

11/2/26

1 John 2:7-17
In my basement, I have the brightest lights available to man (that I'm aware of). I have an aversion to darkness other than when I'm watching a movie or going to sleep. No matter how we feel about physical light and darkness, the Lord wants us to have an aversion to spiritual darkness. The wonderful thing is, we don't have to buy those bright spiritual lights! Jesus is our light. We just have to let Him shine through us. When He does, we will be filled with joy, peace, hope, and most of all… love. Who doesn't want that?

Blessings,
Jonna

The title, Responsible Earthly Living, sounds a lot like being financially responsible, taking care of your body, having integrity with others, and things like that. All those are good! But in God's Kingdom, those things can all be done either with good motives or bad. So what is the foundation of responsible earthly living for the believer? It starts with love. But it's not just any love and it's not just directed at anything. This is a sacrificial, unconditional, tender, affectionate, faithful love that can only come from the Lord when it's genuine.

Jonna… Be careful financially from a heart of divine love. Care for your body because it's a temple of the Holy Spirit and you want to have energy and health so you can serve Him without distraction… but if your body fails, you're still devoted to Him. Treat others with integrity because of love for God and love for them, not for what it gets you. This is responsible earthly living… rooted and grounded in the love of God, poured out in love for others. When I'm motivated by the love of Christ, my love never dries up because my source of love never stops loving me. 1 John 2:17-27 helps clarify this for me.

Vs. 7-8 ~ "Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining."

This command I'm about to read is consistent throughout all the scriptures, Old Testament and New Testament. The first time this command was given was in the Old Testament, in Deuteronomy 6:5, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." Well, that's love for God. What about others? That came in the same timeframe, in Leviticus 19:18, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus also gave this command throughout the New Testament, including John 13:34 when Jesus said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."

Some people say God is different in the Old Testament than the New. Hebrews 13:8 says "He is the same yesterday and today and forever." God is love yesterday and today and forever. God is also light yesterday and today and forever.

The darkness is passing away and the true light is shining. The darkness has no love. The true light shines love. John 1:4-5 says, "In Him (Jesus) was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." John 1:9 calls Jesus "the true light." 1 John 1:5 says, "This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." Light, life, and love come from the Lord.

This is true in the Lord because it's who He is. It's true in me because Jesus has "delivered me from the domain of darkness and transferred me" to His Kingdom of light and life and love (Colossians 1:13).

But John hasn't said anything about love in vs. 7-8. Am I sure he's talking about love? I don't have to read far for my answer…

Vs. 9-11 ~ "Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes."

God takes how I am toward others personally. Jesus said in Matthew 25:40, "When you've done it unto the least of these My brothers (and sisters), you've done it unto Me." There is no justification for hating others. Hating my brothers and sisters in Christ… whether that be revealed by apathy, accusation, or concealed contempt… is walking in darkness. 1 John 1:6 says, "If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth." Why? Because God is love and light. If we are walking with Him, we will necessarily love others.

It's really important that I understand the sanctification process at this point. From the moment Jesus became my personal Savior as I confessed Him as my Lord, His love was planted like a tiny seed in my heart. As I grow in my relationship with Him, that seed grows more and

more. Where I once planted seed in the garden of darkness, I'm now planting in His garden of light. The darkness fades in me little by little, from one degree of glory to the next. One day at a time, I learn to love others as He loves me… as a seed grows little by little into a thriving plant.

That means that my love for Him and others starts out small and grows more in Him. But… if I never feel conviction over my lack of love, there's a good chance I've never left the darkness.

The more I grow in love, the more my light shines. I not only see the light, but I abide in the light. I dwell in the light. I stumble less and less by fighting for my own rights less and less, and loving the Lord and others more and more.

This is huge for me. I used to justify my anger and rationalize it as though I was a victim. Somewhere along the way the Lord showed me that by accusing others of not treating me well (even if I did it silently), I was accusing Him of not loving me well. I read Ecclesiastes 7:9 and felt like a knife had cut through my heart… "Be not quick in your spirit to become angry, for anger lodges in the heart of fools." I started begging God to dislodge the anger from my heart. Little by little, He chipped away at the huge boulder stuck in my heart… and that is painful! As He did, I began to see that so much of my accusation against others was my own heart being deceived! I definitely still have a long way to go, but I know one thing for sure. I don't ever want to go back there!!! Jesus said in Luke 6:27-31, "But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them." This is absolutely IMPOSSIBLE if the Lord does not do it in me. This is one of those passages I used to just skim over and move on. But this is how deep the love of God goes, how bright it shines. O Lord, please do this in me. Let me not be blinded by the darkness! As there is no darkness in You, please remove all darkness in me so that I love like You do.

Vs. 12-14 ~ "I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for His name's sake. I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, children, because you know the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning. 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."

I think this is cool and so full of hope. John speaks to "little children", newer believers in Christ… "fathers", the seasoned veterans of Christianity… and "young men", believers who are deeply ingrained in the sanctification process.

