

# DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

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

June 2016

## *True Christianity*

### INTRODUCTION

Over the years people have used various symbols to show that they are Christians. What are some of them?

### OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION

#### **Read 1 John 3:11-24**

1. According to Jesus, what is a distinguishing mark of a Christian that will last not just in one era or location, but in all places and all times until He returns? Vv 11, 16, 18; **Jn 13:33-35; Gal 5:22-23**
2. Since brotherly love is not a new concept (Lev 19:18; Rom 13:10) why is it *different* now?  
**Jn 15:12; Rom 5:5**
3. How does the world show hostility towards the righteous? Why? Vs 13; **1 Pet 4:12; 2 Tim 3:12**
4. Both Cain's act and Christ's sacrifice involve death. How are they different? **Gen 4:2-8; Heb 11:4; Vv 16-17**

*Note: The verb in John's phrase that Cain slew his brother is a form of sphazō, which is a vivid term that means to butcher or slaughter. It was used of animals killed in sacrifice (Lev. 1:5) and implies a violent death. In the only other reference to killing prior to Cain's action, God put to death an animal and used parts of its skin to cover Adam and Eve. Gen. 3:21 It is as if Cain, intensely resentful and jealous because his inferior sacrifice was rejected by God while Abel's was accepted, violently slit his brother's throat, thus defiantly making Abel his "replacement sacrifice."<sup>1</sup>*

5. How could someone use vs. 15 to say that true Christians could never murder? That murderers will never be saved? What's wrong with that? **Rev 21:7-8**

*Note: In God's eyes, hatred is the moral equivalent of murder. Matt 5:21-22*

6. How does Vs 17 apply to you today?
7. How do our hearts condemn us? Vs 20
8. John seems to be implying that the basis of a Christian's peace is confidence that God is judging them, not their personal conscience. Vv 19-20; **1 Cor 4:3-5** How is that comforting? Rom 8:1 Disturbing? **Ex 3:6**
9. What is the relationship between confidence and prayer? Vv 21-22; **Eph 3:12; Heb 10:19; 4:16**
10. What prevents people from asking in prayer? Vs 22 **Matt 7:7** How could this verse be abused?

### APPLICATION

John says that the test of a true Christian is obedience (moral), love (social) and belief (doctrinal). Vv 23-24 How do you fit John's description?

*The call to embrace the gospel, obey the Word of God, and persevere in holiness overwhelmed many new converts. In response to those concerns, Jonathan Edwards, in 1746, wrote his classic book A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections. It says that the most accurate proof of salvation is the presence in one's life of holy, religious affections—a zealous and biblical inclination toward righteousness, evidenced by practical good works. Because Edwards saw the danger that Satan would counterfeit conversions, he was careful to warn his readers that it is possible to have an initial, positive interest in the gospel (like the seeds on shallow soil and weedy ground in Jesus' parable; Matt. 13:1–23) and yet not possess true saving faith. However, when the grace of God is truly planted in a person's heart, it will always result in a changed nature (2 Cor. 5:17), marked by an abiding desire to live a holy life.<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1 2</sup> MacArthur, J. (2007). *1, 2, 3 John : MacArthur NT Commentary* (133, 140). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.