

1st John Lesson 7 - Now We Are The Sons Of God

1Jn 3:1-2 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. (2) Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

John is faithfully repeating what He heard Jesus say over fifty years earlier.

Joh 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

You are in the family of God because of the love of God. Never forget that. He loved you when you were still a sinner, unable to save yourself, unable to offer Him anything to negotiate with. Like pastor Dave taught us again and again, LOVE reached across the void and gave you the blood of His Son Jesus for you to be able to hold that blood up and approach Him just to say, "Hi." But forgiveness by the blood of Jesus was not enough. His mercy forgave you by the blood of Jesus, but His grace adopted you into His family, rebirthed you with His own spiritual DNA (Divine Nature Attributes), and made you a son of God.

Joh 1:12-13 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: (13) Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Notice in 1st john it says we should be "called" the sons of God. Greek scholars agree the precise wording in the original language means, "**called to be**" sons of God. Who called us to "be?" God did. This is the creative power of God at work. God calls those things which be not as though they were. And when He does, what was NOT becomes what IS.

God's CREATION method is that He "calls those things which be not as though they were." For example, when there was no light, God called, "light ... BE, and light WAS!" God called Abraham a father of many nations, and that is exactly what he became. When God "called" Abram by a new name, Abraham ... the father of a multitude ... could you tell at first there was any change? No. Did God call Abraham to be the father of a multitude only after he got to heaven? No. When God called Abraham a father of many nations, He intended Abraham to be a father of many nations ... NOW ... in this life.

John is saying it is the same with you. God has "called" you a child of God, and even though it does not yet appear what you shall be at perfection, the creative process has

begun, and you are as surely a child of God NOW as Abraham was a father of a multitude from the day God spoke it. We are not "going to be" sons of God when we get to heaven. We are sons of God, NOW! In fact, we are so very much already the sons of God ... the world does not know us anymore than it knew Jesus Himself. **Darkness does not comprehend light.** Remember what John wrote over fifty years earlier by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit,

Joh 1:4-5 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. (5) And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

Again, as always, John is simply teaching what he heard Jesus teach over fifty years ago. Every Christian knows John 3:16, but few know what follows that verse.

Joh 3:16-21 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (17) For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. (18) He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (19) And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. (20) For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. (21) But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

All through this epistle, John has been teaching these same truths:

1. God is light.
2. We are children of the light.
3. We are to walk as children of the light.
4. But some love darkness rather than the light.
5. They say they are children of the light, but they continue walking in darkness.
6. They say they are children of light, but they continue to do evil deeds (iniquity).
7. They say they are children of light, but in truth ... they hate the light ... because the light exposes their deeds.
8. But those who know the truth ... they come to the light ... they become children of the light ... they forsake the deeds of darkness ... and they walk in the light as He is in the light.
9. Those who walk in the light have fellowship with Him who is light.
10. John says those who say they have fellowship with Him but continue to walk in habitual darkness ... they are liars and the truth is not in them.

The world hates the light ... therefore, the world hates you. **A child of God is as incompatible with the world as light is incompatible with darkness. Light and dark cannot share the same room at the same time. You are a child of darkness or you are a child of light. Stop trying to cohabit with darkness.** In street talk, stop trying to get in bed with the world. The apostle James says Christians who do that are adulterers and adulteresses. It is adultery because we are the bride of Christ. We are married to the Lord.

Jas 4:4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

The apostle Paul also taught what Jesus taught. Here are just two witnesses from the apostle Paul's teachings on the same subject:

Col 1:13 Who hath delivered us from the power **of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son:**

Luk 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Eph 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works **of darkness, but rather reprove *them*.**

Joh 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, **I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.**

1Jn 3:2-3 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. (3) And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Now we are the sons of God. You are no longer a child of the world. You are a child of God. The combined work of the new nature and the Holy Spirit within you is in the process of transforming you into the very SAME image as Christ. Jesus wants us to worship Him, but not as something unattainable ... not as being something we could never be like. Just the opposite, He came to start a new species of human. Jesus is the prototype. Hebrew 12:2 says we are to look unto Jesus, the "author and finisher" of our faith. Romans 8:29 says Jesus is the "firstborn of MANY brethren." It also says we are predestined to be conformed to the image of his son. The new man on the inside is

already created in the image of God. Notice the apostle Paul wrote:

Eph 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

The new man "is created after God" (in the same image) of righteousness and true holiness. One Greek scholar says it means, "*Man, by regeneration, is restored to the image of God which he lost in the Garden of Eden.*" Regeneration is done in the spirit instantly, but not in the mind and in the body. The goal is to allow the new man to come to the outside so that we are not like Him in spirit only, but also in how we think, how we live, how we walk as the offspring of God, as children of light in a world of darkness.

It does not yet appear what we shall be. Jesus appears quite different today than He appeared in the four gospels. He is wearing a glorified body. His disciples didn't even recognize Him sometimes when they saw Him after He was glorified.

1Jn 3:2 ... when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

John is remembering how Jesus is called the WORD and He is called the SEED. Every seed has an image within it. Jesus is the express image of God. When the life of the SEED, Jesus Christ, is planted within you at the new birth, that life ... that image ... begins to grow. It is on a mission to take over your whole garden, your whole being, spirit, soul, and body. Jesus taught how this process happens,

Mar 4:26-28 And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; (27) And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. (28) For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

Jesus said that even in good ground, not everyone would allow the image within the SEED to come to full harvest.

