

1 JOHN

Lesson 2 w/Answers

1 John 2:1-14

We continue our study of 1 John by exploring the second chapter.

We will be considering the Christian "walk" and what it means to "walk as Jesus did."

Please read 1 John 2:1-14, and then consider the following:

1. In 1 John 2:1, what does John mean when he says that Christ speaks to the Father in our defense? Does he mean that Christ tries to defend the reasons why we committed a particular sin each time he defends us?
 - a. ANSWER: Of course not. Jesus is concerned about the effects of sin in our lives and intercedes on our behalf with God the Father on our behalf, just as any good defense attorney would do for their client. A good example of this is Jesus' prayer on behalf of Peter in Luke 22:31-32. Knowing that Peter's denial was approaching Jesus prayed that Peter's faith would remain strong and "not fail;" and he further prayed that Peter would continue to be a source of strength to his Christian brothers.
2. In 1 John 2:2, John tells us that Jesus is the atoning sacrifice "for the sins of the whole world." Additionally, in the Gospel of John (John 1:29), Jesus is called the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." Does this mean that the whole world is already saved, since he died once for all?
 - a. ANSWER: Again, of course not. John is telling us that no matter what our sins are, when we believe on the name of Jesus those sins are forgiven. So John is telling us that Jesus died for everyone's sins—the sins of "the whole world." However, forgiveness is for those who believe in Jesus as the only son of God. John 3:16 is often quoted, but the salvation message can be found throughout the Bible. See, for example, a reference to it even in Revelation 22:17. However, this salvation is contingent on our accepting God's free gift of grace through His only son Jesus.
3. Now reread 1 John 2:3-6. What does it mean to walk as Christ walked? How did Christ walk? For some help, see John 15:1-8 and Matthew 3:17, 7:16, 9:36, 12:18, and 17:5. List at least three things that you learned about how to walk as Christ walked from these passages:
 - a. John 15:1-8
 - i. ANSWER: Remain faithful, stay with the healthy vine; reject walking in worldly ways, i.e., dead branches.
 - b. Matthew 3:17
 - i. ANSWER: Jesus is the Son of God.
 - c. Matthew 7:16
 - i. ANSWER: We are judged by the fruit that we produce, and we should judge others the same way. Avoid those whose fruit is thistles, i.e., again, avoid the worldly. While often enticing, worldly pursuits will lead to death, and you will not produce good fruit.
 - d. Matthew 9:36
 - i. ANSWER: We are to have compassion as Jesus did. Further, we should also recognize that we need a shepherd. We are unable to lead ourselves down the correct path—we need Jesus our shepherd.
 - e. Matthew 12:18
 - i. ANSWER: Jesus is the One that God has chosen. Why would we want to follow or put our faith in anyone or anything else?
 - f. Matthew 17:5
 - i. ANSWER: Again, this is confirmation that Jesus is the Messiah, the one true son of God. Reading the above passages, we can see that to walk as Christ walked requires us to be compassionate, faithful to God, and to avoid the world. We should walk as a branch of the true vine, and not as something worldly that will die on the vine and be cut off by Christ.
4. What is John telling us in 1 John 2:9-11 about true Christians and our walk with Christ?
 - a. ANSWER 1: As we have been discussing, we are to walk as Christ walks and avoid the ways of the world which only bring darkness into our lives. In Matthew 6:22-23, Jesus teaches us one important principal in walking as Jesus walks, i.e., that it is all about the light in our lives. Jesus taught us that the eye is the lamp of the body. "If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!"
 - b. ANSWER 2: If we want to walk like Jesus, we need true light in our lives, and that light only has one source. In 1 John 1:5, John tells us that "God is light, in him there is no darkness at all." In 2 Corinthians 4:4 we read, "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." Finally, in Revelation 21:23 we read that in the New Jerusalem, "The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp." Living and walking like Christ means having His light in our lives and avoiding the darkness that comes from the worldly living.

