

Dr. Robert Yarbrough, Johannine Epistles, Session 6, Sect 2, 1 Jn 2:7-17, Sect 3, 1 Jn 2:18-3:8 Audio Overview Podcast from NotebookLM

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Welcome to the Deep Dive. Our mission is, well, to cut through all the noise, take source material, and really pull out the most important bits of insight. We want to give you a genuine shortcut to being well-informed.

Think of us as your guides, really. We navigate through some dense topics, find those surprising facts, and highlight the core ideas that actually matter. And today we are doing a deep dive into some specific verses from the New Testament book of 1 John, specifically chapter 2, verses 7 through 17, and then 2.18 through 3.8. Yeah, and our source material here is a lecture by Dr. Robert Yarbrough.

It's from a series called the Johannine Epistles: Balancing Life in Christ. He really digs into how faith, obedience, and our relationship with God all connect for what he terms a balanced life. Right.

So the goal for us today is to unpack two big ideas that Dr. Yarbrough highlights in these sections: what he calls the central commandment and the key counsel. Exactly. We want to get into why these are considered central and key, and maybe more importantly, what practical difference they make for us in our lives today.

Okay, let's get into it. Before we jump right into today's verses, it's probably helpful to remember the groundwork John laid earlier in the letter, which the source mentions. Yeah.

Good point. He established that God is light, and crucially, there is absolutely no darkness in him. That basic truth about God's character is really the starting point for everything else.

Okay. Okay. So God is light.

That sets the scene. And the source then moves from that truth to what's called the central commandment. Precisely.

In 1 John 2, verses 7 to 11, John brings up this commandment. And here's our first key insight from the source, and it's a bit unexpected. The commandment to love.

It's presented as both old and new. Old and new. Okay, how does that work? How can it be both at the same time? Well, it's old because, as the source points out, the command to love God and love your neighbor goes way back.

It's got deep roots in the Old Testament law. Right. And Jesus taught it and lived it.

Exactly. Jesus explicitly taught it, lived it out perfectly. So yeah, in that sense, it's ancient wisdom.

Okay. So where does the new part come in? It's new, Dr. Yarbrough suggests, because it's made real. It's made true in a fundamentally new way, because Christ has come, and also in believers.

John actually says it's true in him and in you. And this is tied to what the source calls the progress of redemption. Basically, the true light, who is Christ, has actually arrived on the scene and is shining now.

Like the dawn of a new day has actually broken. Exactly like that. The source draws a parallel to Romans 13, where Paul says, you know, wake up, salvation is near, the night is far gone, the day is at hand.

Right. Cast off darkness, put on light. Yeah.

John's making a similar point. Because Christ has come, the true light is already shining. This ushers in a completely new era, a new reality.

So the command to love isn't just some old rule anymore. It's more like a call to live in this new reality Christ brought, to actually embody this new day. You got it.

That's the core idea. And the most immediate kind of practical way John connects living in the light or in this new day is tied straight to key insight two. It means loving your fellow believer.

Yes. He lays out a really sharp contrast here. It's quite stark.

He says, look, if you claim you're in the light, but you hate your brother. And in this context, that means a fellow Christian in the community. Well, then you're actually still walking in darkness.

Simple as that. But if you love your brother, then you abide in the light, and there's no cause for stumbling in you. And the source notes this goes right back to John's earlier focus on authenticity.

You know, the gap between what people say they believe and how they actually live. Exactly. Yeah.

And it also kind of sets the stage for the division problems he's about to tackle later in the letter. Now, there's a crucial nuance the source brings out about this word hating. It's not just like active hostility.

Right. That's really important. It's not necessarily just feeling malice or actively disliking someone.

From this Christian viewpoint John's presenting, it can actually include things like apathy, indifference. Indifference. So just not actively hurting someone isn't good enough.

Apparently not. If you have the means, the ability to help a neighbor who's genuinely in need, the source uses this really vivid example: your neighbor has a tree down across their

road after a storm, and you could help, but you just don't bother. That inaction, that lack of active care, can actually fall under this umbrella of hating, in John's terms.

Wow. So the command to love isn't just do no harm. It's a positive call to actively care and do good whenever it's possible.

That really changes the definition of hate, doesn't it? Makes it much harder to just be neutral or passive. It absolutely raises the bar. It moves from just passive non-aggression to active embodied love and care.

Okay. So then John shifts gears a bit, moving into what the source calls a pastoral appeal in verses 2.12 through 17. He starts addressing different groups in the community, right? Little children, fathers, young men.

Yeah. Likely representing different stages of faith or maybe characteristics within the community. And he starts off with what sound like praises, commendations.

He highlights these positive things about them. Like what? Things like their sins are forgiven. They know God.

They've overcome the evil one. They're strong. God's word is abiding in them.

Really positive affirmations. Okay. But why list all these things? Is it just encouragement before he gives more instructions? Well, the source suggests there's a deeper reason.

