

# *The Epistles Of John*

Studies 1 - 10

## *Teacher Manual*

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*Stephen Nemeth Lectures*

# ***GOD'S REMEDY FOR THE MALADY OF SIN***

## **STUDY 1**

**Scripture Portion: 1 John 1:1-10**

John's first epistle (written, we think, between A.D. 85 and 95), is a personal letter from the aged apostle. It was probably circulated to believers in a number of places.

Though not a doctrinal treatise, it is full of very important truths. In this series of studies, we shall select some of its leading themes.

The first of these is *God's Remedy for the Malady of Sin*. Sin is our great problem - the problem of all mankind.

In his first epistle, John tells us of the gracious provision God has made for us to be set free from the guilt, pollution and power of sin.

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### **GOD IS LIGHT AND LOVE.**

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He is altogether holy and loving. He has fully declared Himself in His Son. We see this in -

**1 John 1:1-6** - *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;*

*2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)*

*3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*

*4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.*

*5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

*6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:*

We read that God is love in -

**1 John 4:8** - *He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*

**1 John 4:16** - *And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

We read that God is light in -

**1 John 1:5** - *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

Light is the symbol of His splendor, His omniscience, but above all, His holiness and absolute purity.

Compare -

**Leviticus 19:2** - *Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.*

**Leviticus 20:7** - *Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God.*

**Leviticus 20:26** - *And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.*

This *loving* and *holy* God has fully declared Himself in His Son, who said -

**John 14:9** - *Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?*

Compare -

**Hebrews 1:1-2** - *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,*

*2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;*

John tells us in -

**1 John 1:1-3** - *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;*

*2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)*

*3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*

that he saw, heard and touched Christ; that He was (and is) 'the Word of life', Who was 'manifested', and Who, prior to His manifestation, was 'with the Father.

**John 1:14** - *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

**John 17:5** - *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

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GOD LONGS TO BRING ALL MEN INTO FELLOWSHIP WITH HIMSELF  
(FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT) AND WITH ONE ANOTHER.

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“Fellowship” is a key word in this epistle. For example -

**1 John 1:3** - *That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*

The word “fellowship”, (Greek: koinonia), conveys the idea of joint participation, of mutually sharing in a thing or an experience.

When God created man, His plan was to share His life with him, but sin entered and such fellowship was broken. Now, He longs to bring us back into fellowship with Himself and with one another.

Notice in **verse 3** that fellowship is ‘with the Father and with His Son’ - vertical - and ‘that ye also may have fellowship with us’ - horizontal; Christians having fellowship with God and with one another.

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WE ARE SINNERS BY NATURE AND BY PRACTICE.

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How can we have fellowship with a holy God and He with us? Sin created a barrier between God and man -

**1 John 1:5-6** - *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

*6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:*

He is light and we are in the darkness!

**1 John 1:8** - *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

**1 John 1:10** - *If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

make plain that we are sinners by nature and by practice. That is, we have a sinful, fallen nature, **verse 8**, and commit acts of sin, **verse 10**.

No one is sinless in this life - these verses declare this and experience confirms it. Only One has ever lived without sin.

**Hebrews 7:26** - *For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;*

The rest of us are sinful.

**1 Kings 8:46** - *If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near;*

**Ecclesiastes 7:20** - *For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.*

**Romans 3:20** - *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

**Romans 3:23** - *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

How can a holy God have fellowship with us who are so sinful?

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#### ***4. THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY.***

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That way is through the Person and work of God's Son, Who came to earth and shed His blood to provide salvation for all who would put their trust in Him.

In **1 John 3:5** - *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.*

we are told why Jesus came from heaven to earth.

In **1 John 1:7** - *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

we are told that, when we come into the light of God's presence, acknowledging our sin, He removes the barrier of sin and we have fellowship 'one with another'. That is, with God (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit), and with all believers.

But how is our sin dealt with and removed?

By 'the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son'.

His blood stands for His atoning, expiatory and substitutionary work and death upon the cross.

**Isaiah 53:5-6** - *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

*6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

**John 1:29** - *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

**2 Corinthians 5:21** - *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

**1 Peter 2:24** - *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*

Thus, sin is removed by God on the grounds of the once-offered sacrifice of Christ.

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5. **WHEN WE BELIEVE ON CHRIST (COME INTO THE LIGHT AND PUT OUR TRUST IN HIM), THE BARRIER OF SIN IS AT ONCE REMOVED.**

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We are born into God's family. We receive His life (a new nature) which cannot sin and, henceforth, we no longer habitually commit sin.

Notice the word 'all' in -

**1 John 1:7** - *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

and compare with -

**Matthew 1:21** - *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

Then look at -

**1 John 3:1-2** - *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.*

*2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

**1 John 5:18** - *We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.*

where we are told that, by the miracle of the new birth, we are born into God's family and become His children.

Now notice that -

**1 John 3:9** - *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*

tells us that the divine life, which cannot sin, is implanted into the child of God, thus enabling him to live a new life.

**2 Corinthians 5:17** - *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

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6. WE DO STUMBLE AND FALL, HOWEVER, BECAUSE, ALTHOUGH WE NOW HAVE A NEW NATURE WHICH CANNOT SIN, WE STILL POSSESS THE OLD NATURE WHICH CANNOT DO OTHER THAN SIN.

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See from -

**1 John 2:1** - *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:*

that John makes allowance for the fact that believers do sin.

What happens when Christians sin?

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## **7. PROVISION HAS BEEN MADE!**

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Jesus Christ not only died as our Sinbearer, but now lives to be our Advocate. As such, He pleads the merits of His finished work before the Father. We learn from -

**1 John 2:1-2** - *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:*

*2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

that when we sin, our *relationship* with God is not affected. We are still His children. But, our *enjoyment of fellowship* with God is affected. Moreover, the devil accuses us before the throne of God.

**Revelation 12:10** - *And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.*

When this happens, we have an Advocate, a divine Barrister, in the court of heaven Who pleads our case before the throne of God, on the basis of His work upon Calvary, **verse 2**, and compare with -

**Romans 8:33-34** - *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.*

*34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

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3. WHEN, BECAUSE OF SIN, OUR COMMUNION WITH GOD IS TEMPORARILY BROKEN, WE NEED TO REPENT AND MAKE CONFESSION TO GOD.

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When we do this, we are at once forgiven and cleansed, and communion is restored.

God can see our true state, and to confess is to admit our sin. How wonderful is the promise of -

**1 John 1:9** - *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

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**9. THE WAY TO BE KEPT FREE FROM SIN AND TO LIVE VICTORIOUSLY IS TO ABIDE IN OUR VICTORIOUS LORD AND TO RELY UPON HIM TO KEEP US.**

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**1 John 3:6** - *Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.*

Now turn to -

**1 John 5:18** - *We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.*

Be sure to spell the word 'He' with a capital 'H'! The Lord keeps His children.

**Psalms 37:23-24** - *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.*

*24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.*

**2 Timothy 4:18** - *And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

**Jude 24** - *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,*

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10. ALL SIN COMMITTED BY A CHILD OF GOD MAY BE FORGIVEN, ALTHOUGH, WHEN A SIN IS UNCONFESSED AND UNFORSAKEN, CHASTENING MAY FOLLOW, EVEN TO THE EXTREME OF PHYSICAL DEATH - BUT NEVER BY SPIRITUAL DEATH.

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**1 John 5:16-17** - *If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.*

*17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.*

These are solemn words indeed and should be read in connection with -

**Proverbs 28:18** - *Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved: but he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once.*

**1 Corinthians 11:29-30** - *For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.  
30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*

**James 5:19-20** - *Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;  
20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.*

# ***FAMILY PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES***

## **STUDY 2**

**Scripture Portion: 1 John 2:1-19**

Several times in his first epistle, John addresses his words to his 'little children' - i.e. -

**1 John 2:1** - *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:*

The reference is not the their *first* birthday but their *second*, when they were born again and became members of God's family.

**John 3:3-7** - *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

*4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*

*5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

*6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

*7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

Our first birthday did not make us children of God. It is only when we put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ that we are born again, thus become members of the family of God.

**Galatians 3:26** - *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*

So John was writing to those new in the faith, who were (in the apostle Peter's words) -

**1 Peter 2:2** - *As newborn babes,.....*

John also writes to 'fathers' (those mature in the faith and in their knowledge of the Lord), and to 'young men' (those who were growing up into spiritual manhood).

