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Study Series: Unfailing Love in Uncertain Times

Author: J. Ryan Wicker

Lesson Title: “Stand and Celebrate” (pp. 62-75)

Session 5

April 2, 2023

The main point of this lesson is: Standing firm in truth requires understanding true love incarnate.

Focus on this goal: To help adults stand firm in true love incarnate, Jesus

Key Bible Passage: 1 John 4:1-19

Before the Session

1. Bring a short piece of 2-by-4-inch lumber (or a large children’s building block) and a large pillow to class. (Step 1)

2. Gather a large writing surface and appropriate writing instrument. (Step 7)

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Invite a good-natured volunteer to stand at the focal point of the class. Ask: Would you consider this floor to be a good, solid foundation for standing? (Hopefully he affirms that it is.) What if I gave you this equally solid, but not quite as large, piece of wood to stand on? If willing, invite him to try to stand on the board and consider its stability. Then hand him the large pillow. Say: Well, this pillow isn’t as solid, but it’s large. Does this make for a good foundation? Again, let him demonstrate whether or not it’s good for standing on.

Say: In todays passage, we’re going to consider what it takes to stand firm in truth.

Step 2. Standing Firm in the Truth, Part 1

Use the Day One content (pp. 62-63) to point outthat there are different spirits in the world; some good, some evil.

Invite a volunteer to read 1 John 4:1. Ask: Does this verse sound like a suggestion or a command?

Observe that some of the best teachers in school often give some of the hardest tests to be sure students truly know the material. Ask: What does it mean that we are to “test” the spirits?

Read Acts 17:11 and point out how the Bereans, in response to Paul’s preaching, had searched the Scriptures to be sure his teaching lined up with God’s Word. As a group, consider how daily Bible study is imperative for being able to test for truth in our world.

Step 3. Standing Firm in the Truth, Part 2

Invite a volunteer to read 1 John 4:2-3 aloud. Use the second paragraph of Day Two (p. 64) to help learners understand the definition of “confess” and that we must be able to speak openly and truthfully about Jesus.

Choose one (or more if time allows) of the verses listed in the third paragraph (pp. 64-65) as an example of a creed. Explain that these creeds were the only “Christian” writings many early churches had for testing the truth of a statement.

Invite a volunteer to read 1 John 4:4-6. Explain that conquering false teaching depends on what we choose to reject and what we choose to confess.

Step 4. Celebrate Jesus, True Love Incarnate, Part 1

Invite a volunteer to read 1 John 4:7-8. Explain that the Greek words translated “love” appear twenty-one times in verses 7-19. Use the Day Three content (pp. 67-68) to help learners understand that love originates with God, God and Jesus are one, so if we are genuinely saved through faith in Christ we, too, will exhibit that love.

Read the paragraph from Day Three (pp. 67-68) that begins with the phrase, “John begins here . . . .” Ask: How does this speak to our hearts about relationships where we don’t love a person or don’t want to love a person?

Help learners see that our outward displays of love—self-sacrificial and radical—must come from God inside us.

Step 5. Celebrate Jesus, True Love Incarnate, Part 2

Invite a volunteer to read 1 John 4:9. Invite a few others to read the verse from different Bible translations. Ask: What does the idea of God manifesting love through Christ mean?

Use the opening paragraphs of Day Four (pp. 68-69) to reveal how Christ made God’s love visible.

Invite a volunteer to read 1 John 4:10-12. Use the content of Day Four (p. 69) to reveal that the incarnation (Jesus’s coming to earth as a baby) was a visible demonstration of God’s love.

Rereadandstress the phrase from verse 11: “we also must love one another.” Emphasize that our love is the visible expression of God’s love in our sin-filled world.

Step 6. Celebrate Jesus, True Love Incarnate, Part 3

Invite a volunteer to read 1 John 4:13-19. Ask jokingly: Does this seem repetitive to you, or is it just me? Remind learners that John was teaching a very serious truth that was—and remains—a struggle for Christian brothers and sisters; he didn’t want them to miss it!

Point out specifically that we can be confident about our salvation and we need not fear judgment. Say: Confidence and fear are two major struggles for most people today; when we live with confident faith and no fear of our eternal security, we certainly point others to Christ.

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

On the large writing surface, write God is love at the top. Lead learners to briefly review 1 John 4:7-19 individually. Invite volunteers to call out everything that the passage says flows from the love of God. As they call out their answers, record those on the writing surface. Be prepared to supplement their responses as needed. After learners cease offering new suggestions, say: The love of God is the source of our salvation, our confidence, and our eternity. We can walk out of here as changed, encouraged people after hearing and believing this truth today!

Close in prayer.

