

SURE OF A RELATIONSHIP

Leader pages on pp. 106-109

THE POINT:
MY RELATIONSHIP
WITH GOD IS
REFLECTED IN HOW I
LIVE.

1 JOHN 2:3-11,15-17

³ This is how we know that we know him: if we keep his commands. ⁴ The one who says, "I have come to know him," and yet doesn't keep his commands, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵ But whoever keeps his word, truly in him the love of God is made complete. This is how we know we are in him: ⁶ The one who says he remains in him should walk just as he walked.

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⁷ Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old command that you have had from the beginning. The old command is the word you have heard. ⁸ Yet I am writing you a new command, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. ⁹ The one who says he is in the light but hates his brother or sister is in the darkness until now. ¹⁰ The one who loves his brother or sister remains in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. ¹¹ But the one who hates his brother or sister is in the darkness, walks in the darkness, and doesn't know where he's going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

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¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride in one's possessions—is not from the Father, but is from the world. ¹⁷ **And the world with its lust is passing away, but the one who does the will of God remains forever.**

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MEMORY VERSE

KEYWORDS

His commands (v. 4)—These words mean the same thing as "his word" in verse 5 and Jesus's example in verse 6 ("just as he walked"). The true follower of Christ is a doer (Jas. 1:22).

Remains (v. 6)—This refers to remaining in God or Christ and reveals a permanent relationship.

We cannot claim to abide in Christ unless we live like Him.

Dear friends (v. 7)—Literally means "beloved." This was a favorite term of address for John (3:2,21; 4:1,7,11). It is a reminder that Christians are what they are—"beloved"—because God has loved them (4:10).

HOW CAN I REFLECT GOD IN THE WAY I LIVE?

Life has a way of surprising us and throwing us into a sea of unknowns. We saw this in early 2020 when a virus from the other side of the globe came crashing down on us.

- One day parents were dropping their kids off at school. The next day, the schools were closed indefinitely.
- One day people had steady, stable jobs. The next day, many businesses had to shut their doors indefinitely.
- One day people were free to move about, but suddenly they were cautioned to stay inside for fear of catching or spreading the COVID-19 virus.

When life is full of unknowns, confidence and assurance can disappear. In their place come fear and doubt. We all need confidence and assurance, and when it comes to living the Christian life, confidence and assurance become critical. This session teaches us to live in confident obedience to God when we give our hearts to Christ.

Do Not Be a Liar // 1 John 2:3-6

In short order in these passages, John used the word “know” four times. John wrote that Christians can know with certainty they are in a relationship with God. Assurance of salvation is based on the right conditions.

The right conditions for a Christian to have the assurance of his or her relationship with God result from walking in obedience to God's commands. We don't obey out of legalism but out of gratitude for all God has given us, especially the gift of His Son.

Obedience happens as we keep His Word. This phrase stresses the importance of consistent, continual compliance with the Word of God. We still will falter on occasion, but all true Christians seek to live their lives in obedience to God's commands.

HOW DOES OBEDIENCE TO GOD REFLECT OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST?



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Obedience is the natural outcome of the new birth. Jesus said, “If you love me, you will keep my commands” (John 14:15). We demonstrate our love for Jesus through our obedience. Therefore, if we lack assurance of salvation, all we need to do is to look at the pattern of obedience in our lives. Obedience to God’s commands doesn’t save us; we are saved by grace through our faith in Jesus, the One who kept the law perfectly. Now we obey because we have that relationship. Our obedience reflects our relationship with Christ.

However, for those who don’t obey, John had some harsh words: “The one who says, ‘I have come to know him,’ and yet doesn’t keep his commands, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (v. 4). It’s like the guy who claims to be a football player but never shows up to practice or for the game. His claim is not backed up by reality. Unfortunately, this is the same for many so-called Christians today. They profess Christ without any life change whatsoever. Is this real Christianity? Absolutely not. No Christian obeys perfectly, but every genuine believer has a desire to obey God, and that desire is substantiated by practice. The proof of our love for God is our loyalty and obedience to Him.

True love for God is reflected through gracious obedience to His commands. Throughout John’s writing, he reminded us of the call to love others (John 13:34-35; 1 John 4:7-11). Let’s put this together. God loves us. We love Him in return (4:19), and we show that love by obeying His command to love one another. God’s love has worked on us and in us. In this way “the love of God is made complete” (2:5), meaning it is maturing us and pointing to our conversion and transformation.

