

1 John 2:20-27 (NKJV)

20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things.

21 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

22 Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.

23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

24 Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.

25 And this is the promise that He has promised us--eternal life.

26 These things I have written to you concerning those who *try to* deceive you.

27 But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

We started this passage last week. We focused on the influence of the **antichrist** and the implications of that. We looked at how significant **church involvement** is and what it means when people abandon it for evil reasons. Now we are moving on to focus on verses 20-23. **What resources do we have** as a believer and **what does it mean?**

Have you ever listened to people who were proclaiming truths that God had, in their words, told them? Then they go off on tangents that would cause a believer to divert his focus on certain works, or spiritual experiences, or anything else, rather than to keep His focus on Christ and maintaining a solid relationship with Him?

Have you ever been caught up in that appeal? That appeal to have a more dramatic expression of faith than your life portrays? Maybe you want the emotional experience the other person seems to have. You find the things being portrayed as seductive and appealing. That is what is happening here in 1 John.

Now sometimes this desire inside of us is a good thing. When we are drawn to want to be more **like those** who are following the Lord closely. They are **more submitted to His will** and to obedience to Christ than we are. They are

enjoying their fellowship with God than we are. Some people have a zeal that scripture tells us to copy. So that is good.

But when the appeal is to **something new**, something that this new teacher has a corner on the market in because God has **freshly revealed** it to them, WATCH OUT. There is no important **new** truth in anything that is **really true**. There is no new truth in how a person gets right with God. There may be new applications, but at its core, the truth that **saved us** was the same when Christ walked the earth as it is now. And if someone says, God told me, and it does not align perfectly with the old truth we have been given, the teacher is acting as a false prophet.

Our ears should perk up when a person starts saying, "God told me".

Sometimes people mean that they experienced an inner perception based on what they already know God has said and they take that as being God's leading. So if you asked them if they audibly heard the voice of God they would say, no, I did not. They might say I believe I received a perception from God that was directing me. Well, that might be a sloppy description of what is going on. But that is not necessarily dangerous.

But when someone goes on and on about an experience they had where they directly heard from Christ, scrutiny is required. A test must be performed.

What they say must be critically evaluated. And that is what was happening in 1 John.

Now, how should we evaluate this person who is speaking in the name of God? Let's look.

²⁰ But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things.

²¹ I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

Now, this is the kind of passage that taken out of its context can result in all kinds of craziness.

At face value we might get the impression that when a Christian gets this anointing **he no longer has any need to read the words in the Bible**. The anointing zaps him with supernatural intuition that needs no cognitive content. We can mysteriously and supernaturally sense a fraud.

Some of the applications that people have made from this passage is that they no longer need to read the Bible. Pastors don't need to study the Word. They can just stand up on Sunday morning and wait for God to supernaturally reveal what that Word means. And logically then, whatever they say cannot be defied because it came right from God.

I hope you can see the world of craziness that unleashes. And it can only be done if we take verse 20 out of the context of the whole book.

Remember how 1 John started?

Verses 1-5 in Chapter 1 tell us about the historical proof for the Gospel message that these people **heard with their ears** and believed and were saved by. They were taught this message, this doctrinal message with some of the deep truths of God at the point of their salvation. If you were to do a study on the word anointed you would find that every Christian has, by necessity, been baptized in the Spirit. Every believer has the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 (NKJV)

²¹ Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God,

²² who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

A person cannot be a believer except for that being so. John's passage assumes this fact.

So when did that anointing happen? When did the Holy Spirit enter this person? Well, it was **in conjunction with** that person coming to faith. No one comes to Christ apart from the Holy Spirit.

So there are two things necessary for a person to come to Christ. The preaching of the truth externally, and the Holy Spirit's drawing a person to Christ internally.

Hence John can say "You have an anointing from the Holy One... The Holy Spirit is indwelling you... and you know all things... you are thoroughly familiar with the message that saves people." John can safely assume both of these things are true because they absolutely **must be true** for a person to come to Christ.

