

Complete in Him

Dramatic presentation for conclusion of I John Series, WCBC, September 2009

Young woman sits at small table or desk, closed Bible in front of her, head bowed . . .

Play Recording (each of first 6 bullets is a different voice—last four use same people):

- *(Male)* Why don't those parents love their children? So many people trying to have kids, and then THEY get to have them?
- *(Female)* Why is my brother dying of cancer? What will his wife and young daughters do without him?
- *(Male)* Why is my coworker getting away with this? My job is getting worse every day. I'm trying to be a light, but my integrity is costing a lot. I'm being penalized for an honest work ethic, and my job is on the line.
- *(Male)* Our family is facing a major financial crisis. Should we file for bankruptcy? Should I try to switch jobs in this economy? Our debt is our own fault . . . but NOW what do we do?
- *(Female)* I am a new believer, and look what I'm facing: persecution, fierce temptation, major health struggles . . . Just as I learn to trust You more, the burdens increase. What next?
- *(Female)* Why is my child facing this trial? Why not me? I can't bear to see her suffer. I'm trying to anchor my faith in Scripture, but the loud cry of my heart is threatening to drown out the truth . . .
- *(Male)* So many doubts, what ifs,
- *(Female)* Questions
- *(Female)* Fears
- *(Male)* Pressures

Immediately following last line, woman at table lifts her head and begins to pray aloud . . . (each time, after she speaks, she looks down and silently reads from I John. Male voice is heard reading the Scripture passages.)

God, I am feeling so overwhelmed with the difficult things that You allow . . . discouragement hovers like a cloud over my head, fogging my vision, daily blurring my focus. I hate this lack of direction and loss of joy.

These things are written that your joy may be complete. Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ. God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.

Lord, I know You are free from darkness. You are the essence of sinless perfection, and You have given me new life in Christ. So why am I still struggling with this horrible sin? Why don't I feel forgiven? Can I ever be forgiven?

If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. His sacrifice removes God's wrath toward all our sin.

Wow. Somehow I had lost sight of that. In Christ, I AM forgiven. Fully.
So then how do I live forgiven?

He calls us His own sons and daughters--so purify yourself! Don't continue in sin. Whoever keeps His Word, in Him God's love is perfected. This is how we know we are in Him. Abide in Him. Walk in the same way that He walked. Love the brethren. Don't love the world. Check your faith—is it genuine? Abide in Him! Practice righteousness, not sin. Believe in His name and love one another. Don't shut off your heart of compassion. Persuade your heart to keep actively loving others. Confess that Jesus is the Son of God. Abide in love—God's love. Obey God's command to love your brother. Believe that Jesus is the Christ. Love God and keep His commandments. Don't keep on sinning. Keep yourself from idols. Love in deed and in truth.

Father, my own love is so entirely unlike Yours. I don't understand Your relentless love. Please help me to know the depth, length, breadth, and height of Your love.

Love is of God. He IS love. He revealed His love by sending His Son that we might live through Him. Here is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the sacrifice to remove God's wrath toward our sin. Since He loved us like this, we ought to love one another. That is how His love is perfected in us. There is no fear in love. Perfect love casts out fear, because fear has torment. He who fears is not made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us. We know that we love God's children when we love Him and obey His Word. This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.

Father, I have been a follower of Christ for years. I know that there is only one God, eternal, both loving and just. I understand that I am a helpless sinner with nothing to contribute. Your Word teaches that You don't accept us on the basis of how we've lived, but that You have provided a way for us to be reconciled to Yourself: Your Son, our sufficient substitute. He has paid the penalty for my sin, I have accepted His work on my behalf, and I've been striving to follow His example. Lately I have been lacking joy and a spiritual focus. I have struggled to live your forgiveness and love toward others. I so badly needed these reminders from Your Word. Thank you for patiently growing me, stretching, teaching, molding. Thank you for your work in my life and in this church family. Draw us close, Father—to You and to each other, that Your truth would be seen by all around us. Let our love for one another shout your glory to neighbors, coworkers, friends, even to those in our midst who still hold You out at arm's length—religious, but lost and without eternal life. May our response to the big and little things in daily life, the struggles, the victories, the blessings, the tests, be to love You more and to share that love with others. Help us persuade our hearts to give and keep giving, to love with Your unconditional love, never withholding compassion toward those in need. You, Father, Who conquered death itself by the priceless gift of Your Son—You have saved us from sin, broken its chains, and given us hope. No matter the test, *God, You are greater*. You are perfecting Christ in us. We can't wait for the day when we stand before You, complete.