



CALVARY
TUSCALOOSA

TEACHING PLAN
NOVEMBER 8, 2020



THIS IS HOW YOU KNOW: CLING TO THE TRUTH

1 JOHN 2:12-29; 3:1-10

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TEACHING PLAN

PREPARATION

- > Spend the week reading through and studying 1 John 2:12-29; 3:1-10. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools (such as a concordance or Bible dictionary) to enhance your preparation.
- > Determine which discussion points and questions will work best with your group.
- > Pray for your pastors, the upcoming group meeting, your teaching, your group members, and their receptivity to the study.

HIGHLIGHTS

TAKEAWAY: In Christ, we have knowledge of what is ultimately true, and through the power of the Spirit we can dispel all that is false.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT: We cannot love God and love the world. Our love for God means forsaking everything the world values for the sake of the one who saved us.

GOSPEL CONNECTION: Christ remains at the center and foundation of our faith, constantly pointing us to ultimate and absolute truth. Anyone or anything that opposes Christ is not of the truth.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.

- 1 Have you ever played the game “Two Truths and a Lie” or some version of it? Are you good at detecting someone else’s lie?
- 2 What are some ways a person can determine what is true over what is false?

“The last hour” began in John’s day and has been growing in intensity ever since. There were ungodly false teachers in John’s time, and they have continued to increase in both number and influence over the centuries since. We must know what we believe and why we believe it. Does it make any difference what we believe? It makes all the difference in the world. There are those all around us who oppose Christ, and if we are not grounded in the truth, then we will easily fall into their philosophy and away from the truth. The ways people do this range from joining a cult to something as simple as placing money, sports, or achievement as an idol above Christ. It is vitally important that we know and believe the truth and are able to detect lies when they come our way.

ALTERNATE INTRODUCTION

Have you ever been around someone who came across as fake? What made them seem insincere? Have you ever been that person? In what ways?

Why is this type of behavior offensive?

No Christian is sinless, but all Christians are called to sin less. Every great personality mentioned in the Bible sinned at one time or another. Abraham lied about his wife. Moses lost his temper and disobeyed God. Peter denied the Lord three times. But sin was not the settled practice of these men. When these individuals sinned, they admitted it and asked God to forgive them. A person who does not know Jesus or is a counterfeit Christian lives a life of habitual sin. His or her profession of faith is not real. A true believer may commit sin but will not continually practice sin.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Notes:

> Have a volunteer read 1 John 2:12-17.

I write to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.¹³ I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, dear children, because you have known the Father.¹⁴ I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.¹⁵ Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.¹⁶ For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world.¹⁷ The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

Having reminded believers what it means to walk in the light of Christ, John went on to reassure them of their salvation in Christ. Many false teachers spread lies about the gospel and the way of Jesus. John wanted to reassure his fellow believers of the true gospel. He started with assuring them of their salvation held securely in and through the person of Christ. They were being tempted to doubt; they were being tempted to question that Jesus was who He said. But those at each and every step of their spiritual journey could be confident in the gospel they had received.

- Why did John address “children,” “young men,” and “fathers”? To whom was he referring?

- In which of these groups would you consider yourself? Why?

After John affirmed the people's salvation—which was not in question—he moved onto warn them of some of the temptations that would remain, even for believers. Though they were saved, and were following Christ, they would continue to feel the pull toward the world and the culture that surrounded them. But their love—and our love—should never be divided between God and the things of this world.

Notes:

- What are some ways we “love the world”? What indicators did John specify about how people love the world?
- How are Christians to actively fight against this type of love in their lives?

> Have a volunteer read 1 John 2:18-29.

Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.¹⁹ They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.²⁰ But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.²¹ I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth.²² Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist—he denies the Father and the Son.²³ No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.²⁴ See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father.²⁵ And this is what he promised us—even eternal life.²⁶ I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray.²⁷ As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone

to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him.²⁸ And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.²⁹ If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

NOTES:

So much of what John centered on in his first letter came down to what was true and what was false. His fellow believers were being drawn away by things that were simply not true. False teachers and false teachings distracted them from the true gospel that they learned in Jesus Christ alone.

