

## **I John: Lesson #89 – Practice Righteousness, Not Sin**

### **Notes for Parents to Study With Their Children**

### **For Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup>**

Read I John 2:12-17, 2:29 - 3:10; 5:16-19) (a simplified explanation of the text will be supplied at the end of these notes).

**Memory Verse:** I John 2:15 “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.”

All through John’s letter he encourages Christians not to live a life of sin, but to live a righteous life. We are looking at several groups of passages from John’s letter that warn us that a sinful life cannot please God.

#### **Three Groups of Christians**

- John has some encouraging things to say to the people he is writing to. He divides these Christians into three groups:
  - **little children** – here he is talking, not to small kids, but to young Christians. Some of them may have been younger in age, but what all these had in common was that they had been Christians for a short time. John said this group could rejoice that they had been forgiven of their sins and because they could truly say that they had come to know the Father.
  - **young men** – this applies to those who have been Christians long enough to show that they were faithful. John says they were showing that they were winning the victory over the Devil. They were not living their lives for sinful things, but for the things of God. Though they had not been Christians a long, long time, they were still strong in the faith. They had the Word of God in their hearts and that helped them win their victories over sin.
  - **and fathers** – these were Christians who had been followers of Christ for many years. They had lived a long life serving God. They had known Christ through most of their lives. They had stayed faithful to Him and held to His teaching.
- In almost every congregation of God’s people today, you still have those three groups. Some members here at our congregation have served the Lord for many, many years. Others, have been Christians for several years and have shown that they are dedicated and are trying to win over sin. A few of our group have been Christians for a short time, but they are so glad that they can be forgiven of their sins and know about God’s teaching.

#### **Don’t Love the World**

- John says, “Do not love the world.” He isn’t talking about the planet. It isn’t wrong to enjoy the beauty of the earth that God has created. And John isn’t saying, “Don’t love the people of the world.” We are supposed to love others.
- In the New Testament, “the world” sometimes means “worldly” or sinful things. All of us have to live in the world (the earth), but we shouldn’t want to be involved in the sinful things of life. John puts the sinful things of life into three categories:

- **The lust of the eyes.** Our eyes see a lot of things. It is not wrong to see something (like a game or a scooter) and wish you could have that. But some might want it so bad that they would steal it. That would be lust because lust involves wanting something too much. Lust can also be wanting something that isn't right to have. What if you saw a bike that your friend had and you wanted it real bad, but you couldn't have it or one like it, and you started feeling jealous of them? That would be lust of the eyes. In life our eyes will see many things we can't have, so we have to learn to control our hearts.
- **The lust of the flesh.** Flesh can mean your body or it can mean the sinful things we are tempted to do. If you take your lunch to school, what would happen if you got to the lunch room and realized you had forgotten to bring your own food? You are very hungry. Would it be right to steal someone else's lunch so that you could eat? If you did, that would be the "lust of the flesh." You would know that stealing was wrong, but you be tempted to do it because you were hungry. We have to be willing to say "No" to things that tempt us.
- **The pride of life.** Pride is about how you see your life and what makes you feel important. Pride can be a good thing or a bad thing. It is not wrong to be proud of your family. When you do a good job or do the right thing, you can be proud of yourself. A person can be proud to be a Christian. But on the other hand, pride can get out of hand. I can get so filled with pride about myself that I don't ever want anyone telling me I did something wrong. Some can get so proud that they think they are far better than everyone else. And some people take pride in the wrong kind of things – having a lot of money, owning a lot of things, being popular or important. If we have those things, its fine, but it's far more important to be a good person, a kind person and a righteous person.
- If we live by the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh or the pride of life, we can't please our Father in heaven. Those kind of things show that we don't really love Him and what He is. Another word for sin is lawlessness. Sin breaks God's Law. It is acting as if we don't care about the laws God has given, but that we will do what we want to do.
- Our Father in heaven is righteous – He does what is right. So to be God's children (to be born of Him) you also have to do what's right. To be God's children we must not continue in sinful ways.
- The lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life all comes from the Devil. He influences this world a lot and uses the things of the world to tempt us with. Jesus died to get us free from the Devil's ways. We have to be careful and not let Satan get hold of our hearts by causing us to want the things of the world in a bad way.
- None of these things of the world will ever last – they are passing away. We wanted that new scooter, but in time it breaks and we don't have it any more, or we outgrow it and want something else. What God offers us will last forever. One day the whole world will end, and then none of these earthly things will matter. All that will matter then is getting to be with God.

## **Great Promises for the Children of God**

- It really is a wonderful thing God has done to save us and let us be called His children. It is so much better to be a child of God than a child of the Devil. God loves us and blesses us as His children.
- But the best part about being the children of God is what we will be some day. When Jesus returns we will realize how wonderful and glorious He is and He will give us bodies that are like His.
- This is a good reason for Christians to live their lives to be like Jesus, to be pure like He is pure. We want to be righteous like He was righteous. If we truly want to live to be like Jesus, then we won't continue in sinful ways. If we keep on choosing to do sinful things, then we don't really know Jesus the way we should.

## **Simplified Explanation of the Text**

### **Fathers, Young Men, and Little Children**

2:12 I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven because of Jesus' name.

13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you have known the Lord from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have won a victory over the wicked one. I am writing to you, little children, because you know the Father.

14 I have written to you, fathers, because you have known the Lord from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the Word of God abides in you, and you have won a victory over the wicked one.

### **Don't Love the World**

15 Don't love the world, and don't even love the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, they don't have the love for the Father in them.

16 Because everything in the world like fleshly desires, sinful things the eye sees and longs for, and the vain bragging people do about what they are or what they have in life, is not from the Father, but comes from the world.

17 And the world is passing away and so are it's sinful desires, but those who do what God wants them to do will remain forever.

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

### **An Important Reason to Stay Pure**

3:1 Look at what type of love the Father has given us that we would be called the children of God. That is the reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

2 Dearly loved, even at this time we can be called the children of God, and it has not yet been shown to us what we will be, but we do know this much – when Jesus appears we will become like Him because we will see Him as He is.

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

### **We Must Not Continue in the Sinful Ways of the Devil**

4 Everyone who commits sin also commits lawlessness, because sin is acting as if God has no law.

5 You know that Jesus came to take away sins, and that He Himself had no sins.

6 Anyone who truly lives in Christ won't continue in sinful ways. Those who go on in their sins show that they have not truly seen who He is or understood Him.

7 Little children, don't let anyone deceive you and lead you astray: Anyone who does righteousness is righteous just like Jesus is righteous.

8 Anyone who commits sin is of the devil, because the devil sinned from the beginning. This is the reason the Son of God appeared, so that He could break us loose from the work the devil does.

9 All those who are born of God do not continue in sin, because His seed remains in them and they don't sin because they are born of God.

10 Its this very thing that clearly shows who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are. Everyone who acts unrighteously cannot be of God. Everyone who doesn't love their brother is not of God.

### **Praying For Those in Sin**

5:16 If anyone sees their brother sin (a sin which is not unto death), then they can ask God for that person's sin to be pardoned, and He will give that person life. There are those, however, whose sin is unto death. I am not teaching you to pray for that.

17 Of course, all unrighteousness is sin, but some sin is not unto death.

18 We know that all those who are born of God do not go on sinning. Those that are born of God will pay careful attention to themselves, and the wicked one cannot get a tight hold on them.

19 We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the control of the wicked one.