testimony – “we” (all of the apostles).
 - a. Heard.
 - b. Saw.
 - c. Beheld (contemplated).
 - d. Handled.
 - 1) Three times John says “*we saw Him.*”
 - 2) This is all emphasized by the fact that the apostles would suffer and even die for their testimony.
2. The difference between *seeing* and *beholding*:
 - a. *To see* is to superficially perceive, to register the fact as it transpires.
 - b. *To behold* (contemplate) is to think, to discern, to meditate upon, to view attentively.
3. We have direct multiple testimony. (cf. 2 Peter 1:1,21 and John 19:35.)
 - a. Not only to pre-existing deity – “*that which was from the beginning.*”
 - b. But also to His real humanity – “*we heard, saw, contemplated, and handled.*”

C. Concerning the Word of Life (v. 1c)

1. That which they had contemplated and handled was in relation to the “*Word of Life.*” (cf. John 1:4)
2. Here John makes the declaration that all of that which was from the beginning relates to life. But whose life – our life!
 - a. It is “*the life, the eternal.*”
 - b. 1 John 5:11 states that God has given us “*the life, the eternal*” and that life is in the Son.
 - c. This is not the life of Christ – He is the preexisting one, the eternal one. Life is not a problem for Him, but it is to us for we die.

3. The importance of accepting the apostles' testimony – *Life* (1 John 4:5–6). Their message relates to life and they bear witness to it.

D. Fellowship is With the Father (vs. 2-4)

The same idea of John 1:1 “... *the Word was with God . . .*”

1. *With* carries the idea in the Greek of “face to face.”
2. *Manifested* means “to open up, to unfold, to reveal.”
3. *Proclaim* carries the idea of the apostles putting out from themselves a message.

NOTE: In verses 1–2 John takes up these three areas:

1. The **manifestation** – He revealed Himself.
2. The **testimony** – I beheld the revealing.
3. The **proclamation** – I declare that which I beheld.

THE PREMISE FOR HAVING FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD (vs. 5-6)

A. God's Nature Stated Positively – “*God Is Light*”

1. The figure of light is often used in the Scriptures to describe that which is good, righteous, and true (cf. Ephesians 5:8-10).
2. Therefore, God must always be thought of in this way: He is good, He is righteous, He is true!

B. God's Nature Stated Negatively – “*In Him Is No Darkness at All*”

1. The figure of darkness would represent the opposite of light: evil, unrighteousness, falsehood.
2. Therefore we can never think of God as countenancing sin, excusing it in any way.
3. No matter how you view God – there is absolutely no darkness in His practice.
 - a. As a creative God.
 - b. As a loving God.
 - c. As a redeeming God.
 - d. As a judging God.
4. Light and darkness are opposing forces. They are self-eliminating.
 - a. The presence of light eliminates the presence of darkness.
 - b. The presence of darkness eliminates the presence of light.

C. False Claims Concerning Fellowship with God (vs. 5-6)

“... *we have fellowship with him*,” yet walk in darkness. . .” (v. 6).

1. Why is this claim false?
 - a. Because fellowship means to “have something in common.”
 - b. And we have seen that God is “light” (goodness, righteousness, truth).
 - c. “Walking in darkness”, therefore, would be going against everything God stands for! (cf. Ephesians 4:17-24).
2. What is the result of such a claim?
 - a. We are false in our WORDS – “*we lie*”.

- b. We are false in our DEEDS – “*do not practice the truth*”.
- 3. Instead, we should “*walk in the light as He is in the light*.”
 - a. Instead of living a life characterized by “evil, unrighteousness, and error” (all the while claiming to have fellowship with God) . . .
 - b. . . .we should live a life in harmony with God’s “goodness, righteousness, and truth”!
- 4. Only then will we experience:
 - a. “*Fellowship with one another*.”
 - 1) We will have fellowship with God.
 - 2) Whereby we can share in that life which is eternal, and provides fullness of joy!
 - b. “*The blood of Jesus Christ His Son [which] cleanses us from all sin*.”
 - 1) This suggests that “*walking in the light*” does not imply sinlessness.
 - 2) Any more than “*walking in darkness*” implies total absence of good.
 - 3) Rather, “*walking in the light*” suggests:
 - a) A life making progress under the positive influence of God’s “light.”
 - b) A life enjoying the cleansing power of Jesus’ blood as one meets the conditions of forgiveness outlined in verses 8-9.

D. The Possibility of Fellowship (v. 7)

- 1. Fellowship with God is *possible*.
 - a. Verse 6 says “*if you walk in darkness*,” there is no fellowship.
 - b. Verse 7 says “*if you walk in light*,” there is fellowship.
- 2. The *basis* of our fellowship is “*the blood of Jesus*.”
- 3. The *condition* of our fellowship is “*walking in the light*.”
- 4. The *description* of our righteousness – we are clean by the blood of Jesus.
- 5. The *state and privilege* of those who walk in the light.
 - a. The state – they are righteous.
 - b. The privilege – they have fellowship with God.
- 6. The tense and use of the verbs *have* (present tense) and *cleanse* (present tense) indicates constant cleansing by the blood of Christ as one walks in the light.
- 7. The definition of a *walk*. A walk expresses:
 - a. Movement.
 - b. Direction.
 - c. Continuity.
 - d. Separation.
 - e. Destiny.
 - f. Fellowship.
- 8. The example of walking in the light.
- 9. The harmony of John’s concept with other scriptures (Philippians 3:8-9; Romans 4:15; 6:14).
- 10. If the walk is continuous,

- a. Then the fellowship is continuous.
- b. Because the blood cleansing is continuous.
- c. This assumes the possibility of continual occasional sin.
 - 1) Chapter 3 will be a condemnation of continuing in sin.
 - 2) Chapter 2 will be a condemnation of any presumption to sin.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWO:

1. How does John present himself in the first two verses of this epistle?

2. What “*beginning*” is being spoken of in verse one?_____

3. What three areas of importance does John take up in verses 1-2?

1)_____
2)_____
3)_____

4. What is the two-fold description of God’s nature stated in verses 5-6?

1)_____
2)_____

5. What is the false claim made by the gnostic in verse 6 and what is the result of such a claim?

6. What is the basis of our fellowship with God and the condition of our fellowship?

The basis:_____

The condition:_____

LESSON THREE

FELLOWSHIP IS ROOTED IN REDEMPTION

INTRODUCTION:

s we begin the third lesson in our study of 1 John, we want to remember a closing passage of scripture that we were looking at in lesson two, verse 7 of the first chapter. John said, “*If we walk in the light as God is in the light, we have fellowship, (we and God), one with another, the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son keeps on cleansing all of our sins.*” A lot of times a question comes up, “How many sins can an individual commit and still be walking in the light?” That is not even a proper question to ask because walking in the light is not determined by how many sins an individual commits or how few sins an individual commits.

Walking in the light determines the standard by which you measure your walk, by which you measure your steps. And so light is the measure of truth by which you make your choices, your moral decisions rather than the steps and the activities that we participate in. It has God as the rule and not man. Of course, a man can commit sin and continue to practice sin, and before long he loses his fellowship with God. But that would simply be because he is using the wrong standard. He has the wrong commitment because he is beginning to practice darkness rather than light.

LESSON TEXT: 1 John 1:8 – 2:7

LESSON AIM: To study the true concept of sin, the remedy for sin and the requirements for forgiveness and fellowship.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. See the possibility of self-deception in claiming no action of sin and the danger of calling God a liar by claiming a sinless state.
 2. View Jesus as the Christian’s “paraclete” and “advocate” and the part He plays in the Christian’s confidence.
 3. Learn three requirements given by John in this section for fellowship with a holy God.
 4. Discover that the word “know” (*GINOSKO*) used by John denotes a knowledge that comes by experience, by sharing experiences in life together.
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SOLVING THE SIN PROBLEM

A. Mis-Claimed ACTION of Holiness. Another category of people that seek to solve the problem of sin (v. 8). People who say, “WE HAVE NO SIN!”

1. John may have reference to statements made by professing Christians who thought they had become sinless.
 - a. **The Epicureans** (v. 6). Greek philosophers taught that sin makes no difference. These were people that satisfied and gratified the appetites of the flesh.
 - b. **The Stoics.** Greek philosophers taught that we have to control the appetites of the flesh. These would have to control all sin and eliminate it from their lives before they can have any fellowship with God. They trust in themselves more than in the blood of Jesus.
 - c. These people in verse 8 are probably the individuals that would withdraw themselves from the world and feel like they could not live in a secular society.
2. The consequences of such a claim. The man in verse 8 claims: “I have fellowship with God because I am keeping the standard.”
 - a. **Self-deceit** (“we deceive ourselves”).
 - 1) A denial of sin in their lives – therefore do not need forgiveness from God.
 - 2) They claim to be holy people by performance.
 - b. **Living in error** (“*the truth is not in us*”).
 - c. **Walking in darkness**, not walking in light!

B. Attained Holiness. The solution to that man’s problem (v. 9). We should freely confess our sins. Cf. Proverbs 28:13.

- a. This word, “confess” comes from the Greek word *HOMOLOGEO* and means *to speak the same thing*.
- b. It is not making a list of sins, but *confessing a sinful state*. To confess sin is to admit that there is a standard, and I have missed that standard.
- c. Sin comes from the Greek word *HAMARTIA* and means *to miss the mark*.
- d. Confession of sin says two things:
 - 1) There is a standard by which one walks.
 - 2) It is a cry for help from a forgiving God.
4. Then God, who is “faithful” (trustworthy) and “righteous” (one who does what is right) will do two things:
 - a. He will, “*...forgive us our sins*”
 - b. He will “*...cleanse us from all unrighteousness*” Through His mercy He makes it possible for one to continue in fellowship with Him!

NOTE: He has presented the blood of Christ Jesus to make atonement for our sins, and therefore He is free to function out of that blood. And it is right for Him to forgive. The confession of sin on our part is not a meritorious action. All of the merit is in God Himself. All of the glory of our forgiveness comes from the blood of Jesus Christ. And so the writer tells us that God is faithful, and God is righteous to forgive if we confess our sin.

C. Mis-Claimed STATE of Holiness. “WE HAVE NOT SINNED” (v. 10).

1. This claim may have been made by some denying they had ever sinned.
2. The consequences of this claim are two-fold:
 - a. **We make God a liar!** Cf. Romans 3:23. Denying one’s sin really characterizes God as being untrue to Himself because God has already says “*All have sinned.*”
 - b. **His Word is not in us!** We’ve not accepted His word as truth concerning sin.
3. How can anyone who makes such claims as these hope to have true fellowship with God, and thereby enjoy the life such fellowship gives?
4. Fellowship with God does not occur by making claims that turn God into a liar!

NOTE: Though affirming that we do sin, John is not seeking to encourage sin. Indeed, he is writing to discourage sin (1 John 2:1). But fellowship with God requires that a person takes sin seriously.

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD REQUIRES AN ADVOCATE (2:1-2)

A. Our Advocate as Paraclete and Bondsman

“We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (v. 1).

1. The word “advocate”.
 - a. Literally means “to call to one’s side, to one’s aid.”
 - b. It suggests the capability for giving aid.
 - c. Used in a court of justice to denote a legal assistant, a counsel for the defense.
 - d. Generally, it is one who pleads another’s case, an intercessor.
2. Jesus is the perfect “advocate”, for He is RIGHTEOUS.
 - a. As sinners, we are alienated from God (Isaiah 59:1-2).
 - b. But since Jesus is without sin, He is a fit representative to come before God on our behalf!
 - c. The author of Hebrews also makes the point that though righteous, He understands our situation perfectly (Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:14-16).

B. Our Advocate as Atoning Sacrifice

“He himself is the propitiation for our sins” (v. 2).

1. The word “propitiation” means “an appeasing.”
 - a. The pagans would offer sacrifices to appease their gods.
 - b. In the New Testament, it is God, not man, who offers the appeasing sacrifice (1 John 4:10).
 - c. Through His death on the cross, Jesus is the means by which God can show mercy to the sinner.
 - d. This explains how God can be “*just*” (1 John 1:9) and still forgive sin.
 - e. This wonderful “*propitiation*” was given to the whole world, but is accessed only by those who believe in Jesus (1 John 2:2; Romans 3:21-26).

SUMMARY:

In this first chapter, and into the second, John makes it clear upon what basis we can have fellowship with God, and enjoy the life that provides fullness of joy. To have fellowship with God, we who are Christians must . . .

