

Living Life to the Fullest

Part XXXIX

The Believer's Hope in an Evil World

1 John 5:18-21

The wife stood in hopeless shock as she watched her physician husband enter the kitchen from the garage. He displayed a daze of discouragement she had never seen before. "It seems like the harder I try to do what's right and prayerfully plan, things are continually unraveled by schemers." Another wife and mother was shocked by the news she has cancer and only months to live. "But I've prayed; I've gone to church; I've tried to serve others, and this is what I get. I feel like God has abandoned me." The president of a corporation sat at his desk with his head in his hands as his life was sucked out of his body upon learning that a greedy competitor had ruthlessly undermined his business. "I never dreamed it could end this way." Oh yes, and the employee of twenty-five years who never watched the clock, never played the game, was always the first to arrive and the last to leave and always gave his best discovered by "e-mail" that this would be his last day at work. "But I thought God would honor my integrity and commitment. God, I trusted You. What have You done to me?"

It's so easy to allow present circumstances to control our attitudes and lives and cause us to lose our eternal perspective, isn't it? We know God *is* in control, that He has a *plan*, but my oh my how quickly every one of us is prone to react to the present rather than respond in faith to God's eternal love, grace, and protection at any given moment.

Jesus said, "These things I have spoken to you, that *in Me* you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

There seems to be a growing sense of hopelessness in a world that is increasingly drifting away from its only hope, God in person—Jesus Christ. Man is groping for answers from every venue. We constantly hear the cry for change . . . change in politics, in society, in religion—none of which brings hope . . . all in the absence of God in Christ. If his conclusion doesn't leave us empty, what does?

It's not as if we have not realized the futility of man's best before. As recently as three hundred years ago the humanist, Henry Wadsworth penned, "The world is too much with us; late and soon, getting and spending, we lay waste our powers, little we see in nature that is ours. . . . We have given our hearts away. . . . for this, for everything, we are out of tune; it moves us not."

Today we will focus on the believer's hope in an evil world, as we conclude the Apostle John's letter for the Christian who lives in a "world that lies in the power of the evil one."

LIFE RESPONSE:

1. This week **MEMORIZE** and **MEDITATE** on 1 John 5:18-19 "*We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him and the evil one does not touch him. We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.*"
2. What are some of the "sins" that have become a part of your life—acts or attitudes that are your practice or, habits that hinder you in manifesting the life of Christ?
3. How would you define the contrast John draws between being of and under the power of God versus the power of the evil one?
Why is it so difficult to personally draw that distinction in our culture?
Why is it so important to clearly define that distinction in your decisions and conduct?
What is the product versus the consequence of not drawing that distinction?
4. This week pray that God would give you a clear *understanding* of what your life is to look like as one who is "in Him" and who has His *power* to reflect all that He is in your life.
5. Begin a list of those areas that John would call "idols" in your life that would stand between you and the fidelity of your relationship with Jesus.

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“Anything that comes in between your soul and the path of obedience to God is an idol, and sometimes God has to come and take these idols away from us in a way that seems very hard, and we may even charge Him with being cruel, but it is in order that Christ may have His rightful place, that our hearts may be entirely devoted to Him.”

- Dr. Henry A. Ironside

What alternative does the church offer to the world?

THE EPILOGUE OF 1 JOHN . . . 1 John 5:18-21

Answers three critical questions for the Christian.

- What is a Christian to look like in an evil world?
- What is the challenge in living as a Christian in an evil world?
- What is our confidence to live as a Christian in an evil world?

WE KNOW . . .

“WE”

John, the apostles, and the church

“KNOW”

Οἶδα -Factual knowledge, confidence

Question #1: What is a Christian to look like in an evil world?

WE KNOW . . . that our lives are to be a manifestation of Christ. 1 John 5:18a

- “No one born of God sins”
3:6-9 . . . Sin is not our new nature
. . . A continual, unrepentant, unconfessed act, habitual practice
Revealed in our obedience 2:3-6
in our relationships 3:15-18; 4:19-21; 5:1-2
in our conscience 3:19-24
- God’s provision of grace and protection when we do sin 1 John 5:18b
 - √ Jesus keeps “sets a guard” for us
1 John 2:1-2
 - √ The evil one does not touch him
1 John 5:4

Challenge:

Is my life a manifestation of Christ?

Life Response #2

What are some of the “sins” that have become a part of your life?

Question # 2: What is the challenge in living as a Christian in an evil world?

WE KNOW . . . that the power, purpose, and influence of God stand in stark contrast to that of the world. 1 John 5:19

1 John 3:10

- “The whole world lies in the power of the evil one”
. . . The world is cradled in the arms of Satan

1 John 2:15-17

- Do not love the world, not of the Father.

John 12:31

- Judgment is upon this world.

- Satan is the prince of this world.

Eph 6:12

-Struggle is against the rulers of this world.

- “But know that we are of God” 1 John 5:19

1 John 3:1 Born of God

1 John 5:1 Born of God

2 Peter 1:4 Partakers of the divine nature

John 16:33 Written that you may have peace in a world of tribulation.

Challenge:

Does my life reflect one who is from God or the evil one?

Life Response #3

How would you define the contrast John draws between being of and under the power of God versus the power of the evil one?

Question #3: What is our confidence to live as a Christian in an evil world?

WE KNOW . . . that God has provided Holy Spirit to give us understanding to confidently experience the manifestation of Christ now and for eternity. 1 John 5:20

- “has given us understanding”

1 John 1:1-4

1 John 4:8-12

John 16:13-15

- that we might “know”

. . . an experiential knowledge to demonstrate, model the alternative of Christ to a fallen world

. . . in assurance 1 John 5:13

Challenge:

To look at my life depending upon Holy Spirit to enable me to take what I know to be true and make it into a life of truth.

Life Response #4

Pray that God would give you a clear *understanding* of what your life is to look like as one who is “in Him” and who has His *power* to reflect all that He is in your life.

WARNING! Be on guard . . . 1 John 5:21

To take extreme caution to guard yourself from anything that would stand between you and God. . .