

LIVING FOR GOD IN AN

UPSIDE

A STUDY IN THE EPISTLE OF I JOHN

DOWN

WORLD

*Christ
Baptist
Church*

Clabon Bogan

c.bogan2@gmail.com

609.230.5809

Lesson 10
"Benefits of
Sonship"

LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

Previously we discussed in I John 4 the prevalent use of the idea of *abiding, remaining, and continuing* in our connectivity with God.

- In fact, the word appeared six times in the five verses of I John 4:12–16
- John's use of the word is meant to indicate spiritual oneness with God

John was extending his reporting in his gospel in **John 14:16-18** “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;¹⁷Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.¹⁸I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you (KJV).

Evident in many Jewish depictions of God's heavenly court, are angels and divine attributes could serve as accusers or advocates, with Satan as the primary prosecutor, and God or his favored attribute of mercy, or Michael defending God's people (Israel).

- Three participants are active in this hostility **(1) Adversary/Accuser (2) Almighty (3) Advocate**

LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

The term used in the Bible with the general connotation of "adversary," being applied to any antagonist

- (1) to an enemy in war (I Kings 5:4; 11:14; 11:23-25) from which use is developed the concept of a traitor in battle (I Sam. 29:4)
- (2) to an accuser before the judgment-seat (Psl. cix. 6; Zech 3:1-2)
- (3) to any opponent (II Sam. 19:22; Num 22:32); particularly those who puts obstacles in the way of their opponent
 - Such a view is found in the prologue to the Book of Job, where Satan appears, together with other celestial beings or "sons of God," before the Almighty.
 - Satan's dialogue with God in Job 1 depicts his unrelentless activity in our world, saying he's been "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it" (V 7).
 - He is the **celestial prosecutor**, who sees only man's iniquity; for he persists in his evil opinion of Job even after Job has successfully passed his first trial by surrendering to the will of God, whereupon Satan demands the test of physical suffering (2:2-5)

LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

It is also evident from the accounts involving the accusatory opposition of Satan that he has no power of independent action but requires the permission of God.

- In fact, we are encouraged that God's power in us is greater than his power (I John 4:4)
- Thus, he cannot be regarded as an equal opponent of the Almighty; and does not disturb the peace of God's people by his presence
- This is true in the case of Job and Joshua the high priest and the people he represents in Zech. 3:1-2; and he must halt his deleterious activity when told to stop speaking by the "angel of the Lord"

In both passages Satan is a mere accuser who acts out of diabolical intent with no power to enforce without the permission of the Almighty.

In John 14, the Spirit is "another" advocate like Jesus (John 9:35-41), where Jesus defends the man put out of the synagogue and accuses his accusers).

Judaism was also familiar with the idea of an advocate who was a "successor" who carries on a predecessor's work – **JOSHUA/MOSES–ELISHA/ELIJAH– HOLY SPIRIT/ JESUS**

LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

So, having seen the activities of the **Adversary/Accuser** and **the Almighty**, in the gospel of John we have the unveiling of the Advocate

The backdrop for calling the Spirit “**Counselor**” (NIV) or “**Helper**” (NASB) is debated, but it is probably a courtroom image; because one sense of the term is “**advocate,**” (**paraklētos**) “**defending attorney,**” or “**intercessor.**”

In gospel of John 16:8-11, The believers’ Advocate becomes a “**prosecutor**” of the **world**, as sometimes in the OT (Jer. 50:34; 51:36; Lam. 3:58-66; Psalm 43:1;50:8).

It becomes easier to understand why John opened this fourth Chapter discussing those who are children of the God and the incentive to living godly versus that of the children of he who is the god of this world.

- **I John 4:4-6** You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.⁵They are of the world. Therefore, they speak *as* of the world, and the world hears them. ⁶We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

➤ He states in **V 3** that Antichrist and his followers **confess** (speak) untruths about Christ

❑ They **say** He Who came in the flesh is not God

❑ Then in **V 5** he says they **speak** in a manner indicative of their worldliness which reiterates the matter of the Christ coming in flesh

❑ But we in who are of God (**V 6**), **speak** and God hears us because we speak from the spirit of truth

- God's children (sons and daughters), and Satan's children (the rest of the world), are distinguished and directed by either **the spirit of truth** or the **spirit of error**.

And the evidences of true religion in man is known by the **exercises** (*operative performance*) of the mind, influenced by the Holy Spirit.

In other words, the state of the mind is manifest only by its exercises; and spiritual exercises indicate the operations of the Spirit of Christ.

Believers **dwell** (abide) in **God (Christ)** and His Spirit **abides** (dwells) in us; and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the action by which God takes up permanent residence in the body of a believer in Jesus Christ.

LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

In the OT, the Spirit would come and go from the saints, **empowering them for service** but not necessarily remaining with them (Judges 15:14 / **Samson**; I Chron. 12:18/ **Amasai**; Psl. 51:11/ **David**; Ezekiel 11:5/ **fell on the prophet**).