Now, again, very little is more dangerous in scripture than to refuse to limit the word "all" to the context it is being used in. Lots of harm has been done to scripture by this one failure in Bible Study.

"You know **all things**"- does this mean that the Holy Spirit has conveyed all the depths of all the wonderful doctrines in scripture. Does the believer know that justification is monergistic and sanctification is synergistic? Does a believer know what every scripture that refers to the end times refers to?

Does He show us who will win the next ball game?

If they knew all things, why is John even bothering to write the letter?

No, that is ridiculous when we take it that far.

OK then what is the "all" referring to? What are the "all things" that we know? Well in context what is it that the gnostics were preaching? A false gospel. A false way to get right with God. So what is the **all** that these people knew by the anointing in them? They knew the **right way to be made right with God.**

They knew the core doctrines that a believer **must know** to truly be made right with God.

To say it another way we could say, Look fellow believers, I know that if you are a believer, something wildly supernatural had to happen to you. The Spirit of God worked in your hearts, and filled you, and caused you to respond to the gospel message that fully saves people from their sins. And I can confidently say that if you are a believer, **you know enough of the truth to know that these false teachers are feeding you a bunch of baloney**. Trust it.

Then he goes on to say,

21 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

This should have been encouraging to **his readers** as it should be encouraging **to us**, especially to us who are new in the faith. Even a new believer has enough contained in the gospel message to weed out the core of all false teaching. Because the core of false teaching is always to **deny that Christ is sufficient to save us**. The appeal will always be that salvation is gained by faith in Christ and something else. Or it will be that salvation is found by something completely other than Jesus Christ.

Are you being pestered by teaching that might be false? We mentioned this last week. Test it. If salvation is by Christ alone, why must you join their club? If salvation is by faith in Christ alone, any club that believes that salvation is by faith in Christ alone should be good enough. Then listen. And you will find the add ons. You will find the false.

So John is telling these people, I have confidence that you know enough. If he didn't think they knew it, he would be telling them **the gospel** in order to get them saved. He would not be telling them **how to protect themselves from falling**.

This ought to be confirming to us too. If we are believers, we already know the most important truths we will ever need to know.

Now he goes on to say- **no lie is of the truth**.

RC Sproul has been teaching us this same thing in Sunday School. This is the law of non-contradiction.

John is telling these people to trust their common sense when it is based on what they know about the word of God. These false teachers are coming in with smooth speech, confident tones, with fresh teaching from God, they say. And the common folk might think, I am no theologian. I am nothing special. Maybe I just don't understand what **I think** I understand. Maybe these people are right and I am just too dense to see how what they are saying is true.

John is saying, no. If it contradicts the message you have first heard, it is false, bogus, bologna, a lie. It isn't just **another perspective** looking at the same thing we are looking at. It isn't just **another way of believing**, an alternative. It isn't another viable option. No. If it is not **the truth**, it is **a lie**. If it is not saying what **we are saying** it did not come from us and it will not square with what we said.

This had to be very comforting to the people reading or hearing this. He is saying, don't let these fast talkers hoodwink you. They aren't just **inaccurate**. They are devilish liars trying to undo your faith.

22 Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.

23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

These are just a few things that scripture says about Jesus.

John 14:8-10 (NKJV)

8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."

9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.

Colossians 1:15 (NKJV)

15 Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

Hebrews 1:2-3 (NKJV)

2 has in these last days spoken to us by *His Son*, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

3 who being the brightness of *His* glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Scripture very clearly tells us that **Jesus is God**. That is very clear. It is part of the saving news of the Gospel.

Much of our world does not have any problem with the **idea** of God. That is, as long as we have a list of **alternative ways** to get to Him. And in all the religious beliefs there is only **one** that clings to a historical Jesus who was fully man and fully God, who was truly the **savior of the world**. Every other religion and every cult might use those words, but none of them mean what the Bible says it means.

