

Sent: Friday, September 18, 2015 10:48 AM
Subject: Tuesday Night's MOB Study

Men--As most of you know, we kicked off our first MOB Study for the Fall 2015 season on Tuesday night, with a brief overview of I John and discussion of where we're going over the next 9 months or so with MOB! It was also an opportunity to get acquainted, or reacquainted, with the men in our small group. Some of you weren't able to join us Tuesday--but those who were shared some amazing stories of how God has worked in their lives! We left--I know I did--with a special feeling that we connected with each other and that we "know" each other a little bit more than when we arrived! It was a great start!

Notice the emphasis on "know"! And that word in itself has a lot to do with the epistle of I John! It's used some 30 times in John's writing! Our study of I John is the perfect follow-on to our study of the Gospel of John, which most of us shared together this past year and which will forever remain in our memories! As you probably "know," John, the "beloved disciple," wrote his gospel primarily so that people would know the real Jesus, whom he (John) knew up close and personal! And, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he proclaimed that Jesus was sent by the Father and came into this world to die on the cross and thus provide for those who would believe in Him eternal life! John said specifically that he wrote "these things" that "you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life through His name" (John 20:31). And that's why it was especially inspiring and encouraging to hear your stories last night of about how you came to Christ!

And now, it's exciting to get into our study of I John--among other things realizing that John wrote it to tell people who now believed and received Christ how they might know and be confident that they, indeed, have eternal life! I John 5:13 says "These things I have written unto you that believe in name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life!"

Well, John had other reasons for writing his epistle as well! In addition, to writing so that you might "know that you have eternal life," he said he wrote it so that "you might have fellowship with God"--and with each other (as brothers in Christ)! Wow! Think of it! Fellowship (restored!) with the God of the Universe--which had severed by the "fall" in the garden! And then John says he also wrote it "...so that our joy might be full" (1:4); and that we would be able to stop "practicing sin" (2:1); and that we would be able to spot and be guarded against false teaching (2:21, etc.)!

These purposes John had in mind all fit neatly together! Assurance of salvation produces "joy"--and joy makes you want to have victory over sin! And having victory over sin and being in fellowship with God--and with other believers--helps you to be able to identify and expose false teaching!

But the reality is that while being in fellowship with God brings indescribable joy, there still is the problem of "sin"--and it's very personal (note the letter "I" in the middle of it!). Sin breaks that fellowship and keeps us from experiencing real joy and victory in our lives--and so must be dealt with! How it must be dealt with is one of the subjects we'll be getting into in the weeks ahead! Our memory verse for next week's lesson just happens to be I John 1:9, where John

writes: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness!" John further tells us that we don't have to be enslaved by sin but can have victory over it by "walking in the Light" (1:7). Like the sunflower--one of the intriguing mysteries of God's creation--which somehow each day follows the sun across the sky, from the east to the west, we too need to keep our eyes continually fixed on Him! But more on that next week and in the weeks to come!

In preparation for next week's lesson, which covers I John 1:1-2:5, I want to encourage you to read, or re-read, the entire epistle of I John--and also use the questions and discussion in Warren Wiebe's study guide, titled "Real"--to examine the message and meaning of John's writings and their implications for living a life that is real!

Have a great week, men! See you next Tuesday night!

Lowell