

STUDIES IN 1 JOHN

STUDY NUMBER SIX: Fellowship is a Rehearsal for the Future

1 John 2:28-3:3

Key Verse 3:2: "Beloved ones, now we are the children of God, and not yet has it been made visible what we shall be. We are knowing that, whenever He is made visible, like ones to Him we shall be, because we shall see Him just as He is."

TEXT:

v.28 And now, little children, keep on abiding in Him, in order that whenever He is revealed, we might have boldness and not shrink away in shame from Him in His coming.

v.29 If you know that He is righteous, you are knowing also that everyone who is doing righteousness has been born of Him.

3:v. 1 Behold how glorious a love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and we are. For this reason the world is not knowing us, because it knew Him not.

v. 2 Beloved ones, now we are the children of God, and not yet has it been made visible what we shall be. We are knowing that, whenever He is made visible, like ones to Him we shall be, because we shall see Him just as He is.

v. 3 And everyone who is having this hope on Him is purifying himself, even as that one is pure.

INTRODUCTION:

People Want To Maintain Barrier Of Space When Using Public Transportation by Ann Landers

Dear Ann Landers: I can tell by your answer to "Slim Lady in Pico Rivera" that you don't ride the bus much. You bawled her out in a manner she didn't deserve when she complained about fat people taking up a seat and a half and squashing her against the window.

Ann, I'm a people person and easy to get along with, but when I ride public transportation, I do not want a stranger "this close" to me.--Teri in Washington State

Dear Teri: Many readers were extremely upset with my response, and they spared no words letting me know it. Please read on:

Dear Ann Landers: If some grossly overweight stranger suddenly sat on your lap, I don't believe you would react with great cordiality.

Size is not an issue here. Each of us has a comfort level regarding the space around us. We have a tendency to react defensively, negatively and sometimes violently when someone intrudes into our space.

I take the position that no one has the right to sit on my lap without my permission. You missed a fine opportunity to tell you[r] readers that it is perfectly good manners to say to a seatmate on a plane, on a bus or in a private car, "I am being crushed. Please get off me."--Cynthia in Wasilla, Alaska

Dear Alaska: Your point is a valid one, but your language could use a bit of refinement. For example, how about this? "Would you mind moving over just a bit? These seats are really too small for two people."

The next correspondent tells a different story.

Dear Ann: I've been heavy all my life, and no diet has ever worked for me. When I ride the bus, I make a special effort to sit next to a slim person so that I don't crowd anyone. When that's not possible, I try to leave some space between me and my seatmate, even though it's not always comfortable. It hurts to read unkind comments about "fat people." Thanks for pleading for compassion. We need it.

From Columbus, Ohio: You were awfully tough on that slim lady who complained about the seat hog. I can't tell much from that small head shot of you in the Dispatch, but I'll bet you are a bit of a hippo yourself, which explains your militant defense of the fatties who write to you.--Henry F.

Dear Henry: I am 5 foot 2 and have weighed between 112 and 117 for the last 30 years. If that makes me a hippo, so be it.

Fresno, Calif.: Two months ago, I took a trip from Los Angeles to London. For nearly 12 hours, I was squashed between two enormous women. In self-defense, I took a sleeping pill. When I awakened, I thought I was paralyzed for life. My left side was completely numb. I had to be helped off the plane because my leg just buckled. Before we took off, I knew I was in big trouble and asked the flight attendant if she could move me. She said, "Sorry, this is a sold-out flight. There's nothing I can do." Maybe when people make their airline reservations, they should be asked what they weigh.--J.L.

Dear J. L.: I think there might be a law against it.
--something to do with invasion of privacy.

Gem of the Day: A football fan is a guy who yells at the quarterback for not being able to pinpoint a receiver 46 yards down field and then can't find his own car in the parking lot after the game.

(1992, Creators Syndicate)

(Overcoming Loneliness by David Jeremiah)

Another woman poetically described the kind of gift she hopes to receive from God.

Unknown Man

Oh, unknown man, whose rib I am, why don't you come for me?
A lonely, homesick rib I am that would with others be.
I want to wed--there, now, 'tis said!
(I won't deny and fib.)
I want my man to come at once and claim his rib!

Some men have thought that I'd be theirs,
but only for a bit,
We found out soon it wouldn't do--
we didn't seem to fit.
There's just one place, the only space I'll fit
(I will not fib).
I want that man to come at once and claim his rib!

Oh, don't you sometimes feel a lack, a new rib needed there?
 It's me! Do come and get me soon before I have gray hair.
 Come get me, dear! I'm homesick here!
 I want (and I'll not fib),
 I want my man to come at once and claim his rib.
 pp. 33-34

1 Corinthians 2:9

but just as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him.

