

GLENKIRK CHURCH



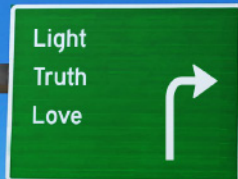
WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

# The DEVO

SEPTEMBER 9 - 13, 2019

## WALKING IN THE TRUTH

SERMON SERIES 9/8 - 11/24



# MONDAY

## 1 John 1:6-2:2; Romans 6:15; Luke 18:9-14

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This week we explore John's 7-verse mini-essay on sin, 1 John 1:6-2:2. Herein the Apostle powerfully addresses the three major sin frameworks (those of the carnal "Christian," the atheist, and the legalist), God's process to make us more Christ-like, and His solution for humankind's fallen separation from Him.

The Bible skewers the "wisdom" of atheism: "*The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God'*" (Psalms 14:1, 53:1). As well, close cousins to atheism are the assorted views of God as impersonal: "nature" itself or "the universe" is god; and/or "god is a life force" of sorts. Such misguided pantheism prevails among New Age adherents, Wicca (witchcraft), and naturalists rooted in ancient paganism. Another similarly corrupted view is that "god" is weak and/or woefully limited, far below the Almighty, Sovereign, All-knowing, Living God. The core motive of atheism, paganism, and "weak god" schemes is denying moral accountability, living dismissive of consequences from a personal, powerful Moral Authority.

Legalists—though they wouldn't call themselves this—would bristle in hearing that they end up in essentially the same place as atheists and pagans. Merit-based religions, which encompass virtually all formal faith systems aside from true Christianity, ultimately default to legalism. The legalist maintains, "I'm good enough to earn my eternal reward (heaven/paradise/Nirvana); I'm saved by my own righteousness." Luke 18's Pharisee is legalism's poster child. The legalist wants a Lord (rules-maker), but not a Savior—"I don't need one; I deserve salvation on my own."

The carnal “Christians,” unlike the legalists, want a Savior and “cheap grace,” but not a Lord. Their life verse, although misapplied, is: “*Where sin increases, grace abounds all the more*” (Romans 5:20). However, salvation is not a smorgasbord—you cannot have a Lord or a Savior; knowing Christ means that Jesus must be your Lord and Savior. Christ’s related admonition is: “*Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?*” (Luke 6:46).

Reread 1 John 1:6, 8 and 10. Verse 6 speaks particularly to carnal “Christians,” verses 8 and 10 speak to atheists and legalists. Do you tend toward any of these misguided directions? How can you help others who embrace such folly?

## QUESTIONS

What is a key similarity between atheists and legalists? What is a core motive of atheists, pagans, and “weak-god” adherents? What is a typical error of carnal “Christians”?

## PRAYERS FOR BRANDON AND KENDRA KERSTON/ CHI ALPHA

Brandon and Kendra express thanks to all who support and pray for them during this pivotal time in their ongoing Chi Alpha ministry at San Diego State University. Classes began on Monday, August 26. Pray for the new freshman class.

# TUESDAY

## 1 John 2:2; John 3:16-21; 2 Corinthians 5:21

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Good newspaper journalism maintains that well-written stories reveal the “Who?” “What?” “Where?” “When?” “Why” and “How?” of an event or circumstance. The verse 1 John 2:2 touches upon the “Who?” (Jesus Christ), “How?” (propitiation or atoning sacrifice), and “Why?” (sin) of God’s plan to rescue us from our desperate, fallen plight. Hopefully, Jesus and the sin elements of this are familiar to you. Today let’s consider the “How?” and a controversial portion of this verse.

GotQuestions.org defines *propitiation*: “Appeasing (satisfying) the wrath of an offended person and being reconciled to him. ... There is no service, sacrifice, or gift that [a mere] man can offer that will appease the holy wrath of God or satisfy His perfect justice. ... [Propitiation] had to be made by God. For this reason, God the Son, Jesus Christ, came into the world ... to be the perfect Sacrifice for sin and make atonement.”

On Calvary’s cross a mysterious, eternal transaction took place between the Father and Son: Jesus died to satisfy God’s holy justice (Romans 6:23); Christ thereby assumed our sinful position while believers receive His righteous standing before God. Thus, a favorite expression of the Apostle Paul is “in Christ” (i.e., Romans 8:1).

