

1 John 2:12-17
Who Christians Are and What Christians Are Not to Love
January 13, 2021

John wrote 1 John to:

- Refute false teaching which began to infiltrate the church and did so by laying out doctrinal imperatives.
- Encourage genuine believers. This other purpose of the letter is stated in 1 Jo. 5:13 where we read “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.”

I. Who Christians Are (12-14)

Verses 12-14 are structured as a poem with John’s personal address of the congregation receiving this letter is seen in the added emphasis of each line starting with the phrases “I am writing to you” or “I write to you”.

The term, “little children”, was used in 2:1 and will be used term five more times in the letter (2:28, 3:7, 3:18, 4:4, 5:21). Jo. 13:33.

What are some possible reasons that in verse 12 the characteristic of sins being forgiven for his name’s sake is the first Christian characteristic that John highlights? Consider how sin is discussed in 1 Jo. 1:1-2:11.

At the beginning of verse 13 and then at the beginning of verse 14 John addresses a group he refers to as fathers. John indicates that he is writing to this group because they know him who is from the beginning. In 1 Jo. 1:1, Jo. 1:1-2 specifically refers to Jesus Christ.

John addresses the young men in verse 13 and the end of verse 14. The young men’s overcoming the evil one is indicated twice, but in verse 14 we are given the reasons for the young men’s overcoming the evil one – they are strong and the word of God abides in them. Eph. 6:1, 17.

Finally, John addresses the children in verse 13c. When a child is adopted into a family they are given the family name which is the father’s name identifying that the child as a legal member of the family. Beyond a name the newborn Christian is given the Spirit of God (2 Pet. 1:4).

The proper and appropriate response to the gift of salvation is love for God shown in the Christian’s obedience to God (Jo. 14:15).

II. What Christians are Not to Love (15-17)

In verse 15 we encounter the first direct command of the letter when we read “Do not love the world or the things in the world.” (KJV: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.”) Love for the world and love for God are totally incompatible.

The world that John refers to is the system of the unregenerate world.

In verse 16 we read that all that is in the world amounts to the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life.

How would you define the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes and pride of life? What are examples of each of these from the Bible?

What are some of the results of obeying or disobeying this command?

The passage ends with a promise that the one who does the will of God abides forever.

To rightly understand this statement then one must realize that our doing the will of God is not the reason for our salvation but a result of our salvation. Our abiding forever is not because we do the revealed will of God but it's because God caused us to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who did the will of God perfectly. 1 Cor. 15:20-22.

Application

- We should thank God that as God's people our sins are forgiven, that we know Christ and have come into fellowship with him and that God enables us to overcome the evil one by applying His Word to our lives by His Spirit.
- We should renew our minds daily with the truths of the gospel so that we are not susceptible to believing false teaching.
- We should ask the Spirit to examine our lives for any areas where there is love for the world and then repent of those areas that are shown to us. Ps. 139:23-24.