- a. Not walk in darkness, but walk in the light of God's goodness, righteousness, and truth.
- b. Admit that we have sinned, and do sin.
- c. Utilize our “*advocate*” (Jesus Christ), Whom God provides as the “*propitiation*” for our sins.

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD REQUIRES THAT WE “KNOW” HIM (2:3-5a)**A. The Christian’s Confidence of Having Fellowship with Jesus**

1. Identifying the “*Him*” of this passage.
 - a. Is it God or Jesus? The Father or the Son?
 - b. In light of the context, it is Jesus the Son of God (1 John 2:1-2,6).
 - c. This fits in well with John’s aim in this epistle (1 John 1:3).
 - 1) He has described the basis for fellowship with the Father.
 - 2) Now he discusses the basis for fellowship with the Son.
2. What it means to “*know*” Jesus.
 - a. As frequently used by John, the word “*know*” (*GINOSKO*) denotes a knowledge that comes by experience, by sharing experiences in life together.
 - b. In this sense, it implies that “*fellowship*” (sharing, communion) has taken place.

B. The Basis of Christian Confidence, “*If We Keep His Commandments*”

1. The requirement of fellowship – keeping His teachings (John 14:21-23; 15:10).
2. The person who claims to “*know*” (have fellowship) with Jesus, and does not keep His commandments:
 - a. Is a liar, and the truth is not in him! (1 John 2:4b).
 - b. Is just like the one who claims to have fellowship with the Father while walking in darkness! (1 John 1:6).
3. But the person who keeps the words of Jesus, the “*love of God*” is perfected in Him!
 - a. This “*love of God*”.
 - 1) Is it God’s kind of love (1 John 3:16-17)?
 - 2) Is it God’s love for us (1 John 4:9)?
 - 3) Is it our love for God (1 John 5:2-3)?
 - b. Such love for God is “*perfected*” (made whole, complete) only when we keep the commandments of His Son! (John 14:15,21,23).

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD REQUIRES THAT WE ARE “IN” HIM (vs. 5b-6)

A. Here Is How We Can Be Sure We Are Abiding in Jesus

1. The word “in” (v. 5b) is parallel to the expression “*abides in*” (v. 6a).
2. “*Abiding in Jesus*” is described by Jesus Himself as similar to The branch abiding in the vine (John 15:4-5).
 - a. There is a union, or attachment, between the branch and vine.
 - b. From this union comes a communion, or sharing.
3. So again, we are discussing the idea of having fellowship with Jesus.

B. We Can Be Sure, If We “Walk Just as He Walked”

1. The person claiming to “*abide in Jesus*” (or to have fellowship with Him) should “*walk*” (live) just as Jesus did!
 - a. Only those who follow His words are truly His disciples (John 8:31).
 - b. And those who are His disciples will become like their Teacher (Luke 6:40).
 - c. Such is the goal of discipleship, and of God’s scheme of redemption itself! (Romans 8:29).
2. Understanding and applying this truth should have powerful ramifications in how we live.

CONCLUSION:

We learn from John, then, that the key to knowing that we have fellowship with Jesus is understanding the difference between “talking” and “walking.”

- a. Anyone can say that they know Jesus, that they abide in Him.
- b. But those that really know are those who . . .
 - 1) KEEP His commandments.
 - 2) WALK just as He walked.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON THREE:

1. What is the two-fold claim of the man in 1:8 as to his claim to the right of fellowship with God?

2. What is the meaning of the Greek word *HOMOLOGEO*?

3. Define the Greek word *HAMARTIA*.

4. What two things does a person say when he confesses his sin as commanded in verse 9?

1) _____

2) _____

5. Define the two words “*faithful*” and “*righteous*” in verse 9.

“*Faithful*” _____

“*Righteous*” _____

6. Three things are given in the Study Guide as requirements for fellowship with God are:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

7. Define the word “advocate” and describe an advocates work.

8. Besides being our “Advocate” in 2:1-2 Jesus is also our _____

LESSON FOUR

FELLOWSHIP IS ROOTED IN KEEPING THE NEW COMMANDMENT

INTRODUCTION:



hen one walks with Christ there will be both an effect, and an assurance. The effect will be that we will be pleasing to God. As Christ was well pleasing to the Father we will find His pleasure in following Christ.

God's word is not a new word. It is something which "*you have heard from the beginning.*" It is not a late discovery. The surest way is not the newest way. The right way is an old way. Anything purporting to be a new discovery or a new revelation is sure to be wrong.

The true Christian faith will stand a specific test: Was it taught from the beginning? This section is dealing with standards, and the standards are from the beginning. They are not opinions or discoveries. We are not discovering Christianity, we are "discipling" it.

LESSON TEXT: 1 John 2:7-17

LESSON AIM: To examine various aspects of the new/old commandment and its effect on one's fellowship with God and the believers true relationship to the world.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Examine the various aspects of the "New Commandment" which is not really new.
 2. Understand John's confidence in the believers as he addresses three categories of Christians – fathers, young men and little children.
 3. See the extreme danger the love of the world has for all believers.
-

THE NEW COMMANDMENT

A. The Background of this Lesson

The Gnostics denied the importance of love, love of the brethren.

1. The Gnostics despised the *uninitiated* (cf. Luke 18:9; John 7:49).
2. Light and darkness are not only *moral* symbols, but also *love* symbols.

- a. 1 John 1:5-7 – light and darkness are synonyms of *moral purity* and *moral impurity*.
- b. 1 John 2:7-11 – light and darkness are synonyms of *love* and *hate*.
- 3. “*Love of the brethren*” is a test of “*life*. ”
- 4. Three *pillars* on which our fellowship with God is firmly planted by the apostle John are:
 - a. ***Moral purity*** because God is light.
 - b. ***Love*** because God is love.
 - c. ***The Incarnation of Christ*** (the acceptance of the divinity of Christ) because He is the Son of God.

B. The New-Old Commandment Defined (1 John 2:7-11)

Understand John’s use of new and old and learn the definition of the new commandment measure of love.

- 1. John’s use of the terms new and old (vs. 7-8).
 - a. The new commandment love was given by Jesus about the year 29 A.D. and is recorded in John 13:34.
 - b. John is not making a new commandment as he writes in 96 A.D. but is referring to the commandment of John 13:34.
- 2. The study of the original old commandment of Leviticus 19:18.
 - a. This old commandment says to give your neighbor the same position and importance as you would give yourself.
 - b. This old commandment fulfills the demands of the law (Romans 13:10).
- 3. The definition of two words translated new.
 - a. *NEO* – the most commonly used word and generally means new in time.
 - b. *KAINO* – can mean “new in **time**”, but also means “new in **kind**.”
 - 1) Example: The new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34).
 - 2) This is the word (*KAINO*) John uses in speaking of a new commandment.
- 4. Notice the contrast between the commandment of Leviticus 19:18 and the commandment of John 13:34.
 - a. Leviticus 19:18 – Love your neighbor as yourself.
 - b. John 13:34 – Love your neighbor beyond yourself.
 - c. This new measure of love is self-denying love. (Example: Christ in Philippians 2:1-8)
- 5. What does it mean to “*love one another*”?
 - a. It may be helpful to first review the different Greek words for “love.”
 - 1) “*STORGE*” – describes love of family.
 - 2) “*EROS*” – carnal, sexual love. It is love that exploits, that abuses, that uses other people for self-gratification, for self-satisfaction. This is the kind of love that Cain had.
 - 3) “*PHILEO*” – love for dear friends, based upon the neighborhood concept. This is the standard of love of the Old Testament (Leviticus 19:18).
 - 4) “*AGAPE*” – active goodwill toward others, a kind of sacrificial love. This kind of love is illustrated in the lives of the early Christians.

- b. It is “AGAPE” love that we are commanded to have in this text.
 - 1) It is also the same kind of love commanded in John 13: 34-35.
 - 2) It is that concern to meet the needs of others that is best exemplified in the life and death of Jesus (cf. 1 John 3:16-17).
 - c. Therefore, to “*love one another*” is to consider the needs of one another, and to actively work toward meeting those needs.
- 6. The AGAPE love that John presents is self denying, sacrificial love. (see John 13:34, 15:12-13; 1 John 3:16; Romans 5:6-8). Three characteristics about this kind of AGAPE love:
 - a. It seeks another’s highest good.
 - b. Regardless of the price it has to pay.
 - c. Whether the person deserves that good or not.
- 7. The sense of the phrase “*there is no occasion of stumbling* (Gr. *SKANDALON* means a trap or snare) *in him*” is most likely that the one who loves will not cause stumbling in others.

C. Darkness Will Retreat as this Light of Love Advances

THE EFFECT OF NOT KEEPING THIS COMMANDMENT

- A. One “Is in Darkness” (9).** “*Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness*” (1 John 2:9 NIV).
 - 1. When a person claims to walk in the light, but hates his brother, he is still in darkness!
 - 2. Indeed, he has always been in darkness!
 - a. “*Is in darkness until now.*”
 - b. Despite what they may claim, they have not yet “*passed from darkness to light!*”
 - c. Or as expressed later, they have not yet “*. . . passed from death to life!*” (1 John 3:14). You cannot have a new birth on a platform of hatred.
- B. One Does Not His Destination (v. 11).** “*But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him*” (1 John 2:11 NIV).
 - 1. He may “think” he has fellowship with God, that he is saved, but he is blind!
 - 2. He fails to realize the absurdity of his claim of knowing and loving God (cf. 1 John 4:20.)
 - 3. Blinded by darkness (hate), he cannot see that he is on the road to hell!

THE EFFECT OF KEEPING THIS COMMANDMENT.

- A One “Abides in the Light” (v. 10a).** “*Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble*” (1 John 2:10 NIV).
 - 1. Meaning that they are in full fellowship with the Father! (1 John 1:7a).
 - 2. They enjoy the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus! (1 John 1:7b).
 - Unless we love one another, fellowship and forgiveness is not possible!

B. “There Is No Cause for Stumbling” (v. 10b). “. . .and there is nothing in him to make him stumble.”

1. Abiding in the light, he can see clearly as he walks.
2. Fellowship with God makes it possible to “know where he is going” (unlike the one who hates his brother and is in darkness).
3. This does not imply sinlessness.
 - a. Remember 1 John 1:8, 10.
 - b. But as one walks in the light (in fellowship with God), he knows what to do when he sins, in what direction he should be headed (1 John 1:9).

JOHN’S CONFIDENCE IN THE TRUE BELIEVERS. (2:12-14)

Understand John’s confidence in the believers as he addresses three categories of Christians – fathers, young men and little children.

A. Three Stages in the Christian Life

1. The distinction between John’s use of the terms *TEKNIA* and *PAIDIA* (both translated *little children*).
 - a. *TEKNIA* (vs. 1, 12, 28) – all God’s family in Christ.
 - b. *PAIDIA* (vs. 13,18) – new converts.
2. Three categories of people to which John addresses himself (vs. 13-14).
 - a. Fathers – mature Christians.
 - b. Young men – maturing Christians – middle-aged young Christians.
 - c. Little children – immature Christians, babes in Christ.
3. The *confidence* that John expresses toward these true believers. I write to you because:
 - a. “*You know Him who is from the beginning.*”
 - b. “*You have overcome the evil one.*”
 - c. “*You know the Father.*”
4. “*I have written*” would probably have reference to the *Revelation* letter. He changes the verb tense. Verse 12 “I am writing unto you. In verse 13, “*I have written unto you.*”

LOVE NOT THE WORLD (2:15-17)

A. Because of What the World is (vs. 15a, 16)

1. The “world” in this passage . . .
 - a. It is NOT the “physical world.”
 - 1) God’s creation (Genesis 1:1).
 - 2) For it is “*very good*” (Genesis 1:31).
 - b. It is NOT the “human world”
 - a. It is not mankind.
 - b. Indeed, God Himself loves the world of men (John 3:16).
 - c. RATHER, it is the world of “sin”, the world of “evil”!
 - a. It is the “sphere” in which sin, evil, and Satan dominate.
 - b. Just as the phrase “the world of sports” describes the domain in which sports dominate, so this “world” is one in which sin dominates.