Jesus revealed to His disciples the new role the Spirit of Truth would play in their lives: “He lives (dwelleth) with you and will be in you” (John 14:17).

Paul wrote in I Cor. 6:19-20, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, **who is in you**, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body.”

When one accepts Christ as their Savior (Rom. 10:9–13), the Holy Spirit takes up residence in your heart, bringing with them an entirely new life of love, service to the Lord, and relationship.

John started the epistle in I John 1:2 saying that he bore witness of the authenticity of Jesus, and in I John 4 there are three witnesses:

LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

1. the witness *in* the believer by the Spirit (I John 4:13)
2. the witness *through* the believer that God is love and that He sent His Son to die for the world (I John 4:14).
3. the witness *of* the believer that Jesus Christ is God's Son (I John 4:15)

The world will not believe that God loves sinners until they see His love at work in His children's lives; therefore, these three witnesses cannot be separated.

- Jesus did not simply preach the love of God; He proved it by giving His life on the cross.
- If we abide in Christ, we will abide in His love, and He expects His followers to love likewise.
- If we abide in His love, we must share this love with others.
- Whenever we share this love, it is proof in our own hearts that we are abiding in Christ.
- In other words, there is no separation between a Christian's inner life and his outer life.

Abiding in God's love produces two wonderful spiritual benefits in the life of a believer:

- ▶ He grows in knowledge, and ▶ He grows in faith (I John 4:16)
- ▶ The more we love God, the more we understand the love of God
- ▶ And the more we understand His love, the easier it is for us to trust Him

LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

After all, when you know someone intimately and love him sincerely, you have no problem putting your confidence in him.

As a believer abides in Christ and spends time in fellowship with Him, he comes to love God more and more.

- He also grows in his love for other Christians, for the lost, and even for his enemies.
- As he shares the Father's love with others, he experiences more of the Father's love himself.

"God is love," then, is not simply a profound biblical statement, rather it is the basis for a believer's relationship with God and with his fellowman.

- Because God is love, we can love. His love is not past history; it is present reality.
- "Love one another" begins as ***a commandment*** (I John 4:7), then it becomes ***a privilege*** (I John 4:11).
- But it is more than a commandment or a privilege, it is also the **thrilling consequence** and **evidence** of our abiding in Christ (I John 4:12).
- Loving one another is not something we simply *ought* to do; it is something we *want* to do.

LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

There are some practical applications which grow out of this basic truth about God's love:

First, the better we know God's love, the easier it will be to live as a Christian.

- How can we explain the love of God, if we are uncertain about it ourselves?
- Never knowing what it feels like to be loved leaves an unsatisfied longing
- While presenting to Moses the second set of tablets, we find in **Exd. 34:6-7** The LORD, the LORD, a God **merciful and gracious**, slow to anger, and **abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love** for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.”
 - God is merciful, gracious, compassionate, longsuffering; abundant in goodness & truth
- This kind of understanding does not come from reading the Bible alone, rather it results from a personal experience of God's love.
- In fact, reading devotions alone can become a dangerous substitute for deep devotion

LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

Secondly, unless we *love* the lost, our verbal witness to them will be useless.

- One of the common criticisms Jesus faced was He spent too much time with sinners.
- How many of us could be accused of spending time with the unwelcomed and unappreciated?
- The Gospel message of love is both declared and demonstrated by Jesus Christ.
- The only way we can effectively win others is to declare the Gospel by our lives
- I'm talking about lives that reflect Christ and becomes a draw to the lost and dying
- May our "witnessing" be more than just mere mouthing of words—people need love
- Are you ready to return God's love for the hatred of the world?
- Jesus said in Matt. 5:11, 44 "Blessed are you when men revile you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me ... But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you" (Matt. 5:11, 44, NASB).

These two aspects of Christian love cannot be separated: if we love God, we will love one another; and if we love one another, we will grow in our love for God.

LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

Unfortunately, much of what we call “love” today is not really reflective of the love which God gives to us or we claim to give to others.

God’s Divine love is a special kind of love and I John 4:10 may be translated: “In this way is seen the true love.”

- There is a false love, and this kind of love God must and will reject.
- Love that is born out of the very essence of God *must* be spiritual and holy, because “God is spirit” and “God is light.”
- God’s true genuine unmerited love is “poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us” (Rom. 5:5).

Love, therefore, is a valid test of true Christian faith, since God is love, and we have claimed a personal relationship with God, we must of necessity reveal His love in how we live.

- A child of God has been “born of God,” and therefore he shares God’s divine nature.
- Not only have we been “born of God,” but we also “know God.”

LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

In the Bible, the word *know* has a much deeper meaning than simply intellectual acquaintance or understanding.

a) For example, the verb *know* is used to describe the intimate union of husband & wife (Gen. 4:1).

b) Thus, to know God means to be in a deep relationship to Him—to share His life and enjoy His love.

