

Intro:

Can the Church adopt the world's techniques to accomplish God's purpose?
Can the Church maintain the proper message while adapting the world's techniques?
John addressed some of this in 1 John.

I. These churches had believers are four levels of maturity.

A. The little children [*teknia*] were spiritually young believers (new believers) (2:12).

1. These knew their sins were forgiven because of Christ's character.

2. "For of His name's sake" is literally, "because of His name."

3. Name is referring to His character, who He is. Their sins were forgiven because of Who Jesus Christ is. If you alter who He is, it would affect the potential for forgiveness.

B. The fathers were mature believers (2:13).

They had a real knowledge of Jesus Christ. This was the measure of their maturity, knowing Christ in their personal experience, in the manner in which they lived their lives.

C. The young men were maturing believers (2:13).

1. They had learned to have victory over the evil one (Satan).

2. They had to have learned to have victory over their own sin nature in order to have victory over Satan.

D. The young children [*paidia*] had matured slightly and are distinguished from the little children (2:14).

They had an experiential knowledge of the Father.

E. The father's level of maturity meant John had nothing more to say to them, so he stated the same truth (2:14). This is the level of maturity for which believers should be reaching. This was Paul's goal, "to know Him..."

F. The young men's maturity was also marked by others traits (2:14).

1. They had strength. This is spiritual strength in the inner man. It makes possible christian living.

2. They had the word of God abiding (at ease) in them. They weren't wrestling with the Word any more. They could appreciate it. They may still struggle with its proper application but what God said was not their struggle.

3. They were struggling with loving the world (2:15-17). This is one of three enemies which the believer has. The believer learns to deal with this enemy after learning to have victory over his flesh and Satan.

II. The two groups of younger believers were struggling with some events which had taken place in their churches.

A. The young believers [*paidia*] needed to know that there were some who were opposed to Christ (2:18-23).

1. These people were called antichrists.

a) They were told that antichrist was coming.

b) They needed to know that many had now arrived.

2. These antichrists had left their churches (2:19). This troubled the younger believers, because they lacked the discernment to know why these people had left.

a) They left because they were never really part of the Church. They were unbelievers attending these churches.

b) They left so that others, such as these young believers, could see that they weren't really part of the church.

3. These antichrists could be identified because the Holy Spirit (Anointing) teaches believers (2:20-23).

a) They are liars (2:22).

b) They deny that Jesus is the Christ (2:22). This is a denial that Jesus was bodily raised.

c) They deny the Father and the Son (2:22). This is a denial of Jesus' deity.

d) They deny the Father by denying the Son (2:23).

(1) Since both are one God, a person can't deny one of them without denying the other.

(2) Since both are one God, a person who agrees (confesses) about who the Son is, also had the Father.

B. The young believers could respond properly to the departure of the antichrists (2:24-27).

1. They were to let the truth which they had heard from a beginning remain at ease in them (2:24-25)

a) They were in the Son (2:25).

b) They were in the Father (2:25).

c) They had eternal life, because God had promised it to them (2:25).

2. They were to know John was writing about people who were trying to lead them astray (2:26).

3. They had the Anointing (the Holy Spirit) (2:27).

a) He teaches them these things.

(1) He is true.

(2) He isn't a lie.

b) He teaches them to be at ease in "Him", i.e. Christ.

C. The little believers were given instructions for responding to these antichrists.

1. They were to be at ease in Christ (2:28).

a) They were to spiritually relax in their position in Christ, how God sees them.

b) They would be able to have boldness when to Christ appears.

c) They wouldn't have to worry about be ashamed when Christ appears. In reality, there is no shame, but John's method of encouraging this is better than just telling them so.

2. They were not to let anyone lead them astray (3:7).

a) Those who practice righteousness, as the character of their life, is righteous like Christ is righteous.

b) Those who do not practice righteousness, as the character of their life, is not from God (3:10).

(1) This one is equated with loving his brother.

(2) Therefore, righteousness involves loving your brother.

(3) Christ demonstrated this kind of righteousness by loving us.

(4) This kind of love was absent both in the practice and teaching of the antichrists.

3. They were to not love by simply telling our brothers that we love them (2:18).

a) They were to love by works.

b) They were to love by truth (genuineness) not just going through the motions.

c) They could love by meeting the needs of their brothers (3:17).

4. They were to know what made them different than the antichrists (4:4).

a)The believers were from God.

b)The believers were victorious over those antichrists because great is the One in them than the one in the world.

This one is Jesus Christ (cp 3:24).

(1)The antichrists were not agreeing (confessing) that Jesus Christ is come in flesh (4:2).

(2)The antichrists were not agreeing (confessing) Jesus, that is, they denied the real human Savior. The Son is both God and man and these antichrists were denying the human side of His person.

(3)The antichrists are out of the world (4:5). That is their source.

(4)The antichrists speak from the world as their source (4:5).

(5)The antichrists are heard by the world (4:5).

c)The believers are from God (4:6).

(1)The one who knows God hears us (4:6).

(a)John heard things from Jesus (1 John 1:5).

(b)John was announcing who God is even Jesus (1 John 1:1-4).

(2)The one who is not from God, doesn't hear us (4:6). Here is a key problem. "Why does the world like them?" Because they are from the world and tell the world the things the world likes to hear.

d)The believer can know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error (4:6).

(1)If one hears us, agrees with who Jesus is and what He has done, we can conclude that one is a brother.

(2)If one doesn't hear us, he does not agree with who Jesus is and what He has done, we can conclude that one is not a brother.

Conclusion

A. It can be confusing when we invite the world into our churches, because we are mixing believers with unbelievers, and they don't believe the same things.

B. It is necessary to beware the influence of the world on our churches.

1.Many wish to incorporate in the local assembly the techniques of the world.

2.This only works if you alter the message, so don't waste your time.

3.It is necessary to keep on teaching God's Word.

a)Teach who God is.

b)Teach our relationship to God.

c)Teach our position in Christ.