

Study Guide



1 Jn. 3:19-24 "When the Heart Condemns" Oct. 30, 2016

Welcome (40 Minutes)

Be intentional to have authentic relationships...

Worship (5 Minutes)

As the group transitions from of a time of fellowship to a time of intentional study of the word, it is important to facilitate that transition with a time of worship. This can look like praying together, singing songs together, or rejoicing in what the Lord has done throughout the week.

Word (45 Minutes)

John continues with the message that was emphasized in the preceding verses of the importance of believers showing love for other believers. John also goes one step further to point out that obedience to this command can serve as a pivotal point in reaffirming to the believer the authenticity of their faith.

This affirmation was critical then – and it is critical now – because false teaching in life's circumstances can often cause believers to doubt the reality of their relationship with God. John's going to point out steps that we, as believers, can take to reaffirm that that relationship is real.

For more in depth study check out the following pages...

Walk Prayer & Missions

October 30th— Trunk or Treat
December 18-28—South Sudan
For further information visit
norrisferrychurch.org

Calendar

October 30th—Fall Festival
November 13th— Orphan Sunday
November 13th— Member's Meeting

Welcome (40 Minutes)

As you fellowship with one another, please be intentional about sharing what the Lord is doing in your lives. Get to know one another and encourage one another. Are your conversations pointing one another toward Jesus?

Worship (5 Minutes)

If you are looking for a song to sing this week, here are the lyrics to "[No Other Name](#)":

One name
Holds weight above them all
His fame
Outlasts the earth He formed
His praise
Resounds beyond the stars
And echoes in our hearts
The greatest One of all

His face
Shines brighter than the sun
His grace
As boundless as His love
He reigns
With healing in His wings
The King above all kings
The greatest One of all

Lift up our eyes, see the King has come
Light of the world reaching out for us
There is no other name
There is no other name
Jesus Christ our God

Seated on high, the undefeated One
Mountains bow down as we lift Him up
There is no other name
There is no other name
Jesus Christ our God

Find hope
When all the world seems lost
Behold
The triumph of the cross
His power
Has trampled death and grave
Our life found in His name
The greatest name of all

Lift up our eyes, see the King has come
Light of the world reaching out for us
There is no other name
There is no other name
Jesus Christ our God

Seated on high, the undefeated One
Mountains bow down as we lift Him up
There is no other name
There is no other name
Jesus Christ our God
Jesus

The earth will shake
And tremble before Him
Chains will break
As heaven and earth sing
Holy is the name
Holy is the name of
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus
[x2]

Lift up our eyes, see the King has come
Light of the world reaching out for us
There is no other name
There is no other name
Jesus Christ our God

Seated on high, the undefeated One
Mountains bow down as we lift Him up
There is no other name
There is no other name
There is no other name
There is no other name
Jesus

Blessed Assurance — The Division (3:19-20)

To fully appreciate these two passages, we must first take a look at 1 John 3:18 where John writes, ***“Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.”***

Verse 19 then begins with, ***“This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence:”*** – we obey the commands set forth in the passage of verse 18.

Howard Marshall, in his commentary on the epistles of John, writes, “Doing what is characteristic of the realm of truth is a sign that we belong to that realm.” Emphasized throughout this passage will be the importance of knowing that we are in a right relationship with God when we are obedient to his commands.

Verse 20 goes on to point out that ***“If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.”***

A valuable lesson for the reader is that we should let scripture interpret scripture. If we go back to Romans 8:1, Paul is clear when he writes, ***“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”*** He assured, then, that if our hearts condemn us, that that is not of God, and we can trust that our God is greater and he knows everything.

It is interesting to note that the term, ***“we know”*** in verse 20 is written in the future tense. In other words, we as believers must prepare ourselves for the time when we will doubt the authenticity of our faith. John points out that when doubt sets in, we can pacify our hearts and bring peace to our lives by obedience to the commands set forth in verse 18 – to love ***“with actions and in truth.”***

Marshall goes on to write in his commentary, “If we have no grounds for assurance in ourselves, nevertheless, we can commit ourselves confidently to the mercy of God who knows all things. No matter how much his heart may condemn him, God still welcomes and forgives the man who seeks his forgiveness and casts upon his mercy.”

So what should a believer do when this doubt sets in? We should rely upon the gifts that God has given us. Later in these passages at the end of verse 24 we are going to know that Christ lives in us by the Spirit that he gave us. God is greater than our hearts and knows everything. He knows that we will need direction and reassurance – and for that reason he gave believers the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit serves to do several things. If we go back and look at John 14:26, we are told that the Holy Spirit will be our advocate and ***“will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”*** We, as believers, need to be reminded that the Holy Spirit will remind us of the things we have learned, like Paul’s promise in Romans 8:1 that there is no condemnation for those who are in a believer’s relationship with Jesus Christ. We also need to be reminded as Paul writes later in Romans 8, that nothing can ***“separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*** Furthermore, believers must remember that the Holy Spirit will bring us peace unlike anything that the world will be able to provide.

