

~ 1 John ~

Lesson 36- To Know Him Who is True

We have come to the end of our study on 1 John and today we will conclude our 9-month journey through this wonderful epistle. Let's begin by reading these final 8 verses, **1 John 5:14-21**.

The major overtone to these final 8 verses is a deep admonition to his little children. This epistle has been a letter of sanctification. A letter to separate ourselves from the evil of this world and abide in His Truth. We saw in verse 13 last week that John gave us the final reason why he is writing this letter to us: *so that we might know that we have everlasting life and that we might continue to believe in the name of the Son of God*. That's the key to Everlasting Life, our continual faith in Him. And our assurance of Everlasting Life comes from knowing the Truth, and specifically knowing and having a relationship with the One who is True, who has come from Heaven to redeem us from the bondage of sin.

In John's day, the Gnostics were professing their special knowledge, their gnosis, saying that it was by their secret knowledge of God that one could attain to Eternal Life. These Gnostics denied Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God who came in the flesh as Propitiation for sin. And John has been refuting this heresy throughout his epistle and he concludes with a final warning to guard ourselves from error. And we do this by knowing the Truth and knowing the One who is True. John begins his final statement with an assurance to those who believe the Truth. This is John's style. All through this letter, anytime he gives a warning, it always comes with an assurance to the believer. Let's read verses 14-15...

14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

14 και αυτη εστιν η παρρησια ην εχομεν προς αυτον, οτι εαν τι αιτωμεθα κατα το θελημα αυτου, ακουει ημων.

15 και εαν οιδαμεν οτι ακουει ημων, ο αν αιτωμεθα, οιδαμεν οτι εχομεν τα αιτηματα α ητηκαμεν παρ αυτου.

And this is the confidence that we have toward Him... This word "confidence" is *parresia*, *παρρησία*, a boldness of speech. John has used this word 3 other times in this epistle, 2:28; 3:21; 4:17, and it is always in relation to us having a boldness to approach the throne of grace. And here in verse 14, it is a boldness of speech in making a request. Look at the remainder of the verse... **that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us**. This is an amazing statement. John stated this earlier in this epistle in **1 John 3:21-23**. John is telling us that those who keep His commandments, those who are committed to doing those things that are pleasing to Him, and those who ask according to His will... we can know and have the confidence that we will receive whatever we ask of Him. What an amazing promise! And even more, we see Jesus make this statement several times the night before His crucifixion, **John 14:13-14; 15:7, 16; 16:23-24**. 9 times we see this repeated. This is obviously something God wants us to know and depend on.

Notice the commonality with all 9 of these statements. The one who receives what he asks, is the one in complete agreement with God. 1 John 5:14- we ask according to His will; 1 John 3:22- we keep His commandments and are committed to doing those things that please Him; John 14:13; 16:23-24- we ask according to His Name and the Father is glorified in the Son; John 15:7- we abide in Him and His Words abide in you; John 15:16- we are appointed by God and we are bearing fruit. This is describing one who is living for Jesus. This isn't someone living for themselves and asking for their own selfish pleasures. James makes this clear in his epistle, **James 4:3**. The one receiving from God has made God his greatest treasure, **Psalms 37:3-7**. David says, "commit your way to the Lord..." Align your will to His will, and He will give you the desires of your heart.

This amazing promise and it can be likened to an ambassador sent to do the will of the King. When an ambassador is sent to another country, all his provisions are taken care of: where he is going to stay, his traveling accommodations, food, clothes... every need is provided for. Plus as things come up, he will have certain specific requests pertaining to his mission. Whatever he needs to accomplish the mission that he was sent on will be provided. So likewise, we are ambassadors on this earth, 2 Cor 5:20, sent to do the work of the King. All our provisions are met and as we go about

the King's business, we will have specific requests. And John says, this is the confidence that we have toward God, toward the King who has sent us... that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us... **And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.** We can have confidence and know that we have the requests that we have asked for, because they are requests for the kingdom and our mission. Not of selfish desires, but desires for the kingdom. *Seek first the kingdom of God and His Righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you*, Matt 6:33.

When you yield yourself to Him and His will, and you have put yourself into His service, He will always provide. He has provided your needs and He will provide your specific requests for the kingdom. And this is so reassuring because we are moving into a time when Christians are going to have to take a stand for the Truth and in this stance, life as we know it will change. We are in the world, but not of this world. We are ambassadors sent on a mission from our King, and there are a lot of people that do not like what we have to say. But even among this resistance, we must stand for Truth and endure to the end, Matt 24:13; James 1:12. And we endure with confidence knowing that God is with us, guarding us from the temptations of the world and giving us what we need to do His work.

Throughout this epistle, John has been warning us to remove ourselves from the lust of the world, 2:15-17. We, as ambassadors for Christ, have a different manner of life than the world. He tells us to be aware of the antichrists and those who are trying to deceive us, 2:18-26. Overcoming the world by our faith in Jesus Christ, 4:4; 5:4-5; and finally in these closing statements, John tells us to keep ourselves from the wicked one **5:18-19, 21**. This is John's mindset as he wraps us this letter. To give us the encouragement to endure and persevere through the evil of this world knowing that we are the children of God. So with that thought in mind, let's continue into verse 16...

