

# Three Things We Know

I have enjoyed our journey through the book of 1 John. I hope this book both challenged and encouraged you in your walk with Jesus. We have learned a lot through this little letter.

There are times when we can get overwhelmed by all the things we should and need to know concerning our faith. The Bible contains so much spiritual food that sometimes we get overwhelmed. Sometimes do not know where to begin. Some people struggle in their walk with Jesus because they don't think they know enough. But I have found in my life that what really gives me problems is living up to what I do know, not worrying about what I don't know.

At the Salvation Army in Birmingham, England one of the worst men in that city was converted. It was not long before some of his evil associates began to make fun of him. They taunted him saying, "You say you are a Christian; who was the father of Jesus Christ?" "I don't know." "Who was his mother?" "I don't know." "When did he live?" "I don't know." "How old was he when he died?" "I don't know." "Well, you are a pretty poor Christian; you don't know who was the father of Jesus, or who was his mother or when he lived or when he died; what do you know?" Then the rough but genuine Christian man lifted his head, and looked those who were taunting him in the face. He replied, "I know that he saved me." – (R. W. Dale).

Of course we do have to know certain things in order to be saved. And God wants us to grow in our Christian life, not to just stay as baby Christians. And I do not want to minimize the importance of Biblical knowledge. But as we finish our series in 1 John I want to give you some encouragement. You do not have to be a seminary trained biblical scholar or a theologian with a PhD to live for Jesus. You can know what you need to get you going with Jesus and keep you going with Jesus.

Today I am going to share with you three things John tells us we know. And if you know these three things you are well on your way in your relationship with God.

## I. The Certainty of Righteousness (v.18).

John says, "**We know that whoever is born of God does not sin.**" Practicing sin is not what God's family is about.

WE do not have to know everything in the Bible to understand this simple principle. You come to be a part of God's family through a new birth. Seven times in this little letter John uses that phrase "**born of God.**" John wrote in his gospel, "**But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.**"

John says that practicing sin is not what being in God's family is about. In each family we have expectation for one another. My children always knew that certain things are not acceptable things to do for a person who is in our family. It didn't matter if all their friends were doing it, or even if the whole world was doing it. Our family had different standards.

God protects His family. Verse 18 tells us that He who was born of God keeps him and the evil one does not touch him. This speaks of Jesus. God sent us a protector Jesus!

Back in chapter 3 John wrote, **"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) The Lord Jesus Christ is dwelling in that person's heart and life, and so, he cannot go on in living a lifestyle of sin. The One who was born of God, the holy Son of God, is dwelling in him, living in him, and keeping him. The love of Christ has an unbreakable hold on that person's life. He may struggle, he may temporarily fall, he may resist the changes that the Spirit of God is attempting to make, but he cannot continually do so.

The Christian does not continue to practice sin because Jesus keeps him. Another way to read this verse which the King James suggests is that the one who is born of God protects himself. I do believe there is something to be said about that, but we know that Jesus protects those who are His.

As a father I try to do what I can to protect my children. God has given us the ultimate protector in Jesus.

This verse says the evil one does not touch him. The evil one, of course, is the devil. Each moment of each day, the evil one is trying to influence you. One commentator translates the end of verse 18 this way, "the evil one does not fasten himself on him."

That is an encouraging word, isn't it? The enemy can frighten us, as he often does. He can harass us, he can threaten us, he can make us believe that we are in his power and that we have to do certain things that are wrong. He can create desires and passions within us that are so strong that we think we must yield to them. But that is a lie, because he is a liar. We do not have to yield to them. He can lure us, he can deceive us, as we have seen, he can even temporarily derail us, and make us fall, but the great declaration of this Scripture is, the devil can never make you sin! Once you know Jesus Christ, the devil can never again make you sin. There is never any excuse for giving in because it is all bluster on his part, all a bluff. He is trying to make you believe that you must sin, but you do not have to.

Remember who you are! You are a child of the king. You don't have to live like a peasant. What you believe about yourself determines your behavior.

## **II. The Certainty of a Relationship with God (v. 19).**

John says, **"We know that we are of God."** This is the certainty of relationship that every Christian can declare. We can know that we know. He said in v.13 that you **"may know that you have eternal life."**

However we also **"know"** that **"the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one."** Everything in this world is cradled in the arms of Satan.

Do you believe that?

If the whole world lies in the power of the evil one, then the evil one is a ruler of this world and this world is an evil place to live, and this time we live in is an evil time. This is what we read in other parts of the New Testament as well.

Take this "world" or this "age", for example. Paul says in Galatians 1:4 that **"Christ gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age."** The age we live in is simply called "evil". The world lies in the power of the "evil one" and so the age of this world is "evil". In Ephesians 5:16 Paul says, **"Redeeming the time, for the days are evil."** The days are evil, the age is evil because the world and all the days of the world lie in the power of the evil one.

So Paul tells Christians (in Col 1:13) that what happened to them when they were converted is that they were **"delivered from the dominion of darkness"** and transferred into the kingdom of Christ. This age is ruled by a "dominion of darkness." It's an "evil age" because the world lies in the power of a dark and evil master. To become a Christian is to be delivered from this dominion, or this authority and power.

Here we just have to stop and catch our breath. Do you see that if you believe these things you embrace a world view that is radically different from the world view of our society and most of the people you live and work with in America. Do you see the world this way? Or do you just give lip service to the authority of the Bible? Do you see that the ruler, the prince, the god of business and industry and commerce and politics and education and the arts and recreation and entertainment is Satan! The whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

This is what we are up against. And we need clear, discerning judgment to know how we should then live and minister. DISCERN! Don't expect to be able to guard your heart if you fill your mind with Satan's lies! Pro.4:23 says, **"Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life."**

Here is the good news: 1 John 4:4, **"Little children, you are of God, and have overcome them; for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."** Let's say it together: HE WHO IS IN YOU IS GREATER THAN HE WHO IS IN THE WORLD."

### III. The Certainty of Reality in Christ (v.20).

In this next-to-last verse, John reaffirms the consistent theme of his letter, **"We know that the Son of God has come."** We can verify Him in objectively in history and subjectively through our own experience with the Holy Spirit.

We also **"know"** that He **"has given us an understanding that we may know Him who is true."** **"Understanding"** basically means "faculty" or "mind." Christ has given us the ability to understand His truth. Notice how many times the word, **"true"** occurs in this verse. The word true here means, "genuine, real." Here is

reality. Here is the great rock upon which everything rests. Our faith does not rest upon men's guesses, not upon philosophy; not on theory. It rests solidly upon the great events of God's actions in history. It rests on facts.

We live in a world that is filled with various opinions about everything. No one knows anything for sure. 2 Tim.3:7 describes unbelievers as "**always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.**"

No wonder John closes with this final warning. " **Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.**" Do not go off to something else. Do not give your attention, your interest, your time, or your energy, and your money to anything else. It is Jesus Christ who is real. Everything else that vies for our attention and worship is false.

An idol is what you live for, what you get excited about, what enthuses you. That is your god. Now what is it with you? Is it Jesus Christ, or is it something else?

If God is not in it, it is an idol and it is empty. If you are "**born of God**" you will never find joy or true happiness in anything without FELLOWSHIP with God.

Some say, "*It doesn't hurt me to give myself to the things of the world, God knows my heart.*" That's like the husband who sleeps with many other women but excuses himself by saying, "*It's okay, my wife knows I love her.*"

That man doesn't need counseling, he needs to make a choice.

Choose today. Will it be God or an idol of your own making? The last word in this letter on FELLOWSHIP with God is that there is no neutrality. You choose to worship God or something else.