The Steps to Assurance (3:21-24)

In verse 21, John begins with a salutation that shows his affinity toward the reader when he uses the term, “***Dear friends.***” John goes on to write that “***if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God.***”

The way we’re able to have this confidence and to have peaceful hearts is to remember that God is greater than our hearts, as pointed out in verse 20, and that he is omniscient in that he knows everything that is going to transpire. Therefore, we can approach God with boldness in making our requests known to him.

The first part of verse 22 quotes a passage of scripture that is oftentimes misconstrued. John writes, “***and receive from him anything we ask.***”

Many believers have taken this passage out of context to believe that if they bring any prayer request to God that he is going to grant that by virtue of the fact that we are in a believer’s relationship with him. John goes on to write, though, in verse 23, that this promise is conditioned upon two things:

1. “To believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ” - That we are obedient.
2. “And to love one another as he commanded us.” - That we seek the will of the Lord (and do what pleases him).

In verse 23, John goes on to point out that loving one another is not enough – you must first be in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, the Son of God. There are many “caring” people in the world – but John wants to emphasize that having a caring heart by itself does not qualify one for eternity.

With regards to the relationship that John refers to, it’s important that we make a couple of notes:

1. The verb “to believe” is a decisive act. Our decision to enter into a personal relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is a one-time decision.
2. We must also know that belief in the name of Jesus is to believe that Christ is who he is as described in scripture. In Colossians 1:15, Paul writes, “***The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.***” In subsequent verses in Colossians, Paul writes that Jesus Christ is “***before all things.***” “***He is the head of the body***” and he has “***he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.***” Marshall goes on to write, “A Jesus who is not the Son of God and The Christ would not be able to save the reader from their sins and bring him into the light of God’s presence.”

John goes on to reaffirm the command that has been emphasized in the preceding verses, and that is not only are we to have a belief in Jesus Christ but we are to love one another as he commands us. The term for loving one another in the original translation means to do so on a continuous basis. Unlike our decision to enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ, which is a singular decision, the obedience to Christ’s commands is one that we are expected to continually subscribe to.

Verse 23 reminds us that obedience and a spiritual life are not mutually exclusive of each other. We cannot believe in God's commands if we don't have love for one another, and this love for one another is predicated upon having a sensitivity to those who are in need. And when we have that sensitivity, then we can approach God in prayer with great confidence.

John concludes his third chapter in 1 John by reminding us that ***“The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.”*** In a previous paragraph, we mentioned a gift of the Holy Spirit that each believer receives the moment they enter into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. John is pointing out here that by being obedient to God's commands that we are being obedient to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is what guides us and directs us and keeps us from drifting into our default place of self-will and selfishness. Our reliance on the Holy Spirit makes us sensitive to the commands that God expects us to follow.

Sermon Questions

What Does it Say?

1. What issue does John address in verses 19-21?
2. Verse 19 begins by saying, “By this we shall know that we are of the truth”. By what? Look at verse 18 for the answer to this question.
3. What benefits do verses 21-22 identify that come from our heart not condemning us before God?
4. What relationship does John suggest between obedience to God's commandments and answered prayers in verse 22?
5. How does John summarize God's commandments to us in verses 23-24?
6. According to verse 24 in what form does God abide in his people?

1. What is one way that John says we can reassure our hearts before God in verse 19? Remember to look at the previous verse (18) to help answer this question.
2. Verse 20 raises the possibility that our own hearts may condemn us before God. How do you interpret the last part of verse 20 which says, "God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything." Is that an optimistic statement meaning that God will give us reassurance or do you think it is a warning for the purpose to make us realize that God judges severely because He knows everything? Or is it both a statement of encouragement and warning at the same time?
3. If you believe the statement in verse 20 is encouraging how does God help to remove our doubts about our relationship with him? See Romans 8:1, 8:15-16, and Romans 8:38-39.
4. How does assurance before God affect our prayer life according to verses 21-22?
5. Does verse 22 mean that we earn answered prayers by being obedient to God? What is the correct way to understand the relationship between a life of obedience and answered prayers? Also look at 1 John 5:14-15 and John 15:7 in connection with this question. What is one reason God does not answer the prayers of a wicked man (James 4:3)?
6. How do verses 23-24 summarize the 3 tests of a genuine Christian that John has been teaching throughout this book?
7. Verse 24 speaks of abiding in God and God abiding in us. This relates to John, chapter 15 where John also talks about abiding in Jesus as a necessity for a fruitful Christian life. What are some of the characteristics of a fruitful Christian life?

