



Community of Hope Church
Community Group Bible Study

1 John

Sept. 2020-Jan. 2021

Lesson #9: Week of Nov. 15 // 1 John 3:19-24: Assurance

Read 1 John 3:19-24 aloud. What are you hearing in these verses? What words are repeated?

Examine

- According to John, how do we know we are of the truth?
- What kind of condemnation do you think John is referring to? What does the context of the previous passage, 1 John 3:11–18, reveal?
- Who makes it possible for us to abide in him, and what is the evidence?

Chat

- John tells us that if we love “in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:18), our hearts are reassured before God. How does knowing God’s love for you strengthen your faith?
- Where does the ultimate source of our reassurance come from? How does this influence your faith in God and life?
- What do we learn from this passage about the correlation between our life and our prayers? (See 1 John 5:14–15.)

Apply

- Are you self-condemning when God has forgiven you? Why?
- How do you personally seek to abide in Christ?
- A child of God is deemed righteous and can have confidence before him. Do you pray with this boldness? What is preventing you?

John makes following God sound so simple: Believe in Jesus and love one another. Are there ways you tend to overcomplicate or add to what it means to glorify and enjoy God?

Pray for the group to love one another in deed and in truth. Pray for the group to experience a greater level of reassurance in their relationship with God through faith in Christ, and that God would cast away any fear or doubt. Pray for the ability to enjoy the simple life of loving God and one another.

Just a note from Koko:

"My dear children, let's not just talk about love; let's practice real love. This is the only way we'll know we're living truly, living in God's reality. It's also the way to shut down debilitating self-criticism, even when there is something to it. For God is greater than our worried hearts and knows more about us than we do ourselves.

And friends, once that's taken care of and we're no longer accusing or condemning ourselves, we're bold and free before God! We're able to stretch our hands out and receive what we asked for because we're doing what he said, doing what pleases him. Again, this is God's command: to believe in his personally named Son, Jesus Christ. He told us to love each other, in line with the original command. As we keep his commands, we live deeply and surely in him, and he lives in us. And this is how we experience his deep and abiding presence in us: by the Spirit he gave us." 1 John 3:19-24

In this translation of 1 John 3:19-24, The Message, I am impressed by the powerful encouragement to my heart; our hearts. This heart message is in direct contradiction to what we call, in the counseling field, self-talk. Self-talk is simply that running conversation that we have with ourselves as we go about our daily lives. Counselors get real interested in what we say to ourselves because it reveals what is in our hearts, self-image, our self-estimation. These are some of the self-talk, heart messages that I found common among Christians:

1. It's all bad and only going to get worse; Christ better come soon.
2. I've done it wrong before, I did it wrong again and the future is not looking good.
3. You're killing me. This is unbearable.
4. I can't do it anymore. Everyone thinks I'm a bad or useless or unimportant or foolish person. No one important likes me.
5. I deserve this or You're turns coming; you'll get what you deserve.
6. If I don't do this no one will.
7. I always, you never...

These cognitive biases or self-talk come out of our sub-conscious mind, our attitudes our feelings or what the Bible calls our hearts.

"My child, pay attention to what I say; turn your ear to my words." Proverbs 4:1

"21 Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; 22 for they are life to those who find them and health to one's whole body. 23 Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." Proverbs 4:21-23

"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve." Jeremiah 17:9-10

We Are a 3-Part Whole



We are **spirit**, have a **soul** and live in a **body**

The diagram above is useful in imagining how the various parts of our self, create a whole self-image.

Some of these errant messages, when discovered, can be changed by ourselves. Some of these heart messages can become mental health issues better overcome with trained help, such as:

- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder leads to irrational, obsessive thoughts.
- Generalized anxiety disorder creates irrational worries that are usually situational.
- Panic Disorder often creates negative thinking about health or the inability to escape a particular situation.
- Social anxiety creates irrational negative thoughts about other people.

In my experience many Christians struggle very silently with the messages that come from our hearts. These negative accusations, unexposed can crowd out the truth that Jesus tells us about our beloved, desired and graciously accepted selves. The truth is beautifully outlined in chapter 8 of Paul's letter to the Romans. I love how it opens: "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death."

The world around us has many ways to make us feel less than, but our life in Christ has redemption and grace for us always and every day.

"2 You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone. 3 You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts." 2 Corinthians 3:2-3

"4 Such confidence we have through Christ before God. 5 Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. 6 He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." 2 Corinthians 3:4-6, 17

"This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Dear

friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us." 1 John 3:19-24.

Prayer: Thank you, Jesus, for redeeming and sustaining us!

Koko