

Finding *Renewal* in the Love of God

Unit 1: Discovering Renewal in the Father's Love Study Questions with Answers

Read 1 John in the New Revised Standard Version and respond to the following questions.

1. Read the first four verses of 1 John; how can we trust that God desires a relationship with us? **In these verses, the writer of 1 John testifies about the reality of Jesus, revealed to us. God desired a relationship with us so much that he sent Jesus as a testimony about himself, so that we could know him and could form a relationship with both the Father and the Son.**
2. The book of 1 John speaks of two simple realities about the essence of God. What are they? (see 1.5 and 4.16b) **God is light; God is love.**
3. Take a moment to ponder light and darkness and their relationship to one another and their effects on everything around them. Jot down a few notes about your thoughts before you continue. **Light conquers darkness every time. Only when the light is turned off or the sun is set (finished its course) is there darkness. Light reveals what is already there—it exposes things. Light illuminates paths, allows the possibility of vision; it purifies, too. Children are afraid of the dark. Darkness disguises danger.**
4. What does it mean to me that no darkness—at all—exists in our God?
 - a. 1.6—**We are fooling ourselves if we think that we can have fellowship with God while we walk in darkness. If we are near God, we are in the light; light destroys darkness. Thus, any darkness that exists in us will disappear when we are near our God.**
 - b. 1.7—**If we walk in the light like he does, we have fellowship with him (and anyone else who is walking there) and he has fellowship with us (*Fellowship* means simply “things in common.” *When I am walking in the light, I have something in common with God*).**
 - c. 1.9—**God is full of light. If I am honest with him and bring my sin to him, he forgives; his presence (of total light) cleanses me from *all* unrighteousness (darkness).**
 - d. 2.9-11—**I cannot say that I walk in the light if I hate my brother. However, if I love my brother, I live in the light, and there is nothing to make me stumble. The one who walks in darkness loses his way.**
 - e. 3.2-3—**We are children of God, and as His children, we can expect to grow up into His image—We will be *like him*. The hope in me that I will be like him motivates me to *act like him*. I “purify myself, just as he is pure.”**

5. What does it mean to us that the essence of our God is love?
 - a. 3.1—The Father has given us the privilege of being called children of God—in fact, we *are* children of God.
 - b. 3.16—Jesus laid down his life for us, thus teaching us what love is; we should lay down our lives for one another.
 - c. 3.23—He commands us to love one another and to believe in the name of Jesus (who loved us and died for us).
 - d. 4.7-12—If we really know God, we love like God. God did not love us because we loved him; He loved us because of who He is—not because of who we are. We should love one another; in fact, when we love one another, we prove that God live in us, and when he continues to live in us, his love is perfected in us.

6. Consider your most intimate and wide range feelings about God and your relationship with Him. Take a few minutes to make a list of those feelings before you continue. Put a star by those feelings that might actually get in the way of growing in intimacy with God.

7. Give two motivations for a child of God to be honest and confessional in her relationship with God (1.9-10). How does
 - a. He will forgive us and cleanse us
 - b. If we don't confess and claim we do not sin, we prove that we are a liar (He does not live in us)

8. How might I be sure that I have truly come to know God? (2.5) *If I obey Him.* How does this letter describe the one who claims to know Him, but does not obey? *That person is a "liar."*

9. Compare 1.9-10 with 3.6. How can it be that we are liars if we say we have not sinned, while the book also claims that no one who sins has either seen him or known him? *The tenses of the verbs contain the answers. In 1.9, we are called to live in a state of constant confession before God. In this state, we are continually cleansed. We have not finished committing a sin before we are cleansed if our life state is one of attempting to please God and confessing all of shortcomings. In 1.10, note that the verb is "have not sinned"—at all, ever. Since God sent Jesus to die for our sin, if we claimed we had not sinned, we would be calling God a liar! In 3.6, the writer is speaking of a state in which a person abides (remains) in Him. In that state, like the state of confession, no one "goes on sinning." The verb "sins" means sinning—yesterday, today, and tomorrow. It is speaking of a career of sin. The one who lives in this state has not seen Him and does not know Him.*

10. Into what incredulous identity has everyone who does right been born? (2.29-3.1) *We are (truly) the children of God.*

11. What more can a person hope to gain from this relationship? (3.2) *We cannot even imagine—it has not been revealed, but we do know that whatever it is, we will be like Him.*

12. Twenty-two times the New Revised Standard version speaks of abiding. According to 1 John, a person abides in one of two camps. What are these two camps? (see 3.14-15) *Eternal life and death.* What is the sign that we possess this life? (3.14) *If we love one another.*

13. How do we know that we love one another as we should?
 - a. 3.16—*Jesus sacrificed everything for us; we should be willing to sacrifice everything for our brother*
 - b. 4.17—*In the world, we are just like He is*
 - c. (5.2)—*We love God and obey His commands*

14. What great benefits do we receive from truly loving our brothers? (3.18-22 and 4.17-18)
 - a. *We know that we belong to the truth*
 - b. *Thus, we can be reassured when our hearts condemn us*
 - c. *We can be bold in the presence of God*
 - d. *Our prayers are unhindered*
 - e. *We please God*
 - f. *We can be bold on the Day of Judgment*
 - g. *Love conquers fear; thus we no longer fear punishment*

15. Why does the child of God not need to fear false prophets, even those John calls the “antichrist?” (4.4, 6) *The one who is in us is greater than the one who is in the world and we can recognize the spirits of truth and the spirits of error.*

16. What great gift has been given to us that has prompted the writing of this letter? (5.11, 13) *Eternal life. The book is written that we may know we possess eternal life.*

17. In 5.20, what was Jesus’ purpose? *To give us an understanding of God*

18. Contemplate Jesus for a few more minutes. What can we know about God because of the testimony of Jesus?