

LESSON 12

AUGUST 22, 2021

UNIT III. FAITH GIVES US HOPE

PERFECT LOVE

DEVOTIONAL READING: John 14:15-24

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: 1 John 4–5

PRINT PASSAGES: 1 John 4:2-3, 13-17; 5:4-5

KEY VERSE

God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. (1 John 4:16b, KJV) .

. . . .

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. (1 John 4:16b, NIV)

LESSON AIMS

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do these things:

- Remember the love of God described by the writer of 1 John.
- Reflect on the various expressions of God’s love in your lives.
- Respond to the challenge to love others with Christlike love.

KEY TERMS

Abide (4:13, NASB)—Greek: *menó* (men’-o): to stay, remain; “dwell” (KJV); “live” (NIV).

Confesses (4:2, NASB)—Greek: *homologeó* (hom-ol-og-eh’-o): speaks the same thing as another; agrees with; “confesseth” (KJV); “acknowledges” (NIV).

Flesh (4:2)—Greek: *sarx* (sarx): the soft substance of the living body; denotes mere human nature—being prone to sin and opposed to God; opposite of spirit.

Know (4:2)—Greek: *ginóskó* (ghin-ocē’-ko): to come to know, “recognize” (NIV), perceive.

Love (4:16)—Greek: *agapé* (ag-ah’-pay): to entreat with kind affection, compassion, or goodwill.

Testify (4:14)—Greek: *martureó* (mar-too-reh’-o): to bear witness to, attest to.

PREPARING THE LESSON

- Refer to the Townsend Press SS Commentary Teacher’s Edition for an additional lesson plan—with word studies, insights on teaching adults, learner matrices, etc.
- Review last week’s student assignments (“Your Life” and Your World!”).
- Thoroughly review your student book for your adult or young adult class.

- Please note that you have the option of using your subscription bundle supplements, i.e., Lesson Scenario, Student Activity Sheet, SSL-AAG

WHY THIS LESSON MATTERS

Believers and unbelievers alike are often entangled by the world's allure. How can one resist being pulled or drawn by the appeal of temptations? Through faith in Jesus Christ, believers overcome the world and its seductions with the hope of victory.

THE LESSON IN FOCUS

There are several different kinds of love and many forms of expression for each type. God's highest call of the Christian is agape—love that is pure, sacrificial, and godly. Agape love suits every human encounter we may ever have. Agape fulfills the soul's deepest yearning for love. This form of love is what God has shown toward us, and it is the kind of love with which God calls us to embrace and engage others. Without exception, God calls every believer to behave lovingly toward another. Godly love shows patience, kindness, compassion, generosity, consideration—all attributes of God. The stronger we grow in the Lord, the better we understand that love is best demonstrated through genuine action, not words.

THE LESSON IN CONTEXT

The beloved disciple, apostle, and evangelist John gave precautionary advice about avoiding false teachers, as many were claiming to be sent by God (see 1 John 4:1-3). Only those who were truly inspired by the Spirit of God would openly confess the crucified and resurrected Christ. John and the other apostles had witnessed and could verify that Jesus Christ is the incarnate Word, the Messiah sent from heaven and sacrificing His life through death on the Cross. This doctrine comes from the Spirit of God. Any teaching that does not include this is not of God and should be rejected as such. Believers are members of the family of God who have embraced God's truth and are immersed in God's Spirit. They therefore possess the power to triumph over the deceptions and trickery of false teachers (see Matthew 7:22). First John 4:13 provides significant connection between 1 John and the fourth gospel which bears John's name. It is primarily in that gospel that Jesus spoke of the Spirit (or Advocate) as one who would come to maintain a continuity and intimacy of relationship between the disciples and their Master (see John 14:15-31; 15:26-27; 16:5-15). First John 4:13-14 is one of the few places in Scripture where the Father, Son, and Spirit are each mentioned as distinct persons of the Godhead, sharing relationship with one another and us. They work together to perfect our love and build a faith that is complete and conquering, ready and willing to serve God.

