



Sermon Series: Set Apart: A Life Lived for God

To be used with Session 5: Set Apart in the Way We Live

Sermon Title Possibilities: A Reproducing Saint

Scripture: 2 John 1:4-9

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the Bible study “Set Apart: A Life Lived for God” this sermon will explore how to identify a legacy of discipleship by the way we live. The elder is writing to encourage Christ’s followers about the evidence of fruit displayed in the next generation of believers. However, he is also clear to give a warning on the conduct of a saint of God. He explains that a disciple must walk in truth, embody love and be aware of how to detect deceivers. Augustine said, “Where Scripture speaks, God speaks.”¹ It is important to leave a legacy of reproducing ourselves that God could be glorified in the next generation.

Introduction: The Christian philosopher Arthur Holmes has reminded us that “all truth is God’s truth wherever it is found” (*All Truth Is God’s Truth*).² This is especially true when it comes to being a disciple that makes disciples. Today’s society has lost trust in the undershepherd of the church. “Trust in pastors fell for the third straight year and reached an all-time low. Around 1 in 3 Americans (34%) rate the honesty and ethical standards of clergy as high or very high, according to the latest Gallup survey.”³ Although this statistic seems grim, the reality is that every member of the church is to make disciples. When a biblical, faithful pastor appears before a congregation he is simply called to equip all saints for the work of ministry (Eph. 4:12). This passage shows that a life lived set apart for the gospel reproduces itself.

1. A Saint Walks in Truth (vv. 4,5)

The author of 2 John 1:4 is commending the leaders of the church that they see evidence of their children walking in truth. It is imperative that the saints of God be very well versed in

¹ Platt, D., Akin, D. L., & Merida, T. (2014). [Series Introduction](#). In *Exalting Jesus in 1,2,3 John* (p. xi). Holman Reference.

² Akin, D. L. (2014). [Exalting Jesus in 1,2,3 John](#) (p. 154). Holman Reference.

³ Earls, Aaron (2023), “Lifeway Research,” Lifeway, January 30, 2023, <https://research.lifeway.com/2023/01/30/public-trust-in-pastors-falls-to-historic-low/>

identifying truth. There are a great many theories, heresies, and conspiracies afloat. But the best defense for the believer is a better offense. We must know God's word, and hunger after his Word. Psalm 119:9-11 states, "How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping Your word. I have sought You with all my heart; don't let me wander from Your commands. I have treasured Your word in my heart so that I may not sin against You. Only a healthy diet of reading, studying, memorizing, and mediating on God's Word helps us identify God's truth.

2. A Saint Embodies Love (vv. 6,7)

The message of the gospel is based solely on the love that God has for humanity. The Son of God fully embodies unconditional love for the world. He gives his life for those that were his enemy. And he models for the believer a new way forward. Galatians 5:22-23 states, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law." But the writer also explains that love requires obedience. The children of God are set apart because we love God's commands and identify that his instructions are for our good and not to harm us. This command leads God's called to the ends of the earth to make his name great. Abraham Kuyper declares, "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign overall, does not cry, Mine!"

3. A Saint Detects Deception (vv. 8,9)

When the saints of God love truth, and embody his love as commanded, then they can be keenly aware of deception when it comes. The writer is still concerned enough that he wants to offer a warning to be vigilant. The deceiver will be very convincing, but he or she will not believe in the return of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Paul warns believers in 1 Corinthians 15:19, "If we have put our hope in Christ for this life only, we should be pitied more than anyone." Many people will be drawn away by the latest and greatest in our culture. However, we must filter the lies with the truth. It is Christ's burial, resurrection and return that the saints of God carry around with them. This world will never satisfy, and Jesus has given us a remedy for our pains. 2 Corinthians 4:17 tells us, "For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory. So, we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."

Conclusion: Earlier, we mentioned that the trust of the pastor has been declining in our society. We must begin to pray that God would raise up evangelists, teachers, and preachers in our churches. God said, "for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). We are God's vessels for the work that he will complete through the church. We must also be aware that the more we invest in being disciples that make disciples fulfilling the command that God gave us in Matthew 28. Then we can join in hearing that the next generation of believers are waking in

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truth, embodying love, and vigilant towards detecting deceit. How will you join in being a disciple-maker?

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