

— 1 John —

Lesson #11 Chapter 3:11-24

Read 1 John chapter 3 in preparation for this lesson. Take particular note of how John *shifts* from one topic to the next. Ask the Lord for help in seeing and applying the rich and *convicting* treasures tucked into this section of John's letter!

1. By way of review, what two qualities “prove” we are children of God according to 1 John 3:10?
2. What thought at the end of verse 10 does John now begin to address in 1 John 3:11? How long has that message been taught? See 1 John 3:11, then refer to 1 John 1:1; 2:7, 24.
3. What negative example of love is given in 1 John 3:12? What things do you learn about that negative example in verse 12?
4. How does that negative example from verse 12 fit right in with what John stated in 1 John 3:10?
5. What command is given in verse 13?

6. First John 3:13 might seem to come out of nowhere, yet it is still in line with what John has been addressing in verses 10-12. How does verse 13 connect to John's previous statements in verses 10-12?
  
7. In verse 14, what does loving the brethren reveal?
  
8. When John talks about having "passed out of death into life," what is he describing? See also John 3:16; 5:24; Ephesians 2:1, 5.
  
9. We learn in our passage one of the hallmarks of a Christian's life is love for believers. *Why?* See Matthew 25:40; John 13:35; 15:12, 17. What is the result of that testimony of love for other believers? See Ephesians 1:15; Colossians 1:3-6.
  
10. In verse 14 John explains that love for the brethren is another confirmation of our salvation. Why would love for believers be a *means of assurance* that you are truly redeemed and rescued from sin and darkness? See John 8:44; Romans 1:28-32; Galatians 5:19-24; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 1 Peter 1:22-23; 1 John 3:8-10.
  
11. John makes sure we take a good look at this quality in a believer's life. What truth does he drive home in verse 15? How does John remove any wiggle room we might want to take? See verse 15 again and Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28.

12. How do we even know what love is? See verse 16, then John 10:11; 15:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:8.
13. Most of the time, we're not called to literally give up our life for the sake of another, yet we are called to give of ourselves, nonetheless. What are some ways this sacrificial living might show up in our lives? See Romans 12:9-16; Ephesians 4:2-3; Philippians 2:3-4; 1 Peter 3:8-9; 1 John 3:17.
- a. What are some challenges we might face in dying to ourselves and showing love to the brethren?
14. How is 1 John 3:18 *another* example of loving the brethren? As you answer, pay special attention to what John has just said in verses 16-17.
15. What point is John making in verse 18, especially as it relates to his instruction about loving believers? See also Mark 7:9-13; 1 Corinthians 13:1; James 2:14-17.

May the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you (1 Thessalonians 3:12).

16. By the time we finish reading 1 John 3:11-18, most, if not all of us, will be thoroughly convicted and aware of our failure to love in such an excellent and God-exalting way. How does John seek to reassure us in verses 19-20?

“The foregoing exhortation may have awakened a misgiving in our minds: ‘Am I loving as I ought?’ Our failures in duty and service rise up before us, and ‘our heart condemns us.’”<sup>1</sup> ~David Smith

17. Why is it better to assure our hearts *in the truth* than by what our hearts feel? You might think this is a no-brainer to answer, yet in reality, we often try to elicit “feelings” of assurance rather than living upon the truth we find in God’s Word. List what you learn about the *truth* we need to apply to our hearts all the time, *and even more* when we feel like failures. See Proverbs 21:2; 1 Corinthians 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Philippians 1:6; 1 John 2:28; 3:20; 5:14.
  
18. *What picture of God* does John paint for us in 1 John 3:19-20 to help us when we are deeply aware of our own unfaithfulness in the things of God?
  - a. Now add to your answer what you learn from Psalm 139:1-4; John 21:17; 2 Timothy 2:13; Hebrews 6:10-11; 10:22-23.

