



5/20/26

I don't know why, but I'm always amazed by how love for God and love for others are so closely interconnected with the Lord. I remember Jesus' words when He said, "When you've done it unto the least of these My brothers, you've done it unto Me." He takes how I treat others personally. When I think of my own kids and grandkids, it makes sense. There's just something so beautiful about seeing my girls be so supportive of each other and care for each other. And it would deeply grieve me if they didn't get along. The Lord gave us families to help us understand the relationship we have with Him. Our relationships with each other matter to Him. I'm so thankful that He helps us pursue unity with each other when we humble ourselves before Him. I'm also thankful that He doesn't give up, because I know I personally have more to learn. 🙄

*Blessings,
Jonna*

1 John 2:12-17

I read this quote in Andrew Murray's book, Absolute Surrender... "What is the proof that a Christian who is serving God in the power of the flesh is trying to perfect in the flesh what was begun in the Spirit? Religious self-effort always ends in sinful flesh... You were trusting in yourself or you could not have failed. If you had trusted Christ, HE could not fail." Muscling it never works. The evidence of muscling it is failure. So as I look at what it is to love as Jesus loved, to walk as Jesus walked, I am acutely aware that I fail in that every single time I try to do it in my own strength. I fail a lot. O Lord, please forgive me and help me to fix my eyes on You so that I can give the Holy Spirit full access to my mind and heart and soul. Change me, I pray.

What can I learn about spiritual oneness from today's passage?

Vs. 12-14 ~ "I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for His name's sake."

Who are the "little children"? The young in faith believers. What do we need to know? That our

sins are forgiven! And they're forgiven through the name of Jesus. That is the starting point of spiritual oneness with God and with others. I need to understand that my sins are forgiven or I'll live in shame that drives me away from relationships. I need to understand that I NEED forgiveness or I will be so arrogant that I will view everything through a false lens of MY kingdom, MY rights, and MY concerns. It's only when I recognize my desperation for God's mercy that I will pursue oneness with Him and others. I need to understand that the only reason I'm forgiven is because of Jesus. I could do nothing to earn His forgiveness. He freely gave it by paying the ultimate price for me... a price I'll never fully comprehend.

"I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning."

Who are the "fathers"? Those who are seasoned veterans in the faith. They KNOW they're forgiven. They KNOW where they stand with the Lord. They KNOW the Lord... not just about Him, but they KNOW Him. They have experienced deep relationship with Him for many many years. The evidence of their relationship with God is their humility, gentleness, love, and authenticity.

Sadly, I don't know that many believers surrender themselves so fully to the Lord that they reach this level of spiritual maturity. O Lord, please continue Your work in me and help me to grow to be a seasoned veteran of the faith, fully surrendered to You. Let the evidence of my faith be in how I care for others. O Lord, there is a lot sanctification to be done in me! Please help me to be willing!!!

"I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one."

Who are the "young men"? Those who are on the path of growing in the Lord. The Lord doesn't want any of us to continue as just little children... He says in Psalm 32:9, "Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you." The young men know to stay near the Lord. They have the confidence of knowing, not only that their sins are forgiven, but that through Jesus the evil one cannot destroy their souls. With that confidence, they are able to pursue spiritual oneness with the Lord because they know He's faithful to help them. And they're able to pursue oneness with others because the Lord helps them overcome the schemes of the devil by helping them stand strong in Him. O Lord, please help me to stand strong in You!

"I write to you, children, because you know the Father."

This is beautiful. As children get to know their earthly fathers as they grow, the children of the Heavenly Father get to know Him better and better as they grow. How do we know Him? Through Jesus our Savior, the one who forgave our sins.

"I write to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning."

I love this. There's nothing to add about the seasoned veterans of the faith. They KNOW the

Lord who is from the beginning. That is the epitome of our faith... to be so close to the Lord that we know His heart. We know His goodness. We're confident in who He is without doubt. O Lord, I want to know You so well that nothing can derail my faith! Please make it so!!!

"I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one."

How does one grow so close to the Lord that he overcomes all the schemes of the evil one? His strength is in the Lord. Truly, no one has strength in himself. Both the Apostle Paul and King David said to the Lord, "I am weak. I am poor and needy. You are my strength." How do I find my strength in the Lord? By the power of the Holy Spirit at work in me, I let His word dwell in me... abide in me... motivate me. It's not just something I consider here and there. It's the compass of my life. It's where I learn my desperate need for the Lord to be my strength, and it's where I find His absolute faithfulness to give me His strength.

Now as I read on, I see what destroys spiritual oneness... love of the world.

Vs. 15-17 ~ "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

Yikes!!! There is no riding on the fence. I'm either loving the Lord or I'm loving the world. How do I know when I'm loving the world and not allowing the love of the Father to be my motivation? I love the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God (John 12:43). I care more about how I appear to the world than how I am seen before God. I care more about the opinions of man (and my own opinions) than I care about God's.

Why does the love of the world take me away from the love of God?

"For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever."

Right off I see that love of the world is in direct opposition to the will of God AND the world is passing away. Getting caught up in the things of the world is living in darkness and deception and temporary satisfaction. Let me not be blind to the truth. The devil will do anything he can to make me think God is withholding good from me by calling me away from the love of the world. The devil is a liar.

So what are the traps that get me caught into the love of the world and how do they prevent spiritual oneness?

- *The desires of the flesh ~ These are things that make me feel good, but are hostile to what God calls good. These are things like... seeking instant gratification and prioritizing*

physical comfort over the care of others. The world says, "You have to love yourself first before you can love others." God says, "Be content in My love, and I will give you love for others."

- *The desires of the eyes ~ These are things that make me want what I don't have or more of what I do have. The mindset is, "God is not enough." I need more... more money, more stuff, more beauty... more. The world says I deserve more. God says when I have Him, I have all I need. He provides what I need. When I refuse to believe that, I push myself away from the Lord and from those who stand in the way of me getting what I want. I can't love who I resent.*
- *The pride of life ~ This is about seeking honor for myself, trying to be wise in my own eyes, and wanting status. The world says I can be my own hero. God says He's the only hero I need. The world says I should be master of my destiny. God says I'm called to serve as Jesus served. When I'm trying to fight for my own honor or trying to control my destiny, I push the Lord away because it's about my kingdom, not His. I also push any people away who don't align with my kingdom rules... or I try to control them into aligning with my kingdom rules... or I wallow in self pity because they won't align with my kingdom rules.*

Loving the world is so deceptive even as a believer. It's easy to delude myself into thinking I'm serving the Lord while I'm really using the Lord to serve myself.

Another quote from Andrew Murray that stings... "Friend, don't we have the reason that our sanctification and our faith have produced so little in the pursuit of holiness? It was by self and it's strength that the work was done under the name of faith. It was for self and it's happiness that God was searched for. It was, unconsciously, but in self and its holiness that the soul rejoiced." The love of the world is the love of self... and I can very easily think I'm trying to please God when I'm really trying to please self. I try to follow God in my strength, not His. I seek God SO THAT He will give me happiness, not so that I can know Him. I celebrate my SELF when I think I've done something holy, rather than celebrating His mercy and grace working in me.

O Lord, please remove any blinders from the eyes of my heart. Help me to KNOW You more and more, to let Your word dwell in me richly, to be strong in You, to overcome the evil one, and to celebrate Your mercy. Let my love for You motivate me to love others genuinely, tenderly, and sacrificially. I'll know that I'm truly growing in You when I can love someone like Jesus did even when I'm treated harshly. O Lord, please help me to serve at the pleasure of my King! YOU are my King!