- What did John mean by “antichrists”? What is “the last hour”?
- How did John distinguish those who remained in the truth?
- What was John’s point in writing, according to verse 21?

It’s clear that those who went out from the body were denying that Jesus was the Christ—the Messiah. John’s warning about the antichrist, and indeed all who deny or stand opposed to Christ, points us back to Jesus. Why was John so worried about false teachings that denied the person and/or work of Christ? Because Christ stands at the center of our Christianity. That might seem like an obvious statement, yet John would remind us that to deny Christ in any way leaves us separated from the Father. Without Christ, we have no Christianity. We have no access to God. Without His incarnation, death, and resurrection, we have no hope for eternal life. To remove even one of those elements negates His entire saving work.

- Why is it crucial to abide in Christ as we seek to cling to what is true?

Notes:

- How does the Spirit help guard us against deception?

When we remain in Christ, we have confidence in His power. John would go on to repeat this throughout his first letter (1 John 3:2; 4:17), assuring believers of the confidence they have for the day the Lord returns. We will see Him fully as He is. The mystery surrounding Christ's return can sometimes elicit fear or uncertainty. But regardless of the day or the hour, believers can rest assured in the assurance of Christ. If we remain with Him, we will be with Him at His return, unashamed because we have been living in light of His righteousness.

- Why did John emphasize the importance of abiding in Christ? What bearing does this have on Christ's return?

- What does our righteousness have to do with abiding?

> Have a volunteer read 1 John 3:1-10.

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.² Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.³ Everyone who has this hope in

him purifies himself, just as he is pure.⁴ Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.⁵ But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin.⁶ No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.⁷ Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.⁸ He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.⁹ No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.¹⁰ This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.

NOTES:

God made a way for us to be called His children. And we are. It is so simple that sometimes we miss the gravity of our salvation and what it means for both now and eternity. We were separated from God, with no way to be in right relationship, but in Christ we have been reconciled (Eph. 2:12-13). We have been called sons and daughters of God, but this was nothing of our own doing. It is by no effort of our own that we are His children. He made a way that we simply believe and are adopted as His own (John 1:12).

• How has God's love been demonstrated to us?

• What are the implications of being God's child?

John wasn't beating around the bush when it came to sin. When we sin, we break God's law. We step outside the boundary lines He has put in place for our flourishing.

- What kind of sin was John referring to in these verses? Did he mean that Christians will never sin? Explain.

Notes:

- How do we reconcile abiding with Christ and continued sin in our lives?

- What is the difference between struggling with sin and remaining in sin? Why is this important?

The nature of our sin is lawlessness—stepping outside God's boundary lines. But sin started with Satan, not with the breaking of God's law. He has been sinning from the beginning, continually seeking to lure humanity away from their Creator.

- What is the evidence of our relationship with God or lack thereof?

- How are we supposed to reconcile our pursuit of purity with the sin patterns in our lives?

- What is the relationship between practicing righteousness and loving other Christians?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Notes:

- 1 What lies about God are you prone to believe? What lies about yourself are you prone to believe?
- 2 Where do you need the Spirit to help you discern the truth in this season?
- 3 How are you abiding in Christ daily? What are the rhythms that help you do so? Where do you need help in this area?

PRAY

Take some time in prayer acknowledging the lies you are tempted to believe in this season. Name those to the Lord and ask Him to bring truth from Scripture to your mind. Pray that Scripture in faith today and throughout this week when lies begin to creep in your heart and mind.

FOLLOW UP

Midway through this week, send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following information:

Notes:

- > Questions to consider as they continue to reflect on what they learned this week:
 - Where are you most tempted to love the things of this world? Where do you seek to have both the things of God and the things of the world?
 - Are there any areas of sin in which you are sitting too comfortably? Are there any areas of sin that maybe you are indifferent to? What needs to change?
- > A note of encouragement, following up on any specific prayer requests mentioned during your group gathering.
- > The challenge to memorize 1 John 2:21.

1 JOHN 2:12-29

2:12-14 While 1 John lacks a formal personal address in its opening lines, the author used two terms of endearment in these verses (little children, v. 12; children, v. 14). Then he included all readers with the inclusive terms fathers and young men.

