

Living in Reality

Christianity - Life that is Real

July 30, 2017

1Jn 5:18-21 We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him. 19 We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. 20 And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so 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. 21 Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

5:18 "We know" stated 3 times in verses 18-19; knowledge isn't intellectual but experiential.

We know that no one who is born of God sins (18)

We know that we are of God (19)

We know that the Son of God has come, ... so that we may know Him (20)

"no one who is born of God sins"

"born" implies a completed act accomplished by an outside agent (the Holy Spirit)

Jn 3:5 ... unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

(1Jn 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18)

Being "born-again" has observable characteristics.

The antinomian false teachers' lifestyles reveal their unregenerate hearts!

antinomian = holding or relating to the view that Christians are released by grace from the obligation of observing the moral law. [from Concise Oxford English Dictionary]

Remember - John was addressing two different kinds of false teachers:

One who denied any involvement in sin (1Jn 1:8-2:1)

1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

One who simply made sin irrelevant (1Jn 3:4-10; 5:18-21)

4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness;

6 No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.

7 the one who practices righteousness is righteous

8 the one who practices sin is of the devil;

9 No one who is born of God practices sin,

10 anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God,

Sin is the problem; it needs to be confessed and then avoided. (1Jn 1:9; 5:21).

1Jn 3:6 No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.

1Jn 3:9 No one who is born of God practices sin, ... because he is born of God.

"but He who was born of God keeps him"

literally, "the One who was born of God continues to keep him;" referring to how Jesus continually sustains us.

"and the evil one does not touch him"

This means the evil one cannot continue "laying hold of him."

Various Translations:

and the evil one [wicked one (NKJV)] does not touch him (NASB);

the evil one does not touch them (NRSV)

the Evil One can not harm them (TEV)

the Evil One has no hold over him (NJB)

Because he has regeneration-life, the evil one has nothing to fasten his deadly temptations on.

Jn 14:30 "... for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me"

Jn 17:15 I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.

1Jn 4:4 You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

5:19 "We know that we are of God"

This is **confident assurance**, - the world-view of a Christian (we are of God) in Christ Jesus.

1Jn 4:6 We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Everything is based on **the truth of knowing who we are in Christ!**

1Jn 5:13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

In his writings, John expresses **the believers relationship to God** through the following phrases:

1. To be born (begotten) of God (1Jn 5:1; 2:29; 4:7): denoting our initial receiving of new life.
2. To be of God (Jn 8:47; 1Jn 3:10; 4:6): denoting our essential connection of new life.
3. Child of God (Jn 1:12; 1Jn 3:1, 10): denoting our established relationship with God in new life.

"the whole world lies in the power of the evil one"

The word "**lies**" indicating the passive, unprogressive state in the sphere of Satan's influence.

While we are from God - all the rest of mankind (the world) remains in the hand of the evil one"

How Satan gained power over the world:

1. Satan's rebellion (Isa 14:12-16; Ezk 28:13-17; Lk 10:18; 2Pt 2:4; Rev 12:7-10)

2. Adam's sin

Rom 5:12 ... through one man sin entered into the world, ... because all sinned-

Rom 5:16 ... judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, ...

Rom 5:18 ... through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, ...

Rom 5:19 ... through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners,

3. Individual, personal choice to sin

Rom 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (Rom 3:9, 19; Gal 3:22)

Names by which Satan is called:

the ruler of this world

Jn 12:31 Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

Jn 14:30 the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me;

Jn 16:11 and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

the god of this world

2Cor 4:4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

the prince of the power of the air

Eph 2:2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

Demons are called powers, world forces of darkness and spiritual forces of wickedness.

Eph 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

5:20 “the Son of God has come”

“has come” = literally “is come” - is present, having come.

“HE IS HERE - all is full of Him - His incarnation, work, and abiding presence, is to us a living fact” [ALFORD].

This is an **affirmation of the incarnation** of (Jesus) the Son of God.

Deity with a human body was a major problem for the Gnostic false teachers who asserted that everything physical was evil.

“has given us understanding”

Jesus (not the Gnostic false teachers) has provided the needed insight into deity.

Jesus fully revealed the Father by means of His life, His teachings, His actions, His death and His resurrection!

The understanding that Jesus Christ gives enables us to know God; in a personal, intimate way.

Jesus Christ is the true God; to know Him is to have eternal life.

“we are in Him who is true; in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life”

Reality has been a **theme** throughout John’s letter, and now we are reminded of it again. Jesus Christ is the true God. We know Him and are in Him who is true. We have “the real thing”!

1Jn 5:20 “We know that our real life is in the true One, and in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the real God and this is real, eternal life”

This phrase “**the true God,**” is referring to both the Father, and the Son (Jn 17:3). For one to be in the Father one must be in the Son.

1Jn 5:12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

“**true**” is a description of Jesus in Revelation:

Rev 3:7 ... He who is holy ...

Rev 3:14 ... the faithful and true Witness ...

Rev 6:10 ... holy and true, ...

This Greek word “**true**” signifies true, as contrasted with false.

