

Saturday

The entire book of 1 John is written to teach Christians how they may be sure that they are indeed Christians with new and everlasting life in God (1 John 5:13). Nine times in chapters 3 and 4 we find John writing, “This is how we know.”

There are three tests that John gives in these chapters and throughout the book. Re-read 1 John 3:11-24 and 4:7-21.

1. What things does John say give us confidence or certainty about our salvation in Christ?
2. How do these “tests” of assurance give us confidence?
3. How sure are you of your salvation in Christ? Is your assurance based on the things that John lists? What would be the danger of basing your hopes and confidence on something other than what the Bible teaches is the basis for confidence before God?

Life Together: Spiritual Fellowship in the Church I John 3:11-14 and 4:7-21

FBC Study Guide

Monday

A character in Walker Percy’s novel, *The Second Coming* says:

“I am surrounded by Christians. They are generally speaking a pleasant and agreeable lot, not noticeably different from other people—even though they, the Christians of the South, the U.S.A., the Western world have killed off more people than all other people put together. Yet I cannot be sure they don’t have the truth. But if they have the truth, why is it the case that they are repellent precisely to the degree that they embrace and advertise the truth? One might even become a Christian if there were few if any Christians around. Have you ever lived in the midst of fifteen million Southern Baptists? . . . A mystery: If the good news is true, why is not one pleased to hear it?”

1. Do you think this is a fair description of Christians today? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think Christians are sometimes repellent or insulting with the truth?
3. And why do you think some people are not pleased to hear the Good News?

Tuesday

From the beginning, Jesus commands that Christians love and continue to love one another. The basic ethical message of Christianity is stated plainly in 1 John 3:11. *“This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.”* It’s also stated in 1 John 4:21—*“And He has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.”*

Read the following passages and note some distinguishing things about the love Christians are to have for one another.

- John 13:34-35
- 1 Corinthians 12:25
- Ephesians 5:1-2
- Hebrews 10:24
- James 2:1, 8-9
- 1 Peter 4:7-8
- 1 John 4:21

Wednesday

John makes it clear that the evidence or sign that we have eternal life is continuing to love one another. Those who do not have this kind of love do not have eternal life. Read 1 John 3:14-15 and 4:8.

1. Can you think of any persons who appear not to love others, especially Christians? Consider listing five to ten people on an index card or piece of paper. Pray for them throughout the week, that they might come to believe in Christ and pass from death to life.

Thursday-Friday

Read 1 John 4:7-21 and answer the following.

1. Where does love come from?
2. What does it mean to say “God is love”? How might people misunderstand this teaching today?
3. What other things does the Bible say God is? (see John 4:24; Hebrews 12:29; and 1 John 1:5) How do these passages help us from misunderstanding the Bible’s teaching that “God is love”?
4. How does God reveal His love to humanity? In your own words, why is Jesus’ death good news for sinners? Consider 1 John 4:9-10, 14.
5. Considering Jesus’ sacrificial death as an atonement for our sins, what obligation do we now have with other Christians? Consider 1 John 3:16 and 4:11.
6. Since “No one has ever seen God” (1 John 4:12), how are Christians to make their love for God visible? Can a person love God and hate his brother or sister in Christ? Why or why not?
7. Meditate on 1 John 3:16-18. How is Christian love to be shown in the church?
8. What are some ways we can spur one another on to love and good deeds at FBC (Heb. 10:24)? What specific actions will you take to show love to others at FBC?