16 If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life...

16 εἰάν τις ἴδῃ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτάνοντα ἁμαρτίαν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον, αἰτήσῃ, καὶ δώσει αὐτῷ ζῆν...

This is the power of intercession on behalf of another brother and it shows the importance of the Fellowship that we have with each other. As times get harder, and we see our brothers sway off the narrow path, we can intercede on their behalf and ask the Father to help guide them into the Truth. The Holy Spirit will give us words to speak. He will convict their heart of error and the Truth will keep them from the evil one. This is how the Father gives Life... through the Words of Life to all who believe. This is the purpose of the Word and our duty as believers toward our brethren, **2 Timothy 3:16-17**. But ultimately this Life, that is available to all, is only apprehended by the free will of the individual by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. If we see a brother start to sway and have an occasion of sinfulness, **that does not lead to death**, we can pray and help that brother back to the Truth. But what is this sin that is leading to death? What type of death is John referring to? Physical death or Spiritual death? Our answer is based on the Life He is giving. Is John speaking of physical life or Eternal Life? It's always Eternal Life, so I believe in relation to this, John is speaking of Eternal Death. **There is sin unto to death.** *πρὸς θάνατον*. This is the heart of apostasy and a rejection of Jesus Christ. This is the heart of the deceiver and the antichrist that John has been describing. Throughout this letter, John has been warning of the Gnostics and their deception leading to apostasy. These were people who had infiltrated into the church, and they were trying to sway Christians away from the Truth. They called themselves Christians, but they were condoning continual sin, denying that sin had eternal consequences, and as a result denying the need of a Savior. They denied Jesus as coming in the flesh, they denied Jesus as the Son of God and the Christ and they were hating other believers. These were not accidental or occasions of sin, they were deliberately and deceptively turning believers from the Truth. The sin leading to death is anyone who has hardened their heart toward God and rejected Jesus Christ. Let's read verses 16 and 17...

16 If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that.

16 εἰάν τις ἴδῃ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτάνοντα ἁμαρτίαν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον, αἰτήσῃ, καὶ δώσει αὐτῷ ζῆν, τοῖς ἁμαρτάνουσι μὴ πρὸς θάνατον. ἔστιν ἁμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον. οὐ περὶ ἐκείνης λέγω ἵνα ἐρωτήσῃ.

17 All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death.

17 πᾶσα ἀδικία ἁμαρτία ἐστὶ· καὶ ἔστιν ἁμαρτία οὐ πρὸς θάνατον.

John tells us in verse 17 that... **All unrighteousness is sin**. And we could say it the other way around that all sin is unrighteous, and all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, Romans 3:23 And therefore, since all have sinned, we are all unrighteous by our own merits and we all deserve eternal condemnation. But those of us who have accepted the Propitiating sacrifice for sin through faith in the blood of Jesus, our sins are forgiven and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all unrighteousness, 1 Jn 1:7; 2:1-2.

However, the sin leading to death is the rejection of the only thing that can actually save you. Because Jesus is the Propitiation for the sins of the whole world. This means that all sin has been paid for by the blood of Jesus and there is only one sin leading to death, and that is rejecting the Word of Life, Jesus Christ. This is trampling His blood underfoot and putting Him to an open shame, **Hebrews 10:29; 6:4-6**. This is apostacy, a falling away from the saving grace of God, Gal 5:4. Just to clarify, I am not saying that you can lose your salvation. Nobody can lose their salvation and nobody can have their salvation taken from them, John 10:28-29; Romans 8:38. But somebody can choose to reject their salvation and turn away from believing in Jesus Christ. They can choose to fall away from the grace that saves them.

This **sin leading to death** is apostacy and a rejection of Jesus... and John says... **I do not say that he should pray about that**. These seem like shocking words. Why shouldn't we pray about this? Especially if these are brothers that have been swayed into the darkness. If you read it carefully, John is not forbidding Christians to pray and ask God for mercy because this word is in the subjunctive mood not the imperative, but we must recognize that God will not and cannot restore someone who does not want to be saved. Listen to what God said to Jeremiah, **Jeremiah 7:15-20**. These people were playing the harlot with other gods and rejecting the One True God. This is the sin leading to death and God tells Jeremiah to not pray for them.

If we go back to 1 John and look at verse 16 carefully, the word translated "pray" is erotao, ἐρωτάω, meaning a request, and it is not the common word for prayer. The normal word for prayer is proseuchomai, προσεύχομαι. The word John uses here, erotao, ἐρωτάω, is a kingdom request as an ambassador making a request for the needs and people of the kingdom.