2. Three things in particular make up this “world.”
 - a. “*The lust of the flesh.*”
 - 1) This phrase refers to unbridled desires of the flesh (cf. Galatians 5:19-21).
 - 2) Note that these desires can be expressed both:
 - a) Sexually (fornication, adultery, licentiousness).
 - b) Socially (hatred, contentions, jealousies).
 - b. “*The lust of the eyes.*”
 - 1) This refers to the unlawful longing for things which we can see.
 - 2) It can be summed up in one word: “covetousness.”
 - 3) A modern day expression could be “materialism.”
 - 4) How serious is this? Consider Ephesians 5:5-7; Colossians 3:5-7.
 - c. “*The pride of life.*”
 - 1) This would include pride based upon such things as:
 - a) Age.
 - b) Experience.
 - c) Ancestry.
 - d) Past accomplishments.
 - e) Money, position, power.
 - 2) The folly of trusting in such things is seen in 1 Corinthians 1:26-31.
3. A few passing observations.
 - a. Each of these three things often strike harder at different times in our lives:
 - 1) The YOUNG are most often affected by the “*lust of the flesh.*”
 - 2) The MIDDLE-AGED are usually afflicted by the “*lust of the yes.*”
 - 3) The AGED are likely to be plagued with the “*pride of life.*”
 - b. There seems to be a tendency to consider one more serious than the others.
 - 1) We seem more concerned about sins involving the “*lust of the flesh.*”
 - a) Which is worse, fornication or covetousness?
 - b) Which do we consider more serious, adultery or jealousy?
 - 2) If we are not careful – while fighting strong against immorality, materialism and pride may “sneak in” the back door!

B. Because of What Loving the “World” Does (v. 15b)

1. It makes it impossible to love the Father.
 - a. “*If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*”
 - 1) I understand “*the love of the Father*” means “*love for the Father*”
 - 2) Instead of “*the Father’s love for us,*” for He loves us even as sinners (Romans 5:8).
 - b. John is not the only person to say that if we love the world, we cannot love God:
 - 1) James taught that “*friendship with the world is enmity with God*” (James 4:4).
 - 2) Jesus said that we cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6:24).

- c. Our sinful pride may rebel against this thought, but we simply are not able to love the world and God at the same time!
- 2. To see why, let's define "*the love of the father*".
 - a. What does it really mean for me to love the Father?
 - b. According to John, it means that I keep His commandments (1 John 5:3).
 - c. To this Jesus agrees (John 14:15,21; 15:10).
- 3. If we love the world, we can't keep God's commandments!
 - a. If you are driven by "*the lust of the flesh . . .*"
 - 1) To commit fornication, adultery, etc.
 - 2) Then you can't keep God's command not to defraud your brother (1 Thessalonians 4:3-6).
 - b. If you are overcome by "*lust of the eyes . . .*"
 - 1) You always want more, and strive to hold on to what you have.
 - 2) You won't keep God's command to help the needy (1 John 3:16-17).
 - c. If you are filled with "*the pride of life . . .*"
 - 1) You will consider yourself more important than others.
 - 2) You will not be able to keep the command to imitate Christ (Philippians 2:3-5).

C. Because of Where the "World" is Going (v. 17)

- 1. "*The world is passing away.*"
 - a. This is true in regards to our individual lives (1 Peter 1:24; James 4:13-14).
 - b. It is also true concerning everything that we leave behind (2 Peter 3:10).
- 2. In contrast, "*he who does the will of God abides forever.*"
 - a. This is because he will be blessed to enter the heavenly kingdom (Matthew 7:21).
 - b. Even his "works" will follow with him (Revelation 14:13).

LESSON EXAM FOR LESSON FOUR:

1. Explain how the “new commandment” is also an “old commandment.”

2. What is the contrast between the commandment of Leviticus 19:18 and the commandment of John 13:34?

3. Give four Greek words for love with the definition for each.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

4. What does John say are two effects of not keeping this new/old commandment?

1) _____

2) _____

5. What are two effects of keeping this new/old commandment?

1) _____

2) _____

6. John addresses himself to what three categories of people in 2:13-14?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

7. Three reasons John gives for not loving the world in 2:15-17 are:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

LESSON FIVE

FELLOWSHIP IS ROOTED IN APOSTOLIC TESTIMONY

INTRODUCTION:



With a term of endearment (“little children”) that is a favorite of John’s, he now proceeds to warn them about a problem that was very real in his day. “*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*” (1 John 2:18).

John is the only writer of the New Testament who uses the term “antichrist”, and he uses the term just five times: Twice here in 1 John 2:18 (“*antichrist is coming . . . many antichrists have come*”), again in 1 John 2:22 (“*He is antichrist who denies . . .*”), in 1 John 4:3 (“*this is the spirit of the antichrist . . .*”), and in 2 John 7 (“*a deceiver and an antichrist*”).

The term is commonly used today by many to refer to one individual (“The Antichrist”), who is supposed to appear in the “end times”, some actual person who will arise in the religio-political arena and lead many people astray just before Christ comes again. This view is held by premillennialists and many amillennialists as well.

Actually, John will introduce a very important topic at this point. It is, “How does an individual know what he knows?” How can we really be sure about the source of truth and not make ourselves the standard of what is right and wrong? There are some people that are doing that very thing and John is going to raise a voice of protest against it.

LESSON TEXT: 1 John 2:18-27

LESSON AIM: To see that the true source and origin of knowledge is not from some man or men who claim to have a special anointing but from apostolic testimony.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. Learn what the “*anointing*” of 1 John 2:20-27 is and what it is not.
 2. Learn who the “*anitchrist*” is by definition and description.
 3. Discover what the “*hour*” is of which John speaks in this section.
-

THE ORIGIN AND SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE CONCERNING GOD

A. Warning Concerning the Antichrist

1. Identifying the “*last hour*.”
 - a. Not the end of the world.
 - b. It is the end of a certain era.
 - c. Talking about a period of transition.
2. Defining a condition that is being introduced into the history of the church in New Testament times by the people John will call “antichrist.”
 - a. Pagans begin to introduce their philosophies into Christianity.
 - b. The results are not Christian-izing paganism. The result is pagan-izing Christianity.
3. To mix pagan doctrines and pagan philosophies with the doctrine of Christ would result in the destruction of the gospel of Christ and even stand totally contrary and against everything that Jesus Himself represented. That is the reason John will call them “antichrist.”
4. John’s use of the word “hour.”
 - a. John 4:23, “*But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.*” **The hour of transition from worship centered in the temple in Jerusalem.**
 - b. John 5:25, 28, “*...the hour comes and now is.*” Jesus uses the term “hour” with a very significant meaning of transition.
 - c. John 2, “*Woman, what have I to do with you? My hour has not yet come.*” When it comes it will be introduced by a great transition.
5. John’s description of the change.
 - a. People will be preaching that sin does not make any difference.
 - b. Their knowledge is earth-centered, not heaven-centered (John 4).
 - c. The change is coming with the arrival of the “antichrist.”

NOTE: In verse 18 John says, you know the last hour is coming. It will come with “antichrists.” Many “antichrists” have already arisen. Therefore we know it is the last hour. So that last hour **John is discussing is an hour that was current at his time.**

B. Identifying the Antichrist

1. Several kinds of doctrines being introduced:
 - a. Different doctrines of immorality.
 - b. Different attitudes about Christ.
2. Their identifying characteristics.
 - a. They went out from us.
 - b. They did not really belong to us.
 - c. Their going away showed that they were never in the truth.
 - d. They claimed to have fellowship with God but they were walking in darkness.
 - e. They claimed to know God but did not keep His commandments.

- f. They did not hold to apostolic testimony but invented their doctrines.
- g. They deny the humanity and the deity of Christ.
- 3. Their going away was manifest proof that they were not “*of us.*” (cf. Matthew 7:21-23).

THE ANOINTING DEFINED (vs. 20-27)

A. Confirming the Faith of the Believers

- 1. The contrast between *them* (the Gnostics) and *us* (the Christians).
- 2. It is not that “you have BEEN anointed”, it is “you HAVE an anointing” (cf 1 John 2:2 – “*We HAVE an advocate*”). In this context: “*We HAVE an anointing.*”
- 3. Several things the *anointing* is not:
 - a. The anointing of a king.
 - b. The anointing of a man who has fallen among thieves by a Samaritan (Luke 10).
 - c. The anointing of a blind man’s eyes with spit (John 9).
 - d. The anointing with oil (James 5:16).
 - e. The anointing of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:21-22).
 - 1) This would give everybody that has the Holy Spirit his own hotline to revelation.
 - 2) Those who claim the Holy Spirit as a direct operation never go to 1 John 2:20 to prove it.
 - 3) The Holy Spirit is not called an ***IT*** (verse 27; cf. John 16:13).
 - 4) John has not mentioned the Holy Spirit as yet in this epistle.
 - f. The special gift of knowledge (I Corinthians 12:4-11).
 - 1) The special gift is not something you can hear – it was by the laying on of the apostles’ hands and it was not called an anointing.
 - 2) The special gift was not something that you hear from the beginning.
 - 3) The special gift was not given to all Christians.

B. Identifying This Anointing

- 1. It is from the Holy One (verse 20).
- 2. It gives all knowledge (verse 20).
- 3. It abides in you (verses 24, 27).
- 4. It teaches you concerning all things (verse 27).
- 5. Compare this with 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

C. Important Reasons Why John Writes this Message Down

- 1. To give confirmation of truth.
- 2. To give exposure to error.
- 3. To give a permanent location where truth can be discovered.

D. Similarity to the Teachings of Peter and Paul (2 Peter 1:12; 1 Corinthians 15:1-3)

NOTE: Peter says, after I am gone I want you to remember the things that I have been teaching you. I want you to have a source where you can make reference to those things because after I am gone there is not going to be anyone else. Because we are the ones that heard and saw and touched and lived with Jesus. We are the ones that are guided by God by inspiration not only to preach these things but also to write them down. And so give permanent attention to them.

E. The Anointing is From the Holy One

1. The “Holy One” is Christ Jesus Himself.
2. The “Holy One” in Old Testament Scriptures as well as the New Testament always related to Christ Jesus.
 - a. Psalm 16:10 – *“You will not let your Holy One see corruption.”* Jesus is the Holy One.
 - b. Isaiah 12:6 – *“Shout aloud thou inhabitant of Zion for great in the midst of thee is the Holy One of Israel.”*
 - c. Mark 1:24, Luke 4:34, John 6:69, Acts 3:14, that latter passage, *“You crucified the Holy One of Israel.”* The Holy One of Israel is Jesus Christ because He is the one who originated the message.

NOTE: They not only deny that He is the Messiah of the Old Testament because they want the God of the Old Testament to be a totally different God, but the apostle John says they also deny the Father-Son relationship.

3. John’s use of the word *anointing* here has no relationship with any other passage dealing with an anointing.
4. The *anointing* of which John writes is the *all sufficient Word of God*.
5. The word *if* in verse 28 has the idea of *when*. In the Greek the word can be used as an adverb of time.

The Quote from Hippolytus:

- a. In a document cited by Hippolytus as representing a *Gnostic* sect known as Naassenes, we read: *We alone of all men are Christians who complete the mystery at the third portal and are anointed there with speechless chrism.* (Philosophum, vol.9, pp. 121-122.)
- b. John’s style in meeting this Gnostic heresy was to defeat their arguments or contentions on their own ground with terms they coined.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FIVE:

1. Explain John's use of the term "last hour" in this section of Scripture using some other texts to illustrate this.

2. How does John describe the change that is taking place and how does he indicate its arrival will be known?

3. Who were the antichrists of which John was speaking? List some identifying characteristics of these men.

4. Explain what John meant when he said "*You have an anointing.*"

5. Give four identifying marks which helps to know what the "anointing" is.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

6. What are three important reasons why John writes his message down?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

7. Who is the "Holy One" in verse 20? List some scriptures which will verify your answer.

LESSON SIX

FELLOWSHIP IS ROOTED IN OUR STATUS AS CHILDREN

INTRODUCTION:

 e have been discussing the fact that the writer has been impressing his readers on the truth that they have all the Biblical information that they need. This is information that came through Jesus Christ, and He is the Holy One that is the source of the information. The apostles were simply the channels through whom that information came. So the apostle insisted in verse 20 of chapter 2 that you have the anointing. You have all the information. It is your source of Biblical truth. In verse 24 he encouraged them to stay with what you have been given, what you have already heard. In verse 27 he encourages them not to listen to any modern teachers that come along with later information because they have absolutely nothing to add to the information that you have already received because the anointing that you have already received teaches you everything.

