

1, 2, 3 JOHN
YOU CAN LIVE THIS LIFE
SMALL GROUP STUDY #3: ACT LIKE YOUR FATHER
1John 2:3-14

Ice Breaker: Share one specific way you are like one of your earthly parents. Share one specific way you have become like your heavenly Father.

INTRO: Every family has “passed down” character traits. Some families pass on responsibility, some pass on honesty, and some pass on less noble character traits. These “passed down” or inherited character traits make children easily identifiable as members of their family.

In the same way, children of God should be easily recognized by the ways in which their character reflects the character of God.

READ: 1John 2:3-14

***3** We know that we have come to know him if we **obey his commands**. **4** The man who says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. **5** **But if anyone obeys his word, God’s love is truly made complete in him**. This is how we know we are in him: **6** **Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did**.*

***7** Dear friends, **I am not writing you a new command but an old one**, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. **8** **Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and you**, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.*

***9** Anyone who claims to be in the light **but hates his brother** is still in the darkness. **10** **Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble**. **11** **But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going**, because the darkness has blinded him.*

***12** I write to you, dear children, because **your sins have been forgiven on account of his name**.*

***13** I write to you, fathers, because **you have known him** who is from the beginning.*

*I write to you, young men, because **you have overcome the evil one**.*

*I write to you, dear children, because **you have known the Father**.*

***14** I write to you, fathers, because **you have known him** who is from the beginning.*

*I write to you, young men, because **you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one**.*

Q: According to verse 5, how can God’s love be made complete in you?

- What does it mean to have God’s love made complete in you?

- Love is not complete until it acts! God wants to love others through you.

Q: John says the command to be obedient is not new, and yet it is new (vs. 7 & 8). How can this be?

- In Lev. 22:31 God told the Israelites to obey His commands. Obedience to God was not a new command.
- In John 14:15 Jesus said, *"If you love me, you will obey what I command"*.
- The old command became new when the motive for obedience shifted from "have to" to "want to".

Q: How can the truth of this old command becoming new be seen in Jesus *and* you (vs. 8)?

- Jesus' love was easy to see. He didn't do anything because of obligation or a rule that was imposed on Him.
- If you have the same love in you that John is talking about, people will see it in your actions. You will be obedient to God because you want to be, not because you have to be.

Q: Why does John say hating your brother is not a character trait of God's children?

- How does hating your brother affect your walk (vs. 11)?

Q: What is John trying to say to his readers in verses 12-14? Why does he emphasize "you have known Him"?

- John started of this section telling his readers they can **know** they have come to know Jesus if they obey His commands.
- He is telling them love IS alive in them. Because of this they have overcome the evil one.

APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT: *Answer the following questions as best you can, then get with your discipler/discipleship group and discuss your answers.*

1. Obedience is an inherited family trait for children of God. So far, John has told us we need to be obedient by **Walking in the light, confessing your sins and loving your brother**.
 - a. How strong or weak is your family resemblance in each of these areas?
2. Is there a brother you hate? If so, who is it and what will you do about it?
3. It's easy to focus on the ways we fall short of God's desire for us, but what are some of the ways God's nature is reflected in you? List some of those characteristics and be ready to discuss them.