

Truths of Assurance and Freedom

Lesson # 4 -- Truths Regarding God's Love and Holiness (4).

Introduction

A. One major characteristic of the love of God is that He cares for us.

1. He cares how we are on the inside and how we feel about things.
2. He cares for us, is concerned about us, and wants us to live with love, joy, and peace on the inside. One reason God hates sin the way He does is because He knows how destructive sin will be to us. He does not enjoy our pain.

B. One crucial area that is always causing confusion and anxiety in the life of many Christians has to do with the assurance of salvation. Many cannot get it finally settled -- they cannot say with assurance, "I am a true believer."

C. The text:

I write these things to you who believe on the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. I John 5:13 NIV

D. This statement indicates that John, under inspiration, gave some truths or tests, in his Epistle, that can lead a true believer to assurance.

I. In Our Relation to God -- the Evidence of Salvation is Obedience.

We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. I John 2:3

Comment: This verse does NOT mean we are saved by good works. It DOES teach that the true believer, who has been changed by the grace of God (II Cor 5:17), will reveal that transforming grace by wanting to obey God. It does not mean that the believer will be sinless, John himself condemned that view in 1:8,10. Every true Christian will have a basic characteristic in their life -- obeying God -- not perfectly and not without struggle.

II. In Our Relation to the World -- the Evidence of Salvation is Separation.

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. I John 2:15

Comment: By the "World" John is referring to the self-centered culture of the non-Christian which is largely controlled and structured by Satan, (Eph 2:1-3). It may help to think of the goals, priorities, pleasures, methods, and values of the non-Christian. James tells us that to be a friend of the world is to be an enemy of God (4:4,5). To "love" the world means approval, a desire to be like non-Christians, a seeking of satisfaction from the world. The true believer will give evidence of some separation from "worldly" standards.

III. In Our Relation to Sin -- The Evidence of Salvation is Freedom.

No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him, he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. I John 3:9

Comment: The grammar here is present tense which means continuous action. Because the true believer has been re-born spiritually in the new birth that person cannot be totally given over to sinning. In struggling with sin and with temptation, the true believer will give evidence of some freedom from its control. There will be a boundry over which he will not go. And when he does sin it will lead eventually to remorse, repentance, and confession.

IV. In Our Relation to Other Believers -- The Evidence of Salvation is Love.

We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. I John 3:14

Comment: A basic characteristic in the life of the true believer will be that he will prefer the company of Christians to that of non-Christians. The Gospel not only changes the heart of the believer it gives him the desire to find his fellowship among the people of God.

V. In Our Relation to the Holy Spirit -- The Evidence of Salvation is Progress.

And this is how we know he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us. I John 3:24

Comment: The Holy Spirit dwells in the believer to be his guide, to teach him the Scripture, to lead him into a deeper walk of holiness, and by all of this to glorify Jesus Christ (John 14-16). The true Christian can therefore look back in his life and see some measure of progress in spiritual development. If a person has no desire for spiritual things, and if that attitude is a basic characteristic of life, that person has never been born again. The test, however, is not for a day, or week, or month -- but the character of one's life.

VI. In Our Relation to Ourselves -- The Evidence of Salvation is Understanding.

We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. I John 5:20

Comment: When God gives the gift of eternal life to a person, a number of truths are taught that person. The true believer will rather intuitively know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that sin is wrong, that the Bible is our authority, that love and holiness should be valued, and that he can and should pray. That is the "understanding" John is speaking of.

Conclusion: If a person is characterized by disobedience to God, love for the world and sin, a dislike for Christians, disregard of spiritual things, and ignorance of Bible truth -- that person is not a believer.

God cares for us and wants us to "know that we have eternal life." We will not grow very much as believers unless we settle this important truth.

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