

Abiding In Christ

Lesson 2

God Will Establish You in Christ

Leader Guide

Leader Guide Bible Studies

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Lesson 2

1 John 4:7-21

God Will Establish You in Christ

...God is love. (1 John 4:8)

Prayers

Introduction

For some, the thought of a father's love brings back wonderful memories. For others, it is something they never experienced. The same is true of our thoughts about God. For some, thoughts of God are wonderful. Others feel God is an unapproachable fearful judge. The apostle John describes God as the essence of love; He is love. In this lesson, we will reflect on how every good spiritual gift we receive is from God and how God himself places us to abide in Christ.

Read 1 John 4:7-21, **God's Love and Ours**

⁷ Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

¹³ This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. ¹⁶ And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. ¹⁷ This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. ²¹ And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

1. What qualities do you think of when you think of God? Is He all-powerful and fearful, raising up nations as instruments of his wrath and bringing them low in righteous judgment or do you think of God as the essence of love, carefully nurturing and guiding your life as a gardener carefully tends his garden (parable of the vine)?
2. In verse 1, What is the source of love in the world?

God is the source of love in the world.

3. How did God show his love for the world?

God showed his love for the world by sending his Son to redeem it from sin and to restore us to God.

4. What did we do for God to love us, verse 10?

God loved us first; we did nothing.

5. What do we do since God loves us, verse 11?

We are to be like Jesus to others: be loving, charitable, forgiving, and continue his work of redemption by spreading the gospel.

6. How does God assure that he lives in us, verse 13-16

God gives us his Spirit to abide in us so we can testify about the love of God and Christ.

7. What is God's essence?

God's essence is love.

8. How is God's love made complete in us, verse 17?

We are to be like Jesus.

9. John writes in verse 18 that love drives out fear, but Solomon writes eleven times in Proverbs that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. Do you find these two comments contradictory, or are both true?

I think both statements are equally true. Fear of God's judgment and eternal condemnation in hell can bring many to salvation and repentance. Unfortunately, about 40% of Americans do not believe in hell and do not seek God's eternal salvation in Christ. Even if we come to God in fear of judgment, we do not continue to fear him because God's character is love. God loved us before he created the universe and provided for our salvation and redemption in Christ's death and resurrection. He gave us faith to believe in Christ as our Savior, and has prepared good works for us so that our lives might be abundantly blessed. We are called into the intimate relationship as his children and will join him in eternal life. God is love.

10. Our entire Christian life depends on a clear understanding of our position in Christ. Knowing we are called and kept by God is the sole source of our assurance, strength, and security. Read God's eternal plan of salvation for us in Ephesians 1:3-10.

^{Eph 1:3} Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴ For he [the Father] chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he [the Father]

predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.⁷ In him [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding,⁹ he [the Father] made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ,¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

¹¹In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,¹² in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

- a. Verse 1:4 When did God plan for us to be holy in his sight?

Before Creation

- b. Verse 1:5, How do we become holy and God's children?

Through faith in Jesus Christ

- c. Verse 1:7 What are some of the benefits do we have in Christ?

Redemption and forgiveness of sins

- d. What qualities of God's character and motives are apparent in his plan of salvation?

God's love, grace, and sovereignty are apparent by working out all things to the purpose of his will. God's purpose is to honor his Son by making his people (us) holy so we can worship and praise him as his children.

- e. Verse 1:11. What does Paul mean by predestination?

Predestination is God's plan to work out everything (our salvation) in conformity to his will.

- f. Verses 1:13-14 how does God secure our salvation?

God gives us faith in Christ and the Holy Spirit to keep us secure in him.

11. Paul is the only gospel writer to use the word "predestination" as it relates to God's eternal plan of salvation. Pre-destination describes our spiritual destination – eternal life in Christ, which God has planned in advance. How does God's plan for us since before creation give you great assurance that you are in Christ?

My destination is heaven and living as his child in Christ. Even though I often make wrong choices and sin in my thoughts, words, and actions, I know that by God's grace, I am his child, and he will never let me go. God is infinitely stronger than me, and I know that he will accomplish his purposes in my life.