Sensei, a beautiful young woman, tells the story of how she left a promising career and the possibility of happiness in marriage to go to the country of Japan to establish an orphanage for young girls before they could fall into the hands of the houses of prostitution. She worked for some time in a rescue home for young girls, who had already been captured by some of these houses and had run away and needed a place to stay. She was very frustrated by the lack of results and one day she said, "I thought God gave me this work. It is my burden. A voice inside me answered, 'There isn't anything that can be done to save those girls.' And then another voice said, 'We should put a fence at the top of the precipice, rather than an ambulance at the bottom.'" That made up her mind. She would return to Japan and start a home that would take in girls before they could fall into the hands of the brothel keepers. She went with this new vision of what the Lord wanted her to do. A motto framed upon the wall of a missionary friend paraphrased from the book of Proverbs was her encouragement. It read: "As thou goest step by step, I will open up the way before thee."

Because Sensei was in fellowship with the Father and sensitive to His voice, the Lord was able to reveal to her what He wanted to do with her life. Her fellowship served as a real preparation for the future.

In pursuing our series of studies in 1 John on FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER, we have ascertained thus far in:

Study #1 - FELLOWSHIP IS RESTORED BY JESUS CHRIST

Study #2 - FELLOWSHIP IS BROKEN BY SIN

Study #3 - FELLOWSHIP IS NOURISHED BY OBEDIENCE

Study #4 - FELLOWSHIP IS ESCALATED BY GROWTH

Study #5 - FELLOWSHIP IS BEING EDUCATED BY HIS SPIRIT

This brings us now to Study #6:

"FELLOWSHIP IS A REHEARSAL FOR THE FUTURE."

Isaiah 40:29-31

He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

I believe that one of the sweetest experiences for a Christian in fellowship with the Father is to begin to ascertain what the Lord is doing in his life even before it happens.

It is the Lord's way of preparing us for what is ahead. This fellowship can serve to be of great comfort in the midst of the traumatic experiences of life, simply because when we are walking hand in hand with the Father, He lovingly prepares us for what He is allowing to go on in our lives. Life's most difficult experiences lose their sting when we have the divine perspective.

This is why I feel it is so essential for us to have time in the word on a daily basis. We must not get behind in our homework, or as a result, we are going to be the losers.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Many commentators see a major break here. The words "continue in Him" involve again the Greek verb meno (abide), which has already occurred 10 times in verses 6-27.

John uses meno 66 of the 112 times that it occurs in the New Testament:

40 in John,

23 in 1 John,

and 3 in 2 John.

In accord with his basic theme about fellowship in 1 John 1:3, John once more enjoins the abiding life.

He now, however, introduces the new thought of being confident before Christ at His coming.

v.28 And now, little children, keep on abiding in Him, in order that whenever He is revealed, we might have boldness and not shrink away in shame from Him in His coming.

Once again, John addresses these Christians as "LITTLE CHILDREN." And he is repeating the COMMAND of the previous verse:

"KEEP ON ABIDING IN HIM."

To fulfill that command they need to be:

DRAWING upon all that He is,

DEPENDING upon all that He can do,

and as a result, DEVELOPING into His likeness.

Barclay says:

By far the best way to be ready for the coming of Christ is to live with Him every day. If we do that, His coming will be no shock to us, it will simply be the entry into the nearer presence of One with whom we have lived for so long. The best way to prepare for the coming of Christ is never to forget the presence of Christ.

After giving this command, he gives the purpose for it in the next phrase:

"IN ORDER THAT WHENEVER HE IS REVEALED, WE MIGHT HAVE BOLDNESS AND NOT SHRINK AWAY IN SHAME FROM HIM IN HIS COMING."

Back in chapter 1:2, John says:

"AND THE LIFE WAS MADE VISIBLE [OR REVEALED]."

and now in chapter 2:28, he is saying that he is going to be "REVEALED" or made visible again another time.

John is resting on the promise of Jesus to him in the upper room in the writing of these words, when He told them to stop being troubled in their hearts, for if they believed in God, they were to believe also in Him, for He was going to prepare a place for them; and if He went to prepare a place for them, He was going to come again and receive them unto Himself.

In light of the fact that the Lord was gone, John was challenging these believers to remain faithful by "ABIDING IN HIM" amidst the pressure of the world to conform to its patterns, and to the teachings of error that were being presented to them at this time.

"AND NOW, LITTLE CHILDREN, KEEP ON ABIDING IN HIM, IN ORDER THAT WHENEVER HE IS REVEALED, WE MIGHT HAVE BOLDNESS."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

This is a bold freedom of speech.

Ephesians 3:12

in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.

1 John 3:21

Beloved ones; if our heart is not condemning us, we are having boldness toward God.

1 John 4:17

In this the love has been brought to completion which is in us, that as a result we are having boldness in the day of judgment; because just as that one is, also we ourselves are in this world.

1 John 5:14

And this is the boldness (confidence) which we are having toward Him, that if we are asking anything according to His will, He is hearing us.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

If the readers would maintain their fellowship with God, they would enjoy a genuine boldness of speech when they would meet their Lord.

"AND NOW, LITTLE CHILDREN, KEEP ON ABIDING IN HIM, IN ORDER THAT WHENEVER HE IS REVEALED, WE MIGHT HAVE BOLDNESS AND NOT SHRINK AWAY IN SHAME FROM HIM IN HIS COMING."