Do Not Be Blind // 1 John 2:7-11

In this passage, John wrote of love as both an old and new command. Love is “an old command” in that it is mentioned in the Old Testament law (Lev. 19:17-18; Deut. 6:5). And we see the newness of this old command in how Christ perfectly obeyed and manifested it. He fully and perfectly demonstrated agape (unconditional) love. He showed us what obedience to these commands looks like. Jesus told His disciples, “I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another” (John 13:34-35).



DIGGING DEEPER DISCIPLESHIP

Discipleship should be a major component in the life of every believer. Jesus commands us in Matthew 28:19-20 to go, make disciples, and to teach them to obey His commandments. A disciple is a person that follows Christ. Just as we wouldn’t leave a newborn baby to fend for itself, we must not leave a new believer without guidance. We must show each one how to live godly through the practice of the spiritual disciplines, which include: reading the Word of God, studying and interpreting the Bible, praying daily, memorizing Scriptures, and fellowshiping with other fellow believers. Through this process, each will, in turn, learn to disciple someone else. This is discipleship at its best.

What opportunities do you have when it comes to discipling someone?

“Love” is a word that is overused. People often say they love hot dogs, hamburgers, baseball, and naps, and in so doing we can lose the deeper, greater sense of love. Love is the highest virtue a person can express toward another. It’s the attribute God revealed when He gave His Son to die on the cross.

When God’s children choose to love, they walk in the light, and the darkness flees. For this reason, John wrote, “Yet I am writing you a new command, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. The one who says he is in the light but hates his brother or sister is in darkness until now” (vv. 8-9).

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS?

The “light” John referred to is God’s kingdom, which was inaugurated at Christ’s first coming: “the true light is already shining” (v. 8), Jesus is “the light of the world” (John 8:12), and His kingdom is characterized by both light and love. Our love for God and for others are proof we are citizens of that heavenly kingdom.

The light of Christ is here, but the darkness is not fully eradicated—yet. Individual Christians are the “light of the world” (Matt. 5:14). And as citizens of Christ’s kingdom of light, we push back the darkness when we walk in love. If we don’t walk in the light, we will be blinded by the darkness. “But the one who hates his brother or sister is in the darkness, walks in the darkness, and doesn’t know where he’s going because the darkness has blinded his eyes” (v. 10).

WHY DO SOME PEOPLE ALLOW THEMSELVES TO BE BLINDED BY HATRED?

Loving as Christ loves doesn’t come easily. Love can be costly. God’s love for us led Him to the costly sacrifice of His Son. When we love sacrificially, we are reflecting the love of

God, and we are reflecting a right relationship with Him.

Do Not Love the World

// 1 John 2:15-17

John taught us the critical importance of loving our brothers and sisters, but we are not to “love the world or the things in the world” (v. 15). When John used the word “world,” he was not referring to the people who inhabit this planet. That would be a glaring contradiction to what he wrote in his gospel: “For God loved the world ...” (John 3:16). Nor was John’s use of “world” referring to creation. It would be a contradiction to love God, if we hated what He created. Instead, John was talking about the organized, evil system of darkness that encompasses this world. This sin-filled, worldly mindset is manifested in those actions and attitudes that oppose God.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS IN THE WORLD WE ARE TEMPTED TO LOVE?

The world’s temptations can be grouped into three categories:

- **The lust of the flesh.** This is the desire for selfish pleasure; the person who cares



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more about himself than others. Most of the time this particular temptation manifests itself in self-centeredness and narcissism.

- **The lust of the eyes.** This particular temptation usually reveals itself through coveting and feeding our physical desires. The person who gives into this sin is always wanting the upgrade: the newer car and the bigger house.
- **Pride in one's possessions.** This temptation refers to envy and the love of popularity, recognition, and applause. Folks caught in this sin love to brag. They are showoffs who like to put their possessions on display for others to see.

It is utter foolishness to fall in love with the things of the world, no matter how appealing they may appear. Why? Because “the world with its lust is passing away” (v. 17).

HOW CAN WE PROTECT OURSELVES FROM LOVING THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD?

The great news is that “the one who does the will of God remains forever” (v. 17).

God provides us with so much more than what the world offers—and it lasts! The person who seeks the things of God rather than the things of the world is someone who is prepared for eternity—and you can be assured of that! Let your life reflect your relationship with God.

DID YOU KNOW?