“Our hearts condemn us—that is inevitable. But God is greater than our hearts; he knows all things. Not only does he know our sins; he also knows our love, our longings, the nobility that never fully works itself out, our penitence; and the greatness of his knowledge gives him the sympathy which can understand and forgive. It is this very knowledge of God which gives us our hope. ‘Man’, as the thirteenth-century scholar Thomas Aquinas said, ‘sees the deed, but God knows the intention.’ Other people can judge us only by our actions, but God can judge us by the longings which never became deeds and the dreams which never came true.”<sup>2</sup> ~William Barclay

19. With such a view of God comforting our troubled hearts, what is the result? See 1 John 3:21-22.

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, David. n.d. “The Epistles of John.” In *The Expositor’s Greek Testament: Commentary*, 5:187. New York: George H. Doran Company.

<sup>2</sup>Barclay, William. 2002. *The Letters of John and Jude*. 3rd ed. The New Daily Study Bible. Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press.

Kenneth Wuest's Translation of 1 John 3:21-22. "Divinely-loved ones, if our heart is not condemning us, a fearless confidence we constantly have facing God (the Father), and whatever we are habitually asking, we keep on receiving from Him, because His commandments we are habitually keeping with solicitous care, and the things which are pleasing in His penetrating gaze we are habitually doing."<sup>3</sup>

20. As always, we want to consider the *context* of our passage. We've often seen and heard 1 John 3:21-22 in relation to prayer, yet it's so helpful to remember John's point about praying is still very much tied to the context of the passage. How does this encouragement about God hearing our prayers (in verses 21-22) fit in with the overall flow from our passage (1 John 3:11-24) about loving the brethren?

"Once a condemning heart has been silenced by resting on God's knowledge of all things, there comes a new **confidence before God**. "Confidence" here translates *parrēsia*, which John had not used since his thematic statement in 2:28 (cf. 4:17; 5:14). The halfway point in his argument had now been reached. As a result of active participation in the truth by real deeds of love, Christians can calm their disapproving **hearts** and achieve boldness in prayer, and their prayers will be answered because they, as believers, are consciously subject to God's will (they **obey His commands** [cf. 2:3] **and do what pleases Him**). This presumes, of course, that the requests themselves are made in subjection to God's will (5:14–15)." ~The Bible Knowledge Commentary<sup>4</sup>

21. What "conditions" for answered prayer does John cite in verse 22?
- a. How are those "conditions" meant to reassure the hearts of believers? See also Psalm 119:57-61; Matthew 7:21; John 9:31; Colossians 1:10; Hebrews 13:21; 1 John 2:3.
22. What is God's commandment for us according to 1 John 3:23? See also John 6:29; 13:34; 14:12-15.

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<sup>3</sup> Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*. Vol. 13. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

<sup>4</sup> Walvoord, John F., and Roy B. Zuck, Dallas Theological Seminary. 1985. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Vol. 2. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

- a. What assurance is given for the one who keeps God's commandments according to verse 24? See also John 14:17; Romans 8:9, 14, 16; 1 Thessalonians 4:8; 1 John 4:13.
23. As always, God wants us to consider our Christian life *today*. We're never called to account for our salvation or our obedience *tomorrow*. We can rejoice in how we obeyed *yesterday* or repent of how we didn't obey *yesterday*, but the Christian life is about living upon God's Word *today*. So, *today*, dear friend, what comforts, assurances, convictions, and proddings have you received through the Spirit of God working through the Word?

(3:19, 20) "Smith is helpful here "The foregoing exhortation may have awakened a misgiving in our minds: 'Am I as loving as I ought?' Our failures in duty and service rise up before us, and 'our heart condemns us.' So the apostle furnishes a grand reassurance: 'Herein shall we get to know that we are of the truth, and in His presence shall assure our heart, whereinsoever our heart condemn us, because, etc.' The reassurance is two-fold: (1) The worst that is in us is known to God, and still He cares for us and desires us. Our discovery has been an open secret to Him all along. (2) He 'readeth everything'—sees the deepest things, and these are the real things. This is the true test of a man: Is the deepest that is in him the best? Is he better than he seems? His failures lie on the surface: is there a desire for goodness deep down in his soul? Is he glad to escape from superficial judgments and be judged by God who 'readeth everything?' who sees 'with larger eyes than ours,' to make allowance for us all?" David was a man after God's own heart because the general tenor of his life was habitually Godward. The Psalms give the real David." ~Kenneth Wuest<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*. Vol. 13. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.