Notes:

2:13 The one who is from the beginning could refer to either the Father or the Son. They share the attribute of eternality (Jn 1:1; 17:5).

2:14 Believers are strong not in themselves but because of the one in whom they have placed their trust. God's word refers to the saving gospel message that Christ brought, now embodied in the Bible.

2:15 Things in the world are not just material objects. They are things that absorb human love of the Father to an undue degree, even to the point of supplanting God (see John's warning about idols in 5:21).

2:16 John warned against what the body desires, what the eyes itch to see, and what people work hard to acquire. These are not from the Father but from the world.

2:17 Like the darkness in v. 8, the world with its lust is passing away because of the coming of Christ. This opens the way for doing the will of God and establishing fellowship with him forever.

2:18 John warned against many antichrists. This is probably a reference to misguided or diabolical individuals who were guilty of the sins that he described and condemned. They opposed and sought to replace the true Christ.

2:19 The phrase they went out from us shows there had been a division among the church members to whom John wrote. But not all who were in the church were authentic believers. Their departure from the fellowship and the apostolic truth was proof of this.

2:20 The anointing in this verse could be the Holy Spirit, but it more likely refers to the gospel or the saving message—the teaching that believers had received.

2:21 A mark of those who truly know is the ability to admit their lack of knowledge and their desire to learn more. True believers are always “disciples” (learners).

Notes:

2:22 The error John referred to here was not ethical but theological—false teaching about the Father and the Son.

2:23 This verse affirms the unity and identity of God the Father and the Son. Yet it also affirms their distinctiveness.

2:24 The phrase from the beginning refers to the earliest exposure of John’s readers to gospel teaching. There is a direct tie between what they have heard and the status of their souls as residing (or not residing) in the Son and in the Father.

2:25 Despite John’s earlier ethical warnings to remain faithful, salvation is a matter of God’s faithfulness, not human achievement.

2:26 God’s people cannot always avoid conflict; usurpers and destroyers arise, trying to deceive.

2:27 On anointing, see note at v. 20. John was content to entrust his readers to the powerful message they had received.

2:28 Ashamed refers to the guilt and terror of judgment by God. Those who remain in him avoid this grim prospect.

2:29 The doctrinal knowledge of John’s if statement sets up the ethical response implied by does what is right, but the response is a function of spiritual rebirth (born of him) and not human effort.

1 JOHN 3:1-10

3:1 John marveled at God’s love because of its effect—sinners can be called God’s children.

3:2 The world may think little of God’s children now, but at Christ’s return things will change. Believers will be transformed because they will see him as he is.

3:3 Knowing that the Lord will return is a strong incentive for believers to live in ways that are pleasing to him.

3:4 Sin is a grave matter because God has revealed his moral character in his holy law, and sin is lawlessness. It is a personal offense against God.

Notes:

3:5 Verses 4 and 6 are veiled imperatives that warn by negative examples how John's readers are not to conduct themselves. Verse 5 is the indicative that grounds the imperatives. The purpose of the incarnation was to take away sins. John's statement affirms the sinlessness of Jesus (see 2 Co 5:21; Heb 4:15).

3:6 John was aware that Christians sin (2:1). They can receive forgiveness through Jesus's death (1:7) as they confess their sins (1:9). By everyone who sins has not seen him or known him, John had in mind flagrant sin by false "believers" whose confession of Jesus was false (2:23), whose love was set on the world rather than God (2:15), and whose obedience was lacking (2:4). Jesus himself warned about people who called him "Lord" and did great things in his name, but ultimately were not genuine disciples (Mt 7:21–23).

3:7 Satan continually seeks to subvert and deceive God's people. We must be vigilant always.

3:8 When believers forsake sin, they thwart the devil's aims and further God's kingdom.

3:9–10 On does not sin, see note at v. 6. God's seed is the gospel message. Believers are born of God by the work of his word, and this makes them able to do "what is right" (v. 7). Not able to sin means freedom from bondage to breaking God's law and freedom to live as God's children. John spoke of what spiritual rebirth makes obvious—not sinless perfection but a life surrendered fully to God.