

1st John Lesson 10 - If Our Heart Condemn Us Not

1Jn 3:18-19 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. (19) And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

All through this epistle, John has been putting the emphasis on what we **do**, not so much on what we **say**. Confession of the Word is good. Confession of the Word is one of the tools given to us by God to help us renew our minds to the mind of Christ. John is not teaching about confession in this epistle. John is warning us against hypocrisy. Hypocrisy has no place in a Christian. Remember what Jesus said about it,

Mat 24:44-51 *Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. (45) Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? (46) Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. (47) Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. (48) But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; (49) And shall begin to smite *his* fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; (50) The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and in an hour that he is not aware of, (51) And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

Hypocrite is G5273 hupokrites – actor, stage player, pretender.

Actors are pretenders and so are hypocrites. An actor might portray himself as a murderer in a play, but if the police came to arrest him for murder after the play is over, the actor would say, "I am not a murderer. I was only pretending." In precisely the same way, hypocrites "say" they are Christians. They put on a good show during worship services at church. But when it comes time to BE A CHRISTIAN in real life, by their ACTIONS they are saying, "I am not really a follower of Christ. I was just pretending to be one. I was just acting." If you want to read some really scary things, find and read everything Jesus taught about **hypocrites**. **You do NOT want to end up in that camp!** We are to love ... IN DEED ... and IN TRUTH! Again, John is writing, people are not what they "say," **PEOPLE ARE WHAT THEY DO!**

1 John 3:19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

"Hereby" means "by this" ... by the fact that we love in deed and truth, not just in "good

intentions" and "words,"

We know ... "we" know ... this is evidence "to us" that we are not deceived ... that we are of the truth ... because by our deeds we can plainly see that the love of God is flowing through us. [Please hear the previous lesson #9 where Jesus taught about not enabling people to continue in their rebellion.] The apostle James used very similar wording when he wrote,

Jas 2:17-18 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. (18) Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

... and shall assure our hearts before him. Greek for "shall assure" is G3982 peitho – the first meaning is *to convince* - to persuade, to pacify.

How do we convince and persuade our hearts to be at peace before Him? Is it because we "say" we love the brethren? Or is it because we demonstrate our love to the brethren in deeds and in truth? It is the DOER of the WORD that is blessed. It is by our deeds that we assure, convince, and persuade "our" hearts to be at peace before Him.

IMPORTANT – John is leading up to the subject of getting your prayers answered in the next few verses. Having this "assurance, this peace" in our heart is essential to answered prayer!

John continues to teach what Jesus taught more than fifty years earlier. Most Christians are very familiar with this verse, but it is the rare person that knows the context in which it was spoken,

Joh 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Here is the verse left in its context:

Joh 14:23-27 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. (24) He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. (25) These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. (26) But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto

you. (27) Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

If you are NOT A DOER of the "words, the sayings, and the commandments" of Jesus ... **you have no grounds to assure your heart that you are of the truth.** Why was Jesus' heart always so confident, so convinced, so persuaded and so full of peace whenever He approached the Father?

Joh 15:10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

IMPORTANT – The disciple is not above his Master. Jesus kept the Father's commandments and abode in His love. We keep the commandments of Jesus and abide in His love. **BY THIS, BY THESE DEEDS WE ASSURE, CONVINCE, AND PERSUADE "OUR" HEARTS WE ARE OF THE TRUTH.**

1Jn 3:20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

For if "our" heart condemn us Keep this in context ... what convinces and persuades our heart to be at peace? Keeping His commandments. Being a DOER of the sayings of Jesus. I'm going to also say, being a DOER of the promptings that come from your new nature ... because that is Christ in you! Example: you see a situation and you are prompted from within ... give them some money ... buy them some tires for their car ... take them to lunch ... it could be a thousand things ... the prompting is coming from your heart ... if you DO IT ... your heart will remain at peace ... **but if you DO NOT OBEY the prompting ... your own heart will condemn you.**

The reason for your disobedience could be as simple as lack of trust (I'm going to need that money myself and I can't trust that it will be there when I need it) or it could be blatant GREED (always thinking of bigger barns and more money for ME!) But if you are being prompted from the heart to DO DEEDS OF LOVE and you disobey ... Don't expect your heart not to condemn you.