It was the unprofitable servant who had buried his one talent rather than being faithful in his stewardship. He came into the presence of his master on the defensive and had to shrink away in shame because of his failure to be faithful in doing that which the Lord wanted him to do.

Matthew 22:12

and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?' And he was speechless.

Revelation 6:15-17

And the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand?"

Revelation 20:11

And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.

Mitchell says:

I've thought a good deal about this. Is it possible that there are going to be some who are going to be taken up to be with the Lord who are going to be ashamed when they stand in His presence? My friend, if the Lord Jesus should come for His own today, and He may, would you be ashamed of what you are doing? Would you be ashamed of some of the things you have said? Would you be ashamed of some of the plans you are making? This verse is very practical and heart-searching. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. 21:4). I wonder if this will be because some Christians will be ashamed before Him at His coming. The translation of the church is on the ground of grace, but the question here is: Will we be found abiding in fellowship with Him?

(Principle-Centered Leadership by Stephen R. Covey)

Some habits of ineffectiveness are rooted in our social conditioning toward quick-fix, short-term thinking. In school many of us procrastinate and then successfully cram for tests. But does cramming work on a farm? Can you go two weeks without milking the cow and then get out there and milk like crazy? Can you "forget" to plant in the spring or goof off all summer and then hit the ground real hard in the fall to bring in the harvest? We might laugh at such ludicrous approaches in agriculture, but then in an academic environment we might cram to get the grades and degrees we need to get the jobs we want, even if we fail to get a good general education.

p. 17

(Pack Up Your Gloomees in a Great Big Box, then Sit on the Lid and Laugh! by Barbara Johnson)

Recently I saw a picture of an Indiana license plate bearing the "two forbidden words":

IF ONLY

Saying, "IF ONLY I had done this," "IF ONLY I had gone there," or "IF ONLY I had done that," can lead to all kinds of situations, most of them bad.

IF ONLY can fill your stomach with ulcers.

IF ONLY can give you high blood pressure.

IF ONLY can deprive you of fun in your profession.

IF ONLY can take the zing out of your marriage.

IF ONLY can depress you to the point of suicide.

You see, yesterday is gone forever and tomorrow may never come. TODAY IS IT! So give it your best shot, and at the end of the road you will be at the place of your choice instead of being haunted by IF ONLY, IF ONLY, IF ONLY. . . .
p. 66

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The verse speaks of the consequences that come should a believer fail to abide in Him. There is the possibility of shame when Christ comes. This intimates divine disapproval at the judgment seat of Christ, referred to in chapter 4:17-19.

1 John 4:17-19

In this the love has been brought to completion which is in us, that as a result we are having boldness in the day of judgment; because just as that one is, also we ourselves are in this world. Fear is not in love; but perfect love is casting out fear, because this fear is having to do with punishment. And the one who is fearing has not been brought to completion in this love. As for us, let us be loving because He Himself first loved us.

The possibility is very real but does not, of course, suggest the loss of salvation.

The most important thing that the Lord wants of us is that we "KEEP ON ABIDING IN HIM." The only way this can be done is by a faithful reading of His word and a continuous union with Him in prayer and fellowship.

NO TASK ON EARTH SUPERSEDES THIS RESPONSIBILITY.

NO PRESSURE OR PROBLEM CAN CHANGE THIS PICTURE.

SERVICE CANNOT,

GIVING CANNOT,

TEACHING CANNOT,

NOTHING.

When the student is faithful in studying, he comes to the time of examination with boldness and confidence, and, as a result of a job well done does not need to shrink away in shame.

The 3 QUALITIES that delight the heart of our heavenly Father are:

FELLOWSHIP,

FAITHFULNESS,

and FRUIT.

When we have not been faithful in our fellowship and communion with the Lord, the natural outgrowth of that is going to be a lack of confidence and a certain fearful expectation of what lies ahead.

John is saying, "KEEP ON ABIDING IN HIM, IN ORDER THAT WHENEVER HE IS REVEALED" our fellowship and faithfulness will lead to boldness and we will not be shrinking away in shame--the shame of guilt--because we are unprofitable servants.

We know our hearts, and we know we have done what He told us to do.

The "COMING" he is talking about here is THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH--or the meeting in the air--described in:

1 Corinthians 15:51-55,

and 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18.

Titus 2:12, 13

instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus;

And so John repeats in this verse what he said in the last verse because he wants to emphasize the fact that he wants them above everything else to "KEEP ON ABIDING IN HIM."

In a day of apostasy and unbelief, this is the only safe place to be.

When we are not abiding as believers, there are some sobering passages to tell us the consequences:

John 15:6

If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

1 Corinthians 3:13-15

each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

Hebrews 10:37

For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay.

When the Lord Jesus comes again, it is John's desire that we are characterized by fellowship, by faithfulness, and by fruit. He wants us to have "BOLDNESS" or freedom of speech, rather than feeling guilty about our lives and have to "SHRINK AWAY IN SHAME FROM HIM."

