

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Our Mission: Reaching Out to Leaders Who Can Change the World.

May 2016

True Christianity

INTRODUCTION

Do you think God loves a Christian missionary more than a professor who spends his life trying to prove that He doesn't exist? **Jas 4:4**

OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION

Read 1 John 2:1-6

Note: John is trying to bring a balance between the two extremes of (1) taking sin too lightly (cf. Rom. 6:1; 1 John 1:8–10; 3:6–9; 5:16); and (2) Christian harshness and brittleness over personal sins. These two extremes probably reflect two different schools of gnostic teachings. One group felt that salvation was an intellectual matter; it did not matter how one lived because the body was evil. The other group of gnostics also believed the body was evil and, therefore had to be limited in its desires.¹

1. Why is John writing to this church? Vs 1
2. John says that he is writing believers so they will not sin, then says that “when we sin...” How do you explain this apparent contradiction? Vs 1
3. If Christians should not be slaves to sin, how can we make progress in attaining that? **Rom 6:12-14; 1 Pet 2:24**
4. Why can Jesus speak to the Father on our behalf? Vv 1-2; **1 Jn 4:10; Jn 3:17**
5. What is the relationship between God's love and our obedience? Vv 3-6; **Jn 14:21**
6. What are some challenges of using our actions and motives to assure us of our relationship to God?
7. How has this love/obedience relationship evolved for you since you became a believer?
8. In verse 5, John's use of the words “made complete” means an ongoing fulfillment rather than static termination. How does this help explain that God's love is *not* conditional?
9. We know that repentance is God's work on the heart leading to salvation (Acts 3:19), but what is its role in our sanctification? **2 Cor 7:1**

*Note: **Divine forgiveness** consists of two interrelated aspects: the judicial (or legally forensic) and the sanctifying (or personal, paternal). The Lord illustrated those two aspects of forgiveness when He washed the apostles' feet in the upper room. Jn 13:3-10 He removed the sandals of His followers and washed their grimy feet in preparation for the Passover meal. When Jesus told Peter, “He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean,” the Lord made a distinction between the two aspects of forgiveness. The all-cleansing bath represents God's forensic application of Christ's death to repentant sinners, completely and forever justifying them. Washing feet, on the other hand, represents the paternal forgiveness of sanctification. Although repentant sinners have already been justified once-for-all, they have not yet been delivered from the presence and power of sin in their daily lives. Therefore, believers need to confess and forsake sin regularly, thereby washing the metaphorical dirt of sin off their feet. They come to confess, not to a condemning Judge but to their loving Father endeavoring to avoid His displeasure and discipline. It is this kind of forgiveness that confessing Christians seek, and why they forgive others so that God does not withhold the relational forgiveness that blesses (Matt. 6:14–15).²*

APPLICATION

How can you embrace God's forgiveness, try to live a holy life and constantly confess your sins?

¹ Utley, R. J. D. (1999). *Vol. Volume 4: The Beloved Disciple's Memoirs and Letters: The Gospel of John, I, II, and III John*. Study Guide Commentary Series (199–200). Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International.

² MacArthur, J. (2007). *1, 2, 3 John : MacArthur NT Commentary* (35–36). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.