LESSON TEXT: 1 John 3:1-12

LESSON AIM: We will look at the Christian's relationship to God as children, both here and in the hereafter, and the Christian's relationship to sin.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will...

1. Discover the intensity of God's love for His children in spite of our weakness.
 2. Examine John's definition of sin and compare his definition with James' definition of sin.
 3. See that a person who practices sin is manifested to be the offspring of Satan.
-

Now the writer tells us in verse 27, you stay with the Christ and the information that the apostles had given about Him and remain faithful to Him because He is your teacher. He is the one that has the ultimate knowledge. After all, He is the one that came from heaven and that has returned to heaven. Then in verse 28 the apostle says, "*And now my little children abide in him so that when he comes you will not be ashamed of him at his appearing.*" I am quite confident that these adventurous inventors of what they considered to be truth which is really error, will be ashamed of the abusive misrepresentations that they made of Him. These are the antichrist people who have been denying the humanity of Christ.

In 1 John 2:29, for the first time John speaks of Christians as those who are “born” of God. It is an expression that will be used time and again throughout the remainder of this epistle (1 John 3:9; 4:7; 5:1,4,18). It is a figurative expression, emphasizing that the Christian’s spiritual life is a result of the redemptive work of God.

THE INTENSITY OF GOD’S LOVE FOR US (1 John 3:1-2).

A. The Amazing Love God Has for Us

Four reasons why God’s love is so amazing and what that means to us.

1. “Behold” (Gk. *EMBLEPO*) means *to see, to look with intensive earnest consideration* (cf. Matthew 6:26).
2. “What manner” (Gk. *POTAPOS*) indicates intense astonishment and admiration on the part of the apostle (cf. Matthew 8:27; 2 Peter 3:11; Luke 1:29).
3. Four reasons why God’s love is amazing. It is amazing because of:
 - a. Its *freeness* – it is a gift.
 - b. Its *object* – that He should love us – sinners (Romans 5:8).
 - c. Its *intensity* – that we may be able to comprehend the breadth, length, height, depth and to know the love of Christ (Ephesians 3:17-19).
 - d. The *status it brings* – children of God.
4. Paul’s description of men (Romans 5:8-11).
 - a. We are “morally” weak (v. 8).
 - b. We are sinners (v. 9).
 - c. We are ungodly (v. 10).
 - d. We are enemies of God (v. 11).

B. What We “Are” as Children of God (v. 1). The status that He grants to us is amazing.

1. We are recipients of God’s love (v. 1a). We are the objects of God’s love.
 - a. “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!”
 - b. It is through the love of God that we can even become His children (John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:9-10; Titus 3:3-7).
 - c. It is an honor for God to even take notice of us as one of His creatures (cf. Psalm 8:3-4), how much love God must have to allow us to become His children!
2. We are unknown by the world (v. 1b).
 - a. “...the world does not know us...”
 - b. That is, they do not truly recognize or appreciate what we have become in Christ.
 - c. They may even deem us as religious fanatics and fools (1 Corinthians 4:9-13).
 - d. But this is understandable.
 - 1) For the world did not (and still does not) really know Jesus (John 1:11).
 - 2) And for now, our lives are “hidden” in Jesus (Colossians 3:3-4).

NOTE: Loved and honored by God, unknown and sometimes despised by the world; that is what we are today as the children of God. But as stated by Paul in Colossians 3:4, when Christ comes we will “*appear with Him in glory*”! This speaks of our condition in the future, and John also writes of our future condition.

C. What We “Shall Be” as Children of God (v. 2)

1. It has not yet been fully revealed.
 - a. Exactly what we shall be like has not yet been revealed.
 - b. Which may be due to our finite incapability to comprehend.
 - c. In general terms we have been promised a spiritual body and immortality (1 Corinthians 15:42-44; 50-53).
 - d. But there is something else, hinted at by both Paul and John.
2. We shall be like Jesus!
 - a. “*...we know that we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*”
 - b. Paul also says that we will be like Jesus when He comes.
 - 1) We shall bear the image of the “heavenly Man” (1 Corinthians 15:49).
 - 2) Our lowly bodies will undergo a wonderful transformation to become like Jesus (Philippians 3:20-21).
 - c. Though we cannot fully know what we will be like, it must really be something, for as Christ is now, no man can really see Him and live! (1 Timothy 6:13-16).

NOTE: This wonderful hope of what we will be some day should encourage us to “*stand fast in the Lord*” (cf. Philippians 3:20-4:1). John also has something to say as to how this hope ought to influence how we live.

D. What We Should Be as Children of God (v. 3)

1. Ought to be **motivated by our hope**.
 - a. “*... everyone who has this hope ...*”
 - b. The hope of which John writes, of course, is the earnest expectation that we will be like Jesus when He comes.
2. Diligently **involved in purifying one’s self**.
 - a. The Greek word for “purify” is *HAGNIZO* {hag-nid’-zo} which means “to make clean,” spiritually “to sanctify.”
 - 1) It is closely related to the word for “holiness”, which in Greek is *HAGIASMOS*, {hag-ee-as-mos’}, meaning holiness, sanctification.
 - 2) It therefore involves the idea of being “set apart” for a holy purpose, which Christians are taught to pursue (Hebrews 12:14).
 - b. Properly motivated by the hope that Jesus will “*transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body*” (Philippians 3:21), the true child of God will work toward the purity (holiness) seen in the Lord Himself.
 - c. How can Christians purify themselves?
 - 1) First and foremost by appropriating the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus! (1 John 1:9).

- 2) Only then can we hope to be truly holy – “without spot and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:25-27).
- 3) But we also have an obligation to remove ourselves from things that would defile us (2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1).

THE DEFINITION OF SIN

A. As Understood by Some

1. Sin is nothing more than a violation of human relationships.
2. This can be easily resolved by correcting relationship problems. While SOME sins may be a violation of “human” relationships, the true meaning of sin goes much further than that.

B. The Literal Meaning of the Word Sin

1. The Greek word for “sin” is *HAMARTIA* {ham-ar’-tee’-ah}, and it literally means “to miss the mark.”
2. As when an archer fails to hit the center of the target.
3. So “sin” is some kind of action (or lack of it) in which one fails to meet the goal intended by God (Romans 3:23).

C. As Defined by John

1. Sin is “*lawlessness*” (NKJV), or “*transgression of the law*” (KJV).
2. The word for lawlessness (transgression) is *ANOMIA* {an-om-ee’-ah}, which means “illegality, violation of law.”
 - a. To break or violate a law, such as the law of God.
 - b. To steal when the law says “*Thou shalt not steal.*”
3. So sin occurs when you DO WHAT IS FORBIDDEN (commonly called “a sin of commission”).

D. As Defined by James

1. James describes another kind of sin (James 4:17). “*Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.*”
2. So sin is also committed when you FAIL TO DO WHAT IS GOOD OR COMMANDED (often called “a sin of omission”).
 - a. E.g., failing to love your brother.
 - b. While you may not do ill toward your brother, failure to do good is just as much a sin!

E. In Both of These Definitions of Sin

1. One has failed to meet a certain standard (they have “missed the mark”).
2. In this case, the standard is the “law of God.”
 - a. Which, when carefully noted, is designed to help us in our relationships with:
 - 1) God.
 - 2) Other people.
 - 3) Even self.
 - b. Every command of God, both negative and positive, affect these relationships in one way or the other.

NOTE: Failure to understand the true nature of “sin” is one reason why there is so much apathy toward it today. But every time we sin, we adversely affect our relationship with either God, others, or our own selves!

THE ORIGIN OF SIN – THE DEVIL

A. Sin Is of the Devil! (v. 8a)

1. *“He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning.”*
2. This statement of John is reminiscent of one made by Jesus in John 8:44.
3. From the beginning the devil has been the “father” or origin of sin (“*he is a liar and the father of it*”).

B. Those Who Sin Are of the Devil

1. Since he is the “father” of sin, those who practice sin are his children.
2. *“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do . . .”* (John 8:44a).
3. So when we “miss the mark” by either:
 - a. Doing what is forbidden.
 - b. Failing to do what is commanded, we demonstrate the influences of the devil in our lives!

THE DEFEAT OF SIN (vs. 5a, 8b)

A. This Was the Purpose of Christ’s Coming

1. *“He was manifested to take away our sins”* (1 John 3:5a).
2. *“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil”* (1 John 3:8b).
3. As John the Baptist declared: *“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”* (John 1:29).

NOTE: To continue to walk in sin, therefore, is to undermine the purpose of our Lord’s coming!

B. Consider What it Cost Jesus to Accomplish this Purpose

1. Nothing less than His own death! (1 Corinthians 15:3).
2. Nothing less than His precious blood! (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

NOTE: Does not this tell us something about the terribleness of sin? When we properly understand what sin is, and how terrible it must be in God’s sight, then for the “child of God” there can only be one goal: Refraining from sin!

THE REFRAINMENT OF SIN (vs. 6-7, 9).

A. Whoever Abides in Him Does Not Sin (v. 6)

1. The phrase “does not sin” is present tense in the Greek, suggesting a practice of not sinning.

- a. John has already affirmed that Christians sin (1 John 1:8,10).
- b. To say we have no sin is to lie, and to make God a liar.
- c. So John is talking about one who does not “continuously practice sin.”
- 2. Such is true of those who “abide in Him.”
 - a. Those who “abide in Jesus” do not continuously engage in sin.
 - b. That is because they:
 - 1) Let that which they have heard from the beginning abide in them – the words of Jesus (1 John 2:24).
 - 2) Strive to walk even as Jesus walked (1 John 2:6).
- 3. But the one who continuously practices sin has neither seen Jesus nor known him (despite any claims to the contrary!).

B. Whoever Has Been Born of God Does Not Sin (v. 9)

- 1. Again, John uses the present tense when he says “*does not sin*.”
 - a. He is not suggesting that one “*born of God*” never sins.
 - b. But that one truly “*born of God*” does not continuously practice sin.
- 2. And why is that? Because “*His seed remains in him*.”
 - a. The “seed” is that life-giving principle that makes one a child of God.
 - b. Which clearly involves the Word of God (James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:22-23).
- 3. As long as one allows the “seed” (the Word of God) to remain in him, he is “*born of God*.”
 - a. As such he does not continuously practice sin.
 - b. Nor can he continuously practice sin, if the “seed” is remaining in him.
 - c. Instead, he continuously practices righteousness (1 John 3:7).

NOTE: The question of whether a Christian can or should sin reverts to the topic from which it arose. It is 1 John 3:3, “*And every man that has this hope in him* (the hope of being changed into the likeness of Christ at His return) *purifies himself*.” The matter is one of personal purification because sin is personal defilement. The secret of possessing purity and lessening the danger of defilement is this “hope.” The intensity of the hope measures the purity of the life. If we hold the hope intensely we shall have the purity personally.

We can not transcend this argument: Life is for the King, therefore, it must be lived with the approximation of perfection as the goal. When we live expecting the personal return of our King, the incentive of life is both transforming and purifying. (Quote from Roy L. Laurin’s commentary on 1 John)

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SIX

1. What are two things John states concerning what we are as children of God?

1) _____

2) _____

2. Give two ways in which Christians can purify themselves.

1) _____

2) _____

3. What is the Greek word for “sin” and what is the literal meaning of the word?

4. Give both John and James’ definition of sin.

John’s definition: _____

James’s definition: _____

5. How are people shown to be either of God or of the devil?

6. Complete the following statement: “To continue to walk in sin is to _____

7. Explain the concept and meaning of verse 9, *No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.*

LESSON SEVEN

FELLOWSHIP IS ROOTED IN THE PRACTICE OF SACRIFICIAL LOVE

INTRODUCTION:

Jn our previous study we saw where John described two different kinds of people. One who continuously practices sin, and is therefore “*of the evil one*” (1 John 3:8a), and the one “*born of God*,” who does not continuously practice sin (1 John 3:9).

John continues to illustrate the contrast between “*the children of God*” and “*the children of the devil*” in 1 John 3:10, presenting two criteria which distinguishes them: Practicing righteousness and brotherly love. Both of these “criteria” have already been introduced earlier in this epistle. John enjoined “*brotherly love*” as necessary to “*abiding in the light*” (1 John 2:9-11) and he connected “*practicing righteousness*” to being “*born of Him*” (1 John 2:29; 3:7).

It is primarily the subject of “*brotherly love*” that John expounds upon throughout the rest of this epistle.

