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PATHWAY OF LIGHT STUDY COURSE

by R. W. Young

“But the path of the just is as a shining light that shines more and more unto the perfect day.” (Prov. 4:18)

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of Yahweh; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” (1 John 5:13)

LESSON 156, 1 John chapter 2

We continue today in this rather small, but very fully packed and important Bible letter 1 John. As we have already considered, this letter tells us what the evidences of our being true believers in Yahshua Messiah and, therefore, the evidences that we have eternal life, are.

So far we have seen that John begins by saying that they - the eye witnesses of Yahshua's life, death, burial and resurrection - are witnesses of the Eternal Life, or “the Word of Life”, by which he means Yahshua the Messiah. He then points out that the message they declare is that, “Yahweh is light and in Him is no darkness at all.” He is total truth and moral perfection. Therefore, those who walk in darkness, which is falsehood and sin, have no part in Him.

“But”, John says, “if we are walking in the light, as He is in the light, we are having joint participation” (or “fellowship”) “with one another, and the blood of Yahshua Messiah, His Son is cleansing us from all sin.” So this is the summary of the life of one who is a true believer in Yahshua Messiah and has eternal life. In the rest of the book John amplifies, or further explains, what it is to walk in the light as a true believer.

John tells us that we deceive ourselves if we say we do not have any sin. We all have sin dwelling in our flesh (as Paul points out in Romans chapter 7:17-18). Also we have not yet reached perfection of knowledge. Therefore, we still do many things that we do not yet know are sins.

Next, in speaking about the actual acts of sin that stem from the condition of sin living in us (that is, in our fallen nature) John says if we acknowledge our “sins” – that is, confess them and renounce them as wrong, Yahweh will forgive us “and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. On the other hand, if we say we have never sinned we are calling Yahweh a liar and His truth is not in us.

Now John goes on about the matter of sin in chapter 2.

VERSES 1-2 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Yahshua Messiah the righteous: (2) And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world.*

John says the reason he is writing is to tell us not to sin. He is speaking about knowingly sinning. This is obvious from the fact that he previously said that while we are walking in the light the blood of Yahshua is continuing to cleanse us from all sin, meaning sin that we do unknowingly. Also, he had said that if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, for we should realize that we all still sin unknowingly. While we are truly walking toward to goal of becoming free from all forms of sin, “walking in the light”, the blood of Yahshua continues to cover us and make us accepted in Yahweh’s sight..

Therefore when John says, he writes unto us that we sin not, he is speaking about doing so knowingly. From this we must conclude that (1) even though we have been born of the Spirit, it is still possible for us to knowingly sin, and (2) that we do not have to knowingly sin and absolutely should not do so.

Then, John says, “if any man sin(s)...”. He does not say “When any man sins...” as though we have to sin as some teach. Some say it is not possible not to sin. If they mean sin in the sense of doing things we do not realize as sin at the time, they are most likely correct. However, if they mean we cannot go without knowingly sinning, they are dead wrong according to what John says here, for he would not tell us to “sin not” if it were not possible for us to not sin.

Praise Yah that we do not have to sin knowingly. And as we shall see later we must live without such ongoing sin.

However, if we do sin – that is, commit a sin – thank Yahweh that we have someone to plead our case before the Heavenly Father and against the accuser of the brethren. Our ever living Savior and Great High Priest, Yahshua the Messiah is “the propitiation for our sins” and “for the sins of the whole world”. The Greek word used here and translated as “propitiation” is the same word used in the Greek translation of the “Old Testament” for “Mercy Seat”.

The mercy seat was the cover on the Ark of the Covenant, which was the box into

which were put the two tablets of stone on which the Ten Commandments were written by the finger of Yahweh. Because Yahweh's commandments were broken, blood had to be applied on the cover, which was the mercy seat, or, in Greek, the "propitiation". This was a temporary means of holding back the wrath of Yahweh. It pointed forward to the "Mercy Seat", or "propitiation", that Yahshua later became for us and for the whole world. Blood was applied to the mercy seat as a temporary cover for sin until the one sacrifice that could fully take away sin, that of Yahweh incarnate, became shed for the sins of the whole world.