5. In 1 John 2:12-14, which three spiritual age groups are mentioned?
- a. ANSWER: Children, fathers, and young men.
6. What is the main characteristic of each group? Can you see a natural progression from child to father as we grow in Christ? List below the trait or traits you see John referring to for each level of spiritual growth.
- a. ANSWER: John is showing us the natural progression of a believer. We are infants when we first believe; accordingly, we accept Jesus and His Gospel without question. As we grow, we become "fathers," as we study His Word and experience a life of faith. This growth manifests itself as we become young men in our walk, standing strong on God's promises, and with that we are able to overcome "the evil one" and help to raise others from their new walk with Christ, so that they can grow from newborns in the faith to mature followers of Christ.

Bonus Question:

7. By considering the first fourteen verses from John Chapter 2, and all of Chapter 1, can you describe the type of false teaching in the church at Ephesus that John is trying to address? Can you give some examples of similar false teaching occurring today within the organized church?
- a. ANSWER 1: During John's time a group of "believers" called the Gnostics surfaced. Among them were a group called the Nicolaitans. Both groups were especially prominent in the church at Ephesus. A core belief of Gnosticism was dualism, the idea being that certain forces struggle with each other. These are matter and spirit, evil and good, darkness and light—there is no gray area, everything is either black or white. They applied their "knowledge" of salvation to this idea, which resulted in two different ways of thinking. One group of Gnostics believed that the only way to achieve true spirituality is to deny flesh of anything that might tempt it to sin. These followers became known as ascetics. The opposite view was held by those who believed that the things done in the body are inconsequential, because only the spirit counts. This position is best illustrated by the Nicolaitans, who taught a doctrine that Christ hated. (See Revelation 2:6.) The Nicolaitans lived in unrestrained indulgence; they used their Christian liberty as an occasion for the flesh, going against Paul's warning in Galatians 5:13.
- b. ANSWER 2: John, as well as Paul who also addressed this in his letters, had a real challenge in Ephesus with both influential groups that were teaching these worldly ways as the true Gospel. Lacking in all of this was love, and the heart of Gospel, i.e., believing only in Jesus in order to be saved; instead, works became central to their foolish thinking. Although we will be studying 1 John 2:16 in the next lesson—"for everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world"—these words apply to this lesson as well. In this epistle John is addressing the influences of the world on the true Gospel and all of the false teaching and worldly influences coming from the Gnostic and Nicolaitan lifestyles. All are to be avoided if we are to walk as Jesus walked.
- c. ANSWER 3: We can see these same false teachings creeping into the church today. For example, according to the prosperity gospel—holding that success, material gain, and so on is evidence of being saved, and indeed is an integral part of being saved—you are assured of an "abundant" life in Christ, which is interpreted to be material gain and worldly success. There are also those who deny that Christ was resurrected, or those who teach that Christ is not the "only" son of God.
- d. ANSWER 4: Other worldly influences like Universalism and Universal Unitarianism are also similar iterations of Gnosticism. Universalism teaches that in the end God will forgive everyone because of his great love and mercy, and because Jesus died "for the sins of the world." Unitarianism believes that God is a single being, not a trinity. Followers of Unitarian Universalism are not united by a single creed, but instead they are united by a quest for spiritual growth. Members believe that this growth is the end goal, rather than obedience to a religious code. Due to the open nature of Unitarian Universalism, the religion incorporates ideas from many different religions and philosophies. On their website, they state that their beliefs are "...based on seven principles, grounded in the humanistic teachings of the world's religions. Our spirituality is unbounded, drawing from scripture and science, nature and philosophy, personal experience, and ancient tradition, as described in our six Sources." Relying on man's wisdom for salvation is not new, but it is an easy trap preventing light from entering the lives of the lost.

Praise God that his only son Jesus died for our sins, was resurrected, and sits at the right hand of the Father interceding for us.
(Romans 8:34)

Have a great week everyone!

In Christ,

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