These characteristics he lists are seen as the necessary foundation, the character traits you actually need to possess to genuinely embody that central commandment of love we were just discussing. Ah, I see. So you need your sins forgiven to really know God.

And you need to know God to love as he loves. You need strength from his word to overcome the things that stop you from loving and so on. They're all interconnected, foundational for living out this integrated Christian life.

Got it. And then he introduces what the source called a pre-command, almost like a warning label. Do not love the world or the things in the world.

Yes. And this is vital because John implies that if your ultimate loyalty, your deepest affection, is fixed on the world and everything it offers, then the love of the Father just isn't there. Or at least it can't really take root or be expressed through you.

They're competing loves. Exactly. Competing loyalties.

You can't fully embrace both. So what exactly does he mean by the world here? Is it like nature or people? Good question. The source breaks it down based on the text into three main areas of temptation.

The desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and this interesting phrase, the pride of life. Pride of life. Okay.

What's that about specifically? The source explains it as the vainglory of bios, and bios in Greek refers to your material, everyday existence. Like your job, money, hobbies. Yeah, exactly.

Your work, your career path, how you spend money, your entertainment choices, your social scene, your ambitions. The source is careful to note that this everyday human activity isn't inherently bad, especially when you're young and have energy resources. But the danger zone is when you treat that everyday life, that bios, as the be-all and end-all.

Precisely. If pursuing your career advancement or your social standing or just accumulating stuff becomes your ultimate goal, if you start treating it like it's God. Yeah.

The source points out it's ultimately empty. It doesn't last. Right.

It doesn't last. And it can cause real damage to relationships; marriages and friendships can suffer if the sort of vainglory of chasing these worldly things becomes more important than the people and the values that should matter more. And that contrast in the very last verse of that section just hammers it home.

The world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. That's the absolute core takeaway from this part. Worldly pursuits, when they are the ultimate end, just don't have a future.

They're temporary. Any effort you pour only into the world system just for the world's approval is going to fade. But doing God's will, living out that embodied love.

That has lasting, eternal significance. It reminds me of that idea in 1 Corinthians 3 where Paul talks about works being tested by fire. Some endure, some just burn up.

John is essentially saying, invest your life, your bios, in what actually lasts: doing God's will. That leads us perfectly into the second major section. The source identifies the key counsel.

Right. So John shifts focus now versus 2.18 through 3.8. The context here is crucial. He's writing into a real crisis situation in the community.

A crisis? What happened? There's been a major division, a sort of, well, a church split. People have actually left the fellowship. Okay.

So key insight four is about how John identifies those who left. Yeah. And he's pretty blunt about it in verses 18 to 21.

He says, straight up, they went out from us, but they were not of us. Wow. Direct.

Very. He sees their departure not just as a disagreement over minor things, but as proof that they weren't truly part of the core community, not really rooted in the truth from the start. They left, in his view, because they weren't abiding and were actually opposing the foundational apostolic message about who Jesus is.

Okay. So that's those who left. Then key insight five flips to those who stayed.

What does he say to them? He affirms them. He tells them, " You have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. Basically saying, you guys know the truth.

And this leads to the core advice, the key counsel. Exactly. The counsel for those who remained is simple but profound.

Remain in his anointing. Okay. Anointing.

The source offered a key clarification here, right? It's not just some, like, mystical feeling. No, not primarily. While the Holy Spirit is definitely involved, the source strongly suggests that the anointing John's talking about here is fundamentally the word of the gospel.

It's the message about Christ that they receive from the apostles. So it's the truth itself. Yes.

The actual substance of the truth empowered by the Spirit that resides in the believers. So the counsel is to stay rooted in that specific delivered truth about Jesus, not just rely on, say, personal intuition. That's the idea.

Hold fast to the substance of the gospel they were taught right from the beginning. Which brings us neatly to Key Insight 6, the actual truth that must abide, verses 22-25. What is this specific truth they need to hold on to? The absolute bedrock truth is the confession that Jesus is the Christ, that Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Son of God.

And denying that is serious business for John. It's truly serious. He identifies denying this specific foundational truth as a key characteristic of the Antichrist spirit, or maybe even specific people embodying that opposition.

And the command follows directly from that identification. It does. Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you.

He's saying, let that core message, Jesus is the Christ, stay deeply rooted inside you. Because if that truth stays in you, then you abide in the Son and in the Father. It's the message that connects you.

And the motivation for sticking with it is huge. The promise is eternal life. Absolutely.

In the face of all this division and potentially confusing false teaching, John's reminding them to hold on to the truth you received because the promise attached to it is the ultimate security: eternal life itself. Okay. So Key Insight 7 then looks at the practical power and the benefit of abiding in this gospel truth, this anointing.

Right. The power is pretty significant according to verse 27. This anointing, again, think the gospel truth applied by the Spirit.

It teaches you about everything. Everything. Does that mean they don't need human teachers anymore? Probably not quite that extreme.

