

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1John**

Chapter 3- The True Test of Salvation- Part 1 **1John 1:5-10**

18. Belief in God and Belief in the Reality of Sin Part 1

WAOY Wednesday 05/02/07; WOSM Monday 10/20/08; WOSM Wednesday 10/26/22

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We are continuing our verse by verse “journey” through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to begin to look at what the Apostle John taught about “A Genuine Belief in God and a Belief in the Reality of Sin”. So let’s open our Bibles and look at **1John 1:5- 10** together.

5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;

7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

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

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous 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.

Now in these six verses- John is showing us his great respect for the Truth by laying a groundwork for a true test of Salvation for the Christian Church to know and follow. You see, brothers and sisters, in addition to leading and feeding their sheep- *all* godly pastors and elders have the responsibility to guard the sheep and to warn the sheep about false teachers and the heresy that they spread. John is doing that in these verses and he is in one mind and one accord with the Apostle Paul who taught the same thing. Let’s read what Paul said about this issue in **The Acts 20:28-36**:

28 "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

29 "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;

30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

31 "Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.

32 "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build *you* up and to give *you* the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

33 "I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes.

34 "You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my *own* needs and to the men who were with me.

35 "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, '**It is more blessed to give than to receive.**'"

36 When he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

And let's read Paul's exhortation to Timothy about this issue in **2 Timothy 1:13-14**:

13 Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

14 Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to *you*.

So, we can see that John is in perfect harmony with Brother Paul about this issue by teaching his faithful flock in Ephesus and by constantly going over God's Truth with them so that they will develop strong spiritual discernment.

Now as I told you in our introduction- John is not vague at all about Truth. John's writings are some of the most certain in all of the Bible. So, as we study this Epistle of **1 John**- keep in mind that Divine Truth and the *value* of Divine Truth is at the heart of all that John writes. In his Gospel account, John mentions the word "Truth" 27

times, and in his Epistles, John uses that same word 20 times, so we can see that Truth was a very important issue in John's mind.

But John was not only passionate about Divine Truth- he was also equally passionate about opposing error. John looked at love for the Truth to be equal with hated for error and deception so to John – teaching people the Truth and opposing error went hand in hand. You cannot effectively do one without doing the other.

So, in addition to teaching Sound Doctrine- any Church worth their salt must issue out tests by which the people can readily identify true believers from the false. This is essential for the Church's protection and for their spiritual growth. It is very important that the wheat be distinguished from the tares; the sheep must be distinguished from the goats; the fish on the left side need to be identified from the fish on the right side and the children of God need to be distinguished from the children of the devil; or the pastor will never be able to clarify to his people their true condition or guard them from the deadly deception of false teachers.

Now I am under no illusion that in the modern Church- for a pastor to try to find out who among those who attend his Church are actually saved and who are only deceived into thinking that they are saved is seldom if ever done. I realize that most people today simply shrug their shoulders and say, *"That's between them and God"*.

But is that true? Is it really just between the individual and God or is that just an excuse for us to act irresponsible and to be derelict in our duty as leaders in the Church? Are we *required* by God to warn those who are lost about their lostness, or do we simply remain good friends with them and let them go to hell? Let's see what God's Word says about that by looking at **Ezekiel 3:17-21**:

17 "Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman to the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from My mouth, warn them from Me.

18 "When I say to the wicked, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand.

19 "Yet if you have warned the wicked and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered yourself.

20 "Again, when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I place an obstacle before him, he will die; since you have not warned him, he shall die in his sin, and his righteous deeds which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand.

21 "However, if you have warned the righteous man that the righteous should not sin and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning; and you have delivered yourself."

So, we can see that God requires all believers – not just the pastors- but all believers- to be diligent to warn those who are lost to repent and come to God for forgiveness. And we can see that by having a cavalier attitude about somebody else's sins is wrong and that God will hold us accountable for not going to that person and warning him.

Now I want to say here that not only does Scripture *demand* that we warn the ungodly- but 2,000 years of Church history teaches us this as well. If, as leaders, we say today that that sin is between the individual and God- and wash our hands of any responsibility or obligation to that individual to warn them to repent- we not only violate the clear teachings of Scripture- but we also go against 2,000 years of history where the Church of Jesus Christ throughout the world did exactly what I am talking about.

So, this carefree attitude about sin among professing believers is a relatively new phenomenon that cannot be backed up with either Scripture or Church History.

Now I could go on with this- but suffice it to say it is the business of those in leadership in the Church to determine who in the Church is really endeavoring to serve God and who is not. So, the question is not should leaders be engaged in this activity- because we should be- the real question is *how* do we do this in accordance with Scripture? Well, I'm glad you asked.

In these six verses of **1John**- the Apostle presents two crucial doctrinal tests to determine who in the Church is genuine and who is not. Those two doctrinal tests are:

1. An accurate and Biblical belief in the Character and Nature of God the Father
2. A genuine belief in and Biblical understanding of sin

Let's look very carefully again at **1John 1:5**:

This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

John tells us here that the message that John and all of the other Apostles taught was the very same message that they heard from Jesus Christ personally. John says here that the Message that he and the other Apostles announce to you is, "... **the message we have heard from Him...**" (Jesus Christ). So, what is that Message?

John summarizes the entire Gospel by making the following statement:

... God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

Now in **John 4:24**, this same Apostle wrote to tell us that "**God is a Spirit**". In **1John 4:8**, John says that "**God is love**". Here, John tells us that "**God is light**".

Now when you examine all of this you can see then that "love"; "light" and "spirit" are all connected because John says that God is all of these things. But we must not distinguish between the three Qualities of "love", "light", and "spirit". So, for example- any kind of love that is dark and not light- or any kind of love that *produces* darkness and not light- any love that manifests sin and not righteousness- that kind of love is not of God and is not a part of God. Also, we can say that any kind of "spirit" that brings forth darkness is not of God and so on. So even though there are many kinds of loves in the world today and many types of spirits- the "love" and the "spirit" and the "light" that is *of* God and that *is* God are all connected and cannot be separated.

So, when John describes God as being "light"- he is showing us the very Essence of the Nature of God- which is the foundation to this entire Epistle. When John says that God is "Spirit"- he meant that God is immaterial in His Form- that God has no body like humans do. And when John says that God is "love"- he was expressing the devotion that all three Persons of the Trinity have for each other and that God has for us.

But the concept that God is “light” is much deeper than that. All throughout Scripture- God and the glory of God is described to us as being light.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our “journey” through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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