In the previous section, John went to great lengths to help us discern whether we are a child of God or a child of the devil. Hopefully, you are not in any of those habitual "deal-breaker" sins. Hopefully you found out you are a child of God. Well, if you are a child of God, you are a JOINT HEIR with Jesus Christ. You are like the Prodigal Son who has returned home to a FULL INHERITANCE. John went to such lengths in this letter to let us know for sure that **NOW WE ARE THE SONS OF GOD ... like JESUS!**

As sons, we need to start thinking and acting like sons of God.

Jesus would never hesitate to "give" when prompted to do so because He thought, *"I better hang on to that because, you never know, I may need that in the future and I can't trust for sure my Father will provide it again when I need it."* He would never think that and we should never think that way. If you are being prompted from your heart to give, you should give, and by that DEED of obedience you are assuring, convincing, and persuading your heart to remain at peace because you are keeping His commandments. This prompting can go both ways, however. I have been just as prompted NOT to give to certain individuals over these years. So has Sue. There is a discernment that comes from within where you just know ... and you may not know how you know ... that if you give that person money, you will be enabling them to continue in their rebellion. Sometimes it is important that NO MAN GAVE UNTO HIM. Remember the Prodigal? Sometimes I have offered to buy them food instead of giving them cash.

Sometimes it is more than promptings. Sometimes it is the Lord Himself giving you specific instruction by the Holy Spirit. Once in church the Lord told my wife to give a lady a certain amount of cash. When Sue heard it her first thought was, *"Lord, I don't think I have that much cash on me."* At that very moment, a friend who Sue had worked with doing a garage sale handed Sue the cash for her portion of the garage sale. It was more money than the amount Sue had heard so Sue's first thought was, *"Lord, I'll just give her all of it."* Immediately, in a clear and firm voice the Lord spoke back, ***"No! That would be adding to my word."*** So, Sue gave the lady the amount the Lord had said.

Often the Lord leaves it up to us how much we want to give;

2Co 9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.*

Often the Lord allows us to be His stewards in order to move money around in the kingdom where needed ... at His command;

Luk 16:1 And he said also unto his disciples, *There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; ...*

The Holy Ghost interrupted right there and asked me, ***"Jesus is your Rich Man. Will you be His steward?"*** [I have a series titled "Stewarding the Pound" that you will find helpful if you want to be a steward of Kingdom Finances for Jesus.]

God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Whenever I think of this passage, I remember the early days when the Lord was dealing with me about getting rid of my music. He may never tell you to do that. Music may not be an idol to you. But it was to me at the time. Oh ... it was hard on my flesh to get rid of my vast collection of LP albums I had gathered over a lifetime. But I did good ... except for one album ... that's right ... BAD COMPANY! (Gary sings) "*Bum, Bum, Bummm ... "Bad Company"* ... I hid the album. What was I thinking? That God would not know I kept it and hid it?

God is greater than our heart and He knows all things. He didn't send lightning bolts to blast me. He is a loving Father and He understands growth. He doesn't condone sin, but neither does He kick His children to the curb as they are growing into spiritual adulthood. I didn't listen to the album again. I forgot all about it. But a few months later I discovered it again when we moved to a different house. By that time, I had already grown enough in maturity to have no problem getting rid of it. I said something like, "*Oh Lord, I am so embarrassed. I hid this away. Please forgive me. I'll get rid of it right now.*" And I did. It was nearly twenty years before the Lord allowed us to have music in the house again on a regular basis. By that time, it was no longer an idol in my life. God sees everything. God knows everything. He hates sin more than we do, and he looks on it with less allowance than we do. But thank God He is full of tender mercies.

Psa 145:8-9 The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. (9) The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.

He watches in delight as we mature from newborn spiritual infants, to little children, and then on to adults of full stature in Christ. Every parent understands this. No parent kicks their baby to the curb when they first try to walk but fail after one step. Just the opposite. We are so proud of their effort. We pick them up and encourage them again. We grab the video camera. In the same way, God delights in your growth. There is no need to try and hide anything from Him ... He already knows ... He is greater than our heart and He knows all things.

1Jn 3:21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence toward God.

Here we come to another big "IF." IF our heart condemn us not. **In context, our heart condemns us not when we obey His commandments.** We assure, convince, persuade our heart to be at peace when we are DOERS of the sayings of Jesus, including the promptings that come from within by the new nature. Said more simply ... and in context with this whole letter ... YOU DEVELOP A LIFESTYLE OF WALKING IN THE

LIGHT AS HE IS IN THE LIGHT. You follow the "mechanism of righteousness" we have already taught about, and **as the Holy Spirit brings to your mind what Jesus has said, you obey what He said. It is not a matter of memory, it is a matter of leadership.** Here are two verses from memory:

Luk 9:3 And he said unto them, Take nothing for *your* journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.

