

# KEEP FROM IDOLS!

## 1 JOHN 5:18-21

### INTRODUCTION

Throughout his letter, John has been exhorting us to fully live out our new life in Christ, this life of fellowship with God, victory over Satan and this world, and fullness of joy. Now, in this last section of John's epistle, we find an exhortation to KEEP FROM IDOLS!

Preceding this exhortation, John lays out three "certainties" that are rooted in the heart and mind of everyone who is born of God. Each of these certainties is introduced by the words "we know". The knowledge spoken of here is that inward understanding that is given to every true Christian by the Holy Spirit. So, here in v18, John gives us that 1<sup>st</sup> certainty, the certainty that every Christian is EQUIPPED TO OVERCOME A SINFUL LIFESTYLE. He says...

### I. KNOWING YOU'RE EQUIPPED TO OVERCOME A SINFUL LIFESTYLE

v18

*18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.*

#### A. "WHOEVER IS BORN OF GOD DOES NOT SIN"

- This statement, like the one in 1JHN 3:9, tells us that the Christian does not "continuously practice sin".

#### B. "BUT HE WHO HAS BEEN BORN OF GOD KEEPS HIMSELF"

1. John shows how the one born of God guards against sinful practices
  - a. Some translations have "keeps him" instead of "keeps himself" because they think that "he who has been born of God" refers to Jesus.
  - b. But John uses "only begotten" when referring to Jesus. And consistently in this epistle, "born of God" refers to those born again
2. So here John is telling us that Christians bear some responsibility in keeping from sin.

#### C. "THE WICKED ONE DOES NOT TOUCH HIM" - CANNOT LAY HOLD ON HIM

1. When we keep ourselves in fellowship with God, Satan can't gain a foothold in our Lives.
2. When we submit to God, and resist the devil, the devil flees! - JAMES 4:7
2. When we keep God's word we overcome Satan - consider Jesus in MT 4:4,7,10

So the first "certainty" of the Christian faith is that one born of God does not abide in sin, but rather keeps himself by abiding in God's word. And with God's help he is able to win the conflict with "the wicked one".

We know that one who is born of God does not sin (does not practice or abide in sin). John spoke of this in 1JHN 3:9, telling us that the one born of God does not practice sin because the seed of God abides in him. In other words, he finds that sin is contrary to his new nature. And instead of continuing or abiding in sin, he abides in God. As John says here in 1JHN 5:18, "he keeps himself". In other words he remains in fellowship with God, being obedient and seeking to please Him. He is dead to sin and alive unto God. And the results are that the wicked one touches him not (Satan can't lay hold on him; he can't gain a foot hold in his life).

Now for the second "certainty", the second "We know"...

### II. KNOWING YOU'RE EQUIPPED TO LIVE FOR GOD

v19

*19 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.*

#### A. "WE ARE OF GOD"

1. The Christian has been "born of God" and is a partaker of God's divine nature
2. He is walking in the light, in fellowship with God, living a godly lifestyle
3. He is under God's rule, living under the influence of the Holy Spirit

#### B. "THE WHOLE WORLD LIES UNDER THE SWAY OF THE WICKED ONE"

The world lives with a warped view of life. The Christian has a godly world view. He knows this world is dying and passing away. He lives as a pilgrim here on earth, longing for the coming of God's kingdom. For he knows the whole world lies in wickedness (it is under the influence and rule of Satan) - EPH 2 speaks of Satan's influence

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This brings us to the third "we know"...

**III. KNOWING YOU'RE EQUIPPED TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND GOD****v20**

*20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.*

**A. The Son of God has come and has given us understanding**

1. Jesus has come to give us true insight concerning God
2. As John declared in his gospel: "No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." – JHN 1:18

**B. That we may know...**

1. "...Him who is true"
  - a. God is the truth
  - c. By coming in the flesh, Jesus has manifested the true God to us – JHN 14:7-9
2. "...and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ"
  - a. Jesus has also given us understanding about how we can be in God
  - b. It is through His Son, as we keep His words and His commandments, that we can abide in God – JHN 14:21-23

**C. This is the true God and eternal life**

1. Again, the expression "true God" is saying He who is "the real God"
2. With this declaration, John is also defining what "eternal life" truly is...
  - a. It is to "know" Him who is true, calling God, "Abba Father": "Daddy"
  - b. It is to be "in Him" who is true, and "in His Son Jesus Christ"
  - c. It is the abundant life that comes from "knowing" intimately the Father and the Son through fellowship, worship, and obedience

To truly know and commune with God is to have eternal life, the life imparted to us when we were born again. And Now the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit dwells within us to comfort and guide our lives.

These are three (3) great assurances that the born again, child of God, is able to live a godly life: Now, with these certainties set before us, John exhorts us ...

**IV. KEEP YOURSELVES FROM IDOLS****v21**

*21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.*

1. Paul says an idol is anything that replaces God in our hearts – EPH 5:5; COL 3:5
2. Here, with his favorite term of endearment, John exhorts us to stay away from idols: anything that would replace God and steal our devotion to Him

An idol is anything that tries to replace God. It is anything that comes between God and me. It is anything that takes hold of my attention and devotion and seeks to be the center of my life. God is to be the center of my life. God is to be my 1<sup>st</sup> love. So, we must guard against anything that would turn us from God and steal our affections. We must not be like the church at Ephesus, who left her 1<sup>st</sup> love – REV 2. We must give our worship and adoration fully to God and live in communion with Him.

**CONCLUSION**

So, hello Christian! Are you maintaining your fellowship with God? Are you guarding your heart and keeping yourself just for Him? Are you keeping yourself from idols?