

Briefing Document: Core Themes from "1 John Lesson 29"

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This document summarizes the key theological and practical teachings presented in *1 John Lesson 29*. The discussion centers on Christian love and spiritual growth, drawn from 1 John and other biblical passages.

I. The Centrality of Love: An Old and New Commandment

- Love as a Way of Life

Love is described not merely as an emotion but as a directive for daily conduct. This reflects God's presence in a believer's heart.

- God's Love for Us, Our Love for Each Other

The focus shifts from our love toward God to the love God gives us to share with others. This mutual love is essential for a credible witness.

- The Contrast: Love vs. Hate/Indifference

"He who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes." — 1 John 2:11 NKJV

- Defining Hate

Hate includes disdain and also indifference toward another's condition.

- Consequences of Darkness

Those who walk in darkness are described as spiritually blind, stumbling, and ultimately facing eternal judgment. "...for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." — Jude 1:13 NKJV

- Christ's Newness of Love (John 13:34–35)

Jesus embodied love in a way previously unseen.

- Jesus as the Embodiment of Love

Jesus' life demonstrated sacrificial love in visible, tangible ways.

- Sacrificial Love

"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." — John 15:13 NKJV

- Love as the Mark of Discipleship and Testimony

"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." — John 13:35 NKJV

- The Foundation of Believability

A Christian's love for others gives credibility to their gospel witness.

- God-Taught Love

"But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another." — 1 Thessalonians 4:9 NKJV

- Prophecy of a New Heart

This aligns with Old Testament prophecies: Jeremiah 31:33, Ezekiel 36:26–27, Ezekiel 11:19–20, Hebrews 8:10, 10:16, Romans 5:5

II. Spiritual Growth: A Privilege and Obligation

- Growth as Evidence of Life

"Where there's life, there's going to be growth. Where there's growth, there's life."

- Divine Intention

God desires His children to grow into maturity in Christ.

- Privilege and Obligation

Spiritual growth is not optional. Without it, believers forfeit many blessings.

- The Goal: Christlikeness

Philippians 3:13–14, Romans 8:29, Ephesians 4:15

- Ministry's Purpose

All ministries—teaching, discipling—should aim to help believers become more like Christ.

- Desiring the Word

"As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby." — 1 Peter 2:2 NKJV

III. Sanctification as Spiritual Growth

- Positional Sanctification

Hebrews 10:14 NKJV

- Progressive Sanctification

Daily process of becoming more Christlike.

- Future/Ultimate Sanctification

Complete separation from sin in heaven.

IV. Key Distinctions Regarding Spiritual Growth

- Not Tied to Standing Before God
Philippians 3:9, Colossians 2:10, 2 Corinthians 5:21
- Not Tied to God's Love for You
God's love remains unchanged.

V. Community and Practical Application

- Community Life
Church activities like baptisms, men's breakfast, etc.
- Mutual Support
Shared prayer needs.
- Hospitality
Hosting church interns.
- Personal Anecdotes
Used to illustrate spiritual truths.
- Memory Verse
"Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the Lord!" — Psalm 27:14 NKJV

Conclusion

Genuine Christian life is marked by a visible, Christ-like love for others—a love taught by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Spiritual growth is both a privilege and an obligation, leading us into deeper sanctification and maturity without altering our standing or God's love for us.

Greek Words

- Sanctification – ἁγιασμός (*hagiasmos*)
Pronounced: hahg-ee-as-MOSS
Meaning: Holiness, consecration; the process of being made holy or set apart for God's use.
This term appears in reference to progressive spiritual growth in the believer's life.¹

¹ *Hagiasmos* is used in the New Testament to describe both positional and progressive sanctification (e.g., Romans 6:19, 1 Thessalonians 4:3).