

— 1 John —  
Lesson #15 Chapter 4:15-21

In this last section in chapter 4, John again seeks to encourage the believers. As you prepare to do your lesson, ask the Lord to help you believe and trust in the assurances He has placed in His Word.

1. In the book of 1 John, John seeks to assure and strengthen his beloved friends by reminding them of the truth. Summarize what he told them in 1 John 4:1-6.
  - a. From there, please summarize John's teaching in 1 John 4:7-14.
  
2. Verse 14 ended by mentioning what we have seen and testified. What is that testimony (verse 14)?
  
3. What do true believers confess or acknowledge according to the first part of 1 John 4:15? Now add to your answer from John 17:8; 1 John 2:23; 4:2; 5:5, 10; 2 John 7.
  
4. When someone makes the confession found in verse 15, what is true of that person (verse 15)?

“Testimony about Jesus tells more than what Jesus did—save from sin. It also tells who He is—the Son of God. Again, all this goes against false teachers. They apparently claimed Jesus could not be human, thus could not die on the cross. On the other hand, Scripture claims that anyone who acknowledges this Savior they have seen is a true Christian, living in union with God.” ~The Holman New Testament Commentary<sup>1</sup>

5. The verb tense for both *know* and *believe* from verse 16 indicates that at a point in time in the past an action took place, the results of which continue into the present. What is true of all believers according to the first part of verse 16?
  
6. The second half of verse 16 explains how experiencing and trusting in God’s love is possible. What do you learn?
  
7. We’ve looked at *abides* before, but let’s take time to refresh our memory about the word’s meaning. Define *abides* [Strong’s #3306 (NIV *lives in*; HCSB *remains in*)]. Add to your understanding of the word by looking at John 14:17; 1 John 3:9; 4:12-13, 15-16.
  
8. Since you have defined *abide* in the question above, rewrite verses 15-16 using synonyms of *abide*. How did this little exercise help bring home some of the truths John wants us to understand about our relationship with the Lord?
  
9. John begins verse 17 with the words *by this* (NIV *in this way*; HCSB *in this*), providing a bridge between the point he made in verses 15-16 to verse 17. What do you learn about love in verse 17 that is directly tied to verses 15-16?

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<sup>1</sup>Walls, David, and Max Anders. 1999. *I & II Peter, I, II & III John, Jude*. Vol. 11. Holman New Testament Commentary. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

10. Define *perfected* [Strong's #5048 (NIV *made complete*)]. See also John 17:23; Hebrews 10:14; 1 John 2:5; 4:12 where the same word is used.
  
11. What is the result of that completed love according to verse 17? What reason is given for that result in verse 17?
  
12. Okay, let's take a step back a minute and consider what John is telling us here in this section of his letter. Who confesses that Jesus is God according to verse 15 and 1 John 3:23; 4:2; 5:1, 5? What is true of those people (verse 15)?
  
13. As a result of verse 15, what is true for believers according to the beginning of verse 16? Why is that possible? See the second half of verse 16.
  
14. Because of this close relationship with God, what is the result for all God's children? See verse 17.
  
15. In verse 18, John begins with the statement, "There is no fear in love." What did John just discuss in verse 17 that might be a cause for fear? See also Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10, 18-19; 1 John 2:28.

16. What is the answer for our hearts when we fear God's judgment? See verse 18. Why is that the perfect answer for counseling believers to think rightly about the Lord, condemnation, and judgment? See 1 John 4:18; Psalm 34:22; Romans 5:18-19, 21; 8:1-4, 15, 31-34.

"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). But a Christian does not fear future judgment, because Christ has suffered his judgment for him on the cross. "Truly, truly I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life" (John 5:24, NASB). "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1, NASB). For a Christian, judgment is not future; *it is past*. His sins have been judged already at the cross, and they will never be brought against him again." ~Warren Wiersbe<sup>2</sup>

17. In the bigger picture of 1 John 4:7-21, John is discussing *love for the brethren*. Why would John's subject matter about loving believers be a source of fear for us on the day of judgment? See 1 John 4:20-21.

18. What assurance does John again give the believers to help them overcome their fear of failing to obey this command to love the brethren and then experience God's judgment? See 1 John 4:19, also see 1 John 4:10 and Matthew 25:31-46.

19. Let's simplify this section even more. True believers will do what according to 1 John 4:19?

- a. If someone does not love the brethren, what does this say about them according to 1 John 4:7-8, 20.

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<sup>2</sup>Wiersbe, Warren W. 1996. *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Vol. 2. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

- b. According to 1 John 4:17, what will believers have or possess on the day of judgment when God judges men according to their faith in Christ or by their deeds (because of the absence of their faith in Christ)?
- c. What comfort does a believer have on the day of judgment according to the end of 1 John 4:17?
20. What assurances have you gleaned from verses 15-21 that bring you hope and give you joy?

“Mr. Fleming, in his “Fulfilling of the Scriptures,” relates the case of a most hardened sinner who was put to death in the town of Ayr. It pleased the Lord to bring him to repentance when in prison, and so full was his assurance of pardoning mercy that, when he came to the place of execution, he could not help crying out to the people, under the sense of pardon, “Oh, He is a great Forgiver! He is a great Forgiver!” and he added, “Now hath perfect love cast out fear. I know God hath nothing to say against me, for Jesus Christ hath paid all; and those are free whom the Son makes free.” ~G. S. Bowes.<sup>3</sup>

“Between the fear of a slave and the fear of a child, we can all perceive a great distinction. Between the fear of God’s great power and justice which the devils have, and that fear which a child of God has when he walks in the light with his God, there is as much difference, surely, as between hell and heaven.” ~Charles Spurgeon<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Spurgeon, C. H. 2009. *My Sermon Notes & 2: Genesis to Malachi*. Vol. 1. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

<sup>4</sup>Spurgeon, C. H. 1902. “A Fear to Be Desired.” In *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, 48:494. London: Passmore & Alabaster.