Now, we all begin the Christian life as babes, so what the apostle says to 'little children' is applicable to all the members of God's family.

What does he say about their privileges and responsibilities?

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**ALL GOD'S CHILDREN HAVE AN ADVOCATE WITH THE FATHER.**

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**1 John 2:1-2** - *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:  
2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

We see here that God's plan and provision is that we should not sin. God has provided full deliverance from sin through the death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus, and by the Holy Spirit.

**Romans 6:14** - *For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

His plan is that we should 'sin not', or not sin! But what if we do sin as, of course, we do?

**1 John 1:8** - *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

and as we infer from -

**1 John 1:9** - *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

If, or when, we sin, -

**1 John 2:1** - *....we have an advocate with the Father,.....:*

What does this mean?

It means that in the presence of our Father we have a Representative, an Advocate. When the devil, who is -

**Revelation 12:10** - *.....the accuser of our brethren.....*

accuses us before God, the Lord Jesus pleads His own merits.

**1 John 2:1** - *.....Jesus Christ the righteous:*

has made provision for our pardon and cleansing by His shed blood and finished work.

This provision is available for the whole world -

**1 John 2:2** - *And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

but it is enjoyed only by those who have put their trust in Christ.

Therefore, when God's children sin, their relationship is not disturbed. God is still their Father and they are still His children.

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## **2. ALL GOD'S CHILDREN HAVE HAD THEIR SINS FORGIVEN.**

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**1 John 2:12** - *I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.*

What a glorious truth - every child of God is already completely forgiven! It does not say 'shall be' or 'may be', or we 'may be forgiven if....'; it says we *are* forgiven!

God says it and He wants us to believe it.

We are also told that we have been forgiven -

**1 John 2:12** - *.....your sins are forgiven.....*

that is because of all that Jesus is and has done for our salvation.

Who is He, and what has He done? The answer is in -

**1 John 1:7** - *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

His blood goes on cleansing us from every sin and this all for His Name's sake, or because we are accepted in the Beloved.

Compare -

**Romans 8:1** - *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

**Ephesians 1:6** - *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

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## **3. ALL GOD'S CHILDREN MUST ABIDE IN HIM.**

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**1 John 2:28** - *And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*

What does this mean?

To abide in Him is to live in close fellowship, in harmony with Him.

Why?

The reason given is that the Lord Himself is soon coming . We need to be ready to meet Him with boldness and not shrink away from Him when He comes.

This is not suggesting that our salvation is in doubt. Nothing can alter the relationship of the child of God with his loving heavenly Father. It is talking about how we live.

If we are living carelessly when He comes, this matter will be settled at the Judgment Seat of Christ where all God's children will be rewarded, or will suffer loss.

**1 Corinthians 3:13-15** - *Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.*

*14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.*

*15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*

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#### **4. ALL GOD'S CHILDREN NEED TO BE ON THEIR GUARD AGAINST DECEPTION.**

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**1 John 3:7** - *Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.*

It was very necessary for John to write these words because there were many false teachers around, teaching heresy.

Some were downright apostates.

But the same warning is needed today for, on every hand, there are those who are teaching things contrary to the Word of God.

See what the apostle Paul said in -

**Acts 20:27-30** - *For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.*

*28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

*29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.*

*30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*

and compare with -

**2 Corinthians 11:13-15** - *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.*

*14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.*

*15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.*

Solemn words of warning! How necessary it is for us to test everything by the Word of God!

Read and underline -

**1 John 4:1** - *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*

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**5. ALL GOD'S CHILDREN SHOULD GUARD AGAINST HYPOCRISY.**

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**1 John 3:18** - *My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.*

As children of God we must be sincere and see to it that our testimony is borne out in the way we live from day to day. Our words must correspond with our actions, and vice versa.

If we profess one thing and do another then we are downright hypocrites.

Any hypocrisy is obnoxious to our loving heavenly Father.

Compare -

**2 Timothy 3:5** - *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*

**Titus 1:16** - *They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.*

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**6. ALL GOD'S CHILDREN ARE INDWELT BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

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**1 John 4:4** - *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

We see that the Holy Spirit indwells every true child of God. For confirmation of this read -

**John 14:16-17** - *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*

*17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

**Romans 5:5** - *And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

**Romans 8:9** - *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

**1 Corinthians 6:19** - *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*

Then read -

**1 John 2:20** - *But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*

and notice the words 'ye have'.

Then read -

**1 John 4:13** - *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.*

and notice the words 'He in us' and 'hath given'.

Thus, every child of God has two Advocates - One *above* in the person of the Saviour, and One *within* in the person of the Holy Spirit.

Several things happen at once when we become a child of God.

We are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ -

**1 Corinthians 12:13** - *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

**b. We are sealed by the Holy Spirit as God's property -**

**Ephesians 1:13** - *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,*

3. We are immediately indwelt by the Holy Spirit -

**1 Corinthians 6:19** - *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*

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7. ALL GOD'S CHILDREN MUST KEEP THEMSELVES FROM IDOLS.

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**1 John 5:21** - *Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.*

Anything that comes between your soul and the path of obedience to God is an idol. God says -

**Exodus 20:3** - *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

How possible it is for a child of God to be guilty of idolatry! It is significant that John's first epistle ends with the words -

**1 John 5:21** - *Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.*

and that the very first words in the scriptures are -

**Genesis 1:1** - *In the beginning God.....*

*The dearest idol I have known,  
Whate'er that idol be  
Help me to tear it from Thy throne,  
And worship only Thee.*

No matter how long we have been in God's family, these privileges and responsibilities never cease to be ours.

And, they are for *all* God's children.

# ***CLEAR TEACHING ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT***

## **STUDY 3**

**Scripture Portion: 1 John 2:20-29**

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is a major biblical doctrine. We read of His ministry throughout the Old Testament, in the gospels, Acts, the epistles and the book of the Revelation.

In recent times there has been a renewal of interest in, and emphasis upon, His work in the child of God. For this we should be profoundly thankful.

It must be said, however, that there is some unscriptural teaching abroad on this subject. Some are placing undue emphasis on certain aspects of His ministry, giving an unbalanced presentation of the teaching of God's Word.

What is needed is clear teaching that fully accords with scripture and -

**2 Timothy 2:15** - *.....rightly dividing the word of truth.*

It is significant that the apostle John gives us a clear outline of such teaching in his first epistle. He does not set out to give a complete body of truth on the person and work of the Holy Spirit, but, having written so much about the Holy Spirit's work in his gospel, he now writes much basic truth on this subject for our learning in his first epistle.

To begin with, turn to the following references to the Holy Spirit -

**1 John 2:20** - *But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*

**1 John 2:27** - *But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.*

**1 John 3:24** - *And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*

**1 John 4:2** - *Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:*

**1 John 4:4** - *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

**1 John 4:13** - *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.*

**1 John 5:6-8** - *This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.*

*7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.*

*8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.*

**1 John 5:10** - *He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.*

What do we learn from them when we place them against the background of the teaching on this subject in the rest of God's Word?

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THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A DIVINE PERSON WHO IS ONE WITH GOD THE FATHER AND GOD THE SON IN THE HOLY TRINITY.

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We need to be clear about three basic truths concerning the Holy Spirit, all of which are emphasized by the apostle John in this epistle.

The Holy Spirit is a Person.

He is not just an influence. Notice the word 'He' in -

**1 John 4:4** - *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

not 'it'.

Compare the pronouns referring to the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit and the disciples in -

**John 14:16-17** - *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*

*17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

**John 14:26** - *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

**John 15:26-27** - *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:*

*27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.*

**John 16:7-15** - *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

*8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:*

*9 Of sin, because they believe not on me;*

*10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;*

*11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*

*12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.*

*13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.*

*14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.*

*15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.*

Now see from these verses what He does. He teaches, brings to remembrance, testifies, bears witness, reproves, guides, speaks, hears, shows, glorifies Christ. Only a person can do these things.

We read in -

**1 John 2:20** - *But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*

**1 John 2:27** - *But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.*

that He is our Teacher.

**1 John 5:6-8** - *This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.*

*7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.*

*8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.*

that He 'beareth witness'.