Judaism denies that Jesus is the Christ. Islam denies that Jesus is the Christ. Buddhism denies that Jesus is the Christ. We may be tempted to think that God will have sympathy on all these people who are seeking Him the wrong way. But that is not how Romans talks about it. Romans explains that all of us have suppressed what knowledge we have of the true God to pursue these other options. Those who pursue a relationship with God apart from Christ fall into that same lump. God may show sympathy. That is just like God. But His sympathy will be to **get the gospel to them** and to **draw them to it**.

Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ. God is not going to save those who are firmly committed to the process of lying about Jesus. We can count on that. He may save them **from** that position. But He will not save them **in** that position.

A person cannot get right with God the Father without getting right with Jesus the Son. A person cannot choose which portion of Godhood they would like to appease. The Father is pleased to have all human salvation go through His Son Christ. If you want to get to God another way, you will never get right with God. Ever. Because God has promised as much. There is salvation in no other name than the name of Jesus. No one comes to the father except through Jesus.

Now let's skip down to verse 26

²⁶ These things I have written to you concerning those who *try to deceive you*.

John gives us three qualities of the false teacher.

He departs, he denies, and he deceives.

False teachers will try to deceive people into believing lies so they can pull them aside and exploit them. He will deny that salvation is purely through Christ because when people believe that, he no longer can **get his hooks in them**. And false teachers will depart, sometimes to get the sheep away from the leaders who will protect them. And sometimes they would like to stay but the leadership will kick them out.

So that is the story of the false teacher. This is what you will see in them as you watch them. In vs 26 it talks about deception.

The end goal of the devil is deception that leads to destruction. But he does not have the power to create. So he must repaint what it is that God has done. I believe the following is from Warren Wiersby. He says:

Satan is not an originator; he is a counterfeiter. He imitates the work of God. For example, Satan has counterfeited "ministers" ([2 Cor. 11:13-15](#)) who preach a counterfeit gospel ([Gal. 1:6-12](#)) that produces counterfeit

Christians ([John 8:43-44](#)) who depend on a counterfeit righteousness ([Rom. 10:1-10](#)). In the Parable of the Tares ([Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43](#)), Jesus and Satan are pictured as sowers. Jesus sows the true seed, the children of God; but Satan sows "the children of the wicked one." The two kinds of plants, while growing, look so much alike that the servants could not tell the difference until the fruit appeared! Satan's chief stratagem during this age is to plant the counterfeit wherever Christ plants the true. And it is important that you be able to detect the counterfeit and separate the teachings of Christ from the false teachings of antichrist.

How does a believer do this? By depending on the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Each believer has experienced the *anointing* (the *unction*, [1 John 2:20](#)) of the Spirit, and it is the Spirit who teaches him truth ([John 14:17; 15:26](#)). False teachers are not led by the Spirit of Truth; they are led by the spirit of error ([1 John 4:3, 6](#)).

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John is teaching the believers he is addressing to do just that. He is writing them to expose the false teachers. What a kindness that is to those folks who are in danger of being deceived.

Now, why are some Christians led astray to believe false teachings? What sets a person up to be misled by false teaching? Who are those who are most prone to being deceived?

It is those who are not *abiding* in the Spirit.

Look at our text

²⁴ Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.

²⁵ And this is the promise that He has promised us--eternal life.

²⁷ But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

First note that core to us abiding is the **content of the message**. This supports what I said earlier that we do not mystically know the truth. We have heard it with our ears and it is quotable from our brains. It consists of words and phrases and concepts. We are to abide in that truth.

Then there is something else that is good to look at here.

This is another quote from, I think, Warren Wiersbe

The word "abide" occurs several times in this section of 1 John, and it would be helpful to review:

- **False teachers do not abide ("continue") in the fellowship ([1 John 2:19](#)).**
- **The word (message) we have heard should abide in us ([1 John 2:24](#)).**
- **The anointing (the Holy Spirit) abides in us, and we should abide in the Spirit ([1 John 2:27](#)).**
- **As we abide in the Word and in the Spirit, we also abide in Christ ([1 John 2:28](#)).**

We noticed this word *abide* earlier in John's letter too:

- **If we say we abide in Christ, we should walk as He walked ([1 John 2:6](#)).**
- **If we love our brother, we abide in the light ([1 John 2:10](#)).**
- **If the Word abides in us, we will be spiritually strong ([1 John 2:14](#)).**
- **If we do the will of God, we shall abide forever ([1 John 2:17](#)).**

"To abide" means *to remain in fellowship*; and "fellowship" is the key idea in the first two chapters of this epistle. From chapters 3 to 5, the emphasis is on *sonship*, or being "born of God."