Propitiation, or atoning sacrifice, is controversial only among unbelievers. Islam, for example, flatly rejects that One can die for another’s sins. The various self-righteous types, as considered yesterday, dismiss the need for atonement or for a Savior. However, the meaning of 1 John 2:2’s

*“for the sins of the whole world”* has been debated within Christendom for centuries. Reformed theology (including Glenkirk’s ECO denomination) supports “limited atonement,” maintaining that “the whole world” here refers only to the elect, those predestined by God for salvation. Other Christians embrace a more literal understanding of “the whole world”; their “unlimited atonement” view maintains that Jesus died for all, but only those who faithfully respond to the Gospel are saved.

Interpretation of “the whole world” is not a matter of salvation and should not divide us. We can unite, however, in this glorious truth: “Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe; sin had left a crimson stain; He washed it white as snow.” (Elvina Hall)

## QUESTIONS

What is “propitiation”? Why is it something that God alone could provide? What mysterious, eternal transaction took place between the Father and the Son on Calvary’s cross?

## PRAYERS FOR BRANDON AND KENDRA KERSTON/ CHI ALPHA

Pray for the Chi Alpha student leaders to have the courage and boldness to share their faith as they build and foster relationships with new and returning students. Pray that many will be open to hear the Word of God.

# WEDNESDAY

**1 John 1:9; Romans 5:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17-19**

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Omniscient God foreknew humankind's fall: that Adam and Eve would rebel and pass along the sin nature to their descendants. This appeared to present a dilemma for God. He created us for intimate relationship with Him, yet a holy God cannot commune with sin. How could God righteously achieve His purpose in creating us despite our sinfulness?

A survey of Scripture reveals that God planned even before creation that the Son would come to earth as Jesus of Nazareth, the perfect Man, to save humankind. Yesterday we considered the glorious transaction between Father and Son at the crucifixion, whereby we can be reconciled to God. This is underlined in 1 John 1:9, the biblical principle of justification. "Justification is the declaring of a person to be just or righteous. It is a legal term signifying acquittal ... of one who is tried before God. ... Justification comes to the sinner by the atoning work of Jesus and this is applied to the individual sinner by faith. ... God pardons and accepts believing sinners." (Leon Morris)

"Wait a minute!" you argue. "That sounds really legalistic. Didn't we slam legalism on Monday?" Via justification, enabled only by the atoning death of Jesus Christ, believers have a legal standing of "innocent" with God. However, our relationship with God in Christ is personal, not legal. The Lord judged sin fully in Christ,

our Substitute, thereby sustaining God's holiness while providing the only Way to reconciliation and a personal relationship with Him.

Some like to use a word play to characterize justification: "just-as-if-I'd never sinned at all." This illustration has some use, but disregards sin's physical, emotional and relational consequences. Though forgiven, Israel's King David experienced this with his newborn son's death in 2 Samuel 13. Moreover, the "just-as-if-I'd" oversimplification ignores that God's justification deems us not only innocent, but as righteous as Christ Himself. Justification in Christ is glorious, fueling faith, gratitude, and worship!

Do you want a *legal* relationship with God? If so, you'll receive a legal verdict: guilty in your sin. Accepting Christ and His atoning sacrifice, however, justifies the believer, producing reconciliation and a *personal* relationship with the Creator.

## QUESTIONS

When Adam and Eve fell, was God surprised, having to resort to "Plan C"? What is "justification" and how does it operate? Why it so unwise to have only a "legal" relationship with God?

## PRAYERS FOR BRANDON AND KENDRA KERSTON/ CHI ALPHA

Pray that freshman, as well as those returning to San Diego State, will have open hearts and that the campus ministry interacts with them. Pray that those Christian students would be led to connect to a campus ministry such as Chi Alpha or a local Bible teaching church.

# THURSDAY

**1 John 2:1; Romans 8:31-39**

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God delights in our sincerest efforts to know Him and understand His ways. However, if we feel we can begin understanding anything approaching the fullness of God's glory, we're no longer considering the Almighty Creator, but something far lower and manmade. Limited as I am, I confess my confusion regarding 1 John 2:1's phrase, "*we have an Advocate with the Father.*"

If Jesus' atoning sacrifice was sufficient and complete—His last recorded words were "*It is finished!*" (John 19:30)—and I am fully justified in Christ, why does Jesus feel the need to "advocate with the Father" on my behalf? This almost suggests contention between Father and Son; but we know that they are One (John 10:30) and that Jesus always did the will of His Father (John 5:30).

