

Week Three Study Guide - 1st John 2:1-12

Scripture

1 My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous. 2 He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world.

3 And we can be sure that we know him if we obey his commandments. 4 If someone claims, “I know God,” but doesn’t obey God’s commandments, that person is a liar and is not living in the truth. 5 But those who obey God’s word truly show how completely they love him. That is how we know we are living in him. 6 Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did. 7 Dear friends, I am not writing a new commandment for you; rather it is an old one you have had from the very beginning. This old commandment—to love one another—is the same message you heard before. 8 Yet it is also new. Jesus lived the truth of this commandment, and you also are living it. For the darkness is disappearing, and the true light is already shining.

9 If anyone claims, “I am living in the light,” but hates a fellow believer, that person is still living in darkness. 10 Anyone who loves a fellow believer is living in the light and does not cause others to stumble. 11 But anyone who hates a fellow believer is still living and walking in darkness. Such a person does not know the way to go, having been blinded by the darkness.

Questions

Do you watch any shows that happen in court? What do you like about those shows?

Imagine you are in a court case. God is the judge. He is trying to determine if we are guilty of sin. If Jesus was not speaking on your behalf what would the verdict be? Why? Name some of the reasons you would be guilty. Now reread verses 1-2. What does it mean that Jesus pleads our case to the father? How does that change the sentencing from God?

Would you believe me if I said I loved the Chicago Cubs but was rooting for them to lose every time I played? Would you believe someone if they said they loved God, but followed none of His commandments? Why? Does that mean if we love God we are perfect? (No, but we are progressively becoming more like Jesus)

How has knowing Jesus changed your heart? What differences have you or others seen since you started following Jesus? Do you think you are pursuing Jesus?

What is the “new” command? How do you do at following that command? According to verse 8 what is the result of loving people?

Devotional

Let's say I tell you I love my wife very much! Matter of fact I tell you she is my best friend. Then you come over to my house and watch me with my wife. She asked me for help moving something. I tell her to do it herself. Later on she trips and takes an extremely hard fall. Instead of seeing if she is ok I sit there and make fun of her. I also yell at her everytime she tries to talk to me. Maybe you would chalk that up to me having a bad day, but let's say I do this every time you are around me and my wife. I am constantly disrespectful, mean, and insensitive to her. Would you think that I really loved her? Of course not. When you really love someone you will treat them with love.

John is saying the same thing when it comes to our relationship with Jesus. If we love Jesus then we will do what He says. That does not mean we are perfect, but that we are in a pursuit after Him. We are continuing to make progress to become more like Him. We should look back to the moment we started following Jesus and see change over that period of time. One of His two greatest commandments are to love people. John says when we love people the darkness disappears and the light is shown.

Action Steps

Think - Do you really love Jesus? Do you follow His commands? Have you made progress in your life to look more like Jesus since you started following Him?

Prayer - Think of the illustration John gives in his first two verses about Jesus being our advocate. Take time to thank Him for that. Also, take time to pray that God continues to change your heart.

Act - We all live and walk in different situations in life. Think of someone around you and try to tangibly love them. John talks about the darkness leaving and the light shining when you love people. Love someone in such a way this week that you take away some of their darkness and replace it with the light.