LESSON TEXT: 1 John 3:13-24

LESSON AIM: To see the power, significance and value of the principle of love for one another.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Review the truth that love distinguishes the children of God in verses 10-13.
 2. See that hostility between the children of God and the offspring of the devil was imposed by God Himself in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:15).
 3. Study the active nature of love exemplified in the work of Jesus on the cross.
 4. Understand the value and fruit of brotherly love in the three benefits it gives.
-

LOVE DISTINGUISHES THE CHILDREN OF GOD (vs. 10-13)

A. Two Things Manifest the Difference Between God's Children and the Children of the Devil (v. 10)

1. The word “manifest” means: “To show or demonstrate plainly, reveal; to be evidence of; prove.”
2. That which clearly demonstrates the children of God are:
 - a. The practice of righteousness.
 - b. The love of the brethren.
3. Those who are the children of the devil are clearly revealed when they:
 - a. Do not practice righteousness.
 - b. Do not have brotherly love.

B. The Command to Love Is “*From the Beginning*” (v. 11). The love with which we are admonished to love one another is the reflection of a divine nature. It is the result of the believer partaking of the nature of God.

1. From the beginning of the gospel, spoken by Jesus Himself (John 13:34-35).
2. Jesus also stressed how loving one another would make the children of God (His disciples) “manifest” to the world: “. . .by this all will know” (John 13:35).

C. Expect Some Conflict Between These Two “Children” (vs. 12-13)

1. Just as Cain killed his brother Abel.
 - a. He who was **of** the wicked one killed his brother.
 - b. The murder was sparked by the contrast between the works of the two but issued from a predisposed heart.

NOTE: The one sin mentioned concerning Cain is murder. It is the greatest of natural sins. Contrasting it is hatred, the greatest of spiritual sins.

2. Don't be surprised if the world hates you as well. Cf. also John 15:18-20 – *“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember the words I spoke to you: ‘No servant is greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.’”*
3. God Himself imposed hostility between these ingredients of right and wrong, light and darkness, truth and error way back after the Garden of Eden experience with Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:15).

NOTE: When we follow the teachings of Jesus, especially His command to love one another, it soon becomes evident (“manifest”) that we are different from those of the world. But that difference sometimes leads to jealousy and its unpleasant consequences.

LOVE SIGNIFIES A PASSING FROM DEATH TO LIFE (vs. 14-15)

- A. It Is a Mark of True Conversion (v. 14a).** “...we have passed from death to life.”
 - 1. Certainly brotherly love is not the ONLY indicator.
 - 2. Remember that we must also practice righteousness (cf. Galatians 5:22-23).
 - 3. But love for the brethren is a positive sign that true conversion has occurred.

- B. Whereas Lack of Love Is an Ominous Sign (vs. 14b-15)**
 - 1. That one “*abides in death.*”
 - 2. One who hates his brother “*is in darkness until now*” (1 John 2:9,11).
 - 3. Hating one’s brother makes one a murderer! (just like Cain).
 - 4. And it should be self-evident that a murderer does not possess eternal life!
 - Hatred in the realm of the spiritual world is the equivalent of murder in the physical world.
 - a. The one is the wishful destruction of a soul and the other is the violent destruction of a life.
 - b. When we hate a person the motive is the same as wishing him destroyed.

- C. When Christians Do Not Love Their Brethren**
 - 1. It MAY be an indication that true conversion never occurred, and that they are Christians in name only.
 - 2. It MAY be that there was true conversion.
 - a. But the Christian is still a “*babe in Christ*” (1 Corinthians 3:1-3).
 - b. Or that what the writer of Hebrews feared has occurred (Hebrews 3:12-14).
 - 3. In ANY circumstance, it is not what God desires for us!

CONCLUSION

- 1. Two compelling reasons are given by John for why we should love one another:
 - a. ***It distinguishes the children of God.***
 - b. ***It signifies a passing from death to life.***
- 2. There is a world of difference between the man that hates and would destroy life, and the man that loves and would lay down his life voluntarily.

THE DEFINITION OF BROTHERLY LOVE (vs. 16-18)

- A. Jesus Exemplifies What it Means to Love the Brethren (16)**
 - 1. The word for love (Gk. AGAPE) has often been described as “active goodwill.”
 - 2. In giving His life for our sins, Jesus demonstrated goodwill in an active way.
 - 3. By meditating upon His example, we are “... taught of God to love one another” (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:9).
 - 4. With Jesus’ example, then, we come to understand what brotherly love is all about: sacrificially serving others!

- a. Therefore we should be willing to lay down our lives for one another.
- b. In some cases, it may indeed involve “dying” for our brethren; but it can also be “living” for them through serving.

B. An Example of Failing to Show Brotherly Love (v. 17)

- 1. John uses the example of not helping a brother when it is within your power to do so.
- 2. In view of Christ’s love, how we can claim to have love if we are not willing to sacrifice for a brother in need?
- 3. This illustrates that brotherly love is not only being willing to “die” for someone, but willing to “live” for them as well, through active service on their behalf.

C. Therefore, an Admonition to “True Love” (18)

- 1. An admonition prefaced by John’s favorite term of endearment: “*My little children.*”
- 2. To love, not just in words, but truly, through deeds! Love is a quality of life, not merely of the tongue (word), but also of the hand (deed) and of the heart (truth).

NOTE: We see, then, that “brotherly love” which 1) distinguishes the children of God, and 2) signifies one as having passed from death to life, must 3) go beyond the spoken word or occasional hymn.

Patterned after the example of Jesus, “brotherly love” is manifested by what one does, not just by what one says (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8). The blessedness of such love is not only for the recipient, but also for the giver.

THE VALUE OF BROTHERLY LOVE (19-24)

A. It Gives One Assurance Before God (vs. 19-21)

- 1. The assurance of the Truth (v. 19).
 - a. Love of the brethren is an indication that one is “*of the truth,*” just as it was an indication that one had passed from death to life (1 John 3:1).
 - b. It is not the only indicator (cf. 1 John 3:10), but it does help to provide one with assurance of their salvation.
- 2. The assurance of an un-condemning heart (vs. 20-21).
 - a. If our own hearts condemn us.
 - 1) Because we know we do not love the brethren as we ought.
 - 2) Certainly God, who is greater and knows all things, will know of our shortcomings in this area.
 - b. But if our hearts do NOT condemn us.
 - 1) Because we are loving the brethren as we know we should.
 - 2) This will make us able to approach God with joyful confidence!

B. It Leads to Positive Answers to Prayer (vs. 22-23)

1. Our prayers are more likely to be answered according to our requests.
2. Because we are keeping the commandments of God (of which loving the brethren is one), and thereby pleasing Him.
3. “Commandment-keeping” is a condition upon which God hears prayer, just as it is a condition upon which Christ promises His abiding love (John 15:10).

C. It Ensures That One Abides in Christ (v. 24)

1. Abiding in Christ is contingent upon keeping His commandments (and loving the brethren is certainly one of His commandments) (cf. John 14:23).
2. And how do we know that Christ truly abides in those who keeps His commandments?
 - a. By the Spirit whom Christ has given.
 - b. He (the Spirit) is the one Who reminded the apostles of the key to abiding in Christ (cf. John 14:19-26).

NOTE: We must realize in all this discussion about life at its best that these external evidences such as love do not automatically spring up and exhibit themselves. It is true that they are inherently present for they are potential parts of the regenerated personality, but all graces must be nourished and cultivated. It is in grace that we are to grow.

Love is the characteristic of the new life. It is our life-potential. It is life’s normal expression. It is possible to suppress it and to express the things that fall below this ideal, but when a Christian lives in the vigor of faith and in the strength of fellowship he will exhibit these qualities of the new life.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SEVEN:

1. What two things in verse 10 manifest the difference between God's children and the devil's children?

1) _____

2) _____

2. Where did the animosity between people of God and people of the devil begin?

3. What in verse 16 exemplifies the true meaning of "brotherly love?"

4. List three things which show the value of brotherly love.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

5. What example does John use to illustrate the failing to show brotherly love?

LESSON EIGHT

FELLOWSHIP IS ROOTED IN THE REJECTION OF FALSE DOCTRINE

INTRODUCTION:

eachers today who claim that “God told me this” or “God revealed that to me” are not limiting their doctrine to New Testament scripture. They are motivated by the “spirit of error!” If their message is not found in the written word of God, then they are to be avoided with all caution.

As we begin our study of chapter 4 John presents the peril that the “antichrist” and his doctrines are presenting to Christian people. John wants us not to believe every spirit, every individual that comes along and claims to be a spokesman for God. Do not listen to what he says because John tells us many false prophets have gone out into the world and false teachings will not save the soul. Jesus had said in John 8:31 to those that believe in Him that “*... if you continue in my word then you will know the truth and the truth will make you free.*” But error will not give spiritual freedom to any individual. John is concerned that his people not be carried away by the doctrines of “antichrist.” He asks them and us to test them, put them to the test, prove them. Prove the spirits, whether they are of God.

LESSON TEXT: 1 John 4:1-21

LESSON AIM: We want you to see that true religion and fellowship with God is based not on spurious teachings which originate in some persons imagination, but on apostolic testimony.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will...

1. See that there are two great contrasting powers at work in the world; the power of truth and the power of error (4:1-6).
 2. Learn that every believer has the responsibility to test the truth or untruth of any who would profess to be teachers concerning God.
 3. Come to understand that fellowship with God is rooted in God’s love and perfected in the practice of that love in all believers (4:7-21).
-

THE VALUE OF APOSTOLIC TESTIMONY

A. Two Great Contrasting Powers at Work in the World (1 John 4:1-6)

1. The two great contrasting powers at work in the world (4:1-6):
 - a. The Spirit of God.
 - b. The spirit of antichrist.
2. Our relationship with God is determined not only by what we do (righteousness and love), but also by our doctrine (what we believe).

B. The Exhortation to Test the Spirits (v. 1)

- 1 “*Do not believe every spirit.*”
 - a. Don’t believe everything you hear, or everyone who claims to be from God.
 - b. How foolish it would be to do so should be obvious.
 - 1) We would be in a constant state of confusion (believing one thing one moment, and another thing the next).
 - 2) We would be easily misled by those teaching error.
- 2 “*Test the spirits, whether they are of God.*”
 - a. The word “test” (“try”, KJV) means:
 - 1) “To examine, prove, scrutinize” (Thayer).
 - 2) “To see whether a thing is genuine or not.”
 - b. Those who have this attitude are highly commended in the Scriptures.
 - 1) The Bereans – Acts 17:11.
 - 2) The Ephesians – Revelation 2:2.
- 3 “*Because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*”
 - a. This is the reason we must “*test the spirits.*”
 - b. Others have also warned us of this fact.
 - 1) Jesus – Matthew 7:15.
 - 2) Peter – 2 Peter 2:1-3.
 - 3) Paul’s admonishment – 2 Corinthians 11:13-15.
“For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light. It is no great thing therefore if his ministers also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works.”
 - c. So we must examine, prove, and scrutinize those who would teach us claiming to be spokesmen for God!

C. The Method of Testing the Spirits (vs. 2-3, 6)

1. **Do they confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh?**
 - a. Verses 2-3 are best understood in light of the Gnostic-like errors that were prevalent at that time.
 - 1) Some were denying that Jesus Christ actually came in the flesh (2 John 7).
 - 2) Their doctrine was leading many astray, possibly because the false teachers claimed inspiration by the Spirit – claimed to be “spirit” people.

- b. Those who would teach such falsehood are not led by the Spirit of God, but possess the spirit of the “antichrist” (2 John 7). The most predominant characteristic of this gnostic teaching is the denial that Jesus had a physical body.
- 2. **Do they listen to the apostles of Christ?**
 - a. Verse 6 reveals how we can distinguish between “the spirit of truth” and “the spirit of error.”
 - 1) Those who truly know God listen to the apostles.
 - 2) Those who are not of God will reject them.
 - b. The proof: Does the teaching agree with what the apostles teach?
 - 1) Jesus taught that to receive them was to receive Him and God (John 13:20).
 - 2) The early church continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine (Acts 2:42).
 - 3) They recognized the apostles’ words as the commands of the Lord (1 Corinthians 14:37).
 - 4) The apostles recognized their fellow-apostles’ writings as equivalent to inspired scriptures (2 Peter 3:15-16) – Therefore, those who are of God will heed the apostles, and agree with their teaching!
 - c. This is a test that we can easily apply today on virtually every issue.
 - 1) It implies knowledge and understanding of the apostles’ doctrine on our part.
 - 2) Yet that should not be a problem if we follow the example of the first church in Jerusalem (Acts 2:42).

