
Back to the Basics

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Illustration: Pastor Ian began with a personal illustration of his twin sons telling stories to outdo each other. When he realized that one of them was telling an outrageous story that included him, and that it was hurting his brother, Pastor Ian interrupted by saying that it didn't really happen — *that he knew it didn't happen because he was there.*

Observation: *Often lies perpetuated in the right tone, at the right place, at the right time can lead to a disruption in our lives. These disruptions can lead to deceptions — and these deceptions can lead towards death. It is because of this very crisis that John writes this letter to the church around the city of Ephesus with instructions to them of how to delete deception!*

How to delete deception: We are looking at the book of **1 John** as a way to do just that. **1 John** is a letter written from “The Elder” (as John was known in the later years of his life), as he is overseeing a group of home churches around the city of Ephesus. He is writing in a time of crisis, fracture, unsettledness. The problems he is addressing are rooted in some false teaching that had worked its way in — espousing that Jesus wasn't real. That belief had skewed their living a Holy or righteous life. Over time that led to great distrust and hurting of each other.

1. I was there (*I write this so your joy may be full!*)
2. Take off the mask of faking it, stop lying to yourself, and walk in the light.
3. As you get real, understand that sin is no joke, and it is really bad.
(*Stopping sin is connected to finding Joy*)
4. Keep Gods commands — don't add more, or take any away
5. Love each other — not the way the world defines it — but the way I do!

Don't love the world

1 John 2:15-17

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

What is there to love of the world?

Churchplants.com study says these are the top seven.¹

1. Pro Sports
2. College Sports
3. Fame celebrity — TV, Movie, YouTube, Instagram
4. Cars
5. Guns
6. Money
7. National security

¹ <https://churchplants.com/articles/6455-the-top-7-gods-americans-worship.html>

None of these things in and of themselves are evil and wrong. However — IF they have your *highest attention* — *you have made an idol and must repent!*

- This is an interesting command from John, considering Jesus came and died for the world. However, John is specific in what word he is using here. In Greek, the word he is using is “Agapao” or agape. In Scripture, we see three different Greek words used for love.
 1. Eros — where we get the word erotic — this is a husband/wife love
 2. Phileo — think Philadelphia — this is a brotherly love of comradery
 3. Agape — a love reserved for God alone — an *unconditional* love
In this context, it means “*to place the highest value on*”
- In this use where John is saying *agape*, he is saying you cannot love the world — *you cannot “place the highest value on, put before all else, worship things of the world.*
- **If you do, then you can no longer place the highest value of God.**

We were made to love God and experience the life He made us for in eternity. The enemy of our souls seeks always to distort and disfigure that plan and purpose in our lives. Look at your life, look at your bank statements, look at your search history. Start asking the question, “*What do I agape? What do I put before anything else?*”

**We must walk in the light, not trying to deceive ourselves.
We must take the mask off and see where we really are.
So that we can make a change, confess, repent, go a new way!**

Don't be deceived

1 John 2:18-23

¹⁸ Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. ¹⁹ They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out* that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us. ²⁰ But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. ²¹ I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth. ²² Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. ²³ Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

Note: *Antichrist means people anti, against, in opposition to Christ. It's so easy to get caught up thinking about the Capitol A Anti-Christ, but here he is saying the lowercase ones are already at work. Those that are resistant to and lying against the truth of Christ.*

Observation: **There is a huge amount of support in the text that states *deception* is a common practice against the church and its people. We are often told about it and warned against it!**

Matthew 24:4

And Jesus answered and said to them, “See to it that no one misleads you.

Jeremiah 9:6

“Your dwelling is in the midst of deceit;
Through deceit they refuse to know Me,” declares the Lord.

Romans 16:18

For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

Matthew 24:11

Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many.

Colossians 2:8

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

Deception: tricked, beguiled, mislead. There is a constant pursuit of confusion. If I can be convinced to think wrongly — then it is easy to see how I can start living wrongly!

John's encouragement is stay on track! YOU KNOW THE TRUTH!!! Keep focused on that which matters. So much of the modern world is spent on getting our time, energy, and attention on things that have no real eternal impact. The day your stand at the gates of heaven, who the president was and what happened in 2020 will not be the thing you are thinking about! Eternity, compared to the present moment, is incomparable. It's a blip, a fleeting passing moment, compared to an endless vast, ocean!

Pastor's note:

We need to be vigilant in eliminating that which deceives us, tricks us, steals from what matters most!

You were made to **Love God, Love People and Make Disciples.**

If that's not on your mind — you're living in deception!

Abide in HIM

1 John 2:24-25

²⁴Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life.

John sets up these ideas with what **not** to do — then he gives us vision for what **to** do!

Abide: Live, dwell, act in accordance with

Observation: *Abiding isn't easy because it goes against everything we are taught to believe.*

The World says...

1. speed up — *abiding says slow down*
2. work hard — *abiding says let Him work*
3. be loud — *abiding says be quite*
4. it's up to me — *abiding says it's all on Him*

“Some men cannot abide because it reveals their inward poverty, is as a palace of cedar to the wise, for along its hallowed courts the King in his beauty deigns to walk”²

~ Charles H Spurgeon

² C.H. Spurgeon. The Complete Works of C.H. Spurgeon, Volume 81 (Delmarva Publication, 2015)

Observation: *John is giving perspective here. He is saying to the church: don't love the world, don't fall into deception — you know how to do that? ABIDE!*

John 15:4-5

⁴Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵“I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

John, early in his life, is saying the same thing. However, here it's the words of Jesus Himself.

Abiding bears fruit — *not* abiding leads to a fruitless life. No tree that just sits in a field and yells “fruit come on” actually produces anything!!

You have to be rooted, fed, fertilized, grown — and eventually fruit comes forth!

With Him — fruit is possible

Without Him — nothing is possible. We can do a whole lot of nothing.

I don't want to do nothing!!

Conclusion

Beloved, as we continue to navigate the world that God has put us in, we **MUST** remember — our calling doesn't change with the news. God is not in heaven rewriting the plays based on pandemics and elections. He has spoken in the past and is speaking through Jesus. His calling, purpose, and plan for every follower of Christ is clearly presented through His Word.

Whether you're a banker, a plumber, a pastor, or a mother — you were made for this moment — to **Love God, Love People and Make Disciples.**

If fear, busyness, deception, or love for the world has held you back from this, my invitation to you is to Abide, get with Him, change your rhythms, and get in His presence. Hear Him invite you to this life of purpose — this life to the fullest!! You were made for this...you can do this!!!

Discussion Questions

1. What do you idolize in your daily life? What do you spend your time/money on? Anything that you put higher value on than God alone?
2. Why is it so easy to be deceived, confused, in placing value on earthly things?
3. How does *abiding* go against everything we are taught to believe in the world?
4. Without Him we can do nothing. Can we be busy for Him but do a whole lot of nothing?
5. How does someone bear fruit for the Lord?

NOTES