OPENING INQUIRY (Choose from the questions below.)

1. Name a few people whom you love unconditionally.
2. Why have you chosen to make them the recipients of your love?
3. Do you believe the power of God can cause you to love anyone unconditionally?

INSIGHTS

Believers strive to live wisely and prayerfully to avoid being deceived by false teachers. To grow stronger in knowledge and discernment, believers must devote themselves to the Word of God (private devotion, Bible study, Sunday school, formal theological training, etc.). We recognize that those who have faith have the capacity to conquer the world. Christians are motivated by love to extend themselves to the practice of helping others (even strangers or enemies). Those who commit themselves to obeying God's command to love, grow in the capacity to love others as Christ has loved us.

EXPLORATION

Christians are compelled by the love of God, to act as God's loving representatives in the world. We must represent God by sharing the Gospel, helping the needy, caring for the uncaring, and doing those things that allow the world to see the love of God clearly. Students of God's Word meditate upon the Word daily and are better equipped to recognize and avoid false teachings, and to demonstrate the love of God to others in tangible ways.

ADDITIONAL EXPOSITORY INSIGHTS FOR THE TEACHER

COMMENTARY ON 1 JOHN 4:2-3

KJV

2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

NIV

2 This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,

3 but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

If a teacher confesses Jesus is the Christ of God who has come in the flesh, this person is the true prophet. To confess means to openly acknowledge, in this case, Jesus as the Savior of the world. Jesus did not think Himself too great to take on human form and come and dwell among us. His willingness to come to us and lay down His life for our sins is evidence of His deity and divine love. John presents a test of authenticity for those who claim to speak for God. True prophecy, preaching, and teaching will always present and glorify Jesus. John wrote to an audience of people who had rejected the truth that God is Emmanuel (God with us). He has come down to us in human form. Today, some dare to confess that Christ came, died, and rose from death—yet, still deny Him as God. This erroneous (false) understanding is an inaccurate presentation of Christ. In verse 3, John flips his argument: those who refuse to confess Christ are vulnerable to possess the spirit of the antichrist. Such a false prophet or teacher is influenced by many forces

and spirit, including demonic ones, and all of these reveal the action of the antichrist. The antichrist is blatantly opposed to the fullness of Christ. Instead, the antichrist seeks to offer a substitute or form of Christ to keep people blinded. Ungodly forces motivate false teaching; therefore, we must neither take it lightly nor excuse or overlook it.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Question:** In what ways can we be aware of false teachers?
- **Young Adult Question:** God's Word is under attack even today. What are ways that you think Christians can guard themselves from false teachings?

COMMENTARY ON 1 JOHN 4:13-17

KJV

13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.
14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.
15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.
16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. 17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

NIV

13 This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit.
14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.
15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God.
16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.
17 This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus.

Since we cannot see God, He has given us evidence of His presence with us through His Spirit, who dwells within each of us. As believers embrace God's presence, they receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit that God has given the church for His glory and His work here on earth. Confessing that Jesus is the Son of God is the believer's personal affirmation that He is the true Savior of the world. To confess Jesus means surrendering to Him and allowing the Spirit of God to dwell within. As believers yield or surrender to the Spirit, their actions are motivated by love of God. Love that is Spirit-led and godly gives the believer the bold assurance of belonging to God. This boldness is not one of arrogance but of the love God has produced in us to shine for the world. The believer who faithfully walks in God's love can approach the Judgment seat without shame. Those who are endued with the love of God are living proof of God's power.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Question:** What can I do to be better prepared for worship and to help lead and engage others in worship?
- **Young Adult Question:** Reflect on the various expressions of God's love as seen in the life of Jesus. In what ways can you improve your efforts to demonstrate the love of God to others?