“Would you say ‘stay’ when God said ‘go’
To that dark foreign land and
Spread the light? Would you say ‘no’
That bright their souls might stand?”

These are words from a poem written by Eliza Davis George when she felt a strong conviction to be a missionary in Liberia. She endured many hardships but eventually was able to go to school and receive her teaching certificate. While teaching at Central Texas College, she felt the overwhelming desire to go to Africa. Despite opposition; she persevered, and God used her. She established a school and in only two years over 1,000 people accepted Christ in nearby villages.⁴

In what ways did Eliza’ life reflect Christ?

LIVE IT

How should you live to show that your life is a reflection of your relationship with God?

Salvation comes through Jesus because of what He has done. He died in our place and received the punishment that was due us because of His love for us. We should respond by graciously obeying the commands of God. The way we live after coming to Him in faith is a reflection of our true love for God and our relationship with Him. Let your life reflect Christ by doing the following:

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- **Practice obedience.** Ask God to show you one area of your life where you can become more obedient to His commandments. Then seek to change.
- **Discipline yourself.** Consider picking up a spiritual discipline you don’t already practice regularly—prayer, Bible reading, fasting, service, worship, etc. Put it into practice every day this week.
- **Live in the light.** Spend some of the time you might normally devote to media or social media to the Lord this week. How might devoting that time to God lead you to walk more fully in the light?

DAILY READINGS

1. THE EVIDENCE

// JOHN 14:15

In criminal cases, prosecuting attorneys accuse people who have committed crimes. In court, the attorneys must present evidence that confirms the guilt of the accused. Consider this: If being a Christian were a crime, in a court of law would you be found guilty of reflecting Christ in your life? What evidence would a prosecuting attorney have against you? Would the attorney accuse you of loving Christ and keeping His commandments? Would the judge find you to be guilty as charged? If we truly love Christ, people around us will know it by the way we live and the love we have for our Savior. They will see Christ reflected in us.

As Christians we are peculiar and must stand out as different from the world.

2. THE TRANSFORMED LIFE

// ROMANS 12:2

As Christians, we are called to be separate from people in the world. Our actions and talk should not be like those who don't have a relationship with Christ, because our standards are different. Also, our minds have been changed or transformed. Furthermore, we must continue to read the Bible so that our way of thinking continues to change. This is Christian growth. One of the goals of Christian growth is to increasingly have a mind that closely resembles the mind of Christ. This will prevent us from "straddling the fence" between righteousness and unrighteousness. Instead, we will be empowered to live a life pleasing to God. A life lived in this way can easily prove "what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God."

If we love God, we will earnestly seek to live an increasingly transformed life.

3. WITHOUT EXCUSE

// EPHESIANS 1:3

This verse is frequently quoted by my pastor. It is basically a "no excuse" proclamation. As Christians, God has granted us everything we need to live the

Christian life. We can't use the excuse, "I would do it, but ..." According to this verse, our Father has given us all we need spiritually to serve Him and live godly both now and in eternity. Just as a soldier must be equipped before going into battle, God has equipped us with power to live for Him and do His will while on earth.

Thank God for these blessings: forgiveness, spiritual gifts, spiritual power, and hope for eternity. We are without excuse.

4. LIFE-LONG LEARNERS

// 2 TIMOTHY 2:15

There is a deacon in our church who often says, "I didn't make it up; I looked it up." He says this to affirm what he is talking about and to let others know that what he said wasn't made up by him personally. The deacon's words should be expressed by every Christian. We must stand on the Truth and not make up things to fit our truth. This is called proof texting the Bible. To avoid this error, we must be life-long learners of the written Word of God. Consistency in Bible study will provide the confidence we need to truthfully represent God in this world. We will become unashamed dispensers of the truth.

Only truth matters in our Christian walk as ambassadors of God. Keep studying His Word.

5. THE RIGHT OPINION

// 2 TIMOTHY 4:3-4

Let's face it—no one wants to be told they are wrong. Correction is something that is not welcomed. This has led to a sad state of affairs in our culture, because many people want to be right. Everyone has an opinion they think is right. However, there is no need to correct words from the Bible. It is the absolute authority on every issue. For example, arguments related to eternity can be settled quickly. According to the Bible, it is true that death and destruction lie ahead for those who do not follow Christ (2 Thess. 1:8-9). As Christians, our opinions must be based on the Word of God.

There is truth and life in following God's Word.