

Bible Studies for Life: September 26

Sure of Victory • 1 John 3:19-4:4

By Laura Lee Leathers



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Ellen deKroon Stamps was a personal assistant to Corrie ten Boom, the Dutch woman who helped save many Jews from the Nazi Holocaust during World War II. Stamps said that one of Corrie's favorite things to say was, "Jesus is Victor." Notice she did not say Jesus "will be" victorious.

As believers in Christ, we are sure of our victory over sin because of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. He has already won! Also, "when we choose to align ourselves with Christ and follow Him, His victory means we will also experience victory" (Lifeway).

Even though our lesson does not cover the first 18 verses of chapter three, be sure to take time to read about the command to love and then put it into action.

Also, the Apostle John continually weaves the themes of love, obedience, and truth throughout his epistles. Please do not skim over verses because they seem repetitious. John is covering these themes from a different point of view, challenging the reader to dig deeper and deeper.

We have victory over doubt (1 John 3:19-22). "And this we

know," refers to verse 18. We love "with truth and action." Therefore, "we are of the truth." We are to live with confidence because God knows the motives of our hearts and observes our lives.

Furthermore, as we confess our sin we live more and more "in His presence," and we grow more confident in our faith instead of fear or guilt. As believers, "God expects a true believer to sin less, not to sin habitually" (Be Real (1 John): Turning from Hypocrisy to Truth by Warren Wiersbe). God "knows all things," and our hearts are to rest in His assurance.

Then there is assurance in answered prayer; read verses 21 and 22. We are to ask according to God's will (5:14). Take a few minutes to read Psalm 66:18-20, John 14:15, and John 15:7, 10. His Word abiding in us helps us to keep His commandments.

We have victory because we remain in Jesus and He remains in us (1 John 3:23-24). What is God's commandment? It is this "that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another" (v. 23) – two aspects, yet one that shows a single, undivided love of God (HCSB Study Bible).

Then in verse 24: "And the way we know that He remains in us is from the Spirit He has given us." In this verse, we see the role of the Holy Spirit clearly defined for the first time in this epistle. The Holy Spirit empowers and equips us to remain in Christ, another evidence of genuine salvation.

We have victory because Jesus has conquered the world (1 John 4:1-4). Continuing to focus on the Holy Spirit, John warns once again that there are counterfeits. We are to "test the spirits to determine if they are from God."

Notice the phrase again, "this is how you know." John then says we will know it is the Spirit of God because, "Every spirit who confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God."

The Holy Spirit gives us the ability to discern. It is a critical characteristic of a believer. Some people describe it as a “check in my spirit,” because there is something not right regarding a situation. Be wise and cautious.

John further writes, “every spirit who does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist” (v. 3). In last week’s lesson, we looked at the Antichrist (an individual whom Satan uses who claims to be God) and the antichrists (those individuals who are false prophets and spread false doctrine).

If you want to know what an individual believes, start with this question: “Who is Jesus?” Listen closely to their response. Is the individual confessing that Jesus is the Son of God? Next, ask: “What does your relationship with Jesus look like?” Are they in the Word daily and in fellowship with other believers? This demonstrates their love for Jesus in action.

John reminds us that we can overcome the false prophets because Jesus, who is in us, “is greater than he who is in the world.” John will address this subject again in chapter five. We belong to God, and we are to abide in Him. Therefore, we can be sure of victory!

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