

9NT8

The First Epistle of John (Part II)

Objective:

🕒 The study of chapters two and three and the clarification of our fellowship with God

Memory verse:

“Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God” (1 John 3:9).

Lesson Outline:

I. Chapter Two: What are the features revealing our fellowship with God?

A. Not committing sin (1 John 2:1,2)

This is the aim of everyone... and if we sin, we have an “Advocate” with the Father.

B. Keeping the commandments (1 John 2:3-11)

This is the proof of our love to Him because they speak of Him. Finding the commandments difficult arises from lack of inner love.

C. Rejecting the love of the world (1 John 2:12-17)

God has granted us the power to reject the love of the world (1 John 2:12-14). Furthermore, it is impossible to love the world and God at the same time (Matthew 6:24).

D. Rejecting apostasy and those separated from the Church (John 2:18-23)

There will surely be confusion and Christ has warned us about that (Matthew 24:5,24-28). Moreover, we will not be shaken since we will remain steadfast in the Lord. Nevertheless we should avoid deceivers, such as Antichrists (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

E. Steadfastness in God (1 John 2:24-27)

🕒 Steadfastness in Love (John 8:31).

🕒 Steadfastness in faith that is a recommendation delivered by all the apostles to us (1 Corinthians 16:13, 2Thes 3:14; 2 Peter 3:17). The Lord has promised to bless our efforts (John 15:17; 2 Corinthians 1:21-23; Revelation 2:8-25).

🕒 The Reward: All who follow in the Lord’s footsteps walk in righteousness.

II. Chapter Three

A. The gift of adoption

There are two spiritual families in the world. One belongs to Satan and one belongs to the Lord. We belong to the Lord’s spiritual family (Galatians 3:26). We are heirs regardless of our condition.

B. Our responsibility as children of God (Jeremiah1 John 3:3-18)

⌚ Purity, having become the children of God, it is our task to purify ourselves.

⌚ Holiness, whoever is born of God, does not sin, (1 John 1:8-10; 1 John 2:9-11).

⌚ Love (1 John 3:10-18). This is a positive value not that we should not sin but that we show love to our fellow brothers (1 John 3:10-14).

⌚ How to preserve the status of the children of God - adoption (1 John 3:19).

⌚ We have to reckon with ourselves. If our heart condemns us, this means our inner life and motives in doing charity are incorrect. God is greater than our heart. Therefore, we admit our sins and weaknesses. If our heart does not condemn us and we find that we bear true love, then we have confidence in God (1 John 3:19-22).

⌚ Steadfastness in faith (1 John 3:23). This takes place by keeping the commandments of God.

III. Chapter Four

A. Love and Wisdom (1 John 4:1-6)

⌚ Love means that we should follow the spirit and its teachings. But what is the true spirit? It is every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. On the other hand, an evil spirit manifests itself in rejecting faith in Christ's incarnation, defying the rites and teachings of the church.

B. The spirit of truth and the spirit of evil

i) The spirit of truth

⌚ Proceeds from God, therefore it confesses and recognizes the incarnate Lord.

⌚ Its characteristic feature is love for it proceeds from God.

⌚ He is the greatest, "because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world".

ii) The spirit of evil

⌚ Is antichrist and does not love the truth.

⌚ It is of the world; hence the world listens to it.

⌚ It does not love, because it does not know God.

C. God's love for us (1 John 4:7-10)

⌚ The only religion that speaks about God's love for mankind is Christianity (1 John 4:8).

⌚ God's love for us is eternal for He has sent His Son, "that we might live through Him." That is true, for even when we sin, we remain His children, and can ask Him for all our needs (Romans 8:32).

D. How can we enjoy the taste of His love (1 John 4:11-21)

i) Through brotherly love (1 John 4:11-20)

⌚ If any spirit of hatred towards any one is stirred within us, or any spirit of revenge, or enmity, or jealousy is awakened, then He is able to burn all the thorns that suffocate the soul by His fiery power; but only if we pray to Him to do so.

⌚ The sign of steadfastness in the Lord is love towards our fellow brothers (1 John 4:16,20,21).

ii) Through watching for the coming of the Lord with joy (1 John 4:17,18)

⌚ For perfect love is found in heaven (1 John 4:17). As we taste God's love while we are here on earth, and as we interact with Him, we wait anxiously and confidently for the day of the Lord (1 Corinthians 13:8-13).

E. There is no fear in love (1 John 4:18)

⌚ As much as love increases fear decreases. Yet there is fear of another kind that accompanies love, the fear inspired by awe and respect, the fear experienced by a person who does not wish to hurt a loved one, the fear to be separated from God.

⌚ St. Felix says, "there is one who fears to be flogged and that is the fear experienced by a slave; there is one who fears to lose, a fear experienced by an employee. While there is one who fears to provoke his loved one and such fear is experienced by the righteous".

IV. Chapter Five

A. Adoption by God is the fruit of believing in Him

⌚ In the early Church, candidates for baptism were gradually promoted into the lines of the catechumen. In the present baptism rituals it is necessary to recite the Creed of the Faith before the dipping into the water.

B. The fruit of baptism (1 John 5:2-5,14-18)

⌚ Love towards our fellow brothers whom we see, and love for the saints (1 John 5:2).

⌚ Keeping the commandments (1 John 5:2,3).

⌚ Confidence in our prayers being answered and as long as we pray for things that are according to His Will (1 John 5:14,15).

⌚ Baptism is founded on the Cross and accepting it means accepting to being buried and resurrecting with the Lord.

⌚ The heavens testify to the power of baptism as the Holy Trinity appeared at the time of Christ's baptism.

C. A final recommendation (1 John 5:21)

⌚ The apostle reiterates that we are God's children therefore we surrender to Him.

⌚ We should surrender our hearts to God, for there are so many idols: money, greed, lust, honor, egoism, etc.

Applications:

I. Chapter Two

⌚ Indicate the practical ways of demonstrating our love to God; who loved us and laid down his life for us.

⌚ Love within the framework of truth. Explain how our love for God makes us reject heresy.

⌚ What is the relationship between our love for God and our love for men? Support your view by verses from this chapter.

⌚ What is meant by righteousness? How can we practice righteousness?

⌚ What is meant by “Do not love the world”? How is it related to the verse: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son so that none who believe in Him is condemned?”

II. Chapter Three

⌚ The apostle distinguishes between two spiritual families in the world, what are they? What are their characteristic features?

⌚ What is the greatest honor bestowed upon you by God? How can you preserve it? What is your attitude towards the world that does not appreciate that honor?

⌚ How can you answer those sects that claim that a true believer never sins? To assist you, refer to the following verses: 1 Corinthians 10:2; 2 Corinthians 12:17; 2 Corinthians 11:2; 1 Corinthians 9:27.

III. Which Verses In Chapter Four Reinforces The Following Christian Principles

⌚ Love implies our rejection of all that opposes the spirit of God, love expressed through the truth.

⌚ The source of true love is the cross.

⌚ We get a taste of love through our experience of it towards our fellow brothers and through our vigil for the day of the Lord.

⌚ What is meant by: There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear? What is the difference between fear and being stricken within the framework of our love for God?

⌚ Attempt to learn by heart the verses concerned with brotherly love, and to apply them in your practical life. This would involve daily and continual practice.