**1 John 5:10** - *He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.*

that He is the 'Witness' within.

He is a divine Person.

That is, He is God the Holy Spirit Who proceeds from 'the Holy One' (Christ).

**1 John 2:20** - *But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*

Who is called 'the Spirit of God' -

**1 John 4:2** - *Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:*

The Holy Ghost is also said to be 'God' -

**Acts 5:3-4** - *But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?*

*4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.*

**c. He is one with the Father and the Son in the Trinity.**

Several times in this epistle we read of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

**1 John 1:2-3** - *(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)*

*3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*

**1 John 2:1** - *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:*

The Holy Spirit is one with the Father and the Son in the unity of the Godhead.

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**THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD'S GIFT TO EVERY ONE OF HIS CHILDREN.**

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John was writing to all believers, all born again ones, all who were in the family of God, and not just to a select few. See the force of the words 'ye have' in -

**1 John 2:20** - *But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*

**1 John 2:27** - *But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.*

You cannot be a child of God and not have the Holy Spirit.

**Romans 8:9** - *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

Compare -

**John 14:16** - *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*

**Acts 2:37-39** - *Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?*

*38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

*39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*

So, if you are a child of God, He has given you the Holy Spirit. But where is He?

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### **3. THE HOLY SPIRIT INDWELLS EVERY ONE OF GOD'S CHILDREN.**

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He is not only *with* us - He is *in* us. It is important to emphasize this because some have taught that -

**Acts 19:2** - *He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.*

proves that one can be a Christian, a child of God, and not have the Holy Spirit.

It does nothing of the kind!

The twelve in **Acts 19** were not Christians at all, in the full sense of the word, until Paul explained the gospel to them. Then, when they believed, they received the Holy Spirit - as you did when you believed!

Again look at 'ye have' in -

**1 John 2:20** - *But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*

and 'ye have.....in you' in -

**1 John 2:27** - *But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.*

Compare -

**John 14:17** - *Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

(especially the last two words 'in you').

**1 Corinthians 6:19** - *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*

So if you are a child of God, He is now *in you!*

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#### 4. THE HOLY SPIRIT PERMANENTLY INDWELLS EVERY CHILD OF GOD.

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Does the Holy Spirit indwell the child of God and then leave him? In the old dispensation, David prayed -

**Psalms 51:11** - *Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.*

but we do not need to pray this prayer now, nor should we, for He Who indwells us has come to 'abide', that is to stay, in us -

**1 John 2:27** - *But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.*

Notice the words 'abideth in you'.

**John 14:16** - *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*

Notice the words 'abide with you for ever'.

That settles it! Of course, when we sin, we 'grieve' Him -

**Ephesians 4:30** - *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

when we disobey Him we 'quench' Him -

**1 Thessalonians 5:19** - *Quench not the Spirit.*

In both cases we restrict His operations in and through us. But we do not 'drive Him away'.

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5. THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO DWELLS WITHIN US WHO ARE GOD'S CHILDREN, IS THE SOURCE AND SUPPLIER OF ALL THAT WE NEED FOR HOLY LIVING AND FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICE.

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Notice the three special ministries of the Holy Spirit referred to by John.

1. He assures us.

He gives us the absolute assurance that we are born again and are members of God's family. He does this through the Word of God (outwardly) -

**1 John 5:13** - *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

He also does this by His indwelling (inwardly) -

**1 John 5:10** - *He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.*

**1 John 3:24** - *And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*

**1 John 4:13** - *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.*

Compare -

**Romans 8:16** - *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*

**Galatians 4:6** - *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

2. He teaches us.

Think about the wonderful truth revealed in -

**1 John 2:20** - *But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*

**1 John 2:27** - *But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.*

Within us we have the fountain of all wisdom, the 'Spirit of truth' Himself.

Read **1 John 2:18-27** and compare with -

**John 14:17** - *Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

**John 15:26** - *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:*

**John 16:13** - *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.*

This is the explanation of such promises as -

**Psalms 25:12** - *What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.*

**Psalms 32:8** - *I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.*

**Isaiah 28:26** - *For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him.*

**Luke 12:12** - *For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.*

Read the testimony of the psalmist in -

**Psalms 119:99** - *I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.*

How wonderful to have this great Teacher *with* and *in* us!

3. He fortifies us.

The indwelling Holy Spirit is greater than the devil or anything 'outside' us -

**1 John 4:4** - *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

The devil is certainly great in his power - a real, diabolical personality, the enemy of God and of God's children -

**John 8:44** - *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

**John 12:31** - *Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*

**2 Corinthians 4:4** - *In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

Compare -

**2 Corinthians 11:14** - *And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.*

**1 Peter 5:8** - *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:*

*But the Holy Spirit within us is greater!*

The power to live a life of holiness, victory and service, which is glorifying to the Lord, lies not in us but in Him, the person of God the Holy Spirit.

**Isaiah 59:19** - *So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.*

Compare -

**Zechariah 4:6** - *Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.*

# ***FOUR THINGS ABOUT GOD'S CHILDREN!***

## **STUDY 4**

**Scripture Portion: 1 John 3:1-24**

There are a great many people in heaven and upon earth whom God calls His children

-

**1 John 3:1** - .....*the sons of God:.....*

We shall look at some of those things we are told in -

**1 John 3:1-3** - *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.*

*2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

*3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

about these favored people. But are not all people the children of God?

No, not in the sense in which the apostle John writes.

In *a creative sense* we are all the children of God. We are His offspring -

**Acts 17:28-29** - *For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.*

*29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.*

but in *a spiritual and redemptive sense* we only become the children of God when, by receiving the Lord Jesus Christ into our lives, we are born into His family.

Compare -

**John 1:11-13** -*He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*

*12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

*13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

**1 John 3:1-2** - *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.*

*2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

John wrote this epistle to those who had become 'sons of God' -

**Galatians 3:26** - *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*

The moment we believe on Him and receive Him as our personal Saviour, we are born from above.

**John 3:7** - *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

**1 John 2:29** - *If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.*

**1 John 3:9** - *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*

**1 John 4:7** - *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*

**1 John 5:1** - *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.*

**1 John 5:4** - *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*

**1 John 5:18** - *We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.*

We are told four things about the children of God in -

**1 John 3:1-3** - *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.*

*2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

*3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

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1. OUR DIGNITY IS GREAT.

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Do you catch the note of wonder in John's words in -

**1 John 3:1** - *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.*

God loves everybody, as we are assured in -

**John 3:16** - *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

But, He has a very special love for His own children. Do you ever think about the wonderful place and position of dignity, privilege and honor into which the Lord has brought you as His child? Think of it! You, who were a child of wrath -

**Ephesians 2:3** - *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

and a child of disobedience -

**Ephesians 5:6** - *Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.*

He has lifted and made you a son of God, a member of the royal family of heaven -

**Ephesians 3:15** - *Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*

You are not *going to be* His child later on. If you are a true believer in Him you *are* His child *now* -

**1 John 3:2** - *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

What a royal, heavenly dignity the Father has bestowed upon us! Say to yourself, "I am a child of God!". Let the full glory of your high calling take possession of you.

This will enable you to cast off your fears and troubles and to rejoice, for your dignity is great.

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2. OUR DISTINCTIVENESS IS MARKED.

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Because we are the children of God -

**1 John 3:1** - .....*the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*

It is perfectly true that, when Jesus was here, the world did not recognize Him, nor will it recognize us. We are a distinctive people. The world does not recognize or understand us.

Indeed, sometimes non-Christians think we are fanatical and foolish to be so religious. They are mystified when we do not share their pleasures -

**1 John 2:15-17** - *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

*16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

**1 Peter 4:4** - *Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:*

because, when it would stumble our weaker brother, we are willing to deny ourselves certain things.

**Romans 14:21** - *It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.*

because we have a conscience that will not allow us to be untruthful -

**Acts 24:16** - *And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.*

because we seek to be honest before all men -

**Romans 13:7** - *Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.*

because we prefer a prayer meeting to some worldly entertainment -

**Acts 4:23** - *And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.*

or because we prefer to give up our well-paid job in order to serve the Lord in some needy part of Africa, India or South America -

**Matthew 6:19-20** - *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:*

*20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:*

Yes, the world very quickly misunderstands us because we are a distinctive people.