"The English word *advocate* has been translated from the Greek word *parakleton*, which means 'helper, adviser, or counselor.'... God's righteous law pronounces us guilty. ... But Jesus stands as the Advocate between our repentant hearts and the law. ... [Jesus] has already satisfied the demands of justice, so ... God accepts His Son's advocacy on our behalf as part of their divine agreement, established before the world began. ... Our position as 'the righteousness of Christ' is secure because the One who purchased our position with His own blood is also our Advocate." (GotQuestions.org)



“God the Father doesn’t just look back to the cross. He looks straight ahead into the face of the living, righteous Jesus Christ, who is our righteousness ... our life ... our purchase and payment. ... The death of Christ is not the end, but the beginning and the foundation of everything that God does for the elect. ... Every minute of our joy in eternity is owing to the one Mediator between God and man ... the crucified and risen Man, Christ Jesus.”  
(John Piper)

Christ’s advocacy cannot pertain to salvation—we’re justified already in Him. Might it relate to reconciliation with God upon post-sin prayerful repentance? “*Taste and see that the LORD is good*” (Psalm 34:8). I need to continue prayerfully “chewing on” 1 John 2:1, wrestling with it as Jacob did with God (Genesis 32). Holy Spirit, please enlighten me!

## QUESTIONS

Why do you believe Jesus continues to operate as our “Advocate with the Father”? What are we to do with Scripture passages that we cannot understand?

## PRAYERS FOR BRANDON AND KENDRA KERSTON/ CHI ALPHA

Pray for students who are non-believers and for those who are questioning the Bible’s accuracy and God’s existence. Pray that they might find answers and come to faith in Jesus Christ.

# FRIDAY

**1 John 1:7; Philippians 2:12-13; Hebrews 12:5-11**

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Perhaps you've heard, "We *have been* saved—from sin's destruction; we *are being* saved—from sin's influence; and we *will be* saved—from sin's proximity." The "being saved" part here refers to what's called *sanctification*. Another relevant saying: "God loves you just as you are, yet He loves you too much to leave you where you are." One other rustic sanctification motto is: "You've got to catch the fish before you clean it."

The verse 1 John 1:7 and today's other verses address sanctification, God's process to develop greater Christ-likeness in us. "The word *sanctification* is related to the word *saint*; both words have to do with holiness. To 'sanctify' something is to set it apart for special use ... to make [one] holy. ... While we are *positionally* holy ('set free from every sin' by the blood of Christ, Acts 13:39), we know that we still sin. ... That's why the Bible also refers to sanctification as a practical experience of our separation unto God ... [whereby] God guides us to maturity, a practical, progressive holiness." (GotQuestions.org)

Were your teenage years continually fun? Perhaps not. However, these are arguably the most developmental years, socially and academically, of any in your life. Learning and growing are uncomfortable, as you discard or "let die" something embraced earlier. So it is often with sanctification under the direction of a loving, all-knowing God.

Jesus, calling Himself “the True Vine,” indicated that “every branch that does bear fruit [the Father] prunes, that it may bear more fruit” (John 15:1-2). Such “pruning,” though it may not always feel good at the time, promotes healthy growth and fruitfulness. It’s much like the caring discipline that responsible parents apply to children. Otherwise, kids might choose to eat sweets and watch cartoons or play video games continually, much to their developmental detriment.

What’s our part in sanctification? Surrender, something that I find difficult yet yearn for evermore in my Christian walk. The more we cooperate with God in surrendering to Him, the further He can develop us and, perhaps, the less He feels the need to use brokenness to get our attention. Holy Spirit, help me to surrender increasingly to Your perfect will; mold me evermore into Jesus’ image!

## QUESTIONS

What is “sanctification” and how does God use it? What does Jesus’ self-description as the “True Vine” have to do with sanctification? What is our critical role in the sanctification process?

## PRAYERS FOR BRANDON AND KENDRA KERSTON/ CHI ALPHA

Continue to pray for the Chi Alpha staff to have the energy and perseverance to work long hours (70-80) during the first several weeks of school. Pray that as they work to “feed” others that they themselves are adequately fed and nourished spiritually.

## Sources

- GotQuestions.org quotes can be found at <https://www.gotquestions.org/propitiation.html>, <https://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-Advocate.html>, and <https://www.gotquestions.org/sanctification.html>
- Elvina Hall's lyrics are from her 1865 hymn, "Jesus Paid It All."
- Leon Morris' quotes are from [www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/justification](http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/justification)
- John Piper's quotes are from [www.desiringgod.org/interviews/how-is-christ-my-advocate-if-his-saving-work-is-finished](http://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/how-is-christ-my-advocate-if-his-saving-work-is-finished)