FELLOWSHIP IS ROOTED IN GOD’S LOVE PERFECTED IN PRACTICE (4:7-21)

A. Brotherly Love Is Evidence of Sonship (vs. 7-8)

- 1. Those who are “beloved” are commanded to “love” others.
 - a. True love (the Greek word is *AGAPE*, “active goodwill”) emanates from God (v. 7a).
 - b. That is because “*God is love*” (v. 8b).
 - 1) Every action of His is motivated out of an “active goodwill” toward us.
 - 2) This does not mean He overlooks sin, for God is “light” and has no fellowship with darkness (1 John 1:5-6).
- 2. Those who love, demonstrate their sonship.
 - a. They demonstrate that they are “*born of God*” and “*know God*” (v. 7b).
 - b. But if one does not love as God does, then they have not yet come to truly know God (v. 8a).

B. Brotherly Love Is Defined by God’s Love (vs. 9-11)

- 1. God manifested His love through the gift of His Son.
 - a. He sent His “*only begotten Son*” (v. 9; cf. John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18).

- b. He sent His Son, not because we loved Him, but because He loved us (v. 10; cf. Romans 5:8).
- c. He sent His Son for two reasons in this text:
 - 1) **That we might live through Him** (v. 9; John 10:10).
 - 2) **That He might be the propitiation** (an appeasing sacrifice) **for our sins** (v. 10).
- 2. This is the kind of love we should have.
 - a. Since this is the kind of love God has shown toward us.
 - b. Then this is the kind of love we should have toward one another!
 - 1) Where we love, not because we are loved first.
 - 2) But as God is love, so we are to be as His children and lovers of all men to the same extent that God loves (Luke 6:35).
- 3. Brotherly love is evidence of fellowship with God (vs. 12-16).
- 4. Through brotherly love, God's abiding is possible.
 - a. No one has seen God at any time (v. 12a; cf. John 1:18).
 - b. However, when we keep the command to love one another, God will abide in us, and His love will be perfected in us! (v. 12b; cf. 1 John 3:24a).
 - c. We know this is true because of the Spirit which God has given (v. 13; cf. 1 John 3:24b).
- 5. This is not the only necessary requirement for God to abide in us, but it is an essential one.
 - a. The apostles have testified that Father sent the Son to be our Savior (v. 14).
 - b. And so we must be willing to confess Jesus as the Son of God (v. 15).
 - c. Then, when we have known and believed the love God has for us (manifested in the sending of His Son), we are in a position to fully accept two basic principles of the gospel:
 - 1) God is love.
 - 2) He who abides in love abides in God and God in him (v. 16).

C. Brotherly Love Provides Assurance (vs. 17-19)

- 1. When brotherly love is perfected, **we can have boldness**.
 - a. As we grow and become more complete and mature in brotherly love, we will be able to have boldness in the day of judgment (v. 17a).
 - b. The boldness will come from knowing that as His children we were like Him in this world (v. 17b).
- 2. As brotherly love is perfected, **fear is dispelled**.
 - a. Because the prospects of torment naturally produce fear, the more we grow in God's love, to that degree fear is dispersed (v. 18a).
 - b. If we fear the day of judgment, that is an indication we need to grow in love (v. 18b).
 - c. Growing in love is made so easy for us, however, because God first loved us (v. 19).

D. Brotherly Love Is Essential to Loving God (vs. 20-21)

1. To claim to love God and still hate one's brother is a lie.
 - a. Like those who claim:
 - 1) To have fellowship with God while they walk in darkness (1 John 1:6).
 - 2) To not have sinned (1 John 1:10).
 - 3) To know Jesus while not keeping His commandments (1 John 2:4). So is one who claims to love God while hating his brother: John says that they are all liars (v. 20a).
 - b. For to love one whom we cannot see (God) requires that we first be able to love those whom we can see (v. 20b).
2. To love God, therefore, means we must develop brotherly love.
 - a. This is why we have the commandment from Jesus (John 13: 34-35).
 - b. Indeed, Jesus taught that loving God and one another were the two greatest commandments of the old law (Matthew 22:35-40).

CONCLUSION

1. If "brotherly love" is . . .
 - a. Evidence of sonship
 - b. Defined by God's love for us
 - c. Evidence of fellowship with God
 - d. A means of providing assurance in the day of judgment
 - e. Essential to loving God

. . .then how dare we neglect this most essential commandment of God?
2. While there are other commands of our Lord that we must be careful to obey, none is so important, so essential to our spiritual life as God's children, as this one.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON EIGHT:

1. What are the two great contrasting powers at work in the world which John warns us about?

1) _____

2) _____

2. Our relationship with God is determined by what two factors in this study?

1) _____

2) _____

3. What command does John give us concerning teachers coming to us today?

For what reason? _____

4. By what criteria in this context can we determine whether or not a teacher (spirit) is from God?

5. Four important things are said concerning love in 4:7-21. List these four things below.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

6. Those who love demonstrate what particular relationship to God? _____

7. How is brotherly love defined in this context? _____

8. Describe how brotherly love provides assurance in the believer.

9. What significant test of brotherly love does John give in verses 20-21?

10. "Brotherly love" is said to be what five things as listed in the **CONCLUSION**?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

LESSON NINE

FELLOWSHIP IS ROOTED IN THE THE NEW BIRTH BY FAITH

INTRODUCTION:

 Biblical faith has specific elements that are basic to the reception of the new birth. Those specifics are equally basic to the continuance of that new life. Salvation begins when one confesses his conviction that the man Jesus is the divine Son of God and on that faith is baptized for the remission of his sins (Acts 2:38; 8:36-37; Romans 10:9-10). The new birth has obligations that are equally basic to its practice. Love for God and His family must manifest itself in continual obedience to God's commands, especially as they dictate duties toward His children. Present and eternal victories are intrinsically bound up in world conquering faith. Christ is the key to "life" both here and hereafter.

LESSON TEXT: 1 John 5:1-12

LESSON AIM: A short review of the discussion of love in the last few verses of chapter four and the relationship of the new birth by faith to fellowship with God.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will...

1. Review the concept of "love made perfect" from the last several verses of chapter four.
 2. Examine the relationship of commandment keeping to love for God.
 3. See that the Christian's power to be victorious over the world is his faith in God.
 4. Learn of two historical events in the life of Jesus used by John to refute the gnostic teaching known as the "adoptionist" view.
 5. Know that eternal life speaks of a quality of life that is contingent upon having the Son.
-

REVIEW:

We have been discussing 1 John 4:19, we love because God first loved us.

- A. Our love is a reaction to the love of God (1 John 4:9, 10, and 14). He has demonstrated His love by:
1. Sending His Son so that we could live.
 2. Sending His Son to be the satisfaction for our sins.
 3. Sending His Son to be the savior of the world.

- B. Our love is naturally a reflection of the love of God.
- C. God wants this love of His invested in us to be perfected in us.
 - 1. It is perfected in us when we are in this world as He is.
 - 2. We show our love toward God by serving the needs of His people and when we manifest that kind of love then we are showing our love for God Himself.
 - 3. It is demonstrated in the practical services and ministries that we give one to another. Cf. Matthew 25.

FAITH AND FELLOWSHIP (5:1-12)

A. The Concept of Faith in Christ Jesus

- 1. The apostle has built the new birth already on two fundamental principles.
 - a. He says the one that is pure in life and does not practice sin is begotten of God (1 John 3:9).
 - b. He states that the one that loves is begotten of God (4:7).
- 2. All of those actions are present tense verbs, whether it be the practice of purity, whether it be the manifestation of love, or whether it be constant demonstrations of faith and confidence in Christ Jesus.
 - a. Therefore the new birth is a present tense relationship because it is based upon the present tense convictions that we have in Jesus Christ and our obligation to love and practice purity.
 - b. John tells us whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God.
- 3. We demonstrate love by keeping the commandments of God (v. 2).
 - a. The commandments are a list of our obligations, the assignments that we have one toward another.
 - b. We are to minister to one another, admonish one another, exhort one another, serve one another.
 - c. Commandment keeping, then, is a demonstration of our love for the Father and of our love for His children.
 - d. Apostle Paul said in Romans 13:8, "*Owe no man anything save or except this unpayable debt of love.*"
 - e. The law says that love is the fulfilling of all of its obligations (Romans 13:9).
- 4. "*For this is the love of God to keep His commandments*" (v. 3).
 - a. We must all meet all of the assignments that God has given us regarding worship, concerning prayer, concerning walking in the light, concerning believing in His Son, and meeting all of the obligations that God has given to us.
 - b. Pleasing God would be one of the major interests and commitments on the part of God's people.
- 5. His commandments are not grievous.
 - a. God's commandments are not the source of our grief.
 - b. God's commandments are the guidelines to successful living.
 - c. Violated commandments bring grief. All of the grief that human beings experience derives from the violation of God's commandments.
 - d. Keeping His commandments is the secret of a successful, happy kind of a life.

B. Faith is the Source of Victory (vs. 4-5)

1. Whatever is begotten of God overcomes the world.
 - a. John has left the personal and uses the impersonal.
 - 1) He is no longer saying **whoever** is begotten of God overcomes.
 - 2) He says **whatever** (faith) is begotten of God overcomes the world.
 - 3) God is the one that originates faith.
 - b. God is the one that originates.
 - c. He is not only the one that begets life in us. He is the one that originates, that begins, that brings into existence our faith.
 - d. God originates faith in us through the fact that He has presented unto us the evidence that is necessary for us to believe.
 - e. Faith does come by hearing and hearing by the word, we read in Romans 10:17.
 - f. God is the one that originates the commandments.
2. Overcoming the world demands not only that we resist the temptations of Satan but that we also resist the temptation not to love.
3. It is the one that believes that Jesus is the Son of God that overcomes the world.
 - a. Verse 1 – whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah.
 - b. Verse 5 – you must also believe that He is the Son of God, that He is co-equal with the Father in deity.

C. Witnesses to the Incarnation (1 John 5: 6-8)

1. John's water and blood argument. "*This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ. Not with water only but with water and with the blood.*"
 - a. The strength of the argument is in John's use of the preposition "through" (Greek: *DIA*).
 - b. John is therefore saying that Jesus was divine before, during and after both His baptism and His cross.
 - c. John in this argument was combating gnostic theories concerning the incarnation.
 - 1) The adoption idea said that Christ (divine) came upon Jesus after His baptism and left before His death on the cross. So John writes, "*this is He that came by (through) water and blood, even Jesus Christ*" (verse 6a).
 - 2) Some Gnostics might concede the coming through water, but not the blood. So John writes not with water only, but with the water and with the blood (verse 6b).
2. The interpolation (inserting something from without to within which pollutes that which is within) in the King James Version:
 - a. The words: "*in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth*" are not in the Greek texts. (See Gerald's discussion in his commentary The First Epistle of John, (published by Sunset International Bible Institute Press.)
 - b. Its entrance into the KJV came in this fashion. It was added to the quotation in 1 John by a Spanish heretic Priscillian (died 385 A.D.) in a Latin sermon. From his work the verse was added to a Latin

manuscript of Pseudo-Virgilius and came gradually to work its way into late Latin texts. Then after the 15th Century it made its appearance into two Greek manuscripts and from there into the King James Version.

3. The Witnesses:
 - a. Water – refers to Christ's baptism.
 - b. Spirit – testifies to Christ's divinity.
 - c. Blood – refers to the cross.

(See Gerald Paden's commentary on The First Epistle of John.)
4. The witness of the Holy Spirit. Jesus entire life as a man was guided and led by the Holy Spirit.
 - a. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit.
 - b. He performed His miracles by the power of the Spirit (Matthew 5:17; Luke 5:17).
 - c. He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted.
 - d. He was led by the Spirit even to the cross of Calvary (Hebrews 9:14).
 - e. He was raised from the dead by the Holy Spirit.
5. Some ways in which God bore witness.
 - a. More than 330 specific prophecies concerning the Messiah recorded in the Old Testament.
 - b. When Jesus came God gave witness through the verbal expressions of the angels.
 - c. At His baptism the Holy Spirit came down upon Him in the form of a dove and the voice of God Himself comes out of the heavens saying, "*This is my beloved Son.*"
 - d. At the Mount of Transfiguration God bore witness concerning Him, "*This is my Son.*"
 - e. Through the miracles that Jesus performed. (Acts 2:22 NIV) "*Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.*"

D. Eternal life – Promise or Fact (1 John 5:9-12). Eternal life speaks of a quality of life that is contingent upon having the Son.