Luk 22:36 Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take *it*, and likewise *his* scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.

Which is it? Take nothing with you? Or take your purse, your scrip, oh ... and by the way ... take a weapon with you. Which is it? **Having memory of these verses is little help.**

YOU CANNOT DO BOTH AT ONCE. THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL BRING TO YOUR REMEMBRANCE WHAT JESUS SAID FOR YOU TO ACT ON IN THE CIRCUMSTANCE YOU ARE IN.

Example: There have been times when I heard, "**Give to every man that asketh of thee.**" There have been times when I have heard, "**And no man gave unto him.**" This is part of the leadership that comes from the Holy Spirit ... and it is a great help if you spend time in the Word of God so you have your spirit equipped for day and night meditation.

1Jn 3:21-22 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence toward God.

Compare this verse with two other verses we have already studied earlier in this epistle:

1Jn 2:28-29 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. (29) If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

We could go back even further in this epistle because John has been talking about this same thing throughout the letter:

1Jn 1:7 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.

John uses all of these various phrases to describe the same thing: "Walk in the light, he that doeth righteousness, abide in Him, let His word abide in you, keep His commandments, hear His word and keep it."

NOW YOU ARE A SON OF GOD. YOU ARE A CHILD OF LIGHT. STEP OUT OF DARKNESS AND WALK AS THE CHILD OF LIGHT THAT YOU ARE. YOUR LIFE-SOURCE HAS NO SIN IN IT SO WALK FREE FROM SIN. KEEP YOUR HEART AND YOUR CONSCIENCE CLEAN BEFORE GOD AND YOU WILL HAVE CONFIDENCE WHEN YOU APPROACH HIM. YOU WILL NEVER BE ASHAMED BECAUSE YOU ARE A DOER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Here is another witness from the apostle Paul,

Act 24:16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and *toward* men.

THE OVERLY SENSITIVE CONSCIENCE:

Many people accept the hyper-grace message because it gives them relief from an oversensitive conscience. They are so overly sensitive that they feel condemned all the time, no matter what they do. They go off in the ditch on the other side of the road and make standards for themselves that are not described in the Word of God. I am not making this up. I personally know of a young woman like that, who came to the place she would no longer leave her house because she was afraid she would displease God by murdering ants if she accidentally stepped on some. I am not making this up. That is just one of MANY such things her oversensitive mind came up with. Everybody who knew her tried to reason with her. We assured her that even the apostles of Christ themselves no doubt sometimes stepped on ants when they walked, but she kept listening to whatever "voice" that was talking with her instead of renewing her mind with the Word of God. Eventually, she took her own life. How I hate the devil and his deception. He made her feel so guilty for "murdering" ants that she wound up "murdering" herself. Resist an overly sensitive conscience. It can be dangerous. **Side note: Praying in tongues is one of the best ways to keep your conscience properly maintained:**

Jud 1:20-21 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, (21) Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

People who grow up in overly strict, sometimes overly legalistic, households often have a habit of always feeling condemned ... even if they are living the most holy life of

anybody you know. They are so afraid ... "Maybe I committed an unintentional sin. Maybe I committed a sin of omission." They ALWAYS have this feeling that God is mad at them, no matter whether they are living holy or not. So, when they hear a radical grace preacher say, *"All of your sins are forgiven past, present, and future"* ... it is like manna from heaven to them. If you accept that false doctrine it is like a big sigh of relief, *"Ah, my war with the flesh is over. He accepts me just like I am."* Without realizing it, what they are really feeling is the thought, *"At last, my war with the flesh is over."*

It is a partial truth. He does accept each of us just as we are. But He loves us too much to leave us just like we are. Remember the lesson titled "The Purpose Of The Gospel." God made a promise before the foundation of the world that all who believe on Him will be conformed to the image of His Son. That has already happened in your spirit and we are ALL in the process of having that transformation come to the outside of us where it can be seen by all.