1. In what kind of circumstances would a Christian's heart condemn him or her? Is this an act of the conscience? Is it Satan accusing you? Is it the Holy Spirit convicting you?
2. What are your most effective ways to fight a condemning heart and maintain a heart full of assurance toward God?

Walk (30 minutes)

After enjoying fellowship, worship, and time in God's word together, it is now time to pray together as a group and encourage one another in the faith. It is very easy for this portion of the group time to be consumed by the other portions. However, this segment of the group time is crucially important. It answers the question, how do we apply what we are learning in 1 John to our lives today?

Many groups have found that it is helpful to sometimes break up into a men's group and a women's group for the purpose of being able to be more transparent and honest as we encourage one another and keep one another accountable. I encourage you to try this in your groups.

In addition to praying for, and encouraging, one another, this portion of the group time should also be used for planning how your group can participate in God's work outside the walls of our church – "neighbors and nations." Discuss with your group some ideas on how you can be intentional with building relationships with your neighbors and co-workers. What can your Community Group do to impact the area around you?

May the Lord bless and encourage you as you lead your groups! Know that we are praying for you on a weekly basis and that we are here to help you in any way that we can!

What does it say?

1. John addresses the issue of a confident heart versus a condemning heart in these verses.
2. If we see that we are experiencing genuine love (not just in word but in deed) for our Christian brothers, we can have assurance that we are in the truth before God.
3. The benefits of a non-condemning heart are confidence before God and answered prayers from God.
4. John suggests there is a positive correlation between obedience to God's commandments and answered prayers.
5. John summarized God's commandments to us as believing in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, loving one another as Jesus taught us, and abiding in Jesus in obedience.
6. God abides in his people in the person of the Holy Spirit.

What does it mean?

1. We can experience an assured heart before God by recognizing that we are sincerely loving other Christians in deed and not just in word.
2. It is probably an optimistic statement meaning that God will give us reassurance because assurance is the consistent point in these verses. On the other hand, it could serve as a warning to people who are consistently practicing sin, not loving their Christian brothers, and not trusting in Jesus for forgiveness and cleansing.
3. God helps to remove our doubts about our relationship with him by his precious promises in his word like Romans 8:1 and Romans 8:38-39. God also brings assurance to our hearts by his Holy Spirit giving us a spirit of adoption of sons whereby we cry "Abba, Father".
4. It gives us confidence to approach God in prayer, and it helps us to align our lives with God's will so that our prayers are answered.
5. No, verse 22 does not mean that our obedience earns answered prayers from God. Living a life of obedience to God aligns our life with the will of God. When we want God's will to be done in our lives we tend to pray according to his will, and he answers according to his will. John 15:7 says, "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." 1 John 5:14-15 says that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. James 4:3 says God does not answer the prayers of a wicked man because he asks wrongly to spend it on his passions.
6. Verses 23-24 summarize and repeat the 3 tests of a genuine Christian that John has been teaching throughout this book; namely, loving one another; trusting in Jesus, the Son of God, with true faith; and abiding in God with obedience to his commands.
7. Some characteristics of a fruitful Christian life are exhibiting the fruits of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, etc.) experiencing God's power in your life exhibited by answered prayers, experiencing God working through you to draw others to himself in faith.

Join us for some family fun!

Norris Ferry
Community
Church's



FALL FESTIVAL



Sunday, October 30th

4:00 – 6:00 pm

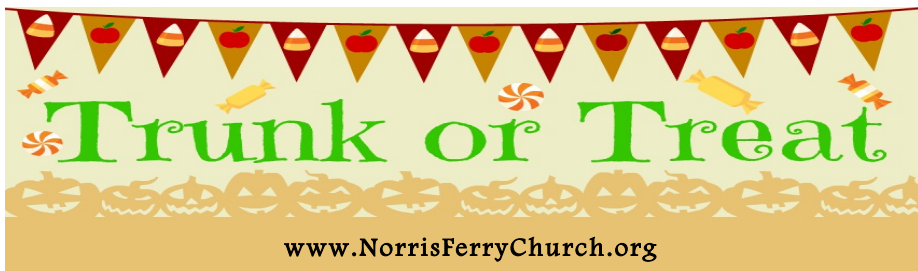
Norris Ferry Community Church
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Costumes Encouraged!
(No scary ones, please!)

•Fun•Food•Games

•Face painting•Fire truck•Inflatables

and.....



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