

1 John

Lesson 2

Chapter 2:1-14

Leader Guide

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Walking in the Light

1 John 2:1-14

Introduction to 1 John 2

How do you tell if promises people make to you are genuine? You probably consider whether the person is a reliable source, do some personal research, and find out they have a proven history. John writes to new Christians stating his credentials as a witness to what he has seen, heard, and experienced from Jesus. John was near the end of his life when he wrote this letter and experienced a lifetime of walking in the light with Jesus. In the second chapter, John continues his discussion of what it means to be in fellowship with Christ and offers four tests of how a Christian knows if his faith is genuine. The first and most significant test of real faith is obeying God's commands. Obedience stems from a love for God and others and reveals a life transformed by the Holy Spirit. The second test of genuine faith is whether a Christian has a love for the "world" – that is, for sinful desires and materialism. The third test acknowledges that salvation is through Jesus Christ and recognizes false doctrines detracting from the deity of Christ. The final test is that genuine faith leads the righteous to do what is right.

Read

^{1Jn 2:1} My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense —Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ^{1Jn 2:2} He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

^{1Jn 2:3} We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. ^{1Jn 2:4} The man who says, "I know him, but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ^{1Jn 2:5} But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: ^{1Jn 2:6} Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

^{1Jn 2:7} Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. ^{1Jn 2:8} Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.

^{1Jn 2:9} Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness.

^{1Jn 2:10} Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. ^{1Jn 2:11} But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.

^{1Jn 2:12} I write to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.

^{1Jn 2:13} I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, dear children, because you have known the Father.

^{1Jn 2:14} I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

Discuss

1. Verse 3-6. How do we know if we know Jesus?

We know Jesus if we obey his commands. We obey God's commandments and "walk" (live, act) as Jesus did because we are God's children, and it pleases Him.

2. What is the measure of our love for God?

John says obedience to God's word is the measure of whether we are in Christ. John is referring to Jesus' teaching in ^{Jn 14:15}, "If you love me, you will obey what I command.

3. Considering 1 John 1:8-10, does John mean we will perfectly keep His commands?

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, forgiving us and purifying us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives (1 John 1:8-10).

We are to obey God's commands and not sin out of love for God, but John also says we are lying to ourselves if we claim we don't sin. This might sound like double talk, but we know it is true because our thoughts and actions are not perfect and pure. Our sinful failures can lead to feel guilty and defeated, but this is why John also assures us of God's forgiveness. We must continually remind ourselves that God loved us before we were in Christ while we were sinners, and His love for us doesn't change after becoming his children! In Christ, our sins are completely forgiven and not remembered.

4. Verses 7-11. What is the "old command" John gave to his readers as a test that they know Jesus? Refer to the following verses:

a. Deuteronomy 6:5

^{Dt 6:5} **Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.**

b. Leviticus 19:18-19

^{Lev 19:18} "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but **love your neighbor as yourself**. I am the LORD. ^{Lev 19:19} "Keep my decrees.

c. Matthew 22:37-39

Mt 22:37 Jesus replied: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ Mt 22:38 This is the first and greatest commandment. Mt 22:39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ Mt 22:40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

John refers to the Old Testament Law in Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18: They should love their brothers/neighbors.

5. Jesus was radical in his teaching of love toward others. What are several ways he made an old command new?

a. John 13:34-35

Jn 13:34 “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. Jn 13:35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.”

Love fellow Christians as a testimony to the world so that all men will know we are Christians

b. Matthew 5:43-48

Mt 5:43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ Mt 5:44 But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, Mt 5:45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. Mt 5:46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?

Mt 5:47 And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Mt 5:48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Jesus taught us that we should love our brothers, our neighbors, and even our enemies.

c. Matthew 5:21-22

Mt 5:21 “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ Mt 5:22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.

Jesus taught that anger against others is the same as murder in God’s law.

d. 1 John 3:16

1Jn 3:16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. ^c

e. John 15:12-14

Jn 15:12 **My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.** Jn 15:13 **Greater love has no one than this that he lay down his life for his friends.** Jn 15:14 **You are my friends if you do what I command.**

Jesus demonstrated sacrificial love for humanity.

6. What is the issue with Christians who are racist or hold grudges?

John says whoever hates his brother is walking in darkness and does not know where he is going. Where does hatred lead to – life without the light of God?

7. Given these scriptures, who else are our brothers?

Who can we exclude from loving? We cannot exclude anyone.

8. Verse 12-14. Why is it important that John assures his readers of their salvation after the preceding verses?

They may feel convicted by their sin and think that they did not pass the test of loving their brother.

Watch Video

Corrie Ten Boom - Forgiveness – YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MrHB_Sp4cJs

Prayer adapted from Ezekiel 11: 19-20

Dear Father, we confess that we have not loved you or our neighbor with our whole heart. We pray for undivided hearts and a renewed spirit. Remove our hearts of stone and give us a heart of flesh. We pray that we follow your decrees and laws out of love and devotion to you. We thank you for being our God, calling us into fellowship with Jesus, and calling us to be your children. AMEN