Dr. Yarbrough suggests it means this indwelling truth gives you a foundation, lifting you above being completely dependent on others for every single piece of guidance. It

empowers you to discern truth from error, unlike the deceptive stuff spread by those who left. It's reliable.

It's true. It's no lie. So the call is to let that truth work, to stay connected.

Yeah. Keep letting it work in you. Stay connected to the Lord.

Keep responding to what God is doing through his word in your life. Don't drift away from it. And what's the main benefit he highlights? And the outward sign? The primary benefit John mentions right after is confidence when Christ returns, when he appears, verse 28.

If you're abiding in this truth, you'll be ready. You won't need to shrink from him in shame. And the sign, the mark that you are abiding.

The clear mark that shows you are truly abiding and have been born of him, verse 29, is practicing righteousness, actively pursuing a life that aligns with God's character and commands. That's the visible fruit of genuine abiding. Which leads us to the final insight, key insight eight, which focuses on the, well, the sheer glory of abiding, being children of God and finding freedom from sin.

Yeah. This is a point where John just seems full of wonder. Chapter three, verse one: see what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God.

And so we are. He emphasizes that. And so we are.

It's not just a title. Exactly. Believers aren't just called that.

They are fundamentally children of God. It's an astonishing status, and it sets them apart from the world, even if the world doesn't get it or recognize it. And this incredible status, being God's children, connects directly to our hope for the future and how we live right now.

Yes, absolutely. Our hope is locked onto Christ's future appearing, knowing that when he appears, we shall be like him. That's the ultimate goal.

And our response now to having this amazing hope, the source points out, is to actively purify ourselves just as Christ is pure. So growing in holiness isn't just trying harder. It's part of what abiding as a child of God looks like.

Exactly. It's a natural expression of who we are and the hope we have. Okay.

Then we hit those really challenging verses about sin in 3.48. Statements like, "Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness, and no one who abides in him keeps on sinning. That sounds incredibly absolute, like Christians never sin. It does sound absolute.

And yeah, this section causes a lot of debate, but the source offers a pretty clear interpretation. Looking closely at the original Greek, John is most likely talking about a deliberate, persistent practice of sinning. A practice, like a lifestyle.

Yeah. The verb tense in Greek for makes a practice of sinning implies continuous, ongoing action- the defining pattern. He's likely not talking about the believer who occasionally stumbles and sins, man.

John deals with that elsewhere, emphasizing confession and forgiveness for those sins not unto death. So this is different. It's about a chosen, ongoing way of life that's defined by sin.

That seems to be the point. Dr. Yarbrough suggests this kind of persistent, deliberate pattern shows a fundamental rejection of God's truth and commands. It could be the heresy and willful disobedience of those who left the community, or really any lifestyle that is actively characterized by lawlessness, by walking in darkness.

And John says that pattern is characteristic of the devil. Yes. And it shows that someone living that way is not truly born of God, not genuinely abiding in him or living in that new reality as his child.

Okay. So the big takeaway isn't that a genuine Christian never sins, but that a life fundamentally defined by persistent, deliberate, unrepented sin just contradicts the claim to be born of God and abiding in Christ. Precisely.

And the source really underscores that Christ appeared specifically in order to take away sins. That means not just getting forgiveness for past sins, but his work aims to actively root sin out of our ongoing lives. So there's a fundamental incompatibility.

Yes. A true relationship with Christ, one that's nurtured by abiding in his truth, is fundamentally incompatible with choosing to live in an ongoing practice of sin. And the gospel provides the power, the enablement for increasing freedom from sin's control.

It's a dynamic process, this purification tied directly to our hope in him. Wow. Okay.

So we've really unpacked quite a bit. First, the central commandment: this call to live out embodied love, understanding it's both ancient wisdom and a new reality in Christ. And that it requires active care, not just avoiding harm, and also freedom from making worldly goals our ultimate focus.

And then the key counsel: to abide, to remain rooted in the truth of the gospel, that anointing. Which provides guidance, discernment, builds confidence for Christ's return, shows itself in a life pursuing righteousness, and leads toward increasing freedom from a life dominated by sin. Yeah.

And it's clear these aren't just separate theological ideas for John. The source really frames them as essential parts of a balanced life in Christ. It shows how tightly connected our faith is: believing in Jesus, knowing God.

Our behavior: loving others, resisting the world's pull, practicing righteousness. And our sense of belonging, being children of God, actually abiding in him really are. Yeah, it's not about picking one or the other.

He sees them as this integrated whole. You can't really have one without the others working together. So here's something maybe to chew on from all this.

If the world and all its desires and ambitions are definitively passing away, but doing the will of God, living out this love, abiding in truth, actually abides forever, how might that perspective shift the way you view your daily efforts? You know, your work, your ambitions, even how you rest or have fun. Where are you investing your bios, your everyday material life, for the kind of return that genuinely lasts?