



Week 4 Study Guide

Read the text: 1 John 2:1-6

2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. 3 And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, 5 but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: 6 whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

Study the text:

- What is the context? First remember the context of the whole letter (who is John writing to and why). Second, summarize what John had said in chapter 1?
- What are the repeated words/phrases in this passage? How do these words and phrases help us understand what John is emphasizing or concerned about?
- This letter is full of contrasts. Do you see any in this passage?
- Why do you think John says what he does in verse 1 considering what he just said in chapter 1? *He had just told them to confess their sins. Perhaps some might have seen this as a license to sin (since God is faithful to forgive me then I have a license to do whatever I want). So John reminds them his aim is that they won't sin but when they do sin he wants them to know that they have an advocate in Jesus.*
- What does it mean that Jesus is our advocate? Think of a courtroom...how does an advocate (an attorney) function for the defendant? Look at Romans 8:34 and Revelation 12:10. How might these verses shed some light on what it means that Jesus is our advocate?
- What does it mean that Jesus is our propitiation for sins and why is this such good news?
- When John says "not for our sins only but also for the sins of the world," does he mean that all people will be saved? Why or why not? Consider what he says in 2:4,23; 3:10 and 5:12. If that's not what he means (that all people will be saved) then what does he mean by adding this phrase? *Consider that the false teachers were claiming to have a special knowledge about God and about how to know him. In other words, this knowledge is not really available to all. How might this help understand why John would say what he did?*

- How do verses 3-6 point to John's main concern in the letter (assurance...he wants his readers to have assurance regarding their relationship with God)?
- What does John mean by knowing God? *Notice in this passage that there are those who claim to "know" but don't and those who really "know" him. And consider that the Bible says the demons know who Jesus is (they have a doctrinal understanding of Jesus as God) and Jesus said that many will say to him on the last day "didn't we perform miracles and cast out demons in your name" and Jesus will say to them "I never knew you" (Matthew 7:21-23). Lastly look at 1 John 5:3...in this verse John says "if we love God we will keep his commandments." For John it seems that to know God and to love him are the same thing.*
- What is the sign here that one knows God? Read a parallel passage: John 14:15-24.
- What does it mean to "keep" God's commandments?
- Why is obedience to God's commands a key sign that one knows and loves God?
- What does John mean by God's love being perfected in us by keeping God's commands?
- Is your life marked by a pattern of obedience to God's commands? What are the commandments of God that you find hardest to keep?

Prayer Time: In light of this text...

- What is there to praise God for?
- What sins do you need to confess?
- What is there to ask God for?

Mission: Look again at the end of verse 2. John says that Jesus is the propitiation "not just for our sins but for the sins of the world." John most likely said this because the false teachers claimed to have a special, almost secret, knowledge about God (it had been made known to them and wasn't really available to all). John was making sure his readers knew: this offer of salvation is intended to be made to all people. Consider this though: are we often not similar to the false teachers in how we act as Christians? We often act as if the Gospel is for us only. Someone shared it with us but we often don't share it with others. We may not say we believe it's only for us but we often act like this because we rarely share it with others. These readers had come to know Jesus because of John's testimony. Now they were not to hog it to themselves but share it with others. Take time to consider one person close to you that you can share Jesus with. Pray for these people as a group.