We should continually praise and thank Yahweh for giving His only begotten Son, Yahshua the Messiah, to be both our mercy seat by His death on Calvary's tree and also our lawyer or advocate in His resurrected life. As our High Priest, He ever lives to make intercession for us. And as we read in Hebrews 7:24-25, "But this *man*, because he continues ever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them." Our advocate, lawyer, and high priest is always victoriously pleading our case before the courts of heaven. In the courts of heaven He declares that He died in our place to pay for all our sins and that we have accepted His death, and resurrection to new life, as our own.

VERSES 3-6 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. (4) He that saith, I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. (5) But whoso keeps his word, in him verily is the love of Yahweh perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abides in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

So as John continues to lay before us those things that prove we are true believers and, therefore, have eternal life, he makes it clear that keeping Yahweh's commandments is the main evidence. He says that is how we know that we know Yahweh. Anyone who does not keep His commandments simple does not know Him.

Many "Christians" delight in their "spiritual" experiences. They *feel* that they love Yahweh. They have great emotions toward Him or to think good thoughts about Him. That certainly should be, for we are to love Him with all our soul and mind. However, that is not enough – just to feel good toward Him. The bottom line is that if we love Him we will keep His commandments.

Do we keep His word, not just what we feel, imagine or think in our own minds is what He wants us to do, but what His word says we are to do? And it all begins with the Ten Commandments. If we do not keep them it means the evidence is that we are not a true believer. This also includes those things in the Law of Moses that are enlargements of, or further explanations of, that category of sin that each one of the ten stands for.

Each of the Ten gives a synopsis and the main point of what comes under the category of sin it deals with. For example, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" is a specific

aspect of sexual sin. But the Law of Moses enlarges upon this commandment to also include pre-marital sex, homo-sexual immorality, and bestiality.

John says that if we keep His word His love is perfected in us and we know that we are in Him. And the one who lives or abides in Yahshua, John says, should be walking as He walked, which is in a life of obedience to the will of the Father. Yahshua's delight was to do the Father's will. That should be what we also find our delight or joy in doing.

VERSES 7-11 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. (8) Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shines. (9) He that saith he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness even until now. (10) He that loves his brother abides in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. (11) But he that hates his brother is in darkness, and walks in darkness, and knows not whither he goes, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

John here speaks of love as not being a new commandment. And yet he declares that it is a new commandment.

Love is the oldest of all commandments. In fact, all the law is summed up in that one word "love". First we are to love Yahweh with all our heart, soul and might and, secondly, we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. Rom 13:8 says, "You owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loves another hath fulfilled the law." And again, in Gal 5:14 we read, "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself".

Thus love is indeed a very old commandment as the basis of all other individual commandments that Yahweh, who is Love, has every given. And yet it is new in the sense that it is renewed or re-emphasized to those who are made new creatures in Messiah. (2 Cor 5:17)

Also the love that we as believers are to have is new in the sense that now we are called by Yahshua to a special love for the brethren and to a type of love the exceeds the love we are to have for our fellow men or neighbors who are not part of the household of faith.

Concerning this new love, Yahshua said, "This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you". Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:12-13) We are called to love one another with this special love that goes so far as to be willing to lay down our lives for one another just as He did for us. He calls this a new commandment. As we read in John 13:34: "A new

commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.”

This means we should be ready to literally die for our brother or sister in the faith – to give our life to save theirs. But the truth is that if we are really willing to lay down our lives for the brethren, it will be manifested in that we are sacrificing our lives now on their behalf when needed. We will be always putting them ahead of ourselves.

This is what Paul is talking about when he writes in Philippians 2:3-4, “*Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*” It is easy enough to say, and think, you would lay down your life for your brother or sister, but to lay it down in the here and now in the sense of putting their needs ahead of your own wants and desires is the real proof of the matter.

So John says keeping this commandment is proof that we abide in Yahshua and He in us. This love for the brethren is proof that we are in the new covenant. It is proof that we are born again and that the Yahweh’s law is written in our hearts and minds by the Holy Spirit, which (along with the forgiveness of sins) is the new covenant.

Peter says as much when he writes, “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Having been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of Yahweh, which lives and abides for ever.*” (1 Peter 1:22-23)

John concludes this section by saying that the one who does not love his brother is not yet in the light. He who does not love, but hates, his brother is not walking in the light (with the blood of the Lamb continually cleansing him from all sin), but is walking in darkness.

VERSES 12-14 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. (13) I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. (14) I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

John next addresses three groups. First, he speaks those who are “little children”, meaning those who are new to or young in the faith. His main word to them is that their sins are forgiven for Yahshua’s name sake, and that they have, therefore come to know the Father Yahweh.