Our attitude towards Him in His coming will be determined by the kind of lives that we have lived as Christians here upon the earth and the level of our fellowship with Him.

Who can measure the joy that can be ours when we face the Lord Jesus with boldness because we have been pleasing to Him in the lives that we have lived, and to hear Him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Dr. Mitchell says:

This 28th verse is a great encouragement to all of us. The same thought is in Hebrews 10:37: "He that shall come shall come and will not tarry." It is an amazing thing that when we stand before God we will stand before Him in all the beauty and righteousness of Christ. In view of this, we are encouraged to abide in Him, to walk in fellowship with Him, to obey Him so that "we shall not be ashamed before Him at His coming."

Yesterday you may have had a wonderful experience with the Lord. That is marvelous, but that has past. My friend, what about today? The great yearning of the heart of God is for your fellowship today wherever you are. "And now little children, abide in Him."

Hebrews 10:31

It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Romans 14:12

So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.

2 Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

v.29 If you know that He is righteous, you are knowing also that everyone who is doing righteousness has been born of Him.

Our fingerprints,

our ID,

our dental records,

our driver's license,

our credit cards,

our social security number all are used to identify who we are.

For the Christian, it is the fruit of righteousness which is flowing from his life.

Too many times we want to identify the victorious believer by:

the cross he or she is wearing around their neck,

the Bible they are carrying,

their membership in a certain church,

their head full of biblical knowledge.

The key result of fellowship with a righteous God is righteousness flowing from my life.

John is saying here that because Jesus Christ is righteous, and we are abiding in Him, and having experienced the new birth, righteousness should be the fruit of our lives.

This takes us back to:

chapter 2:6

The one who is saying he is abiding in Him, he himself is morally obligated to be walking around just as that one also walked around.

Jesus said in:

Matthew 7:20

So then, you will know them by their fruits.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

This verse introduces for the first time in 1 John the explicit thought of new birth. This verse has nothing to do with the reader's individual assurance of salvation. It is rather an assertion that when they see real righteousness exhibited they can be sure that the person who exhibits it is a child of God. This verse shows us how to see the new birth in the actions of others.

Blaiklock says:

The prime purpose of chapter 2:29, this verse of introduction and transition, is to stress the fact that practical righteousness is the fruit and the sign of the holy relationship which is to be the theme. It is no matter of mysticism divorced from life's conduct. The child of God demonstrates his standing by the visible simplicities of Christlike living.
p. 57

Barclay puts it this way:

In verse 29, John comes back again to a thought which is never far from his mind. The only way in which a man can prove that he is abiding in Christ, the only way in which he can prove that he really has had a new birth is by the righteousness of his life. The profession of a man's lips will always be proved or disproved by the practice of his life.

Stott says:

The child exhibits the parents' character because he shares the parents' nature. A person's righteousness is thus the evidence of his new birth, not the cause or condition of it.

Mitchell affirms this by saying:

Here, then, is the revelation that God is righteous. The requirement for fellowship with a righteous God, of course, is righteousness.

J. Vernon McGee says:

In effect, John is saying that God's children look like the Father. They take after their Father. If they don't take after the Father, they must not be the Father's children. It is just as simple as that, my friend.

This is one of the things which JAMES emphasizes in his epistle:

James 2:17

Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

Flowing from my life will be evidences that I am His child. As I "KEEP ON ABIDING IN HIM," fruit is going to be flowing from that fellowship; and that fruit which changes my life will also be making an impact on the lives of those around me.

(Rediscovering Holiness by J. I. Packer)

If the Christian community does not teach righteousness today, nobody will. But Western Christians today are scarcely able to teach righteousness, because they themselves have scarcely learned it. With our overall neglect of ethical education for believers, plus our constant exposure to brainwashing by expositors of positive thinking and high self-esteem who cry down all guilt feelings as unspiritual and against the mind of Jesus, it is not perhaps surprising that when it comes to uprightness, integrity, and compassion, conservative Christians are not seen to excel.

p. 152

Philippians 1:11

having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

3:v. 1 Behold how glorious a love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and we are. For this reason the world is not knowing us, because it knew Him not.

John is emphatic here to get our attention, to get us focused on the message which he is about to give.

He begins with the word "BEHOLD."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Contemplate the greatness of the divine love which that reality displays. "Behold." Look at it. "Behold, how great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God."

"BEHOLD HOW GLORIOUS A LOVE THE FATHER HAS GIVEN TO US."

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

John 15:13

Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

King observes:

Most of the scholars are agreed that the two main sections and subjects of this epistle are LIGHT and LOVE, which, being so, we shall find the prevailing emphasis of these three chapters is on the second attribute of God and requirement of His people. It is striking to note that within the compass of these 66 verses the noun occurs 16 times, the adjective 5 times, the verb 25 times--love is indeed the theme. And as love is strangely violated by so many in the fellowship, this portion of the word may carry much blessing as we study it together. I hope I shall not be held too facile or too fanciful in suggesting that these present verses give us an essay in Christian portraiture.