John is making a distinction between a personal request to God as an ambassador of the kingdom versus a prayer for our enemies. Praying for the lost is not forbidden. Jesus Himself tells us we must love our enemies, and pray, proseuchomai, προσεύχομαι, for those who spitefully use you, Matt 5:44; Luke 6:27-28. But this is not the prayer John is speaking of here. John is speaking of an intimate request that one can make as an ambassador of the kingdom specifically on behalf of one of the King's own. This is a request on behalf of the brethren. This is a specific request only for those of the kingdom, and not a request for those who have rejected Jesus Christ.

This is the exact request Jesus asks in His intimate prayer to the Father in John 17:8-9, 15-⁸ *For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.* (these are children of God) ⁹ *"I pray, erotao, ἐρωτάω, (I am making a request) for them. I do not pray, erotao, ἐρωτάω, (I do not make a request) for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours."* ¹⁵ *I do not pray erotao, ἐρωτάω, (I am not requesting) that You should take them out of the world, but (My kingdom request is that) You should keep them from the evil one.*

John again is drawing from the words of Jesus in this epistle. This special request shows the intimacy that we as children of God and ambassadors for His kingdom have with our Father. It doesn't mean we stop praying for the world, but John is showing the intimate requests we can make for those who are children of God. Now take this thought into verses 18 and 19 and notice the contrast between those of God and those of the world...

18 We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.

18 Οἶδαμεν ὅτι πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει· ἀλλ' ὁ γεννηθεὶς ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ τηρεῖ ἑαυτὸν, καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς οὐχ ἅπτεται αὐτοῦ.

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

¹⁹ οἴδαμεν ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐσμεν, καὶ ὁ κόσμος ὅλος ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται.

Just as John has done through this entire epistle, John is making a definite distinction between those who are of God, ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, and those who are of the world. He says, **We know that whoever is born of God does not sin**, or does not, ἀμαρτάνει, present tense he does not habitually and continually sin.

...but he who has been born of God, γεννηθεὶς ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.

Those who are born out from God keep themselves in the sense that we choose to abide in God and allow His Word to abide in us. We can't sanctify ourselves, it's the Word that Sanctifies, but we do choose to allow His Word in our hearts to keep us from the evil one.

Then look at the contrast again in verse 19... **We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.** The last part of this verse literally says, "...the whole world is lying in the evil one." The idea John is giving us is that the world is abiding in the wicked one. Notice the contrast, because we who are of God are abiding "in the Son", **1 John 5:11**. Now John says, "We know that we are out from God and that we have life because we are in the Son, but those who are of the world, they are not of God, and they are set in place and lying in the wicked one." Again, showing the contrast between those who have Life and those who have death. Then John continues in verse 20 of the confession of faith that focuses the entire epistle into one statement...

20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

²⁰ οἴδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἦκει, καὶ δέδωκεν ἡμῖν διάνοιαν ἵνα γινώσκωμεν τὸν ἀληθινόν· καὶ ἐσμὲν ἐν τῷ ἀληθινῷ, ἐν τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ. οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀληθινὸς Θεὸς, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ αἰώνιος.

John wants us to know that we know that we have Fellowship with God and know that we have Eternal Life in His Son. Six times in these final 8 verses, John says "we know" recapping this entire letter with our confession of faith... we know the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, dianoia, *διάνοια*, a thorough mind of understanding... so that we might know Him, ginosko, *γινώσκω*, know Him intimately in Fellowship who is True... and we are in the True One, in His Son Jesus Christ. Notice how specific John is with these titles, Jesus is the Son of God the Christ who has come, the One who is True and has given us Truth... this Jesus, who is the Christ, is the True God and the Eternal Life. He is doing this to refute the Gnostic heresies and it here that John clearly states that Jesus is the True God.

This could have been the ending to this book, and it would have been a great ending, but John has one more thing to say and this shows the earnestness in his admonition to his little children. Look at verse 21...

21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

²¹ Τεκνία, φυλάξατε ἑαυτοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων. ἀμήν.

The word "keep" is phulasso, *φυλάσσω*, to guard. This is an imperative command to guard our hearts away from idols. This has been the major thread throughout this letter, to guard ourselves from the enemy and not be swayed into the darkness. John ends with his endearing statement, **Little children, Τεκνία, guard yourselves away from idols.** These idols are anything that would exalt themselves in the place of the One who is Worthy of all praise, honor and glory. Anything that would contradict and compromise the Truth, anything that would tear down the name of the One True God and the Eternal Life. He says guard yourself from these things. How do we guard our hearts from deception? We do this by the Truth; by knowing Him who is True; and abiding in Him who is True. Paul exhorted Timothy in this same way, **1 Timothy 6:20- O Timothy! Guard**, phulasso, *φυλάσσω*, *what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge.* And Jesus gives us a blessing for those who do this, **Luke 11:28-... blessed are those who hear the Word of God and keep**, phulasso, *φυλάσσω*, *it!*

Jesus came to give us the Word of Life, **1 John 1:1-2**, and it is by this Word of Life that we have Eternal Life, and it is through the Word of Life that we are kept from the evil one.