Even as Jesus was ostracized we in measure, are always misunderstood and persecuted-

**1 John 3:13** - *Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.*

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### 3. OUR DESTINY IS FIXED.

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John tells us something of what the future holds in store for the child of God.

**1 John 3:2** - *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

Notice how he progressively unfolds the truth.

1. The Lord Jesus is coming again.

John speaks of the time 'when He shall appear'. He refers to the Christian's 'blessed hope'.

**1 John 3:2** - *.....when he shall appear,.....*

**Titus 2:13** - *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;*

If you read your Bible carefully, you will notice that all the signs of the times - religious, Jewish, commercial, etc. - point to the fact that the coming of the Lord must be very near indeed.

**James 5:8** - *Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*

2. When He comes we shall see Him as He is.

John tells us this -

**1 John 3:2** - .....*when he shall appear,.....we shall see him as he is.*

What a wonderful thing it will be to see the Man Christ Jesus, the One Who came and lived and died for us, Who rose again and is ascended now in the place of glory and of majesty at the right hand of the Father!

**1 Peter 3:22** - *Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.*

He first came in weakness, but when He comes the second time He will come in power and great glory! We shall see Him -

**Revelation 1:7** - *Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.*

**c. When we see Him we shall be like Him.**

John tells us -

**1 John 3:2** - .....*when he shall appear, we shall be like him;.....*

Paul tells us -

**1 Corinthians 15:51-53** - *Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,*

*52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

*53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

Compare -

**1 Thessalonians 4:16-17** - *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:*

*17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

What a glorious prospect we have!

**Psalm 17:15** - *As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.*

We are so unlike Him now, but we 'know' - what?

**1 John 3:2** - *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

Yes, our destiny is fixed. All earth's trials and tribulations as well as our personal sorrows and testings are only 'till He come', and when the Lord comes, what a great change there will be in a moment!

But notice that, because of our Dignity, Distinctiveness and Destiny, we have a Duty to perform.

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#### 4. OUR DUTY IS CLEAR.

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**1 John 3:3** - *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

(that is, the assurance that the Lord Jesus is coming back again, and that, when He comes, we shall be like Him),

**1 John 3:3** - *.....purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

If we are living in the light of the coming of the Lord, we shall live very carefully, We shall purify ourselves -

**2 Corinthians 7:1** - *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

We shall have a tender conscience about sinful and doubtful things in our lives, our homes and our business -

**Psalm 139:23-24** - *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:  
24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

We shall want to live in ways that are well-pleasing to the Lord so that, should He come suddenly, we should not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

**1 John 2:28** - *And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*

Is there any adjustment you should make in connection with your private life, your home, your daily work or business, or in relation to your service for the Lord?

If you knew He would be returning tonight, is there some urgent matter you would attend to so that you would be ready to meet Him and be unashamed before Him at His coming?

He may be here tonight! See to that matter now for -

**1 John 3:3** - *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

*God loved the world of sinners lost  
And ruined by the fall;  
Salvation full, at highest cost,  
He offers free to all.*

*Believing souls, rejoicing go;  
There shall to you be given  
A glorious foretaste, here below,  
Of endless life in heaven.*

# ***THE BIRTH-MARKS OF A CHILD OF GOD***

## **STUDY 5**

**Scripture Portion: 1 John 4:1-10**

Several times in John's first epistle, we read of those who are born of God, or born of Him, born into God's family. In his gospel, John emphasized the absolute necessity of the new birth. No one is saved, no one will enter heaven, except by the new birth.

**John 3:3** - *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

The only way to enter the kingdom of God, the family of God, is by being born into that family - a spiritual birth.

In his first epistle, John tells us what born again people should be like. He mentions what we might call their birth-marks, evidences that they really are genuine members of the family of God.

As we look at some of these evidences, let us notice -

*#1 - what the Bible says.*

*#2 - how we stand in regard to what it says.*

In other words, whether these evidences are true of us.

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**A TRUE CHILD OF GOD IS ONE WHO BELIEVES ON, HAS RECEIVED AND HAS PUT HIS WHOLE TRUST IN JESUS CHRIST AS HIS SAVIOUR AND LORD.**

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**1 John 5:1** - *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.*

The way to be born again is to believe the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ, then to act upon what we believe, then to put our trust in Him and receive Him as our personal Saviour.

**John 1:12-13** - *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

*13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

When we thus receive Him, we become a child of God. This is the first mark, or evidence, of the new birth.

How do you stand in regard to this matter?

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**A TRUE CHILD OF GOD IS ONE WHO WILL WANT TO DO, AND WILL DO,  
WHAT IS RIGHT IN GOD'S SIGHT.**

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**1 John 2:29** - *If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.*

God Himself is righteous. Those who are born again are also righteous because they receive His nature. 'Like father, like son!' 'A child exhibits the parents' character because he shares his parents' nature.'

If we share the life and nature of our heavenly Father, because He is righteous we shall be righteous in our ways. This does not mean that our lives will be perfect. It means that they will be lived in harmony with our heavenly Father Who is altogether righteous.

We shall want to do that which is right.

By way of illustration, read -

**Luke 19:8** - *And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.*

Zacchaeus made this decision because he had been born into God's family, had received His nature and now wanted to do that which was right.

Read -

**Acts 16:33-34** - *And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.  
34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.*

The jailer showed love and compassion towards Paul and Silas after he had been born again. This is what God's Word teaches.

How do you stand in regard to this matter?

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**3. A TRUE CHILD OF GOD IS ONE WHO DOES NOT  
HABITUALLY PRACTICE SIN.**

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**1 John 3:9** - *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*

John is not saying that the child of God cannot sin or that he never sins. To say this would contradict -

**1 John 1:8-10** - *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

*9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

*10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

**1 John 2:1** - *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:*

Although we are God's children we do fail, but we have an Advocate -

**1 John 2:1** - *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:*

When we fail, our conscience stings us for we have a new nature within us which -

**1 John 3:9** - *.....doth not commit sin;.....*

**1 John 3:9** - *.....cannot sin,.....*

Read -

**2 Corinthians 5:17** - *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

This is what God's Word teaches.

How do you stand in regard to this matter?

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#### 4. A TRUE CHILD OF GOD LOVES EVERY OTHER CHILD OF GOD.

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**1 John 4:7** - *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*

As His children, we have received the very nature of God. This has been imparted to us.

**2 Peter 1:4** - *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

As God is love, we now have a 'love nature'.

We especially love the other members of God's family.

The same truth is brought out in -

**1 John 3:14** - *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.*

A born again man will love all in the family of God, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, young and old, irrespective of their color.

Compare -

**1 John 3:11-12** - *For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.*

*12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.*

**1 John 3:16-18** - *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*

*17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*

*18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.*

This is what God's Word teaches.

How do you stand in regard to this matter?

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## **5. THE TRUE CHILD OF GOD OVERCOMES THE WORLD.**

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**1 John 5:4** - *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*

This means that the true child of God finds within himself a complete lack of harmony and sympathy with the world, for, living in the world, he is out of his right element - like a 'fish out of water'.

Children of God belong to another world. They begin here and now to live for that other world. Jesus Himself said -

**John 16:33** - *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

Through faith in Him we share His victory and thus do not accept the world's standards, engage in the world's pursuits, enjoy many of the world's pleasures, copy the world's habits, speak the world's language or rely upon and conform to the world's wisdom.

This is what the Bible teaches.

Which world are you living for?

In concluding this study, please notice -

**1 John 5:18** - *We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.*

In the first part of the verse, the apostle is repeating what he said in -

**1 John 3:9** - *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*

but the second part literally reads:

*'But the One Who was begotten of God (that is, Jesus) carefully watches over and protects him - Christ's divine presence within him preserves him against the evil - and the wicked one does not lay hold (get a grip) on him or touch [him].'* (Amplified Bible.)

Now notice -

1. The verb 'born' (in all the instances we have noticed) is in the perfect tense denoting that the original verse has permanent effects. It has taken place once and for all. It cannot be undone.

There is no such thing as excommunication from the family of God. Once we are a child of God, we are always a child of God.

- b. This is so because we are kept by the Saviour; kept by the power of God.

**1 Peter 1:5** - *Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

and preserved by Him.

**Jude 24-25** - *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,  
25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.*

which, in the Amplified Bible, reads like this:

*24 'Now to Him Who is able to keep you without stumbling, or slipping, or falling and to present you unblemished (blameless and faultless) before the presence of His glory - with unspeakable, ecstatic delight - in triumphant joy and exultation,  
25 To the one only God, our Saviour through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory (splendor), majesty, might and dominion, and power and authority, before all time and now and forever - unto all the ages of eternity. Amen - so be it.'*

# ***FIVE REASONS WHY JESUS CAME***

## **STUDY 6**

**Scripture Portion: 1 John 4:11-21**

No less than five times in his first epistle, John emphasizes the fact and the purpose of our Lord's incarnation. Sometimes the question is asked: How do we know that Jesus came?

There are two main lines of evidence for the fact of our Lord's birth, life, ministry, death, resurrection, ascension and exaltation.

### ***#1 - His coming was prophetically anticipated.***

Frequently, in the Old Testament scriptures, we find predictions of the first advent of our Lord. The fact and purpose of His coming are presented to us in pictures, types and promises.

Compare -

**Genesis 3:15** - *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

**Genesis 3:21** - *Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.*

**Genesis 4:1-5** - *And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.*

2 *And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.*

3 *And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.*

4 *And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:*

5 *But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.*

**Exodus 12:13** - *And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.*

**Isaiah 7:14** - *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

**Isaiah 9:6-7** - *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

*7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

**Isaiah 53:5-6** - *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

*6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

**Lamentations 1:12** - *Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.*

## ***#2 - His coming was historically authenticated.***

In the four gospels and in the epistles we have the historical record of the Saviour's birth and life. Added to this, of course, we have the independent testimony of secular historians. Thus, we can join the writer of this epistle and say, "We know that the Son of God is (or has) come."

**1 John 5:20** - *And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.*

We can be absolutely sure about the *fact* that our Lord came into the world.

Can we be equally sure of the *purpose* of His coming?

Yes, for John gives us five simple reasons why Jesus came, which we shall consider in the order in which they appear.

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### **HE CAME TO BE OUR SIN-BEARER.**

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**1 John 3:5** - *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.*

The word 'manifested' is significant. It infers our Lord's pre-existence. When He was born at Bethlehem, that was not His beginning.

Compare -

**John 1:1-3** - *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

2 *The same was in the beginning with God.*

3 *All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

**2 Corinthians 8:9** - *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*

**Galatians 4:4** - *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,*

**1 John 1:1-2** - *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;*

2 *(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)*

Why was He 'manifested'?

The answer is: *to take away our sins!*

So the essential purpose of the incarnation was not that our Lord might become our Example or our Teacher, but that He might be our Sin-bearer. He came to die, for only by dying could He atone for our sins.

**Isaiah 53:5** - *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

**John 1:29** - *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

**2 Corinthians 5:21** - *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

**Hebrews 9:26** - *For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

**1 Peter 2:24** - *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*

Notice that in -

**1 John 3:5** - *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.*

the writer is careful to say that 'in Him is no sin'. Why is this?

It was only as the sinless One that He could qualify as the sin-bearer.

If Jesus was manifested to take away our sins, have we availed ourselves of the work which He did and the provision He made on our behalf? Have we had *our* sins taken away?

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### HE CAME TO DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL.

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**1 John 3:8** - *He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*

Satan is the instigator of all the sin and suffering that the human race has known. All the sickness, heartbreaks, murders and wars come because of his presence in the world.

But Jesus came to destroy Satan's works and to restore to us all that we have lost through his evil workings. Jesus did this by His death upon the cross of Calvary. There, once and for all, Satan was defeated.

**Hebrews 2:14** - *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;*

**Revelation 20:10** - *And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

Jesus 'bound the strong man'.

**Mark 3:27** - *No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.*

He did this *potentially*.

Soon, at His second coming, He will do it *actually*.

**Revelation 20:10** - *And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

There is a beautiful illustration of this in -

**John 10:10** - *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

Satan, as a thief, comes to rob, spoil and destroy. Jesus comes to reverse the whole process and to overthrow and remove all Satan's works.

What a great thing it is to be on the side of the Lord Jesus Christ!

What a solemn thing to be on the devil's side.

**Matthew 12:30** - *He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.*

Satan today is doing his utmost to keep men and women in the dark concerning the person and the work of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**2 Corinthians 4:4** - *In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

Satan is also intent on attacking and accusing God's children, but, thank God, he is a defeated foe.

**Romans 16:20** - *And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.*

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#### HE CAME TO GIVE US ETERNAL LIFE.

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**1 John 4:9** - *In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.*

This was our greatest need, because the coming of sin had brought death upon the whole human race, spiritual death, which is separation from God.

**Romans 5:12** - *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

**Ephesians 2:1** - *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:*  
Compare -

**John 5:40** - *And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.*

We were spiritually dead. God loves us and sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might have eternal life. This is the good news of the gospel.

**John 3:16** - *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

How do we get this life?

**1 John 5:11-12** - *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

*12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*

Do you possess eternal life and have the assurance that you have passed from death into life?

**John 5:24** - *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*

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#### **4. HE CAME TO BE THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS.**

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**1 John 4:10** - *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

These words are saying that the Lord Jesus not only came to take away our sins, but that, because He did that by offering Himself as the sacrifice for sin, He entirely vindicated the holy and righteous character of God and satisfied all the demands of His holiness and justice, thus enabling Him to be merciful to the sinner.

God is righteously angry with our sinfulness.

**Psalms 7:11** - *God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.*

His holy and righteous nature demands this. Sin must be punished. But, sin has been punished in the person of our Substitute, Who bore our sins in His body on the tree.

**1 Peter 2:24** - *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*

Thus we can say with the psalmist -

**Psalms 103:10** - *He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.*

The Lord Jesus has once and for all dealt with the sin question. Because our trust is in Him, we are safe and secure. How wonderful to have this assurance!

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5. HE CAME TO BE THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD.

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**1 John 4:14** - *And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.*

This is the glorious note with which we end our study. Jesus is the Saviour of the world. The work of salvation which He accomplished upon the cross is adequate for all people everywhere.

Christ is the universal Saviour.

The message given to the shepherds on the first Christmas Day is still true.

**Luke 2:10-11** - *And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*

*11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

Compare -

**John 4:39-42** - *And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.*

*40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.*

*41 And many more believed because of his own word;*

*42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.*

Does this mean that everyone is saved? No!

It means that salvation is available and provided for all - but it has to be accepted.

Jesus is the only Saviour.

**Acts 4:12** - *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

He is well able to save all who come to Him.

**Hebrews 7:25** - *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

But to be saved, we must call upon and trust Him as our own personal Saviour.

**Romans 10:13** - *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

'We know that the Son of God is come' - and these are some of the reasons why He came.

Are you rejoicing, not only in the fact and the purpose of His coming, but in the Lord Himself as your Saviour and your God?

**John 20:28** - *And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.*

Compare -

**Psalms 48:14** - *For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.*

# ***ETERNAL LIFE AND HOW TO GET IT***

## **STUDY 7**

**Scripture Portion: 1 John 5:1-13**

The Lord Jesus Christ came from heaven to earth to bring to all men the wonderful gift of eternal life.

In this study we are to see what is eternal life, where it is to be found, how we may get it and what is the alternative if we do not get it.

In this first epistle of John, three great truths about God are brought before us.

**(1) God is *LIGHT* - 1 John, chapters 1 and 2.**

**(2) God is *LOVE* - 1 John, chapters 3 - 5:5.**

**(3) God is *LIFE* - 1 John, chapter 5:6-21**

God's Word is our only source of information about the subject of eternal life.

What do we learn about this tremendously important subject from -

**1 John 5:9-13** - *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.*

*10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.*

*11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

*12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*

*13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

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ETERNAL LIFE IS QUITE DIFFERENT AND DISTINCT FROM THE  
NATURAL, PHYSICAL OR HUMAN LIFE.

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This portion of scripture makes that quite clear.

For example, in -

**1 John 5:12** - *He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*

some have eternal life and some do not. *All* have human, physical, natural life, but all do not possess eternal life. They are two quite different kinds of life.

See what Jesus said in -

**John 5:40** - *And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.*

All those to whom He was speaking had physical, natural, human life, but they lacked spiritual, eternal life.

What, then, is eternal life?

It is God's life, divine life, and therefore of a different kind and quality from human life. It is more than existence. It is more than eternal existence. It is to share in the unending life of God Himself.

**2 Peter 1:4** - *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

The whole human race will *exist* eternally, but those who have eternal life will *live* eternally.

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ETERNAL LIFE IS A PRESENT POSSESSION.

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**1 John 5:11** - *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

God has already given eternal life and all may receive it. Those who do, receive it at once!

It is not something that begins when we die. It begins here and now.

We must wait until we die for some things, but we do not have to wait until then to possess and enjoy this new life.

Indeed, we must begin to enjoy it before we die (physically), because if we die without it, we shall never have it. We shall just go on existing.

Notice the word 'hath' in the following verses, denoting present possession -

**John 3:36** - *He that believeth on the Son **hath** everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

**John 5:24** - *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, **hath** everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*

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### **3. ETERNAL LIFE IS A FREE GIFT.**

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Notice the word 'given' in -

**1 John 5:11** - *And this is the record, that God hath **given** to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

When and how has God 'given' eternal life?

He did it *historically* when He gave His Son, our Lord Jesus, at the incarnation.

He does it *experimentally* when we, as individual persons, reach out to receive it by faith as a free, unmerited gift.

Eternal life cannot be paid for, worked for, earned or merited. It is a free gift.

**John 10:27-28** - *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

**Romans 6:23** - *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

There are two things you can do with a gift - receive it or refuse it.

It is stated in -

**John 3:16** - *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

that God gave His Son, Jesus Christ, in order that we might have eternal life.

How do we get it? By *receiving* God's gift.

Have you received the Lord Jesus?

**Luke 19:5-6** - *And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.*

*6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.*

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#### 4. ETERNAL LIFE IS IN JESUS CHRIST ALONE.

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This is told to us in -

**1 John 5:11** - *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

Eternal life is not in religion, church-going or ordinances, nor is it in some great religious leader, some 'guru' nor some 'angel from heaven'. It is one person and only in that person and that is Christ.

Compare -

**John 1:4** - *In him was life; and the life was the light of men.*

**John 5:26** - *For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;*

**John 10:10** - *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

**John 14:6** - *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

**Colossians 3:4** - *When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*

**1 John 4:9** - *In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.*

**1 John 5:20** - *And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.*

The Lord Jesus alone is the Repository of eternal life.

So there is only one place where eternal life can be found - in Him!

It therefore follows that:

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## **5. TO POSSESS ETERNAL LIFE WE MUST POSSESS CHRIST.**

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This is clearly taught in -

**1 John 5:11** - *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

**1 John 5:12a** - *He that hath the Son hath life;.....*

If eternal life is in Christ, *I must have Christ* to have eternal life!

The two words 'hath life' literally read 'hath *the* life', because He is the life -

**Acts 3:15** - *And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.*

where the word 'Prince' means 'Author'.

Christ is the source as well as the embodiment of eternal life. This being so, I can only have eternal life by having Him.

The same truth is emphasized in different words in -

**Acts 4:12** - *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

How can I have Him? What do I do with a gift if I want it?

**John 1:12-13** - *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

*13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

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## **6. ALL WHO POSSESS CHRIST HAVE ETERNAL LIFE AND MAY KNOW IT.**

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**1 John 5:9-10** - *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.*

*10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.*

We may know we have eternal life because of -

1. the outward witness of the Word -

**1 John 5:9** - *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.*

2. the inward witness of the Holy Spirit.

Compare -

**Romans 8:15-16** - *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

*16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*

**Galatians 4:6** - *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

For a good illustration of this, read the account of the woman with the issue of blood who came to Jesus and received healing - **Mark 5:25-34**.

After she touched the Saviour in simple faith, two things happened.

**#1 - Mark 5:29** - *And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague.*

She *felt* in her body that she was healed of that plague. But something else happened.

**#2 - Mark 5:34** - *And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.*

These words of the Lord Himself gave her absolute assurance that she had been healed. She knew she was healed because *Christ said so* and because she had the *witness within*.

Now look again at -

**1 John 5:12a** - *He that hath the Son hath life;.....* Notice the two 'haths'!

Read -

**1 John 5:13** - *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

and see that God wants us to know that, because we *have* Christ (having received Him and trusted Him as our Saviour) we *have* eternal life.

Do you have this assurance?

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7. NOT TO HAVE ETERNAL LIFE IS TO REMAIN SPIRITUALLY DEAD AND TO FACE THE PROSPECT OF ETERNAL DEATH.

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This is solemn, but see what we are told in -

**1 John 5:12b** - *.....he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*

All who are without Christ, who do not possess Christ, are here and now spiritually dead and do not have eternal life. This is made clear from -

**John 5:40** - *And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.*

**Ephesians 2:1** - *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:*

**Romans 6:23** - *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

and 'death' here means separation from God.

To die like this, leads to what the Bible calls 'the second death', which is eternal separation from God.

**Revelation 2:11** - *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.*

**Revelation 20:14** - *And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

**Revelation 21:8** - *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*

The choice has to be made. Eternal life or eternal death - which?

**John 3:14-15** - *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:*

*15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

and compare with -

**Numbers 21:5-9** - *And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.*

*6 And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.*

*7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.*

*8 And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.*

*9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.*

If you have not yet done so, *look and live!*

*There is life for a look at the crucified One,  
There is life at this moment for thee;  
Then look, sinner, look unto Him and be saved,  
Unto Him Who was nailed to the tree.*

# ***GOD'S PLEDGE TO HEAR AND ANSWER PRAYER***

## **STUDY 8**

**Scripture Portion: 1 John 5:14-21**

We find a most wonderful promise in -

**1 John 5:14-15** - *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:*

*15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*

which tells us that it is possible for us to pray and not only get the things we for which we pray, but to know beforehand that our prayer is heard and answered.

See how clear the promise is in these verses.

Notice the following points.

### ***#1 - This promise is made to a particular class of people.***

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**1 John 5:13** - *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

If we are to come before God with confidence that He will hear and answer our prayer, we must be true believers, members of His family.

Compare with -

**1 John 5:1** - *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.*

We must know the Lord and be known of Him. We must be Christians.

### ***#2 - This promise reminds us that prayer is necessary for the accomplishment of God's will.***

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There is an element of mystery here, but scripture teaches that there are some things that the Lord does only when His people pray.

**Ezekiel 36:37** - *Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock.*

**James 4:2** - *Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.*

If prayer is offered, God works. If prayer is not offered, His hand is stayed.

**#3 - This promise makes confidence in prayer dependent upon our asking 'according to His will'.**

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This is made very clear in -

**1 John 5:14** - *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:*

It is reasonable that it should be so, for God to answer prayer which did not harmonize with His will would be for Him to do something inconsistent with His nature. Of course, God, being God, could not do such a thing.

**#4 - This promise is given, not to hinder our asking, but to encourage it.**

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We must remove from our minds the idea that prayer is so difficult, and that receiving things from God is such a hard business!

To pray 'according to His will' -

**1 John 5:14** - *.....according to his will,.....*

does not mean asking for less but for more. If it means asking for more, it means receiving more.

**#5 - This promise implies that we may be absolutely sure of God's will when we pray.**

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Notice the words 'confidence' in -

**1 John 5:14** - *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:*

and 'we know' in -

**1 John 5:15** - *And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*

Compare -

**John 11:41-42** - *Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.*

*42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.*

We may be absolutely sure of God's will when we pray. If we are sure of His will when we pray, we are absolutely sure of the answer.

All this leads us to ask: How may we be sure of God's will when we pray? We can be sure, otherwise the words in **verse 14** would mock us.

But the question is: How?

*First, He reveals His will by His word.*

*Second, He reveals His will by His Spirit.*

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## 1. HE REVEALS HIS WILL BY HIS WORD.

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The will of God is revealed in the Word of God, where, over and over again, we find specific statements which tell us what is God's gracious will.

For example:

1. We know it is God's will that our unconverted loved ones should be convicted of their sin and made to feel their need of the Saviour because of -

**John 16:7-8** - *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

*8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:*

For an illustration of this, look up -

**Acts 2:37-38** - *Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?*

*38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

**Acts 16:25-31** - *And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.*

26 *And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.*

27 *And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.*

28 *But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.*

29 *Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,*

30 *And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*

31 *And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*

This means that you may pray with confidence for the Holy Spirit to strive with your loved one or friend.

2. We know we are praying in the line of God's will when we ask for the salvation of any man, woman or child, because of -

**1 Timothy 2:1-4** - *I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;*

*2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*

*3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;*

*4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*

For further assurances, look up -

**Isaiah 45:22** - *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.*

**Ezekiel 33:11** - *Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?*

**John 3:16** - *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

**2 Peter 3:9** - *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

This means you may pray with confidence for the salvation of your loved ones or friends.

3. We know that we are praying in the line of God's will when we ask for the sanctification of His people, because of -

**1 Thessalonians 4:3** - *For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:*

For an example of Paul's prayer for the Christians at Ephesus to be sanctified, look up -

**Ephesians 3:13-19** - *Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.*

*14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

*15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*

*16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;*

*17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,*

*18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;*

*19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

This means that we may pray with confidence for our Christian friends to grow in grace.

4. We know it is God's will to give us wisdom when we ask for it, because of -

**James 1:5** - *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

For the way in which Solomon prayed for this, look up -

**2 Chronicles 1:9-12** - *Now, O LORD God, let thy promise unto David my father be established: for thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude.*

*10 Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?*

*11 And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king:*

*12 Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like.*

This means that when we need special wisdom we may ask God for it knowing that He will give it.

*e. We know it is God's will for us to pray for laborers to be thrust into the harvest field because of -*

**Matthew 9:38** - *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.*

For the description of the way this happened, look up -

**Acts 8:4** - *Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.*

**Acts 8:11** - *And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.*

**Acts 8:19-21** - *Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.*

*20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.*

*21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.*

**Acts 13:1-4** - *Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.*

*2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.*

*3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.*

*4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.*

This means that we may pray with confidence that the Lord will fill the 'gaps' on the mission field.

These are only given as examples to show that in many matters we can know God's will when we pray because *He has revealed His will in His Word.*

But, here is the problem. There are matters about which we can find no specific promise in the Word of God.

For example: Shall I get married? Shall I buy this house? Shall I go to Bible College? Shall I retire? Shall I join this church or that one?.....

There are no specific promises in the Bible that assure us of God's will concerning these and many other matters.



How, then, can I be sure of His will concerning these matters?

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2. HE REVEALS HIS WILL BY HIS SPIRIT.

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**Romans 8:26-27** - *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

*27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

These verses completely cover our needs.

We do not know God's will concerning a certain matter? Well, the Holy Spirit, Who is God and Who dwells with us, comes to our aid and actually inspires the prayer within us which is in full accord with God's will.

In other words, as we yield to Him and seek His will, He makes the will of God known to us so that we can pray with confidence.

God's will, then, may be known by His Word and by His Spirit. We may be quite sure that the Holy Spirit will never lead us into any course of action contrary to what He has caused to be written in His Word.

To be sure of God's will, then, we must read, study and obey the Word of God. We must live day by day in humble submission to the Spirit of God - the Holy Spirit.

If we do this we shall find we are constantly doing the asking.....asking.....asking.....and God will constantly be doing the giving.....giving.....giving.....!

**John 16:24** - *Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*

*So keep on praying!*

# ***HOW TO QUALIFY FOR A FULL REWARD***

## **STUDY 9**

**Scripture Portion: 2 John 1-13**

This is a study of John's second epistle. Over the centuries there has been much discussion concerning the authorship of this letter ( and of John's third epistle), but there is evidence that it was written in Ephesus by John the Apostle and Evangelist.

It has also been a problem to know to whom the epistle was address. Who was the 'the elect lady' referred to in -

**2 John 1** - *The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;*

Who were 'her children'?

Both phrases are capable of more than one interpretation.

The word 'lady' in Greek is "Kuria". This may be translated as a proper name, or translated impersonally, that is, it could refer to a specific Christian lady or to a Christian church.

What we do know is that the message of this short letter is for us today. It is relevant to us.

The six words in -

**2 John 8** - *.....that we receive a full reward.*

provide a 'key' to unlock the central message of this epistle. Hence our title "How to qualify for a full reward", that is, how to live and work down here so that at the Judgment Seat of Christ we may be rewarded and not suffer loss.

**1 Corinthians 3:11-15** - *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

*12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;*

*13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.*

*14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.*

*15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*

**2 Corinthians 5:10** - *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

**Colossians 3:24-25** - *Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.*

*25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.*

How, then, must we seek to live and work if we would qualify for a full reward?

---

**WE MUST CULTIVATE AND SHOW FORTH A SPIRIT OF TRUE HUMILITY.**

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Notice how John begins his letter. He simply refers to himself as ‘the elder’. He does not mention his name, does not say he is an apostle, nor that he is the only one of the original apostles still alive, nor that he is the disciple -

**John 13:23** - *.....whom Jesus loved.*

This indication of humility is very beautiful and very pleasing to the Lord.

**Matthew 11:29** - *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

**John 3:30** - *He must increase, but I must decrease.*

**1 Peter 3:1** - *Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;*

**1 Peter 5:5-6** - *Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*

*6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*

Compare -

**Isaiah 57:15** - *For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*

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**WE MUST BE FULL OF LOVE FOR ALL PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY FOR MEMBERS OF ‘THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH’.**

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**Galatians 6:10** - *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*

**2 John 1** - *The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;*

John expresses his love for those to whom he is writing.

See what he says in -

**2 John 5** - *And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.*

This is the burden of his first epistle. Now it comes to the forefront again.

Christians are to be love-filled.

**John 13:14** - *If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.*

**1 John 3:11-12** - *For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.*

*12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.*

**1 John 3:14-18** - *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.*

*15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.*

*16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*

*17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*

*18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.*

**1 John 4:11-12** - *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.*

*12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.*

Meditate on the following.

**1 Corinthians 13:4-7** - **(NEB)** - *Love is patient; love is kind and envies no one. Love is never boastful, nor conceited,*

*5 nor rude; never selfish, not quick to take offence.*

*6 Love keeps no score of wrongs; does not gloat over other men's sins, but delights in the truth.*

*7 There is nothing love cannot face; there is no limit to its faith, its hope, and its endurance.*

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**WE MUST PROVE AND DEMONSTRATE THE REALITY OF OUR LOVE BY OUR OBEDIENCE.**

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Love is not only talking, but walking!

**2 John 6** - *And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.*

If our hearts are filled with the love of Christ and for Him, the proof will be seen in our obedience. We shall prove our love by keeping His commandments.

**John 14:15** - *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

In the Revised Version of the Bible, this verse reads -

*'If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments.'*

It is hypocritical to profess to love Him if we are not obeying Him.

When Peter told the Lord that he loved Him, Jesus said -

**John 21:15** - *So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.*

Go and prove it!

Compare -

**1 John 5:3** - *For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.*

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## **4. WE MUST SAFEGUARD THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL.**

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**2 John 7-8** *For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.*

**8** *Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought,.....*

How important John felt the 'truth' to be !

W. Griffith Thomas has left us this outline.

### **#1 - Truth as a SPHERE.**

**2 John 1** - *The elder unto the elect lady and her children,.....*

**2 John 3-4** - *Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.*

**4** *I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.*

### **#2 - Truth as an EXPERIENCE.**

**2 John 1** - *.....whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;*

### **#3 - Truth as a MOTIVE.**

**2 John 2** - *For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.*

### **#4 - Truth as a STANDARD.**

**2 John 4** - *I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.*

### **#5 - Truth as a POWER.**

**2 John 5-6** - *And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.*

**6** *And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.*

**2 John 8** - *Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.*

**#6 - Truth as a HOME.**

**2 John 9** - *Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.*

**#7 - Truth as a TEST.**

**2 John 10-11** - *If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:*

*11 For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.*

There is a tendency today to say that doctrine is not important. But what a fallacy! The truth of the gospel has been committed to us. We are to safeguard it and contend for it.

**Jude 3** - *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*

Compare -

**Philippians 1:17** - *But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.*

There are false teachers on every hand.

**2 John 7** - *For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.*

The characteristics of the future antichrist are seen in these false deceivers, so we are to guard the truth concerning -

1. The person of Christ, His unique personality, combining the true deity and perfect humanity.

**2 John 3** - *Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.*

**b. The work of Christ.**

**2 John 7** - *For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.*

To deny that Christ is come in the flesh, as some were doing, and as some do today, leads to a denial of His saving purpose and work.

