

FPFWC Christian Development



Eternal Hope

August 2024

Summer Quarter

August 10, 2024

Lesson #2 - The Love of God

SCRIPTURE TEXT – 1 John 3:1-10

ICE BREAKER –

1. How does each part of the armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-17) help believers resist the work of the devil?
2. How would you explain to an unbeliever what it means to be born of God?

Key Verse: “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.” —1 John 3:1

LESSON BACKGROUND

Five books of the New Testament have traditionally been attributed to the apostle John, who was one of the original 12 disciples (Matthew 10:2). Three of the five—the ones we designate 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John—are letters from the apostle to various believers in the first century AD.

Church history strongly associates John with the church in Ephesus, located in modern-day Turkey. Tradition says he died in this city in the AD 90s. The three letters were probably written in the region of Ephesus. The letters date from the AD 80s or 90s. John would have been an older man by this time (compare the self-designation “the elder” in 2 John 1; 3 John 1). The dignity of his age peeks through in 1 John as he addresses his readers as “little children” nine times (examples: 1 John 2:1; 3:7).

We are unsure of the issues that faced the letter’s original audience. Apparently, they had been confronted with threats to their faith. Some of these threats included the temptation from an early form of the attractive heresy we call Gnosticism. Among other things, gnostics taught that it did not matter whether a person had morality or love—as long as he or she had “secret knowledge.” To combat this false teaching, John emphasized the connection between right belief, right actions, and right love. The child of God must believe the truth, obey the commands, and love the brethren. False teachers were so bold that John referred to them as having a “spirit of antichrist” (1 John 4:3; compare 2:18, 22). John wanted their influence eliminated lest they split the church further (see 2:19).

The church also faced more general threats, including the denial that Jesus is Christ (1 John 2:22), a return to idol worship (5:21), and a general lack of love for one another (4:7).

LESSON COMMENTARY

1. God's Love and the New Birth (3:1)

3:1. Rebirth is the result of that **great** love, which the **Father has bestowed upon us**. That affection causes believers to be **called** God's **children**.

2. Moral Purity and the New Birth (3:2–3)

3:2–3. Although believers do not appear to the world **now** as **children of God**, **what we will be** in future glorification **has not appeared as yet**. Upon seeing Jesus at His return, **we will be like Him** (v. 2). This does not mean that believers become divine as He is divine, but similar to Him in the glorified resurrection body, as well as purity. At the rapture of the Church, believers will be fully and perfectly sanctified, completely free from the sin nature and the sinful deeds that flow from it. It is at this point that the transforming work of the triune God will be completed in the believer who then becomes **like Him**. **Everyone who has this hope** of seeing Jesus at His return and becoming like Him, progressively though imperfectly, **purifies himself** now (v. 3).

3. Moral Impurity and Lawlessness (3:4)

3:4. Unlike believers who are becoming pure like Jesus (v. 3), this verse speaks of those committing sin. **Sin is lawlessness** or the breaking of God's moral law. Those who make a practice of sin disregard the divine standard and resort to their own measuring stick.

4. Moral Impurity and Jesus 'Work (3:5–10)

a. Believers Have Righteous Behavior (3:5–7)

3:5–7. The purpose of Jesus 'incarnation was that He might take away our sins. Only because **in Him there is no sin** could He remove ours (v. 5). Consequently, no person who abides in a relationship with Him persists in sin. For this theme, see the comments below on 3:8. To claim to have a relationship with the sinless One and yet deliberately, consistently, commit sin is a contradiction in terms (3:6). The readers must let no one deceive them about morality. The truth is only he who does what is right is righteous, like Jesus (v. 7).

b. Believers Do Not Sin Like the Devil (3:8)

3:8. The **devil** started sinning **from the beginning** and continues to sin now. Similarly, **the one who** persists in **sin is of the devil**—i.e., influenced and dominated by him. Jesus came to **destroy the influence of the devil** (v. 8). The one "born of God" (v. 9) does not persist in sin; that is, there is a difference between

the believer's old, unregenerate life, and his new life in Christ. The Christian now sins periodically, but no longer incessantly as the devil does.

c. Believers Have God's Seed (3:9–10)

3:9–10. There is a reason believers no longer sin incessantly as the devil does. It is **because His seed**—the divine principle of life in the Holy Spirit—**abides in him**. The new birth produces a radical change (v. 9). But whoever does not do what is right as a lifestyle **is not of God**. This is particularly true of one lacking **love** for **his** Christian **brother** (v. 10).

LESSON NUGGET – Deliberate sin is a serious thing. When you deliberately sin, you grieve the heart of the father who loves you and has a wonderful future planned for you. You also grieve the savior who died for you and delivered you from the power of Satan. The Holy Spirit, who lives in you, gave you birth. You have a new nature and a new father; therefore, you should live a new life. To John, lack of love is the same as hatred; and hatred is the moral equivalent of murder. (Matthew 5:21-26)

Sources: *Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, and The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary*