

Briefing Document: 1 John — Lesson 32

Date: August 20, 2025

I. Key Themes & Main Ideas

This lesson focuses on two interconnected themes:

1. Spiritual Growth and Maturity (Sanctification)
2. The Nature of God's Love and Hatred — particularly toward "The World."

A. Spiritual Growth (Sanctification) — A Step-by-Step Process

John outlines three categories or stages of spiritual development. These stages are not chronological (based on time since salvation) but reflect one's desire to grow and engagement with God's Word.

1. Spiritual Child (Babies)

- Distinguishing Action: Acknowledge God as Father and Christ as Lord.
- Relationship: Primarily relational, not theological.
- Discernment: Very poor discernment, making them easily preyed upon by false teachers.
- Vulnerability: Susceptible to false doctrine.
- Assurance of Salvation: Forgiven, truly believe in Christ, desire to obey and love others (though imperfectly), hatred of the world (though imperfectly).

2. Spiritual Young Man

- Transition: Moves from relationship to knowledge.
- Strength: "You are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one" (1 John 2:14, NKJV).
- Overcoming the Evil One: Equipped with sound doctrine, able to resist falsehood.
- Satan's Role: Creates false systems, prepares the "end-times mystery religion."
- Vulnerability: Still struggles with the flesh and sin. Paul described himself as "chief of sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15).
- Sin & Maturity: Sin's frequency may decrease, but hatred of sin increases.

3. Spiritual Father

- Ultimate Stage: The highest stage of maturity.
- Knowledge: "You have known Him who is from the beginning" (1 John 2:13, NKJV).
- Worship: Life becomes a greater experience of worship.
- Intimacy: Relationship with God becomes fuller and richer.
- Goal: Believers should desire to become spiritual fathers (John 17:3).

B. The Power for Spiritual Progress: The Word of God

- Necessity: Growth requires strength in the Word.
- Lifegiving & Transforming: The Word renews the mind (Romans 12:2, NKJV).
- Active Engagement: Believers should join Bible-teaching churches and read Scripture.

C. God's Love and God's Hatred — The "Love That God Hates"

Focus: 1 John 2:15–17

1. God's Perfect Love

- Biblical Foundation: "God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:16, NKJV).
- Common Grace: Rain on just and unjust (Matthew 5:45).
- Redemptive Grace: Salvation given through Christ.

2. God's Perfect Hatred

- Connection: Perfect love demands perfect hatred.
- Examples (Proverbs 6:16–19): Pride, lying, murder, wicked schemes, eagerness for evil, false witness, sowing discord.
- Other Hatreds: Divorce (Malachi 2:16), Idolatry (Jeremiah 44:3–4), False Religion (Amos 5:21; Revelation 2:6, 15), Hypocrisy (Amos 5:21).
- Core Reason: God hates what is inconsistent with His holy nature.

3. Hating the World

- Command: "Do not love the world or the things in the world..." (1 John 2:15, NKJV).
- Definition: The world = sinful system opposed to God.
- Characteristics (1 John 2:16): Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life.
- Impermanence: "The world is passing away..." (1 John 2:17, NKJV).
- Distinction of Believers: True Christians do not love the world.

D. Assurance of Salvation and Spiritual Inventory

- Purpose: Written to give believers assurance, not doubt.
- Tests: Doctrinal (Christ's deity, acknowledgment of sin). Moral (obedience, love, hatred of the world).
- Authenticity: True faith is seen in obedience, not profession alone.

II. Important Ideas & Facts

- Sanctification vs. Salvation: Salvation is secure; growth depends on obedience.
- Chronological Age vs. Spiritual Age: Time saved does not equal maturity.
- Satan's Strategy: Focuses on false religion.
- The Living Word: Scripture is lifegiving and transforming.
- Perfect Love Demands Perfect Hatred: God's hatred flows from His love.
- Pride as Root Sin: Source of rebellion.

- The World's Components: Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life.
- Assurance through Self-Examination: Believers test themselves to affirm salvation.
- Challenge to the Church: Too many remain spiritual babes.
- Growth Requires Labor: "Work out your salvation..." (Philippians 2:12, NKJV).

III. Greek Word Usage

No Greek terms are present in this briefing document.