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5. WE ARE TO BE VERY WARY OF FALSE TEACHERS AND OF FALSE TEACHING.

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The words in -

**2 John 8** - *Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.*

are an exhortation to self-examination. We are to look to ourselves that we do not become, or have become, contaminated in the slightest degree by error or by false teaching.

What a word for today when so many heresies abound on every hand!

**2 Timothy 4:1-5** - *I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;*

*2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*

*3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;*

*4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*

*5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.*

Beware of the 'isms' that threaten you.

**Acts 20:28-30** - *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

*29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.*

*30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*

**Colossians 2:6-8** - *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:*

*7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.*

*8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

**2 Timothy 2:15** - *Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

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6. WE ARE TO KEEP THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF GOSPEL TRUTH IN BALANCE.

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This word is needed for today when some Christians are taking one precious aspect of truth and 'running it to death', thus getting 'off balance'.

**2 John 9** - *Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.*

The words 'whosoever transgresseth', should literally read, 'whosoever goes onward' - referring to the danger of going *beyond* the teaching of the Bible. This can be done when truth is taken out of its context or when one aspect of truth is made a main line of teaching.

Usually those who fall into this danger soon show signs of pride and later, when challenged, of arrogance. Beware! Pray that you may know 'the simplicity that is in Christ'.

**2 Corinthians 11:3** - *But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

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7. WE MUST SEEK AFTER AND EXERCISE THE JOY OF TRUE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP.

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**2 John 12** - *Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.*

We learn from this verse that John had a burning love for those to whom he was writing. He longed to be with them that he and they might rejoice together.

There is nothing quite so wonderful as true Christian fellowship - but we must seek it, cultivate and enjoy it! If we give heed to these things, one day we shall hear the Lord Himself say to us -

**Matthew 25:21** - *His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

We shall receive 'a full reward'.

# ***TWO GOOD EXAMPLES AND ONE BAD ONE***

## **STUDY 10**

**Scripture Portion: 3 John 1-14**

In concluding this series of studies, we turn to John's third epistle.

It would seem that the key verse of this short letter is -

**3 John 11** - *Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.*

Dr. Weymouth renders it -

*'Do not follow wrong examples but right ones: he that does what is right is a child of God; he who does what is wrong has not seen God.'*

The letter is a private one in which we read of three characters: *Gaius, Diotrephes* and *Demetrius*.

John tells us some exceedingly good things about Gaius and Demetrius, but in the case of Diotrephes, he can only write of bad things.

Then comes the exhortation: 'Follow the right examples'. In other words, do not follow Diotrephes, but follow Gaius and Demetrius.

It is easily possible to follow the wrong examples. To do so is always fatal.

When we get absorbed with someone, we become like that person, for they influence us. In turn, we influence others.

Here, then, we have pictures of three members of the church of long ago.

Let us look at them with the prayer in our hearts that God will give us grace to follow the two good ones and not the bad one!

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1. **GAIUS - A GOOD EXAMPLE!**

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Read **3 John 1-8**.

In his informative pen-picture of Gaius, John tells us three very significant things about him.

He abounded in spiritual health.

**3 John 2** - *Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.*

He may have been physically unwell, possibly he was poor materially, but the thing that is emphasized here is that his soul was brimming over with spiritual life and vitality.

Compare -

**John 10:10** - *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

Some Christians live in a constant state of spiritual invalidism. They are never really well. They do not know anything about life more abundant. They exist, or endure, but they do not enjoy living in fellowship with the Lord from day to day.

The secret of spiritual health is in -

**3 John 3-4** - *For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.*

*4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.*

It consists of receiving the truth and walking in it.

**Matthew 4:4** - *But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

His life harmonized with his profession.

**3 John 3-4** - *For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.*

*4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.*

Not only did Gaius believe the truth (for it was *in* him) but he lived out what he believed (he *walked* in the truth).

He not only had the truth in his head, he had it in his heart also. His faith really worked.

**James 2:20** - *But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?*

It is most necessary that we should stand for the truth and for the whole counsel of God.

**Acts 20:27** - *For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.*

But there is a still greater need for Christians to demonstrate the truth in their lives.

**Titus 2:7-10** - *In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,*

*8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.*

*9 Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again;*

*10 Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.*

*c. His life and his service were dominated by faithfulness, hospitality, large heartedness, generosity and, above all, love.*

**3 John 5-8** - *Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers;*

*6 Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well:*

*7 Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.*

*8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.*

What an example for us to follow!

Gaius knew what it was to be faithful to the Lord and to his brethren, to give hospitality to those itinerant preachers who visited the churches, to be open hearted and generous, and above all, to be loving in his relationship with others.

If there was any way in which he could help the work of the Lord, Gaius would do it. His dominant motive in all his service was that of love (the word 'charity' in **verse 6**).

**2 Corinthians 5:14** - *For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:*

Read **1 Corinthians 13**.

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## 2. DIOTREPHES - A BAD EXAMPLE!

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**3 John 9-10** - *I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.*

*10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.*

This man reminds us of the tares and the wheat.

**Matthew 13:25** - *But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.*

**Romans 8:9** - *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

**2 Timothy 3:5** - *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*

How did he get into the church? Or, having got in, why did he deteriorate so terribly?

1. He was a proud, self-willed man who always wanted to be first.

**3 John 9** - *I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.*

It is clear that he loved the public eye and was always pushing to the front. He was certainly not content to work behind the scenes. He wanted the limelight.

He was insufferably proud. This was the root cause of all the trouble that he was to himself and to others.

What a tragedy it is when anyone pushes around like this in a church! How unlike the Lord Jesus to act in this way!

**Matthew 11:29** - *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

**Matthew 20:27-28** - *And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:*

*28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*

Compare -

**1 Peter 3:4** - *But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.*

Do not follow the example of this man who was dominated by self and was obstructive, destructive, critical and jealous.

2. He had an undisciplined and dangerous tongue.

He was guilty of 'prattling' -

**3 John 10** - *..... prating against us with malicious words:.....*

This means he overflowed with words which were usually malicious or evil. Be careful of the loquacious person!

Diotrephes talked much. In so doing, he tried to build up his own reputation, usually by belittling others and speaking against them.

Oh, the damage that is caused by undisciplined tongues! How much we need to pray the prayer of the psalmist.

**Psalms 141:3** - *Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.*

**c. He turned others away from the church.**

**3 John 10** - *.....and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.*

Fancy casting others out of the church, excommunicating them!

Why did he do this? Because they resisted him. Anyone who would not 'play up' to him became his enemy.

Have we ever been guilty of turning anyone away from the church by our bad example, our criticism or lack of love? Do others avoid us because we are like Diotrephes?

Read and meditate on **Philippians 2:1-18**.

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### 3. DEMETRIUS - ANOTHER GOOD EXAMPLE!

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**3 John 12** - *Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true.*

In all probability Demetrius was the bearer of this letter. We are told three things about him.

1. Everybody spoke well of him.

**3 John 12** - *Demetrius hath good report of all men,.....*

Sometimes, of course, it is not good when everyone speaks well of us, but in this case it was good.

Wherever Demetrius went, in the church, among his friends, at home or in business, everyone had a good word to say for him.

Even his enemies could not fault him.

**Daniel 6:4-5** - *Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.  
5 Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.*

2. Like Gaius, he lived out the truth.

**3 John 12** - *.....and of the truth itself:.....*

Here are five rules for Bible reading and study:

**#1 - Look it up.**

**#2 - Write it down.**

**#3 - Pray it in.**

**#4 - Live it out.**

**#5 - Pass it on.**

This is just what Demetrius did. The truth itself attested the reality and the spirituality of this man.

3. He had the commendation of his spiritual leaders.

**3 John 12** - *.....and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true.*

John, along with other men of spiritual maturity and insight, was able to commend him as a godly, Christ-honoring, Spirit-filled man.

Do not be like Diotrephes. Be like Gaius and Demetrius!

How?

Certainly not in your own strength, but in the strength of the Lord.

**Ephesians 6:10** - *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

*May the love of Jesus fill me  
As the waters fill the sea;  
Him exalting, self-abasing,  
This is victory.*