To the "little children", John says he's writing to them because their sins are forgiven through Jesus and they know the Father. In vs. 23, he will say, "No one who denies the Son has the

Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also." The young believers, at the very least, have confessed Jesus as their Lord and Master… not just the Lord over the world in general, but Lord over their lives. He's in charge. And He who is the way, the truth, and the life has brought them to the Father who has adopted them as His own.

To "the young men" (and women), the growing believers, John says he's writing to them because they have overcome the evil one, the word of the Lord abides in them (dwells in them richly), and they are strong (in the Lord). They are letting God's word be the truth they follow. They check everything against God's word, and by the Holy Spirit they choose to align themselves with God's word with absolute loyalty and devotion to Him. They overcome the evil one by "submitting to the Lord and resisting the devil" (James 4:7).

To the "fathers" (and mothers), seasoned veterans in the faith, John has only one statement for his reason to write to them… it is the epitome of the life of the believer. He says they "KNOW Him who is from the beginning." They have known Him over the lifelong course of their walk with Him. This "knowledge" of the Lord is a personal, intimate knowledge. In John 17:3, Jesus said, "And this is eternal life, that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." This is not just knowing ABOUT Him, but knowing Him intimately. In the Old Testament, the word for "know" was used to speak of a husband "knowing" his wife. Physical intimacy. This knowledge of the Lord is spiritual, personal intimacy that goes deeper than any other relationship can. This is how the Lord knows me. This is how He wants me to know Him.

What more could be said to a seasoned veteran of the faith than, "You KNOW Him"? That is the deepest hope we could have. It's only as we grow in Him that we realize there is nothing better.

So John is writing to believers who are forgiven, who are growing in the Lord, and who know Him. And yet, he still writes to warn them of choosing the wrong loves. All believers are stuck with our flesh until the Lord takes us home. The world and the devil are actively pursuing us to blind our eyes and render us ineffective for the gospel. If we're believers, they can't destroy our souls, but they will try to make us believe they can. And they will try to steal, kill, and destroy our joy in the Lord. So John gives us a warning…

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. 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."

"Do not love the world or the things in the world." Interesting… the word for love here is "agape." John is saying, "Do not sacrifice yourself for the world. Do not unconditionally give your loyalty to the things of the world."

This is again where I have to remember the sanctification process. When I was first saved,

and if I'm being honest, for a long time after that… the pull of the world was heavy on me. I went from embracing to wanting to be free of it while it still had a hold on my life. Little by little, the Lord has pried my fingers open to help me release the love of the world and the things in it… although the draw to it still rears its ugly head. I have to confess it when I recognize it, and praise God for His patience and mercy as He changes me from one degree of glory to the next.

However, if a person has no problem in embracing the things of the world and feels no conviction over it… and justifies it… it's possible that the love of God has not really been rooted in his heart. Hebrews 10:14 says, "For by a single offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified." If there's no evidence of the sanctification process taking place, the question a person has to ask is, "Have I really accepted Jesus' sacrifice for me as the free gift that it is? Or have I just prayed a prayer thinking that it would be a 'get out of jail free' card?" O Lord, open our eyes to see how much more a relationship with You is than just having our sins forgiven!

So what IS this love of the world I'm supposed to be free of! What is this love that is NOT from the Father?

The desires of the flesh ~ Things that FEEL good. Things that I use as escapes to make me feel better or numb my pain when God is calling me to walk through something difficult so that He can help me to be more like Jesus. Jesus chose suffering as He endured the cross for my salvation. Isn't being with Him and knowing Him worth whatever suffering He has me walk through, especially knowing that He'll never make me go through it alone? And He promises that He will absolutely work all things (even the hard things) together for my good?

The desires of the eyes ~ Things that LOOK good. Things that are pleasing to the eyes, the temporary treasures of earth rather than the eternal treasures of heaven. It's defining what looks good by the world's standards rather than the word of God.

Pride of life ~ Things that SHOW ME OFF. Things that try to make others honor me so that I am "all that". Jesus said in John 5:44, "How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?" And it was said of the people who had the A and the B of salvation, but not the C in John 12:42-43, "Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in Him (Jesus), but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God."

All the things of the world along with all the desires of the world are passing away, just like the darkness is passing away. They will come to an end. So sacrificing myself for them, as I did for so many years, is a waste of time!!! But doing what pleases God, what He desires, will continue forever… because He is forever.

What does not loving the world have to do with the command to love? To love the things that

are opposed to God is to not love God. To love what looks good, feels good, and shows me off is to not consider what's best for others, and therefore, to not really love them. Even if my outward actions seem to love others, if I'm doing it for the wrong reasons, it's not love. I can't walk in darkness and light at the same time.

Let me never forget that Jesus came to free me from the darkness. He could have demanded what looked good, felt good, and showed Himself off. Instead, He chose to empty Himself of His glory, majesty, and beauty… and to live in discomfort… and to endure mocking, beating, and the cross… for me. Is He worthy of my love? Is He worthy of my worship? Is He worthy of my obedience? Is He worth offering myself to as a living sacrifice? Yes, Lord! You are worthy! I praise You for Your patience and mercy and grace as You help me to become more like Jesus, full of light and love for You and for my brothers and sisters in Christ, one degree of glory to the next. Knowing You is my greatest treasure.