As Yahshua said, “No man comes unto the Father, except by” Him, and those who have seen Him have seen the Father. (John 14: 6-11) In Him, the man Yahshua the Messiah, “dwells all the fullness of the Elohim bodily”. (Col 2:9) He is, “the image of the invisible Elohim”. (Col 1:15) Yahshua said, “... no man knows the Son, but the Father; neither knows any man the Father, save the Son, and *he* to whomsoever the Son will reveal *him* (Matt 11:27)

Thus John encourages the newer believers that their sins are forgiven, and that they are in the family of Yahweh as is shown by the fact that Yahshua has brought them to know the Father Yahweh. This, as Paul says, is evidenced by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of adoption, which causes us to cry Abba (Father). He says in Romans 8:15-16, “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself bearing witness with our spirit, that we are the children of Elohim.”

Next John speaks to the spiritual fathers, those who are mature believers having been in the faith perhaps for many years. To them he says, “You have known Him that is from the beginning. I believe this implies that they have a fuller, deeper knowledge of Yahweh, clearly understanding that He is from everlasting to everlasting. Again, this is only through the Son of Yahweh who in the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, and whose goings forth have been “from everlasting” (Micah 5:2) as the Word, or expression of the Infinite One, seen in heaven by the heavenly beings, and made known unto us by becoming flesh.

As we read in 1 Timothy 3:16, “And without controversy great is the mystery of deity: He was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

John seems to be emphasizing to these more mature believers -the “fathers” in the faith - that they have come to a richer, fuller understanding of Yahweh, the Father. Remember that when it speaks of the Father it means Yahweh, the one and only El, who is revealed through the one mediator and only begotten Son of Yahweh, Yahshua the Messiah (2 Tim 2:5). He is in reality Yahweh made flesh and manifested in the flesh.

The third category of believers that John addresses is that of the “young men”. This seems to refer to those who are well beyond being very new in the faith and who have built themselves up therein with considerable experience of walking with Yahshua in the elements of the true faith, even though they do not yet have the length of experience that the “fathers” have.

To them John writes that they are strong and have been victorious over “the wicked one”. These therefore would have to be among those spoken of in Hebrews 5:14, which says, “But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

Thus John says to them, “the word of Yahweh remains in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.” The two things go together. You cannot overcome the wicked one unless you have, and use, the sword of the spirit, which is the word of Yahweh.” It is by using Yahweh’s word correctly that Yahshua Himself overcame the devil, as we read, for example, in Matthew chapter 4.

As we shall see further in chapter 5 of 1 John, it is by faith that we overcome. And, as we read in Romans 10:17, “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Yahweh”. In this verse in Romans the “word of Yahweh” is the “rhema” (as it also is in Ephesians 6 which speaks of “the sword of the Spirit, which is the rhema of Yahweh”). It is not “logos”, which is the Greek word used here by the apostle John and in many other places, including Hebrew 4:12, which says, “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

The difference this: the “rhema” is the “logos” as it is spoken into our hearts and minds by the Holy Spirit, and as we speak it in faith. However, we cannot have the continued “rhema” or spoken word, unless Yahweh’s “logos”, the written word, is in us. Unless we know the “logos” we cannot build our faith by speaking it as “rhema”. Therefore, we limit how much of the word (“rhema”) the Holy Spirit will speak into our hearts and minds in time of need by neglecting the “logos” or written word.

The psalmist said, “Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee (Ps 119:11). In Col 3:16 we read, “Let the word (logos) of Messiah dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to Yahweh.” And as we saw quoted from Hebrew 4:12, the logos is what separates between what is spiritual and what is soulish. Therefore, if we want the Holy Spirit to speak the word (logos) to us as the rhema, or that which is most needed at the time for building our faith, we need to be much in the written word or logos.

So, in conclusion, we have three categories of believers mentioned by John: (1) the new or young converts, (2) the more experienced in walking with Yahweh and His word, and (3) those who are very mature in the faith. John addresses them as “little children”, “young men”, and “fathers”. But of course the same applies to the women of faith among whom there are also, the “little children”, the “young women”, and “the mothers in Israel”. It is, of course, understood that the same things apply to them as well, even though some of the ways that they manifest faith and obedience would be different from that of the males.

We will pick up from here in the next lesson as Yahweh permits and enables.