

Dr. Robert Yarbrough, Johannine Epistles

Session 6, Sect 2, 1 Jn 2:7-17, Sect 3, 1 Jn 2:18-3:8,

6-min. Video Overview

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So let's jump right into the biblical text of 1 John. According to one scholar, Dr. Robert Yarbrough, the author here isn't really interested in shades of gray. No, he presents a world of stark contrasts, a fundamental choice that every single person has to face.

And that's exactly what we're going to unpack. It really all boils down to this one question. Are you walking in the light or are you walking in the darkness? Now, this isn't just some pretty poetic language.

For the writer of this text, this is probably the most important question of your life. And here's the kicker. You have to choose a side.

There's no standing on the fence, no trying to blend the two. Your life, your actions, your core beliefs, they all place you squarely on one of these two paths. All right, so let's actually break down these two ways of life.

We're going to look at what defines each path, what they look like in the real world, and, you know, where they ultimately lead. First up, the path of light. Now, what's so interesting about this path of light is that it isn't defined by some super long, complicated list of rules.

According to the text, it all comes down to one central, all-encompassing command. Yep, that's it. Love one another.

Sounds simple, right? But this one command is the heart of the whole thing. To walk in the light basically means your entire life is shaped by this act of love for other people. It's not just a warm, fuzzy feeling.

It's a verb. It's about the choices you make and the things you do. Okay, and this is where it gets really fascinating.

The author calls this command both old and new. So how does that work? Well, it's old because the idea of loving your neighbor, that goes way back, right? It's in the Old Testament, and it was absolutely central to what Jesus taught. But it's also new because, as Dr. Yarbrough explains, when Christ arrived, everything changed.

His life and work gave this old command a totally fresh, deeper meaning. It's like a new day has dawned, and the light is shining in a completely new way. So let's switch gears and look at the other side.

If the path of light is all about love, you can probably guess what the path of darkness is all about. The text really hones in on three key characteristics: hate, a love for the world, and

deception. I mean, the author does not mince words here; it's crystal clear you cannot claim to be in the light and at the same time hate your brother.

The two just don't go together. But what the text means by hate might actually surprise you. And this is a game changer.

Hate here isn't just about feeling rage or intense anger towards someone. It can be something much quieter, much more subtle. Apathy.

It's that indifference that lets you see someone in need and just do nothing. It's the failure to actively love. Dr. Yarbrough shares this great personal story that makes this so, so clear.

His neighbor's tree falls and blocks their road. Now, he could have just said, "Eh," they said they'd handle it, and just gone on with his day. That would be apathy, what the text calls hate.

But instead, he realized they were in over their heads, so he grabbed his tools and went out to help. See the difference? That's active love in action. Okay, on to the second of the path of darkness.

In attachment to the world. Now, this isn't about hating the planet or nature. It's about where you put your ultimate affection and where you find your ultimate sense of meaning and purpose.

So what does loving the world really mean? Well, the text breaks it down into three things. The desires of the flesh, which is all about physical gratification. The desires of the eyes, which is being totally consumed by what you see and what you want.

And the pride of life, which is basically chasing after empty glory in your day-to-day material life. Let's zoom in on that last one, the pride of life, because it's a really specific idea. The Greek word here is *bios*, you know, where we get biology.

It's talking about our material existence, our career, our stuff, our social status. The pride of life is the empty boasting that comes from treating all that stuff like it's the ultimate goal, like it's God. And you know what happens when this pride of life takes over? It leads to division, big time.

And for the author, this wasn't just some theory. He was writing during a crisis, a time when people who had chosen the world, who were denying core truths about Jesus, had actually split off from the church. He calls them antichrists, and their leaving was the real-world consequence of walking in darkness.

So you've got these two paths laid out, crystal clear. The big question then is how do you stay on the path of light, especially when you've got people actively trying to deceive you and pull you off course? The number one piece of advice is to remain in something the author calls his anointing. Think of it like an anchor that's meant to keep believers from drifting away.

Okay, so what on earth is this anointing? It's easy to think of it as some kind of vague, mystical feeling, right? But Dr. Yarbrough argues, no, it's something way more solid than

that. It's the gospel message itself, the core truth about who Jesus is that these believers heard from the very beginning. This message is what carries God's spirit and grounds them in reality, protecting them from lies.

And this anointing, well, it's incredibly powerful. It teaches you directly, so you're not at the mercy of some false teacher. It's true.

It's not a lie. It gives you confidence for the future instead of shame. And ultimately, it's the mark, the evidence that you're born of him.

And that brings us to the endgame, because choosing a path isn't just about how you live your life today. It's about where you end up. It's about your final destination.

And wow, the contrast could not be more dramatic. The world, that whole pursuit of empty glory and possessions and fleeting desires, is temporary. It's literally passing away.

But the person who does the will of God, the one who walks in the light, will abide forever. And that right there is the ultimate promise. That's the whole point.

For those who stay on the path of light, who hold onto the truth and actively love other people, the destination is eternal life. That's the motivation. That's what's at stake.

So we're left with a pretty challenging thought to chew on, aren't we? If hating isn't just about active anger, but can be the quiet sin of apathy, of just not caring, not helping when you could, what does that mean for us today? What does active, non-apathetic love actually require of you right now?