King points out that the phrase that we have translated
"HOW GLORIOUS A LOVE" could be translated:

... "of what country." No earthly kingdom contains, nor could cultivate a love of such sweet quality as this. Only the dews and breezes of the heavenly expanses could ever produce so bountiful and beautiful a harvest.

Westcott says:

It is used to call attention to the character both of persons and of things.

Stott points out:

"What manner of" means originally "of what country." It is as if the Father's love is so unearthly, so foreign to this world, that He wonders from what country it may come. The word always implies astonishment.

Mitchell observes:

In the verse we are considering here, we are dealing with the manner of His love. Here is an imparted, a bestowed love so great and wonderful that we are brought into relationship with Him as His children. We receive not only an imparted life but also an imparted love.

There are those, then, who would translate this phrase:

"BEHOLD WHAT MANNER OF LOVE THE FATHER HAS GIVEN TO US,

by saying:

"BEHOLD HOW GLORIOUS A LOVE THE FATHER HAS GIVEN TO US,"

or

"BEHOLD HOW GREAT . . .,"

or

"BEHOLD HOW WONDERFUL A LOVE THE FATHER HAS GIVEN TO US."

(How to Handle Adversity by Charles Stanley)

A farmer had some puppies he needed to sell. He painted a sign advertising the pups and set about nailing it to a post on the edge of his yard. As he was driving the last nail into the post, he felt a tug on his overalls. He looked down into the eyes of a little boy.

"Mister," he said, "I want to buy one of your puppies."

"Well," said the farmer, as he rubbed the sweat off the back of his neck, "these puppies come from fine parents and cost a good deal of money."

The boy dropped his head for a moment. Then reaching deep into his pocket, he pulled out a handful of change and held it up to the farmer. "I've got thirty-nine cents. Is that enough to take a look?"

"Sure," said the farmer. And with that he let out a whistle. "Here, Dolly!" he called. Out from the doghouse and down the ramp ran Dolly followed by four little balls of fur. The little boy pressed his face against the chain link fence. His eyes danced with delight.

As the dogs made their way to the fence, the little boy noticed something else stirring inside the doghouse. Slowly another little ball appeared; this one noticeably smaller. Down the ramp it slid. Then in a somewhat awkward manner the little pup began hobbling toward the others, doing its best to catch up. This was clearly the runt of the litter.

"I want that one," the little boy said, pointing to the runt.

The farmer knelt down at the boy's side and said, "Son, you don't want that puppy. He will never be able to run and play with you like these other dogs would."

With that the little boy stepped back from the fence, reached down, and began rolling up one leg of his trousers. In doing so he revealed a steel brace running down both sides of his leg attaching itself to a specially made shoe. Looking back up at the farmer, he said, "You see, sir, I don't run too well myself, and he will need someone who understands."

pp. 146-47

"BEHOLD HOW GLORIOUS A LOVE THE FATHER HAS GIVEN TO US, THAT WE SHOULD BE CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD; AND WE ARE. FOR THIS REASON THE WORLD IS NOT KNOWING US, BECAUSE IT KNEW HIM NOT."

John 1:12

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,

Galatians 3:26

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:16, 17

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.

Galatians 4:6

And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

James 1:18

In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among His creatures.

1 Peter 1:23

for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God.

We have been taken OUT of Adam and placed INTO Christ.

We are the children of God. We have been born into His family.

John goes on to say:

"FOR THIS REASON THE WORLD IS NOT KNOWING US, BECAUSE IT KNEW HIM NOT."

John 17:14

I have given them Thy word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

John 16:33

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.

John here again touches on the fact that to love the world is to testify that the Love of the Father is not in us.

v. 2 Beloved ones, now we are the children of God, and not yet has it been made visible what we shall be. We are knowing that, whenever He is made visible, like ones to Him we shall be, because we shall see Him just as He is.

I have chosen this 2nd verse as the KEY VERSE to study #6:

"FELLOWSHIP IS A REHEARSAL FOR THE FUTURE."

How beautiful of John to call these Christians:

"BELOVED ONES."

This again is a real expression of a changed life from one who:

was a "son of thunder,"

got angry,

was antagonistic,

and was filled with selfish ambition.

He now calls his brothers and sisters in God's family "BELOVED ONES."

"BELOVED ONES, NOW WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD."

It becomes a great concern to me when I hear the testimony of some who say that they have always been a Christian. The word "NOW" indicates here in this verse that there was a time in the past when John and the others he is addressing did not know Jesus Christ. They were not children of God but children of wrath.

What John is saying here is that we know what we are now and that is "WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD." This has come about in our lives as a result of the new birth.

J. Vernon McGee says:

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God." Not tomorrow, but right now. This is the wonderful part of it.

"BELOVED ONES, NOW WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD, AND NOT YET HAS IT BEEN MADE VISIBLE WHAT WE SHALL BE."

John is saying what we will be in the future has not been made plain.

2 Timothy 1:12

For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.

Philippians 1:6

For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:16, 17

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.

Romans 8:29

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren;

John is not saying here that there is not going to be a future.