Mar 4:20 And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

It is easy to observe various levels of "maturity" in Christians. But the point Jesus was making was this ... not every Christian comes to full maturity in this life, but every Christian will have "some" maturity in this life. John is teaching what Jesus taught, but he is also giving us the great hope of the future, **but we know that, when he shall appear,**

we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Maybe you only made it to thirty fold in this life, maybe sixtyfold ... but in that day ... when you truly see Him as He is ... there will be a complete transformation to the image of the son. We are already like Him to various degrees (thirty, sixty, one hundred fold) but then ... we shall **all** be changed. Not only spirit, not only in soul, but even our bodies will be changed into a glorified body like He has. Here are a few supporting scriptures:

Rom 8:22-23 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. (23) And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.

Php 3:20-21 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: (21) Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

1Co 15:49-53 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. (50) Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. (51) Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, (52) In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. (53) For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

John continues,

1Jn 3:3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

The "hope" of future "perfection" (100 fold maturity) does not relieve us of the responsibility of purifying ourselves now! Perfection will come when we see Him as He is. Look again at what Jesus taught us about the transformation process:

Mar 4:26-28 And he said, **So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; (27) And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. (28) For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.**

Jesus is the Word. Jesus is the SEED. Jesus is the LIFE. Jesus is the LIGHT. He has been sown into you at the new birth. He begins speaking by the new nature from within you the very day you are born again. In my case He began taking over my "garden" immediately with things like, "This pornography has to go. This foul language has to go. These dirty jokes have to go. You have to forgive those who have hurt you." ... on and on. Paul described this process a little differently, but it is speaking of precisely the same thing,

Rom 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service.* (2) And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

Please, if you can take this one nugget of wisdom from this 71-year-old preacher, you will save yourself many years of frustration. This took me so many years to learn, but I give it to you freely:

A RENEWED MIND IS NOT A MIND THAT IS FULL OF KNOWLEDGE. A RENEWED MIND IS ONE THAT YIELDS TO THE VOICE OF THE NEW NATURE.

A mind can be full of knowledge by "hearing" the Word of God. But a renewed mind that transforms your life is a mind that "does" the Word of God. KNOWLEDGE WILL NOT TRANSFORM YOU. OBEDIENCE TO THE NEW NATURE AND THE VOICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE. YOU DON'T PRESENT YOUR BODY A LIVING SACRIFICE BY HEARING THE WORD OF GOD. YOU PRESENT YOUR BODY A LIVING SACRIFICE BY DOING THE WORD OF GOD.

Jesus made it very clear that those who "hear" the words of Jesus but are not "doers" of His words have not really made Him "Lord." They call Him Lord, but He is only their Lord if they do what He says:

Luk 6:46-49 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? (47) Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: (48) He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. (49) But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.

The apostle James says,

Jas 1:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

In the context of our subject yesterday about the false teachers ... the ones John calls the "antichrist" teachers ... James is saying if you are not going to be a doer of the Word, you really don't need any false teachers like those antichrists to deceive you. You are already deceiving yourself. You can say you have fellowship with Christ all you want to, but if you are walking in darkness, you are not in fellowship with Him.

"Now brother Gary, purifying yourself sounds like works." No, it sounds like grace! Remember the man in Romans chapter seven who had received God's law but had no capacity to keep it? He represents every person since the fall of Adam who loved God and wanted to live righteously. With his mind he agreed that the Law was good, and he set out to keep it ... but like everyone else, he found he could not. Every man had the law of sin and death working in him and he could not live a righteous life, no matter how hard he tried. Trying to live holy by your own strength ... that is works!

But when you are born again, by the grace of God you receive a new nature. You literally become a new man inside, reborn in the image of God. It is "Christ in you" that empowers you to live clean and holy now. It is not you ... but Christ in you ... that lives righteously through you. You have become a child of light and as your mind yields to Christ within you, you simply walk a righteous life. You can't take credit for it. All the glory goes to Christ, and the Father who gave you Christ. Christ is your righteousness. You begin to say like Paul,

Gal 2:19-20 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. (20) I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

The only "work" you do is "yielding" to "Christ in you." It is you yielding your lordship to Christ's lordship. My flesh will still do anything I let it do, with no moral conscience at all. My flesh would still get drunk if I let it. But if the thought occurs to me, my renewed mind now says, "I am a child of light and I don't get drunk. Shut up flesh. No! You are not permitted to get drunk." That is a renewed mind. That is a yielded mind. That is being "spiritually minded" instead of "carnally minded." This is how you purify yourself, by yielding to the righteousness of Christ that has been given to you as a free gift.

Righteousness is yours for the living, but you have to yield to it. You have to want it to be willing to say no to the flesh, because the flesh will often resist you with all of its strength. Withdrawals of all kinds can be tough. Who are you following? Christ or the flesh? If you are led by Christ's nature within you, you will mortify the deeds of the body.

Do you have this HOPE within you ... the HOPE of being like Christ? If you do, you will purify yourself by yielding to the lordship of Christ in you. Again, His nature in you is like a compass. Just as a natural compass always points north, Christ's nature in you always points toward righteousness. Follow the natural compass and you will be going north. Follow the new nature compass and you will live a life of righteousness. You will be pure, **even as He is pure**. You will walk as a child of light.