Jn 1:9 ... the true Light which, ...enlightens every man.

Jn 4:23 ... the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; ...

Jn 4:37 ... the saying is true, 'One sows and another reaps.'

Jn 6:32 ... it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven.

Jn 15:1 "I am the true vine, ...

Jn 17:3 ... that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

Jn 19:35 And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; ...

1Jn 2:8 ... the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining.

1Jn 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so 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.

John uses **another word for true**, This word “true” signifies what is real, perfect, and substantial, as contrasted with what is fanciful, shadowy, counterfeit, or merely symbolic.

Jn 3:33 "He who has received His testimony has set his seal to this, that God is true.

Jn 4:18 ... the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly."

Jn 5:31 "If I alone testify about Myself, My testimony is not true.

Jn 5:32 "There is another who testifies of Me, ... the testimony which He gives about Me is true.

1Jn 2:8 ... I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, ...

1Jn 2:27 ... His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, ...

Thus:

God is true in that He cannot lie (Jn 3:33).

He is true as distinguished from idols (1Thes 1:9).

There is the true tabernacle - a heavenly one; contrasted from the Mosaic tabernacle, which was a figure of the heavenly reality (Heb 8:2; 9:24).

The Father is the source of eternal life; this life is in His Son

1Jn 5:11 And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

1Jn 5:13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

The NT asserts the full deity of Jesus (Jn 1:1, 18; 20:28; Phil 2:6; Tit 2:13; Heb 1:8).

21 Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

Guard against everything which occupies the place due to God.

Various Translations:

"guard yourselves from idols" (NASB)

"keep yourselves from idols" (NKJV, NRSV)

" keep yourselves safe from false gods!" (TEV)

" be on guard against false gods" (NJB)

This declares our active **participation in sanctification,**

1Jn 3:3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

The moment we cease to abide in Jesus Christ - we become part of "the world that lies in the power of the wicked one;" - who are given to idolatry both literally and spiritually!

Eph 5:5 For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Col 3:5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.

Idols can refer to literal idols, foods sacrificed to idols, false ideas in contrast to God's truth, or the doctrines of false teachers.

John reminds us that Jesus is the the true God (v 20). Now he closes by exhorting us to stay away from idols - false gods. Few people today bow to idols of wood and metal. Nevertheless, other idols capture our attention and affection.

For example covetousness is idolatry (Col. 3:5).

A man may worship his bankbook or his stock portfolio just as fervently as a heathen worships his idol.

The thing we serve is the thing we worship! Whatever controls our lives and "calls the signals" is our idol.

Mt 4:10 Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.' "

Idolatry is a subtle way for Satan to take control of us. When "things" take God's place in our lives, we are guilty of idolatry.

To a man of the world, the Christian life is unreal and the worldly life is real.

This is because the world lives by their senses, feelings and thinking and not by God's Word.

We see the heroes of faith in Heb 11:

Like Moses, we endure "as seeing Him who is invisible" (Heb 11:27).

Faith is "the evidence of things not seen" (Heb 11:1).

Like Noah, we respond to His admonitions with our family (Heb 11:7)

Noah never saw a flood, yet by faith he “saw” it coming and did what God told him to do.

Like Abraham, we live for eternal rewards and not the natural things in our pursuit of God.

By faith, Abraham saw a heavenly city and country, and forsook the earthly to follow God.

All of the great heroes of faith named in Heb 11 accomplished what they did because they “saw the invisible” by faith. In other words, they were in contact with reality.

The world boasts of its enlightenment,
but a Christian walks in the real light, because God is light.
The world talks about love,
but it knows nothing of the real love which a Christian experiences because “God is love.”
The world displays its wisdom and learning,
but a Christian lives in truth because “the Spirit is truth.”
God is light, love, and truth;
and these together make a life that is real.

A Christian has “**turned to God from idols** to serve the living and true God” (1Thes 1:9).

Idols are dead - but Christ is the living God.

Idols are false - but Christ is the true God.

This is the secret of the life that is real!

So John’s admonition, “Keep yourselves from idols,” can be paraphrased, “Watch out for the imitation and the artificial and be real!”

Conclusion of 1 John Study - Theological Significance:

This letter speaks to contemporary Christians in a significant way. Today there are many people who profess to know God and have fellowship with Him but do not demonstrate such faith at all. John’s tests concerning obedience, love, and belief provide warnings for the unfaithful as well assurance for genuine believers.

To be sure that we know God, we must obey Him. If we lack love for others, it indicates we do not know the love of God in our hearts. Foundationally we must believe rightly about Jesus Christ. He is the Christ, the Son of God, who has come in the flesh.

This important triad -

(1. Obedience; 2. Love; 3. Correct belief about who Jesus is [He is God and He is man])
calls the contemporary church to a strong, balanced faith. We must grow stronger and stronger in all areas of our Christian life.

Resources used in this study:

Study Guide Commentary Series; by RJ Utley
Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown
Nelson’s Bible Commentary
The Bible Exposition Commentary; by WW Wiersbe
Word Studies in the New Testament; by Vincent
Holman Bible Handbook