1 Corinthians 13:12

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known.

1 Corinthians 15:51

Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

In the PAST, we experienced the new birth by receiving Jesus Christ,
and in the PRESENT, we are now His children, as a result of that transaction;
and what our FUTURE is going to be like has not yet been made known.

We know that it is going to be far better according to the Apostle Paul. We know that "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord," and we do know that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man the things which the Lord hath prepared for them that love him."

John goes on to say:

"WE ARE KNOWING THAT, WHENEVER HE IS MADE VISIBLE, LIKE ONES TO HIM WE SHALL BE, BECAUSE WE SHALL SEE HIM JUST AS HE IS."

2 Corinthians 3:18

But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

Philippians 3:21

who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

King says:

Many such sights and many more have stirred my heart, but I am going to see presently one sight that will eclipse them all. "We shall see Him"--what an indescribably lovely thing that first sight of Him is going to be. What a purifying impression it is going to make. Some folks tell us (how strange that the Bible does not mention it) that the fires of purgatory are needful to make us fit for the holy presence of God. But those who come unbiased to this verse of the epistle will discover that one look, one momentary look at Him, will be gloriously sufficient to transfigure the least and the lowest into a perfect presentiment of the Savior. The lens of the camera takes a momentary look; its plate has been duly prepared for the occasion, and lo, an instantaneous impression. "We shall be like Him."

Mitchell says:

Did you ever stop to think of it? When God gets through with you and with me, we are going to be just like His Son. What will we look like when we get to heaven? Just like Jesus. My, what a transformation. Only God could do this. We tend to look at the other fellow and say, "I'm so glad he's going to be changed." Yes, but we are going to be changed too. We can look at other Christians today and find plenty of ground to criticize, but let us not do that. Wait until God is through with all of us. God is not going to be satisfied with any of us until we stand in His presence like His Son. You will never be satisfied with me, and I will never be satisfied with you until we look just like Jesus. I say again, only God can do that. Isn't it wonderful that we have this joyful anticipation of the coming of our Savior "whom having not seen we love"?

Andrew Bonar sent a copy of his new commentary on the book of Leviticus to Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Spurgeon sent it back to Bonar for a photograph and an autograph. Sometime later the commentary was returned to Spurgeon from Bonar with the following message:

Dear Spurgeon:

Here is the book with my autograph and my photograph. If you had been willing to wait a short season, you could have had a better likeness, for I shall be like Him, for I shall see Him as He is.

The picture here is the picture of a couple in love in the autumn of the year, and they know that they cannot be married until the end of the school year.

Before long, you hear the young man saying, "Darling, just think of it, we will be married in just 250 days." The two of them delight in counting off the days. The 230's, the 220's, the 199th day is a landmark. The numbers begin to decrease, but slowly, oh so slowly. It is the 100 day mark, 90 day, 60 day, 30 day, 10 day--TOMORROW! All true lovers know this loving desire toward their day of hope. The consummation of their joy. This was the purpose of their falling in love, that they might be together, that they might be one.

So it is in our relationship to our heavenly Father. Our fellowship with Him increases our anticipation for eternity. We look on each day as bringing us one day closer to the ultimate consummation of our love and of our being in His presence.

What a precious thought when we celebrate each birthday to say at that time, "I am 60 years closer than I was when I was born to the full consummation of eternal life."

It is only through continuous fellowship and communion with the Father that our minds can grasp this perspective, and we see this life as only a prelude or a time of courtship in comparison to the joys of marital bliss when we will be one with our Savior Jesus Christ.

"BELOVED ONES, NOW WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD, AND NOT YET HAS IT BEEN MADE VISIBLE WHAT WE SHALL BE. WE ARE KNOWING THAT, WHENEVER HE IS MADE VISIBLE, LIKE ONES TO HIM WE SHALL BE, BECAUSE WE SHALL SEE HIM JUST AS HE IS."

John says we do know that the Spirit of God is changing us more into the image of His Son, and when that work is completed, we are going to be like Him:

"BECAUSE WE SHALL SEE HIM JUST AS HE IS."

In that moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we are going to be changed completely. What a glorious day that will be when like Him we shall be made complete.

"WE SHALL SEE HIM JUST AS HE IS."

"Face to Face with Christ my Savior"

Face to Face with Christ my Savior.
Face to Face what will it be?
When, with Rapture I behold him,
Jesus Christ, who died for me.

Only faintly now I see Him
With the darkening veil between;
But a blessed day is coming
When His glory shall be seen.

What rejoicing in His presence
When are banished grief and pain,
When the crooked ways are straightened,
And the dark things shall be plain.

Face to face, oh blissful moment,
Face to face, to see and know;
Face to face with my Redeemer,
Jesus Christ, who loves me so.

Face to face I shall behold Him,
Far beyond the starry sky;
Face to face in all His glory,
I shall see Him by and by.

(The New Church Hymnal, 1976, Lexicon Music, Inc., #491)

WE SHALL BEHOLD HIM

The sky shall unfold,
 Preparing His entrance;
 The stars shall applaud Him
 With thunders of praise.
 The sweet light in His eyes shall
 Enhance those awaiting;
 And we shall behold Him
 Then face to face.

