

October 6/7, 2001

## Study Questions

*Cultivating Authentic Christian Community: A Study in 1 John*

### Will You Choose God or the World?

1 John 2:12-17

#### Opening Discussion

1. What things can you think of that we clearly know are destructive, yet people do them anyway? Why is this?
2. Can you think of something you have done that you should have known would be harmful, yet you did it anyway? Why did you do that?
3. Define the characteristics of “the world” in which we live, meaning the world system that is at odds with God and His values. How is this worldly value system promoted in our culture? What makes the world so alluring to people, including Christians?

#### Bible Study

1. Read 1 John 2:1-17 to get the flow of thought.
2. In 2:12 John uses a word for “children” that he used in 2:1, meaning “to bring forth” as in a parent-child relationship. Here, as in 2:1, he has in mind all believers in the family of God. What does he identify that is true of every believer? What has he already taught us in his letter concerning this? How does this truth bring us together in community as the family of God?
3. “Fathers” would mean both men and women who are mature in their faith. What is the identifying mark of a mature believer according to John in verses 13, 14? We often think of a mature believer as one who has been a Christian a long time. Is that necessarily true? Does a couple necessarily have a good marriage just because they’ve been married a long time?
4. “Young men” would refer to both men and women who are growing Christians, slugging it out in the trenches. What does John say about this category of believers? What is the source of their strength?  
  
Given this, what will happen to these Christians if the false teachers have their way?  
Can you think of examples where this has happened to you or someone you know?
5. “Children” in verse 13 is a different word than verse 12. It is a word that means “to be under authority or in submission.” It would refer to young children dependant upon their parents, representing new believers. What does John say about them? Notice what John says about the new believers and mature believers. What is the emphasis from the beginning to end of our Christian life? Given the description of new believers, growing believers and mature believers, what do we learn about the “discipleship” process to present people complete in Christ?

6. What are the lusts of the flesh and how are they promoted in our culture? If time permits, take a secular magazine or flip through some television channels and identify ways the lusts of the flesh are promoted.
7. What are the lusts of the eyes and how are they promoted in our culture? Why does looking good seem to be so much more important than being good? Do these things really satisfy? What evidence do you see around you that supports your conclusion?
8. What is the boastful pride of life? How does this line up with Satan's lie in the garden that "you can be like God"? How have the events of 9-11-01 caused people to rethink some of these things?
9. What is at stake in this battle between knowing God and the lure of the world?

## **Application**

1. Would you identify yourself as a child, young man, or father – spiritually speaking? What does John teach you that affirms your faith walk and helps you identify where you need to focus your attention?
2. Of the three worldly categories John outlines, which do you struggle with most? Why is that? What 2 practical things can you do to resist the lure of the world?
3. Invite people to keep a notebook this coming week of every way the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life is promoted in our culture. Share your discoveries at the beginning of the next group meeting.
4. Close in a time of prayer. Pray that we would love the Father and not the world. Pray that we would seek to be satisfied in knowing God and not in the empty promises of worldly pursuits.