12. A simple lesson that takes a lifetime to comprehend is that it is God's work to bring you and keep you in Christ. Summarize in your own words God's work in bringing you to Christ in the following verses:

- a. He will also keep you firm to the end so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. (1 Corinthians 1:8-9)

God will keep me secure until the end, holy and blameless in Christ

- b. Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith—to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen. (Romans 16:25- 27)

God established me in Christ according to the Gospel message he commanded

- c. Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. ¹²May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. ¹³May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones. (1 Thessalonians 3:11-13)

God has cleared the way so I would be holy and blameless in Christ.

- d. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 5:10-11)

God called me to faith in Christ, makes me strong, firm, and steadfast, and will raise me to eternal life.

13. There is a concept of God's condescending grace that asks, "what is man that you are mindful of him?" (Hebrews 2:6). Have you ever wondered why God chose you to reveal His plan of salvation through His Son Jesus? Wonder no more; 1 Corinthians tells us why – be prepared to laugh!

^{1Co 1:26} Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. ²⁸ God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, ²⁹ so that no one may boast before him. ³⁰ It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. ³¹ Therefore, as it is written: "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord."

- a. Why did God call you to be in Christ Jesus?

Paul writes that God chose the humble, foolish, and despised to shame the wise! We are in Christ because God has given us faith in Christ as our salvation.

- b. The second aspect of God's call to be in Christ is Ephesians 2:10 and Jesus' parable of the vine. How do you summarize God's purpose for you?

^{Eph 2:10} For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

^{Jn 15:8} **This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.**

God has prepared wonderful things for me to do, to bless my life and to further his kingdom. I confess that I do not even know what these things are, but I pray that I am a steward of his many gifts. I pray to participate in acts of service, celebrate the joy of knowing my neighbors, and that God will further his kingdom through my actions.

14. So, what is our work? If it is God's work to give us faith in Christ for our eternal salvation, keep us in Christ as his children, prepare good works for us to expand his kingdom, and bless our lives; what do we do?

- a. ^{Ac 2:38} Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Our Work is to **repent and be baptized**

- b. ^{Ro 10:8} But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming:

^{Ro 10:9} That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

^{Ro 10:10} For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

^{Ro 10:11} As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

Our work is to **confess that Jesus is Lord and believe in him as our savior, raised from the dead.**

- c. ^{Jn 14:23} Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

Our work is to **obey Jesus' teaching – love God and our neighbor.**

- d. The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread,
^{1Co 11:24} and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."

^{1Co 11:25} In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

^{1Co 11:26} For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Our work is to **partake of communion.**

- e. Eph 6:18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Col 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

Our work is to **pray, be alert – to the needs of others and those working in God’s kingdom, and give thanks.**

- f. Jn 15:4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Our work is to **abide in Christ and be fruitful disciples.**

15. Summarize our work of abiding in Christ.

Our “work” of abiding in Christ is to believe, confess and repent of our sins, to obey Christ’s command to love God and our neighbor, to partake in God’s mean of grace through baptism and holy communion, and to pray.

Closing Prayer, Psalms of Praise

Ps 51:15 O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

Ps 9:1 I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonders.

Ps 9:2 I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.

Ps 9:7 The LORD reigns forever; he has established his throne for judgment.

Ps 9:8 He will judge the world in righteousness; he will govern the peoples with justice.

Ps 9:9 The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.

Ps 9:10 Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.

Ps 42:5 Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

Ps 47:7 For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise.

Ps 30:4 Sing to the LORD, you saints of his; praise his holy name.

Ps 30:5 For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.

Ps 33:1 Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him.

Ps 33:2 Praise the LORD with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.

Ps 33:3 Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy.

Ps 34:1 I will extol the LORD at all times; his praise will always be on my lips.

Ps 34:2 My soul will boast in the LORD; let the afflicted hear and rejoice.

Ps 34:3 Glorify the LORD with me; let us exalt his name together.

Ps 31:21 Praise be to the LORD, for he showed his wonderful love to me

Ps 44:8 In God we make our boast all day long, and we will praise your name forever.