

Lesson for October 16, 2005

Book of I John

Chapter 3:10-13

Verse 10

“In this the children of God are manifested, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.”

Contrary to what most Bible commentaries say, this verse is not teaching that those who fail to do human righteous acts or fail to “love” their fellowman are unbelievers. John is writing to believers, continually teaching them the difference between living in God’s power system and Satan’s cosmic system.

Only a believer can produce divine righteousness under the control of God the Holy Spirit. “Not doing righteousness” is not being able to produce divine righteousness. In the same manner, only a believer can exhibit divine love toward his fellow believer or even toward an unbeliever. The child of God is made known to others by his production of divine good and his love for all mankind. The Greek word for *manifested* is “phaneroo” and means to make visible, to make clear or to make known.

The Christian Way of Life is a supernatural way of life, which cannot be lived apart from knowledge of Bible doctrine and the control of God the Holy Spirit. (Romans 7:6, 8:2; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 5:18) This way of life, of course, requires thinking. All changes in our lives must come from the inside. The true character of the believer is determined by his mental attitude.

The Christian Way of Life began with a change of mental attitude (repentance) toward Jesus Christ, which resulted in salvation. (Acts 3:19) At the moment of salvation, God did at least 40 things for each one of us. We call these Spiritual Assets, and part of these assets include the things necessary to execute the Christian Way of Life. Choosing to use these assets enables the believer to live in a manner that is acceptable to the Lord, and to think those things which bring honor to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:23; Colossians 3:1-2)

After salvation, *we make the choice* of what our life is going to be like. God never forces the believer into any course of action. He has, however, provided the potential, but it is still *our choice*. The Christian Way of Life is designed by God so that you can think, and think properly. Unlike the Age of Israel, with its visible heroes of

the faith, such as, Abraham, Moses and David, the Church Age in which we live is the age of invisible heroes. The invisible hero is the believer who resides in God's power system and continually thinks and applies Bible doctrine to the circumstances of life.

As a Royal Ambassador you represent God before the world. Therefore, as royalty, you are to conduct your life accordingly. This calls for high standards of excellence in every area of your life. It calls for honor in your dealings with your fellow believers and with unbelievers alike. With Jesus Christ as our example, we are to exhibit the same kind of love that He exhibited. This kind of love can be accomplished only by a believer with doctrine in the soul, who is being controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Impersonal Love for All Mankind

Impersonal love is not what we normally think of as *love*. It is the virtue in your soul that causes you to have a relaxed mental attitude toward others and to treat them with kindness, compassion, patience and forgiveness. In other words, impersonal love is how we treat others. Therefore, impersonal love must be based on the virtue of the subject, the one doing the loving ("the treating"). Impersonal love is a function of the Royal Ambassadorship of the believer. It is our love for God that motivates us to exhibit impersonal love toward all. Impersonal love operates from the integrity and virtue that you have developed from learning and APPLYING Bible doctrine.

When we are properly functioning under the control of the Holy Spirit, we *will* adhere to the principles found throughout the Word of God. These principles *will* enable us to exhibit impersonal love toward others. This means that we *will* treat everyone with respect, *not* on the basis of our "pet prejudices" regarding race, social status, ability or what they can or cannot do for us. We *will* refrain from gossip, maligning, judging, character assassination, etc. In other words, we *will* "live and let live". The principle of treating everyone with respect also means that we *will* be tolerant, be thoughtful and be kind toward others. We *will* hold no grudges or resentment against anyone.

Verse 11

“For this is the message that we have heard from the beginning that we should love one another.”

The World System implies that “love” means we have a fondness for someone because we enjoy them, admire them, they make us happy, they treat us nicely, etc. It is easy to love someone like this.

The challenging kind of love is unconditional love. Unconditional love is loving someone who we don't enjoy, who we don't admire, who does not make us happy, who does not treat us nicely, etc. Developing and learning to utilize unconditional love as a “tool” in our daily experience is of utmost importance for a victorious Christian life. This requires setting aside our emotions and instead, thinking and applying Biblical principles in order to produce right attitudes. Right attitudes will produce right behavior. Loving others unconditionally often requires adjusting and adapting to others instead of expecting others to adjust and adapt to us. This does not mean that we condone bad behavior, rather it means that we love others in spite of their behavior. After all, we don't know what a person has gone through or is going through that is affecting their behavior (“walk a mile in his shoes”). Unconditional love is selfless love; loving without asking “what's in it for me.”

Both *divine agape love* and *divine philos love* are applied in the life of the believer by means of “personal love” and “impersonal love.” Personal love for God, a function of the Royal Priesthood, is developed through the consistent intake of Bible doctrine. Personal love depends on the virtue of the object of love. Impersonal love, a function of the Royal Ambassadorship of the believer, is the application of this Bible doctrine displayed in the life of the believer. Impersonal love depends on the virtue of the one doing the loving (the subject of love).

Having the right attitude requires the proper use of personal and impersonal love. Those whom we personally love don't always exhibit virtue and integrity. Therefore, sometimes we need to “switch” from personal love to impersonal love “on the fly”. For example, you and your spouse are having a wonderful time and personal love is being exhibited by both when one makes the other angry. Instead of reacting, we must simply “switch” from personal love (object has the virtue) to impersonal love (subject has the virtue).

Verse 12

“Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous.”

The contrast between Cain and his brother Abel is a well-known story in the Old Testament. This story is used by John as an illustration of the work of Satan in contrast to the work of God. Cain was an unbeliever and did not accept God’s salvation solution of the coming Redeemer. This is evidenced by the offering that he brought to God from *his* labor of tilling the ground. Cain’s offering illustrates man’s attempt to please God by human merit.

On the other hand, Abel brought an animal sacrifice, which is the type of Christ, as he and Cain had obviously been taught to do. Abel’s offering illustrates man’s inability to please God by human merit. Abel showed that he understood the redemption solution; Cain did not. It was Cain’s hatred and jealousy that caused him to murder Abel. Cain, as an unbeliever was incapable of divine love and therefore acted on human emotion.

Verse 13

“Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.”

Hatred is an inward attitude that was manifested in the murder of Abel by Cain. The believer who is executing the Christian Way of Life should not be surprised if he is hated by those in this world system, just as Cain hated Abel. Satan is the ruler of this world system and “the father” of those who exhibit hatred for their fellowman.

The spiritual assets which the advancing believer possesses cannot be understood by the unbeliever. This lack of understanding can lead to ridicule and hatred by others. Paul is a perfect illustration of this prior to his conversion on the road to Damascus. As Saul, he was an unbeliever full of hate for Christians and a zealous persecutor of them all.

The Christian must always remember that he is not a citizen of this world. His citizenship is in Heaven and he is merely passing through on the way to his final home. Jesus Christ in Hypostatic Union was our prototype for the execution of the Christian Way of Life and He was hated by the world to the point of death.