1. The greatness of God's witness (verses 9-11):
 - a. The witness that God has given is that He is my Son (verse 9).
 - b. I accept the witness and have the witness in me when I believe what He says (verse 10).
 - c. If I believe what He says, that witness gives me eternal life (verse 11).
2. The word *eternal* in verse 11 is an adjective modifying life and speaks of **a quality of life rather than duration**.
3. Having eternal life is contingent upon having the Son (v. 12).
 - a. John is going to show in the next paragraph, that it is possible to have life in Christ and to so sin as to bring upon yourself spiritual death.
 - b. When the New Testament argues from the point of present possession, it is always **contingent upon fidelity unto death** (cf. Hebrews 3:14; Revelation 2:10; Ephesians 1:13-14; 2 Peter 1:10-11).
4. John uses the terms life and eternal life interchangeably (1:1-3; 3:15; 5:11, 20).

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON NINE:

-
-
1. What are the three fundamental principles upon which the new birth is built?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
 2. What in verse 2 is a demonstration of our love for God and for His children?

 3. What, according to the apostle John, is the Christian's power to overcome the world?

 4. Explain the "adoptionist" view held by some of the gnostic teachers of John's day and John's refutation of that view.

 5. What three things does John present to testify of the reality of the incarnation of Jesus?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
 6. In considering Jesus and the Holy Spirit, list five ways in which the Spirit was involved in the life of Jesus.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
 7. List at least five ways in which God bore witness to Jesus in the course of history.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
 8. The word *eternal* in verse 11 speaks of what kind of life? _____

LESSON TEN

FELLOWSHIP IS ROOTED IN JESUS' PRESENT MINISTRY

INTRODUCTION:

Jt is not an empty boast to claim the present possession of eternal life in Christ. It is based on revealed truth. Some feel that such a claim will cause brethren to believe they cannot be lost. John did not share such fears. There may well be a contrary fear that would cause some to believe that they cannot be saved! John certainly would discourage such a perversion of his teaching. Remember that this Epistle of John develops the theology of assurance.

The section we are about to study encourages sober concern for struggling brethren. It is clear that John wants “*love for the brethren*” to be real, practical, prayerful and involved. The ultimate survival and salvation of the souls of others may well depend upon timely prayerful intervention. One has to be impressed with the concessions God makes to intercessory prayers offered for weak brethren! And yet it seems that so few manifest the deep concern for a straying brother discussed in this context. The “*one another*” assignments found in the New Testament imperatively impose all these above verses demand and much more too!

LESSON TEXT: 1 John 5:13-21

LESSON AIM: To cultivate boldness and confidence in our prayer life, particularly as it relates to our praying for brethren.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. Learn that assurance and boldness in praying comes from the knowledge that we have eternal life in the Son.
 2. Discover some guidelines in how and for whom the Christian is to pray.
 3. Learn the difference between “*sin unto death*” and “*sin not unto death*.”
-

THE ASSURANCE OF ETERNAL LIFE

A. Eternal Life is Quality not Quantity (5:13)

1. John is not using the word “eternal” in this context as a durational concept.
 - a. He is not talking about life that will never end.
 - b. He is talking about a quality of life.
 - c. He would have used a different term in an adverbial form if he is defining how long this life is going to be.

- d. It would be unending life.
- 2. There is such a thing as a sin unto death – an individual can have eternal life but can then lose it.
- 3. Only the individual that has life can commit a sin unto death.
 - a. You possess this quality of life in the here and now.
 - b. It is the life that has union with God. The Scripture never refers to a man having life when there is no union with God.
 - c. It is always called death when an individual loses his fellowship with God. In Luke chapter 15 when the prodigal son was away from the Father, he did not have life. "*My son was dead.*" (Cf. John 10:10 – "*I came that they might have life and have it more abundantly*").

B. Awareness of Fellowship with God Is Going to Enhance Our Prayer Life

John tells us that this knowledge, this awareness, this conviction that we have accepted God's testimony concerning Jesus, and, therefore God will bear the same witness toward us saying, these are my children, will enhance our prayer life.

- 1. It gives us boldness that when we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.
 - a. This boldness is not only boldness in asking but it produces a confidence in receiving.
 - b. Our awareness of present peace with God, of fellowship with Him increases our confidence in prayer.
- 2. If we know that we are not right before God that destroys our prayer life. We are not acceptable and, therefore, our prayers will not be acceptable. (Read 1 Peter 3:10-12)
- 3. Ask according to God's will.
 - a. Ask God anything that you want.
 - b. Acknowledge the fact that His will for your life is even better than your own will and therefore ask Him to answer your prayers according to His superior wisdom.
 - c. The attitude, "*Not my will but thy will be done.*"
- 4. He who asks is he that receives (v. 15). God hears the prayer and God gives answer to the prayer.
 - a. If we ask it according to His will and He grants our request then what we have asked for has been granted, our prayer has been answered.
 - b. If He does not give us what we ask of Him we still get the answer to our prayer because we ask Him according to His will.

C. John's Example of Prayer According to God's Will (vs. 16-17)

- 1. The example of prayer according to God's will (v. 16a).
 - a. Life for a brother sinning a sin not unto death. (See Luke 13:6-9).
 - b. The example of the barren fig tree in Luke 13:6-9. This could be parallel to this brother asking for life for the sinning brother.
 - 1) The command "*cut the tree down.*"
 - 2) The request: "*Would you let it alone now until I dig about it for*

another year, until I can fertilize it?"

- 3) The tree still had life – as long as it was standing.
- 4) The brother still has life because his sin is not unto death.
- 5) It could become a sin unto death – only those that have spiritual life, spiritual union, can commit a sin unto death.
- 6) A Christian can lose his life and be lost eternally if he commits a sin unto death.
- c. The word “unto” in the Greek is *PROS*. It means a kind of “face to face” relationship.
 - 1) A man committing a sin walking toward God, walking in the light – a sin that is not an “unto-death-sin.”
 - 2) A man committing a sin walking toward Satan (1 John 3:8) – a sin that is an “unto-death-sin.”
- 2. The example of prayer not according to God’s will (v. 16b).
 - a. The sin unto death not a proper topic for prayer.
 - b. This is not a proper request for an individual to make unto God that God would give life unto those that have rejected Him.
 - c. John is still discussing prayer and the power of prayer, the power of intercessory prayer.
- 3. Examples in the New Testament concerning sin unto and not unto death.
 - a. Matthew 18:15 – *“If a man sin against you, go and reprove him between you and him alone and if he hears you, you have gained a brother.”* Therefore his sin is not unto death.
 - b. Luke 15 – The prodigal son:
 - 1) Had fellowship with the father.
 - 2) Turned his back on the father.
 - 3) He died the moment he turned his back on the father – lost from that moment forward. He was dead!
 - 4) Deadness in the Scriptures means lostness.
 - c. Romans 15 – *“You that are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak . . .”* Their sin is not unto death because the apostle says, bear with them.
 - d. Galatians 6:1 – *“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.”*
 - e. James 5:19 – *“My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.”*
 - f. 2 Timothy 2:24 – *“And the Lord’s servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.”*
 - g. Jude 22 – *“Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire*

and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear–hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

4. The discussion of the nature of sin (v. 17) – all unrighteousness is sin.
 - a. John uses *all* unrighteousness to let us know that he is not talking about *the* sin. He is saying that all sins have the potential of being “*unto death*” or “*not unto death*.”
 - b. Unrighteousness means that which is untrue, that which is not right but wrong.
 - c. This explodes the theory that there is a distinction that can be made between a *venial* sin and a *mortal* sin. John is not making a distinction for he says “*all unrighteousness is sin.*”

C. John's Concluding Remarks (vs. 18-21)

Know that Jesus Christ is the ***True God*** and eternal life.

1. The repetition of John’s concept that the child of God is one who has broken with sin and lives in harmony with that break (v. 18).
2. The two words “begotten” in verse 18:
 - a. The first begotten refers to the child of God.
 - b. The second begotten could refer to Christ (see also Jude 24; Philippians 1:6), or also could refer to the individual child of God.
3. The whole world lies in the evil one (v. 19).
4. “*An understanding*” in verse 20a may be the same as “*an anointing*” in Chapter 2.
5. Jesus is truly (v. 20b):
 - a. God (divine).
 - b. Eternal life.
6. Flee erroneous concepts of God (v. 21).

CONCLUSION:

1. Here are the “Certainties of the Christian faith” as summarized by John . . .
 - a. “We know” the relationship between those born of God and sin.
 - b. “We know” the difference between us and those of the world.
 - c. “We know” the basis of fellowship with God and eternal life.
2. May the First Epistle of John always serve to remind of these certainties, and may the last verse always remind us of the need for diligence:
“*Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.*”
3. With his favorite term of endearment, John admonishes us to stay away from anything that would replace our devotion to the one true God.
 - a. We may think that we are too sophisticated to succumb to idolatry.
 - b. But as Paul pointed out time and again, anything that replaces God in our hearts is an idol (Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5).

NOTE WELL: If there was no danger of being led astray, there would be no need for a warning!

SUMMARY:

The Christian has confident assurance of his salvation in Christ Jesus. The redemptive mission of Messiah has the backing of the “**witness of God**”, the truths “**announced**” by the apostles and the Christian’s own “**knowledge**” that has grown out of all the sources of divine revelation. Any denial of the foundations of our faith jeopardizes all hope of ultimate salvation through Christ. Anything less than the confession of the human/divine person of Messiah is another form of idolatry.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TEN:

1. In what way is John using the word “eternal” in this context concerning life?

2. What qualification does John place on a person having his prayer answered?

3. What example does John use to illustrate the principle of praying according to God’s will?

1) _____

2) _____

4. Is the brother “sinning a sin not unto death” still alive or is he dead? Explain your answer.

5. What is the Greek word for *unto* and what is its meaning?

1) _____

2) _____

6. Give two New Testament scriptures used by Gerald Paden to illustrate a sin “not unto death” giving the part of scripture which illustrates the concept.

1) _____

7. At what point was the prodigal son in Luke 15 lost or dead?

LESSON ELEVEN

PRACTICE LOVE, RIGHTEOUSNESS AND OBEDIENCE

INTRODUCTION:

The second letter of John is written by one who styles himself as “the elder,” and it is addressed to an “elect lady” and her children. The letter has the same kind of attestation in the early church as 1 John. Its common style argues strongly that the elder and the author of 1 John are the same person. The key theme: ***Loving and living the truth.*** The key verse: 2 John 4 – “*It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us.*”

The dominant feelings in this little epistle are those of friendship and joy, even though these are mixed with concern and warning.

LESSON TEXT: 2 John 1-13

LESSON AIM: To consider the exhortations and recommendations of John concerning loving Jesus Christ and the brethren and living the truth while not listening to deceivers who claim to have truth but do not.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. Learn the identity of the writer of 2 John and how he describes himself.
 2. Consider some reasons why the *elect lady* to whom the letter is addressed has reference to the church.
-

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN – Walk in the light

A. The Significance of The Term Elder. John is presenting himself as an old man and not as the elder (or bishop) of the church.

1. The word *PRESBUTEROS* has the literal meaning of *elder* and John is simply saying he is *an old man* at the time he is writing.
2. John is not presenting himself as the elder (*PRESBUTEROS*) or bishop of the church:
 - a. Note Peter’s way of speaking of himself as a fellow elder (1 Peter 5:1).
 - b. Elders of the church are always presented in the New Testament with a plural idea.
3. John is just presenting himself as an old man, as one whose demise, death is

not far removed.

