

Care Group Homework
(For the week of November 8, 2009)
I John 3 - What We Believe About Christian Living

Getting to know one another:

1. Many people seem to love statistics. What is some statistic that you find amusing, interesting, shocking or weird?

Getting into the Word:

2. Read I John 3. What stands out to you the most from this text?

3. What is our motivation for living a pure life? This passage seems to imply that it is impossible to be a child of God and to sin. (V6, 9) Assuming that you are a child of God, does this standard seem to be working in your life?

Our motivation rests in the knowledge of God's love and his eventual return. The implication of sinless perfection is just that, an implication. Within the context of this passage we are told to purify ourselves - if we had reached sinless perfection, we would not need to purify ourselves. We also would not need to be made like Christ, because we would already be like him. A standard of sinlessness cannot be reached in this world. In I John 1:8 we are told that we deceive ourselves if we think we are without sin.

4. The passage ties loving our brothers with knowing God. Why do you think this is the case? How do we determine who our brother is?

We are to love what God loves, and he certainly loves his church. If we do not love our brothers we do not have a full understanding of God's love for us. Although the scripture also speaks to the need to love those less fortunate than ourselves generically, within this context (as well as most of the references to helping/loving those in need) the New Testament gives specific importance to the theme of loving others who are a part of the family of God.

5. The passage calls us to look after those in need. Are there any limits to our compassion? What other passages might guide our response to those in need?

Although our compassion is not limited to those within the household of faith, it is in a practical sense directed first there. This will of course limit our ability to help on a generic basis. The scripture also gives us some standards for helping and indicates there are times we should not help (if a man does not work he shouldn't eat). Our immediate family (assuming they are Christian) is to provide the bulk of our help, and where that falls apart, the church is to step in and help.

6. Verse 18 tells us that we are to love with action and in truth. What does that mean? How do we do that in a practical manner today?

It means we have to put our money where our mouth is! We cannot just give encouraging words, but must also actually do something to help them when they are in need.

7. John seems to sum up the passage in the last couple of verses when he talks of believing and loving. How are these two concepts connected?

Out of our belief, we understand the close tie between believing and obeying (note John 3 for a good discussion about that connection). The command to love is the greatest command. It is not possible to believe without loving.

8. In the message, pastor spoke of being a disciple. How does this passage define a disciple?

I believe that a disciple could be defined from verse 22: A Disciple is someone who obeys Christ's commands and seeks to please Him.