➤ This knowing is not simply a matter of understanding facts; it is a matter of perceiving truth (1 John 2:3–5).

➤ In our age we hear the phrase “tell me your truth” – but here is only one truth

➤ In our age we hear talk about “fake news” – but the “good news” is never fake

➤ Whenever there is a disconnect between genuine truth in faulty information transfer, the neural circuitry guided by the Holy Spirit will let us know the tea tastes bad.

• It is unrealistic to expect the **unregenerate heart** to know spiritual things: **1 Cor. 2:12-14**

LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

“Now we have received, **not the spirit of the world**, but the spirit which is of God; that we might **know the things that are freely given to us of God.** ¹³

Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but **which the Holy Ghost teacheth**; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. ¹⁴ But the **natural (*psychikos vs pneumatikos*) man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God**: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.”

- We must understand “he that loveth not knoweth not God” (I John 4:8) in this light.
- It is possible to love our families and even sacrifice for them or we might have intellectual understanding of God, but that does not constitute replication of Divine Affinity
- **I John 4:8** says without *a personal experience* with God, one cannot really love like Him
 - That man will know in his head, but it has never will get into his heart.

LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

What *God* is determines what we ought to be and if He is love, “As He is, so are we in this world” (1 John 4:17).

The fact that Christians love one another is evidence of their fellowship with God and their sonship from God, and it is also evidence that they *know God*.

Their experience with God is not simply a once-for-all crisis; it is a **daily experience** of getting to know Him better and better.

The study of God (Theology) is not a dry, impractical course in doctrinal studies—it is an exciting daily experience that makes us more like His son!

- That is the essence of “give us this day our daily bread” (Matt. 6:11)
 - **Exd. 16:4** Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a **certain rate every day....**”
 - **Sonship requires trust in the Father for daily provision**

LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

As we come to a close on I John chapter 4, lets read the final verses:

I John 4:17-21 Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. ¹⁹ We love Him because He first loved us. ²⁰ If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? ²¹ And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.

Since Christians will have to get along with each other in heaven, so why not begin by loving one another down here?

Interestingly John declares in V 17, "Is made perfect" is really "has been made perfect, meaning if God's love is in us, it exists in its finished result – a past fact and present reality

LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

This love is not primarily God's love for us or our love for Him, but the love which God is in His nature, produced in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

The saint who in the Rapture of the Church will approach the Judgment Seat of Christ with boldness is the saint who in his earthly life has had the love that "God is" in His nature brought to its full operation by the Holy Spirit in his life.

- That fullness of love results in a **life devoted** entirely to the Lord Jesus.
- The word speaks of effortlessness of speech, with a free and fearless confidence, having nothing to hide or be ashamed of in the presence of God.
- That kind of life is a Christ-like life, making the saint like Christ as he dwells in the midst of an upside-down world of sinful people.
- And the Lord Jesus at the Judgment Seat, will not condemn those who, while they lived on earth, were like Him.

We have learned in I John that God's love has been manifested "**toward**" us (4:1), "**in**" us (4:12), and also "**with**" us (4:17).

LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

- This is a life and a church fellowship saturated with the love of God.
- This kind of love seeks to please the Father and has **no interest in the world.**

Sons of God do not fear the day of judgment, because the Spirit's witness of love proves that we are His children and that we will never face condemnation.

Notice the statement at the end of v. 17—"as He is (now in heaven) representing us before the Father, so are we (now on earth), representing Him before sinful men.

- As long as He is there in heaven, we have nothing to fear.
- May we do as good a job here on earth as He does in glory.

Adam and Eve were afraid and hid as they feared the judgment for their disobedience, and all who have never trusted Christ ought to be afraid.

- But Christians need never be afraid to meet their Lord (II Tim. 1:7; Rom. 8:15), for "God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and a healthy mind.

WEDNESDAY— 12 NOON
BIBLE
ESSENTIALS
Join Us for Midday



Fuel for Courage
SUNDAY EVENINGS - 7:00 PM
Live Interactive Bible Study
On Zoom



“Open Church – Open Bible”

Communication Information

**Thank you for sharing today at the “Open Church-Open Bible Ministry
at the Christ Baptist Church.**

**If this lesson has been a blessing to you, and desire you to support
Christ Baptist , please go to <http://www.cbcburlingtonnj.org/>, click on
the **GIVE** tab at the top of the page and follow the prompts**

**Or Send Your Donations by Mail to
Christ Baptist Church, PO Box 10, Burlington NJ 08016**

A copy of this lesson can be obtained by going to the **CBC Website
at <http://www.cbcburlingtonnj.org/>, **Click at the ON-LINE BIBLE STUDYTAB**
A copy of the Weekly Lesson PDF will be available for downloading**

www.cbcburlingtonnj.org e-mail churchoffice@cbcburlingtonnj.org 609.387.1234