



CAPITOL COMMISSION

ASSURANCE-The Ground of Knowing 1 John 2:27-3:10

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As we have noted in previous studies, John is addressing the problems manifesting themselves within the group of believers addressed in this epistle. Irrespective of the specific problem, whether the Incarnation of Christ, the timing of his return, or any other difficulty; all of them ultimately stem from faulty knowledge.

The above assertion is premised upon John's use of the word **know** in its various forms in excess of 27 times. Along with this usage is the theme of certainty or assurance premised upon this knowledge. Those who have caused the division and confusion had done so by challenging what had been taught by John. Just as the wicked one in the Garden of Eden insinuated to Eve a doubt as to God's veracity. In fact, the insinuation is one implying that what had been said was not true. It is on the order of one hearing the word REALLY as an interrogative (?) or as facetious disdain (generally accompanied with a sneer ☹)!

John's recourse is to remind them of what they had been taught and to drive them to anchor their certainty in those truths.

Our next few segments will focus on what I have labeled the ingredients of certainty or assurance and they will be in three categories: **Ethical; Relational; and Doctrinal**. John introduces the **Ethical** focus in this manner:

27 As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him. 28 Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. 29 If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.

REMEMBER

ANNOINTING

Many suggest the anointing John is referring to is their individual baptisms. Others suggest the anointing to be the initial baptism of the Holy Spirit, the idea being one is unable to grasp the things of God without the Spirit's enabling. A third consideration being the the content of truth they received when they were born from above into The Faith, since John tells them the anointing **teaches**.

Application: when you help a new believer, begin to build a solid basis for the faith. Two very effective tools I have utilized in 40+ years of ministry are: 1) The Navigator's **HAND** illustration¹, and **WHEEL** illustration.² With those tools, my focus was on 1) The Word of Christ, 2) The Person of Christ, 3) the Work of Christ,

and 4) the Grace of Christ. In assisting a believer struggling with assurance, seek to determine what was initially taught. In too many instances, new believers are credulous when listening to others professing the faith.

ABIDING

John encourages these believers to *abide* (the verb means **remain**) in what they had been initially taught. Again, the initial teaching a believer is exposed to becomes the ground upon which their certainty will be developed. But, a note of realism: one must assume John to have been a thorough and correct teacher. Obviously, he built well as did Paul who referred to himself as a wise master builder. Yet, even the wise master builder's "product" encounters times of **doubt**. The tone of the letter does not suggest John is "rattled" by these developments, but takes them in stride with solid, definitive teaching

Application: make certain the individuals you assist in their growth in the faith understand the role and place of **doubt**. **Doubt** means "being in two minds", the status between belief and disbelief.³ Being in this "state" is not something to be feared, but expected if one is progressing normally. The objective, according to the apostle Paul is to be "...fully persuaded..." in ones own mind.⁴ Discipling is an educational process versus one of indoctrination. Adults are to be educated. Children, initially, are indoctrinated, then educated (see Ephesians 6:4).

RECOGNIZE

1 See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

PRIVILEGE

Mind-boggling! The word the apostle uses is in the imperative (a command) and is a verb meaning "to perceive or understand". It is as if John is saying, "get a grip on this". God calls them (and every believer) a child of God! They are not called such on the basis of their behavior, for they are still stained by Adam's sin. Their status is the result of divine sovereignty.⁵

The world does not recognize this status since in their minds everyone is a child of God; confusing the **paternity** of creaturehood with the awesome wonder of **biblical adoption**.

Pennsylvania

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As a result of Adam's transgression, we all start out in the family of the devil and are, by the grace and sovereignty of God, adopted out of that family and into God's family. One family is as a result of natural birth and the other by super-natural re-birth.

PERSPECTIVE

Unrecognized by the world in a biblical sense, though certainly recognized in other senses, i.e. ridiculed and often persecuted. At the same time, believers may not recognize what can be in store for them when the *presence* of God is manifest. (Many assume this to be a reference to the Parousia or 2nd Coming, and it may well be just that.. But, it may as well, be a reference to what many call the *Beatific Vision* of Matthew 5:8). Might this not be what the Apostle Paul had in mind when he said believers were an aroma of life unto life and death unto death?⁶ In any event, the believer's perspective is to be oriented toward these two realities. What we were and what we have become by God's grace.

POTENTIAL

Having been brought into the family of God, adopted and empowered by God's Spirit the believer is to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, here referred to as "*purifying himself as he is pure*". Gratitude is the motivator in the life of the believer. Having recognized what God has graciously brought to pass in the believer's life, this realization is manifested in a desire to "be what they have become".

REALIZE

4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. 5 You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. 6 No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. 7 little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; 8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. 9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

This John addresses the nub of the issue already brought to bear in the opening of the letter: the sin nature and its specific manifestations (1:8 & 10).

CHARACTER

John says Sin is lawlessness, i.e. the creature saying he/she is the determiner of good and evil. We know the introduction of this mindset occurred in Eden via the word of the serpent. Our first parents succumbed to this Lie and as a result of **the sin, the death** was the experience of everyone who subsequently flowed from the loins of Adam and his progeny.⁷ John informs us that He (Christ) appeared to take away sins (the atonement) and to destroy this work (Romans 5:12-21).

Application: How do we determine if something is Sin under the New Covenant? At the time of John's writing, the Old covenant was passing⁸ and the New Covenant arriving⁹? We have 1 John 3:4; Romans 14:23, and James 4:17. But, because, in my estimation, the New Covenant was crafted for spiritual adults, I also suggest Susannah Wesley's contribution:

"Take this rule: whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off your relish of spiritual things; in short, whatever increases the strength and authority of your body over your mind, that thing is sin to you, however innocent it may be in itself."¹⁰

CONTRASTS

John informs us of two classes of individuals in humanity: children of God who practice **lawfulness** (i.e. are subject to the word of God in scripture) and children of the devil who practice **lawlessness**. Hard words. This segment can be summed up in the phrase: Profession is Proved by Practice.

CONQUERED

Jesus came to "destroy the works of the devil" and He did that on the cross of Calvary, in His subsequent death, resurrection and subsequent ascension. The Sin and The Death were defeated by Him who is Resurrection and Life. As His sons and daughters we ought to bear a family likeness, meriting the name Christian.

¹ <http://3.ly/tsfq>

² <http://3.ly/DwDR>

³ <http://3.ly/UTQ7>

⁴ Romans 14:5

⁵ Deuteronomy 7:7 and Romans 9:15-18

⁶ 2 Corinthians 2:16

⁷ Genesis 5:3

⁸ Hebrews 8:13

⁹ 1 Corinthians 11:25 & Hebrews 12:28

¹⁰ <http://3.ly/8ANx>