REFRAIN:

And we shall behold Him,
 We shall behold Him,
 Face to Face
 In all of His glory.
 O we shall behold Him,
 We shall behold Him
 Face to face,
 Our Savior and Lord.

The angel shall sound
 The shout of His coming;
 The sleeping shall rise
 From their slumbering place.
 And those who remain
 Shall be changed in a moment;
 And we shall behold Him
 Then face to face.

OPTIONAL CHORAL ENDING:

And we shall behold Him,
 Our Savior and Lord.

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John testified in:

chapter 1:1

That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld and our hands touched, concerning the Word of Life--

Just as surely as he had seen Jesus Christ, so he points to the future and says:

"WE SHALL SEE HIM JUST AS HE IS."

Yes, FELLOWSHIP IS A REHEARSAL FOR THE FUTURE.

Spending time in blessed and holy communion with our Father and His blessed Son is only A REHEARSAL FOR THE FUTURE. This is what we are going to do throughout eternity.

"BELOVED ONES, NOW WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD, AND NOT YET HAS IT BEEN MADE VISIBLE WHAT WE SHALL BE. WE ARE KNOWING THAT, WHENEVER HE IS MADE VISIBLE, LIKE ONES TO HIM WE SHALL BE, BECAUSE WE SHALL SEE HIM JUST AS HE IS."

v. 3 And everyone who is having this hope on Him is purifying himself, even as that one is pure.

The result of the hope expressed in the previous verses is a changed life.

Just like we had back in verse 29: righteousness flows from the life of the one born of Him, so also there is a purifying process that is going on in the life of each believer as he becomes more and more like his Savior.

2 Corinthians 7:1

Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Matthew 5:8

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

2 Corinthians 6:17, 18

Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.

Ephesians 5:27

that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.

Purifying the sinner is part of the process. This is all done in anticipation of spending eternity with Him.

Holy Ghost, with light divine,
Shine upon this heart of mine.
Holy Ghost, with power divine,
Cleanse this guilty heart of mine.

Out of love, the future bride and future husband are keeping themselves pure for that special someone.

It is a joy to see the Lord working out in our lives the image of Jesus Christ and that many of the things which are not pleasing to Him are dropping off and His purity of life is beginning to take their place.

Psalms 26:2, 3

Test me, O Lord, and try me,
examine my heart and my mind;
for your love is ever before me,
and I walk continually in your truth.

Psalm 139:23, 24

Search me, O God, and know my heart;
 test me and know my anxious thoughts.
 See if there is any offensive way in me,
 and lead me in the way everlasting.

Psalm 119:9, 11

How can a young man keep his way pure?
 By living according to your word,

I have hidden your word in my heart
 that I might not sin against you.

Barclay quotes:

Behold the amazing gift of love
 the Father hath bestow'd
 On us, the sinful sons of men,
 to call us sons of God!

Conceal'd as yet this honour lies,
 by this dark world unknown,
 A world that knew not when he came,
 ev'n God's eternal Son.

High is the rank we now possess;
 but higher we shall rise;
 Though what we shall hereafter be
 is hid from mortal eyes.

Our souls, we know, when he appears,
 shall bear his image bright;
 For all his glory, full disclos'd,
 shall open to our sight.

A hope so great, and so divine,
 may trials well endure;
 And purge the soul from sense and sin,
 as Christ Himself is pure.

p. 86

Peter speaks about this purifying process in his 1st epistle:

1 Peter 1:6, 7

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

1 Peter 4:12, 13

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation.

Suffering is part of the purifying process in working out His will in our lives.

I would like to suggest at this point that the purifying process takes place in our lives by 3 THINGS:

1. THE SCRIPTURES
2. SUFFERING
3. SERVANTHOOD

(The Existence and Attributes of God by Stephen Charnock)

Corruptions will certainly be subdued in his voluntary subjects. The covenant, I will be your God, implies protection, government, and relief, which are all grounded upon sovereignty; that therefore which is our greatest burden will be removed by his sovereign power. Micah vii. 19, 'He will subdue our iniquities.' If the outward enemies of the church shall not bear up against his dominion, and perpetuate their rebellions unpunished, those within his people shall as little bear up against his throne without being destroyed by him. The billows of our own hearts, and the raging waves within us, are as much at his beck as those without us. And his sovereignty is more eminent in quelling the corruptions of the heart than the commotions of the world; in reigning over men's spirits, by changing them, or curbing them, more than over men's bodies, by pinching and punishing them. The remainders of Satan's empire will moulder away before him, since 'he that is in us' is a greater sovereign 'than he that is in the world,' 1 John iv. 4. His enemies will be laid at his feet, and so never shall prevail against him, when his kingdom shall come. He could not be Lord of any man as a happy creature, if he did not by his power make them happy; and he could not make them happy unless by his grace he made them holy. He could not be praised as a Lord of glory, if he did not make some creatures glorious to praise him; and an earthly creature could not praise him perfectly, unless he had every grain of enmity to his glory taken out of his heart. Since God is the only sovereign, he only can still the commotions in our spirits, and pull down all the ensigns of the devil's royalty; he can waste him by the powerful word of his lips.

p. 739

(Victory through Surrender by E. Stanley Jones)

Your self in your own hands is a problem and a pain; your self in the hands of God is a possibility and a power.

p. 25

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: John repeats the command to "keep on abiding in Him."