COMMENTARY ON 1 JOHN 5:4-5

KJV

4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

NIV

4 for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

5 Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

As those who believe in Christ Jesus and are aware of His loving grace, we live victorious lives. Keeping the commandment to love the brethren is possible because of the victory which the Christian has over the world. The writer's claim concerning the Christian—"born of God overcomes the world"—is written in the present tense, implying a continuous striving for victory. The word translated as "victory" indicates not only a final victory but also the preliminary assurance of the victory. John's simple yet powerful conclusion is that the saints will ultimately overcome whatever comes their way. The victory that overcomes the world is the believer's faith—that is, an immovable confidence in the full deity of God and trust that Jesus is the Son of God. Those who trust God completely know that living victoriously does not always mean coming out on top of every situation. The victorious Christian may not always be the fastest runner in the race, or the top scorer on the court. Victory for the believer means being assured that whether the door is opened or locked shut, or whether the news is good or bad, they rest in the certainty that all things work together for the good of those who are called to God's purposes (see Romans 8:28). Therefore, regardless of the score or outcome, we always win. God can give us untold blessings and lifelong lessons not by superficial victories, but by meaningful encounters that draw us closer to Him. We trust in Him and can be of good cheer through trials, tribulations, and even temptations—for He has overcome the world (see John 16:33). This assurance gives great comfort to the believer, for we are victorious overcomers through Him.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

- **Adult Question:** How can we become more aware of the power we have in Christ Jesus?

- **Young Adult Question:** Even Jesus was faced with the temptation to sin, but He did not give in. He resisted temptation by quoting Scriptures. What is it, specifically, that strengthens you when you are tempted to sin?

LIFE APPLICATION

Refer to Adult Book

(See student lesson's "Your Life" section.)

—Seek out intentional opportunities in your personal life to display unconditional love. It may look like simply forgiving someone for past offenses. It could also mean making an extra effort to be kind and helpful to someone in need, especially someone with whom you may not be on good terms.

(See student lesson's "Your World!" section.)

—Take a moment to discuss with the class areas within the church that could use an extra sprinkling of God's love and grace. Make a group commitment to come together to share loving acts of service for the benefit of the church facility, an individual member, or a selected ministry. Your efforts might include cleaning a yard, washing a car, running errands, or volunteering for any effort that needs your helping hands.

Refer to Young Adult Book

(See student lesson's "Your Life" section.)

—God has called you to be an overcomer. What are your greatest spiritual challenges? Know that God's power gives you the strength to overcome any challenge you face in this world. Embracing the power of God and embodying God's love are strong witnesses to your faith.

(See student lesson's "Your World!" section.)

—False teachers are all around us—on college campuses, in communities, and even in some religious spaces. John reminds us today that we should not be gullible or overly trusting of every voice. We must test every voice that seeks to lead us according to the Word of God.

NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

The lesson topic for Sunday, August 29, 2021, is "Be Confident." The Devotional Reading is Romans 7:14-26, the Background Scriptures are 2 Chronicles 4:16-5:10, and the Printed Text is 2 Chronicles 4:16-18; 5:1-10.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, help us to be more aware of opportunities to show love and kindness to others. Remind us of our power to live as overcomers. Guide the work that we do in Your name, and let Your glory be revealed through us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

HOPE ETERNAL

(August 23-29, 2021)

MONDAY, August 23: "From Death to Life in Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:16-23)

TUESDAY, August 24: "Strengthening the Inner Being" (Ephesians 3:14-21)

WEDNESDAY, August 25: "Every Deed, Good or Evil, Judges" (Ecclesiastes 12:9-14)

THURSDAY, August 26: "God's Judgment of Human Behavior Impartial"
(Romans 2:4b-11)

FRIDAY, August 27: "Paul, Confident in the Ministry" (2 Corinthians 4:1-6)

SATURDAY, August 28: "Entering the Presence of Jesus" (2 Corinthians 4:7-15)

SUNDAY, August 29: "Live the Faith with Confidence" (2 Corinthians 4:16-5:10)