The BIG DANGER is that all of them teach you that you need not feel condemnation when you sin. **They say don't pay any attention to your conscience.** They say you are so forgiven you don't even need to tell God you are sorry when you sin. THEY ARE TEACHING YOU TO IGNORE THE VERY CONSCIENCE GOD GAVE YOU TO KEEP YOU FOLLOWING THE NEW NATURE. THEY ARE TELLING YOU TO IGNORE THE VERY MECHANISM OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. THEY ARE TAKING AWAY THE FIRST LEVEL OF LEADERSHIP OF CHRIST IN YOU. IT IS AN ANTI-CHRIST DOCTRINE.

Just walk by the light of the new nature, follow its promptings, and follow those things the Holy Spirit brings to your mind that Jesus has already said. That is how you DO RIGHTEOUSNESS. That is how you walk in the light as He is in the light. If you commit a sin, immediately confess your sin and repent, and you will be forgiven and washed from all unrighteousness. That is how you keep your heart from condemning you. That is how you always have confidence when you approach God in prayer.

1Jn 3:22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

People often wonder why more of their prayers do not get answered. I don't think it is as mysterious as we make it out to be. Most people have a fire insurance mindset regarding the gospel. They have the blood of Jesus as sort of a "fire insurance" policy to keep from going to hell, but they are living their own lives however they want to. Even more sad to say, in this present generation, the gospel they have heard has been so watered down most are living very sinful lifestyles to the point you can barely distinguish them from the

world ... and then they wonder why most of their prayers do not get answered when they pray.

"Because we keep His commandments" does not mean we are "earning" answered prayer. Keep it in context. "Keeping His commandments" is how you assure, convince and persuade **your own heart** that you are truly His child. The true Christian knows when he is living right and when he is not. You know when your lifestyle is pleasing Him, and when it is not. That is the very reason God gave you a new nature and the voice of your conscience. When you are living wrong, your own conscience is smiting you, and despite your long prayers ... your own heart is condemning you and you have no confidence that your prayers are going to be answered. This is a family, not a religion. Every child knows when he is disobedient to his parents. Every child knows when he is displeasing them. And every child knows that is NOT the time to go asking for ice cream!

Live your life righteously. Be an obedient child that always brings a smile to your Father's heart. Remember, John is teaching what Jesus taught. Your Father is always with you, always loving you, always observing you:

The "When You's" ... not the "If You's"

Giving to the Poor:

Mat 6:1-4 Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. (2) Therefore when thou doest *thine* alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. (3) But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: (4) That thine alms may be in secret: and *thy* Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

Prayer:

Mat 6:5-15 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. (6) But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. (7) But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. (8) Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. (9) After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. (10) Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is*

in heaven. (11) Give us this day our daily bread. (12) And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. (13) And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.

Amen. (14) For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: (15) But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Fasting:

Mat 6:16-18 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. (17) But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; (18) That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

1. IT PLEASES YOUR FATHER WHEN YOU GIVE TO THE POOR.
2. IT PLEASES YOUR FATHER WHEN YOU SPEND TIME IN PRAYER "TO HIM" AND PRAY ALONG THE LINES THAT JESUS OUTLINED FOR US. IT PLEASES THE FATHER WHEN YOU FORGIVE OTHERS THE SAME WAY HE HAS FORGIVEN YOU.
3. IT PLEASES THE FATHER WHEN YOU KEEP YOUR FLESH IN CHECK THROUGH FASTING.

None of these things are "works" to earn anything from God. All of these things are simply the product of who you are as a son of God. This is what the children of God do. This is their normal behavior. This comes from the nature of Christ in you. This is the fruit on the limbs of "trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord." YOU LIVE AS HIS CHILD BECAUSE YOU ARE HIS CHILD!

It pleases the Father to walk with His children ... as they walk more and more in truth ... more and more conformed to the image of the Son.

1Jn 3:23-24 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. (24) And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

No man can be a true Christian unless the Spirit of Christ lives in him. No one can tell by observation if they have the Spirit of Christ within them except by the fruit produced in their life. In the next chapter, the apostle John examines this truth even deeper. He gives

certain litmus tests we can use to know for sure that the Spirit of Christ truly dwells in us and that we have not been deceived into a false sense of security. The apostle Paul wrote,

Rom 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

John is saying the same thing. John has not changed the subject. This whole chapter has been about examining what you DO ... not what you SAY. **How do you know the Spirit of Christ dwells in you?** You can't see it. You can't touch it. Jesus said it is like the wind.

Joh 3:7-8 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. (8) The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

You can feel the wind and you can see the effects of the wind after it blows through. We know His Spirit abides in us by the effect of the Spirit ... the fruit produced on our limbs.