LESSON #2: When we are in fellowship and abiding in Him, we have boldness and a freedom in His presence.

LESSON #3: Staying in the word on a daily basis keeps us from getting behind on our homework.

LESSON #4: We are abiding in Him when we are drawing upon all that He is, depending upon all that He can do, and developing into His image.

LESSON #5: Fellowship, faithfulness, and fruit are the three elements of the abundant life.

LESSON #6: Righteousness will result from intimate communion with a righteous God.

LESSON #7: Flowing from my life will be evidences that I am His child.

LESSON #8: Our fellowship with the Father increases our anticipation of eternity.

LESSON #9: Soon we shall be like Him because we shall see Him just as He is.

LESSON #10: Every believer is experiencing a purifying process as he walks with God.

LESSON #11: The purifying process is hastened by the scriptures, by suffering, and by servanthood.

We have been looking together in study #6 at:

FELLOWSHIP IS A REHEARSAL FOR THE FUTURE.

As we keep on abiding in Jesus Christ and are faithful in our walk with Him, the coming of Christ to receive us unto Himself, or our being taken to be with Him in physical death will not be a terrible experience for which we are unprepared. We will be prepared simply because we have been walking in fellowship with Him.

We are then prepared not only for the events of this life but the events of the life which is to come. The scriptures tell us that "Enoch walked with God, and the Lord took him, and he was not." The fellowship which Enoch had with the Father just issued into his eternal destiny.

John has taught us that we are now presently the children of God if we have come by faith to receive Christ as our own personal Savior.

What we shall be is not all that clear, but we know that we are going to be like Him for we are going to see Him as He is.

John concludes this section by saying that:

"EVERYONE WHO IS HAVING THIS HOPE ON HIM IS PURIFYING HIMSELF,
EVEN AS THAT ONE IS PURE."

It behooves us then to be faithful in fellowship with the Father that we might be able to discern His dealings with us as His children.

This will enable us to cooperate more fully with what He is endeavoring to do in our lives.

It is true that there will always be those times when we do not understand what He is doing right at the moment, but our fellowship with Him during those times will bring us through the difficulties because of our confidence in Him and the assurance of His love for us.

There is an old sea tale of a sole survivor of a shipwreck who was cast upon an uninhabited island. After anxiously praying to God for deliverance he painstakingly collected whatever he could salvage from the wreck. With the pieces of the wreckage he constructed a crude hut and stored the few bits of valuables he had saved. Each day, he scanned the horizon for sign of a passing vessel, which he could hail. God seemed to have abandoned him, however, for he sighted nothing. One day, when he returned from a search for food he discovered that his hut was in flames. Everything was destroyed. The worst had happened and his situation was hopeless. Angrily, the seaman cursed God. The next day, however, a ship arrived. "We saw your smoke signals," the rescuing skipper told the shipwrecked man.

It is fellowship with the Father that is going to keep us from making premature judgments with regard to the events and circumstances that are occurring in our daily lives.

THE KING IS COMING

O the King is coming,
The King is coming.
I just heard the trumpets sounding,
And now His face I see;

O the King is coming,
The King is coming!
Praise God,
He's coming for me!

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A CHILD'S LAST PRAYER

Two missionaries from the Philippines, Bernard and Eleanor Bancroft, relate this touching story: "In our work among the children, we contacted a little girl who came from an unsaved family. Shortly after attending some of our meetings, she was taken to the Cuyo Hospital, dying of typhoid fever. It was expected that the child would be delirious in her last hours, but instead she lay perfectly still and seemed ready to slip quietly into eternity. The brokenhearted mother and father stood by her bed weeping. Then Rosa's head stirred and her lips moved. Everyone came closer, hoping to hear her last words. Feebly, and yet with deep meaning, she began to sing, 'Into my heart, into my heart, come into my heart, Lord Jesus. Come in today, come in to stay, come into my heart, Lord Jesus.' For hours she drifted in and out of consciousness, but her tiny voice faltered on, sometimes stumbling and sometimes correctly repeating the same lines. Then she was gone, and the doctor gently covered the small face."

Eleanor Bancroft remembered the bright-eyed tot as the one who had gazed intently at the flannelgraphs used in illustrating Bible stories. She wondered at the time if any of the children had fully understood. But now she says, "Whenever we begin to doubt the value of repeating the glad news of salvation to the little folk around us, we seem to hear again the echo of that faint voice whispering in her final moments those blessed words of invitation: 'Come into my heart, Lord Jesus!'"

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

STUDY #6 - 1 John 2:28-3:3

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

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