

The Vincennes Voice

"...The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight..." (Matt. 3:3)

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LESSONS FROM I JOHN

Larry R. Ping II

In John's trio of short epistles near the end of the New Testament, he offers numerous and important lessons, both applicable to us and teachable to others. Would you consider these?

1) A Lesson

Concerning The Basis Of Fellowship. The idea of fellowship has been made too difficult to understand when it is rather simple to comprehend. John summed it up very well by saying, *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"* (I Jn. 1:7). Fellowship is extended only from one person to another. To determine if I can have and maintain fellowship with another, it must be established that both parties are walking in the light. If they are, they may enjoy the pleasures of fellowship. If not, fellowship must be severed (II Thess. 3:6).

2) A Lesson

Concerning The Basis Of

Forgiveness. John penned, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (I Jn. 1:9). Earlier, John reminded, *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"* (I Jn. 1:7). This great privilege is available through an agreement concerning the Son. *"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins"* (I Jn. 2:1-2). For forgiveness to be secured, a Christian who has sinned must humbly approach God and ask for it.

3) A Lesson

Concerning Our Relationship With The World. John says, *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I Jn. 2:15-17). Jesus reminded though we live *"in the world"* (Jn. 17:11), we are not *"of the world"* (Jn. 17:16). James wrote *"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world"* (Jam. 1:27). Always remember, it is much harder to get rid of the world once it is allowed in, so do not let it!

4) A Lesson

Concerning The Definition Of Sin. John helps us to see what sin is by saying *"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law"* (I Jn. 3:4). Later, John also notifies his readers *"All unrighteousness is sin"* (I Jn. 5:17). To these definitions

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James adds, *“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin”* (Jam. 4:17). The Bible informs us, *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”* (Rom. 3:23) and that our *“iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear”* (Isa. 59:2). We must be willing to say, as others, *“I have sinned”* (I Sam. 15:24; II Sam. 12:13) so our sin will not condemn us.

5) A Lesson

Concerning Our Love For The Brethren. John authored, *“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren”* (I Jn. 3:16). The love brethren share is wonderful and needful. The devotion we have for each other runs deep. Jesus said, *“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another”* (Jn. 13:34-35).

He later added, *“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends”* (Jn. 15:12-13). Be sure your brethren know you care for and love them!

6) A Lesson

Concerning The Testing Of Spirits. In I Jn. 4:1 the Bible says, *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”* When someone is teaching, that which is being taught needs to be verified by and matched to the Bible, for *“there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction”* (II Pet. 2:1). This is why the Bereans *“received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so”* (Acts 17:11). Paul commanded, *“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good”* (I Thess. 5:21). Be sure you are testing the spirits and ensuring the truth is being taught.

7) A Lesson

Concerning Where Eternal Life Can Be Found. Near the end of I John it is said, *“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son”* (I Jn. 5:11). We must not overlook the importance of being *“in Christ,”* and how one achieves this status. Paul taught, *“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ”* (Gal. 3:26-27). To the Romans he penned, *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life”* (Rom. 6:3-4). Just like everyone who was in the ark was saved (Gen. 6-7), everyone who is in Christ will be saved. We must recall, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ”* (Eph. 1:3). Are you in Christ? If not, why not?

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MEETING TIMES (EST)

SUNDAY

Bible Study – 10:00 am

Worship – 11:00 am & 3:00 pm

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study – 7:00 pm