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John liked this word "abide". John used it 19 times. It is far more than any other New Testament writer used it.

What he is teaching us is how to live. Many of us want to focus on events. We want to focus on **doing a thing** or **not doing a thing** to achieve our goals or whatever. But John refers more to **a way of life** than to **an event in life**. He does not say, "Have devotions" or "Study any documents you have an hour a day". No the life giving instructions he is giving them is telling them to **focus on how they are living**. While you are going through your minutes of your day, consciously remain in the fellowship with God. Consciously think about what you have heard that God has said, in contrast to your feelings or fleshly reactions to things. Think about how you were saved and all that this means. Keep in mind that the Holy Spirit is abiding in us, He is living in us, He is remaining in fellowship with us.

So as the Spirit abides in us, we too should be consciously aware of His presence and foster that fellowship. And as our minds are focused on what God has said and we are submitting ourselves to it, we are abiding with Christ.

Sometimes when we read this we put this out of our reach. We think we have to be a **mystic** to do what this is telling us.

But when Carla and I were dating she would write me letters. When I got them I was very glad to read them. I don't recall ever having to discipline myself to read them. It was the highlight of my day. And when I would read them, I read them in the light of who **she was** and who **I was**. It was a relational experience. I was, in a sense, abiding in her presence. I was fostering fellowship.

When I thought about her and what she said in her letters, I knew better than to chase after some other girl. I knew that would destroy fellowship. As I lived, I would keep her in mind in the choices I made. I would try not to bust up the shack we were going to live together, at least any more than it already was. I made plans on how to please her. If I were to talk to one of Carla's friends or family, they would have a special place with me because they are her people. If someone were to speak badly of her, I would have things to say in her defense. And if anyone really wanted to hear me go on and on about her virtues, I probably would have been happy to be talking about her.

And I didn't need to write down a list of things I must do. I didn't write down, think about Carla today. Write letter to Carla today. Think about how to make her happy today. Remember to look forward to her letter coming today. I didn't need a note saying, remember that you are planning to marry Carla now. No. I was, in a sense, abiding in the awareness of Carla.

I think that is what John is talking about. Live in Christ. Allow your whole **world** and **world view** be absorbed with Christ. Live in His awareness all the time. Which, because He is not verbally speaking with us, will largely happen as we read His word, speak to Him in prayer, and hang out with His people. And there will be clear signs if we are actually living that way. And there will be clear signs if we are not. That is what 1 John keeps pointing to.

And in the middle of all this talk of abiding John throws this in:

²⁵ **And this is the promise that He has promised us--eternal life.**

I think in this context this would have had several effects.

First false teachers often, if not always, exploit people's desire to live forever. They get people to do all kinds of things to secure entry into heaven. Just look at how the Muslim religion exploits people's desire to live forever in paradise. But John is saying, you already have it. It is yours. It is promised to you. You don't have to consider a single thing the false teachers are saying. You are secure if you are abiding in Christ, which means abiding in the teaching you have been given.

Second, John is telling them that while they are abiding, if it gets tough, don't worry. Jesus will make it worth your while. There is a sure and certain reward.

And third, the reward is actually more of the same abiding, but this time face to face. The abiding will be unending and uninterrupted. All the obstacles to abiding will be removed. And will be in the eternal happy state of being with Christ in the presence of all of his perfected children. And all the false teachers will be outside the gates.

I hope you have found this passage encouraging and instructive. John gives it to us to protect us from evil influences and to encourage us to live in fellowship with God.

Will we take this week to focus on abiding in Christ? We will be going to His house soon. How should we be preparing for meeting?