B. The One Addressed – The Elect Lady

1. Two possible meanings of the term *elect lady* (Gk. *EKLEKTE KURIA*).
 - a. A Christian lady whose own children are faithful.
 - 1) *KURIA* could be a personal name with *elect* or *chosen* as a descriptive modifier and the letter would be to *The Elect Kuria*.
 - 2) *EKLEKTE* could be a proper name with *KURIA* (lady) an appositive – *to the lady EKLEKTE*
 - a) The term *EKLEKTE* is most frequently used as an adjective meaning elect or chosen, but there is documentation for both *EKLEKTE* and *KURIA* as proper names.
 - b) Against the idea that *EKLEKTE* is a name is John's use of the same word in verse 13 – “*your elect sister*.”
 - 3) Could be that neither term is a personal name and that both were meant to be descriptive – “*to the elect lady*” with the person not being further identified.
 2. A church or congregation whose members are faithful is the most likely possibility.
 - a. The church is presented as an *elect bride*:
 - 1) In the universal sense – Ephesians 5:22; Revelation 21:9; 22:17.
 - 2) In the individual sense – 2 Corinthians 11:2-3; 2 Peter 5:13.
 - b. He addresses her in the singular in verse 5, “*And now, dear lady . . .*” and then in verse 6 he addresses her in the plural, “*As YOU* (plural) *have heard from the beginning*.”
 - c. 3 John 9 – *I wrote to the church*. John is probably referring to the letter called 2 John.

NOTE: I really do not think it makes too much difference one way or another whether we are dealing with an actual individual to whom John addresses this letter or whether we are dealing with a congregation of people. He is writing to her and her children. And therefore he has a message for all of them and it would be of value to any congregation of people even if it was written to an individual family headed by an elect woman, a very special woman.

C. The Constancy and Importance of Truth

“. . . will be with us forever” (vs. 1-3).

1. The truth has already been presented and is yet with us (vs. 1-2).
 - a. It is not open to change or new revelations.
 - b. Truth is consistent, it is a constant presence with God's people.
2. John's salutation (v. 3).
 - a. Grace – “a gift from God that we did not earn.”
 - b. Mercy – “when we do not get what we do deserve.”
 - c. Peace – “a peaceful relationship with God.”

D. The Standard of Truth

“. . . the commandments of the Lord” (vs. 4-6)

1. The new/old commandment – to love one another.
2. Walk in love. God’s people are to be consistent in the practice of the new commandment, to love one another sacrificially, devotedly, as God would love them if He were in our position.
3. False teachers to be avoided. They teach that Jesus Christ did not come in the flesh. See 1 John 2:18ff.
4. The truth about the nature of Jesus (v. 7).
 - a. The verb tense says that Jesus not only came in the flesh – He is still in the flesh.
 - b. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven.
 - c. Christ has ascended to heaven.
 - d. Therefore His flesh and blood body has undergone some kind of transformation.
5. Danger of losing heaven (v. 8).
6. “Going onward” (American Standard Version) is to transgress – to go beyond the limits of apostolic revelation (v. 9).
 - a. Not so much teachings *by Christ* as teaching *about Christ*.
 - b. Give no approval, no attention to false teachers.
 - c. Not to receive him into your house if he is teaching false doctrine.
 - d. Must not allow him to set up his base of operation in your home.
 - e. Must not be a part of spreading their false message.

E. The Conclusion to 2 John (vs. 12-13)

John seems to be explaining the evident brevity of this letter. Apparently he expected to visit the church soon. “*Face to face*” (*stoma pros stoma* = literally, mouth to mouth) is a much more practical form of communication. There are many negative trends that gnostic error could introduce into Christian thinking. John wishes to address these and other topics on a personal level. John reassures them of the sacred truths he taught them and reconfirms their confidence in their ultimate redemption in Christ — (In order/so that) “*that your joy may be made full*.

The children of thine elect sister salute thee (2 John 13, ASV). *The children of your chosen sister send their greetings* (2 John 13, NIV).

This is a characteristic salutation Apostles gave when they closed their letters to the churches. Inter-congregational fraternity was always remembered. Prayers of grace, love, mercy, and peace were always encouraged among the churches (Note specific occasions of such apostolic greetings in the following scriptures: Romans 16:5, 16; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Corinthians 13:13; Philippians 4:21-22; Titus 3:15; Hebrews 13:24 and 1 Peter 5:13).

SPECIAL NOTE:

Second John forcefully instructs Christians not to encourage, assist, or have fellowship in the spread of false teaching. Third John, with equal force, requires Christians to support, encourage, and welcome teachers of truth into their homes. It becomes imperative that Christians “*prove the spirits, whether they are of God*” (1 John 4:1, ASV). Such testing aids the decision about whom to support or not support when faced with a proven heretic.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON ELEVEN:

1. To whom does the *chosen lady and her children* have reference? Give at least two reasons for your answer.

2. Who is the author of this letter and why does he refer to himself as “the elder?”

3. Give briefly the sense or meaning of the following phrases:

In truth (v.1) _____

Runs ahead (v. 9) _____

Teaching of Christ (v. 9) _____

4. What does John say about supporting the cause of a false teacher? _____

5. What is the key theme of this epistle? _____

LESSON TWELVE

HOSPITALITY AND MISSION AWARENESS COMMENDED

INTRODUCTION:

he battle for truth and against apostasy is fought in both the home and in the local church; and that is where 3 John comes in. This little letter (the shortest New Testament epistle in the original Greek) gives us a glimpse into an early assembly, its people, and its problems. As you read this brief letter, you find yourself saying, “Times have not changed very much!” We have similar people and problems today!

This letter was addressed to Gaius, one of the leaders of the assembly. But John also discussed two other men in these verses – Diotrephes and Demetrius. Wherever there are people, there are problems – and the potential for *solving* problems. Each of us must honestly face the question, “Am I a part of the problem or a part of the answer?” The key theme might be: Having a good witness in the church.

LESSON TEXT: 3 John

LESSON AIM: To learn that God needs men and women in the local church who will stand for the right and not give in to unrighteous men.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

Learn that in any local church there may be both righteous and unrighteous men and that there is a great need for faithful witnesses who will stand for that which is good and who will support men and women who do mission work.

OUTLINE OF 3 JOHN:

- I. GAIUS, A BELOVED BELIEVER (vs. 1-8).
- II. DIOTREPHEES, A PROUD BELIEVER (vs. 9-10).
- III. DEMETRIUS, AN EXEMPLARY BELIEVER (vs. 11-12).
- IV. CONCLUSION (vs. 13-14).

INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE (3 John 1-4)

Understand John's prayer for Gaius and the apostle's joy at hearing that his children are *walking* in the truth.

A. Possible Identity of Gaius

1. Gaius was a quite common name – there are three of note in the church:
 - a. *Gaius of Macedonia* (Acts 19:29) – Paul's companion of Macedonia who was dragged from the theater when the Ephesians were stirred up over the matter of Diana or Artemis the Great of Ephesus.
 - b. *Gaius of Derbe* (Acts 20:4) – listed with Sopater of Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica, Gaius and Timothy of Derbe and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.
 - c. *Gaius of Corinth* (Romans 16:23; I Corinthians 1:14) – evidences that a congregation met in his home where Paul also stayed and was one of the few in Corinth that Paul personally baptized.
2. Most commentators assign the Gaius of John to another – not one of these, but those who do select one of the three make it the Gaius of Corinth.

B. Greeting and Commendation (vs. 1-4)

1. John writes to Gaius (v. 1).
 - a. Gaius was a faithful Christian.
 - b. He was loved by John (see Romans 16:23).
2. The two kinds of prosperity that John wishes upon Gaius (v. 2):
 - a. Prosper financially.
 - b. Prosper in his physical health.
3. John's joy at hearing of his children walking in the truth (vs. 3-4).

THREE MEN IN THE CHURCH

A. Gaius – The Good Man – His Attitude Concerning Mission Work (3 John 5-8).

Supporting missionaries is an assignment to the church and they should be set forward worthily of God.

1. The use of the phrase “*set forward*” (v. 6).
 - a. The Greek word is *PROPEMPO* (*PRO* – forward; *EMPO* – to send). We get our word *propel* from this Greek word.
 - b. This word in New Testament times had a very definite missionary connotation.
 - c. In Acts 20:38 the same word was used to show a sign of solidarity between the individual who does the setting forth and the person being set forth.
 - d. But the root word has a more financial connotation. It is ordained in the Bible that those who preach the gospel should live of the gospel (Note: 1 Corinthians 9:14; Galatians 6:6; Philippians 1:5; 4:14-16).
2. This term is widely used in the New Testament – (Note carefully Galatians 2:2; Acts 15:3; 1 Corinthians 16:6, 11; 2 Corinthians 1:16; Romans 15:24; Titus 3:13-14; John 20:21).

3. Supporting missionaries and paying their travel expenses is an assignment to the church.
 - a. The example of Lydia fulfilling that assignment,
 - b. The book of Acts is the *church under the great commission*.
 - c. Contributing to the support of missionaries is a *believing act* (v. 5) – *a faithful work*.
4. “*Brethren and strangers without*” (v. 5) refers to *foreign* preachers.
5. “*Taking nothing of the Gentiles*” points to the fact that God’s ministers do not tax the pagans. God’s people are charged with their keep.
6. Two possible meanings of the phrase *worthily of God* (v. 6):
 - a. Set them forward “*as though they were God*.”
 - b. Set them forward “*as though you were God*” (as God would set them forward).

B. Diotrephes the Dictator (vs. 9-10). Learn the importance of imitating that which is good rather than that which is evil.

1. Diotrephes (vs. 9-10) – probably a Gnostic. Note these things about this man:
 - a. He loved to have the preeminence among the brethren.
 - b. He refused John and his letters.
 - c. He refused hospitality to the brethren.
 - d. He forbids and casts out of the church those who would show hospitality to the itinerant preachers.
2. Diotrephes was motivated by pride. Instead of giving the preeminence to Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:18), he claimed it for himself.

C. Demetrius the Exemplar (vs. 11-14)

1. “*Imitate not that which is evil* (Diotrephes), *but that which is good*” (Gaius) (v. 11).
2. Demetrius (v. 12) – a good man. “*Anyone who does what is good is from God*.” Note the witness to that:
 - a. Witness of all men. “*Demetrius is well spoken of by everyone . . .*”
 - b. Witness of the truth itself. “*. . .and even by the truth itself*.”
 - c. Witness of John. “*We also speak well of him . . .*”

NOTE: John’s final words to Gaius are almost a verbatim repetition of John’s conclusion in Second John. There he did not want to “*write with paper and ink*” while here he does not want to communicate “*with ink and pen*.” It would have been interesting to hear John discuss verbally the “*many things*” he wanted to talk about with Gaius. We will just have to be content with what we have.

CONCLUSION:

“*Peace to you. The friends here send their greetings. Greet the friends there by name.*”

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWELVE:

1. Write the four-point outline from memory.

I. _____

II. _____

III. _____

IV. _____

2. Identify these three men by describing each one.

Gaius: _____

Diotrephes: _____

Demetrius: _____

3. What is the relationship in this epistle between the church and missionaries?

4. Give three witnesses to the fact that Demetrius was a good man and one to be trusted.

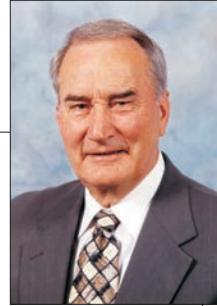
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~~Study Guide~~

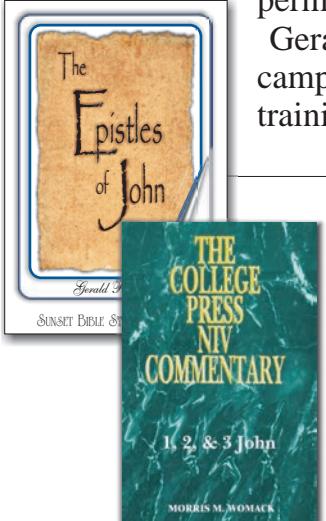
Gerald Paden



Gerald Paden was educated at Abilene Christian University (B.S.) and subsequently served as a missionary in Italy for 18 years and still has a great interest in the evangelization of that country. Gerald specializes in *Church Growth Studies*. His courses in Sunset International Bible Institute include *The Levitical Sacrificial System*, *The Book of Hebrews* and *The Epistles of John*. He teaches in the Sunset School of Missions and is instrumental in motivating families to go to the Mission field. Gerald is married and the father of three children.

Gerald has rich contributions to add to your study of inspired Scripture. His years of study and ministry qualifies him to author this kind of commentary. His years of mission experience on foreign fields shines through and enhances his understanding of the Scriptures. His love for and faith in Jesus Christ permeates his writings.

Gerald has held numerous meetings and campaigns and taught in several preacher training schools in mission fields.



The Epistles of John by Gerald Paden and *The College Press NIV Commentary on 1, 2, & 3 John* are companion books to this study.

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