



## “Dear Children, Do You Have the Right ‘Why?’”

1 John 2:12-14

Sunday | December 3rd, 2017 | Pastor Patrick Bowler

### CONSULT THE SCRIPTURES

1 John 2:12-14

(See also 1 John 1:3, 6-7, 2:3-6, 2:9-10, 2:15, key themes of Rom. 6, 7 and 8, James 1:2-4, Rom. 5:3-5)

### CONSULT THE SCHOLARS

[Martyn Lloyd-Jones] “The Apostle, as it were, puts it like this” ‘I have been showing you,’ he says in effect, ‘some of the basic principles. I have been reminding you of some of the demands which the Christian life makes upon you; I have been showing you what are the very conditions of blessing.’ Why, then, the

pause and the break? Well, the answer, it seems to me, is this: it is because the Apostle was a pastor, an understanding and loving pastor. His object after all, as we have seen, was not simply to lay down Christian doctrine; he had a very practical object, which was to help these people. So he has to appeal to them; he wants to make sure that he is carrying them with him; so here, in his typical, practical manner, he just stops for a moment and says, ‘Now are you quite clear about all this? You see the line of argument; let me once more remind you of the thing on which I am basing my whole appeal and exhortation.’

Now that is the way to understand this particular parenthesis... He [John], was anxious to comfort these people; he has been holding forth a very strong and stern doctrine before them—keeping the commandments and loving the brethren—and it is as if he said to himself, ‘Now I wonder if these people will be discouraged. Will they feel I am holding the standard so high that they cannot attain it? Will it make them feel they are condemned sinners and that there is no hope for them at all? Very well, I will just stop and give them a word of comfort.’”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Life In Christ: Studies in 1 John* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002), p. 202.

### DISCUSS

1. Nietzsche said, “... He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how.”<sup>2</sup> What does that mean?

2. Pastor Patrick subsequently (see above) asked, “Why are you a Christian?” He then rephrased it for those who wouldn’t affirm that they are Christians; “Why are you not a question?” So, why are you a Christian? Or why aren’t you?

3. Respond and discuss the following quote from the late John Stott:

*“Some people become engrossed in the externals of religion. They come to church. They come to be baptized and confirmed. They come to a pastor to seek counsel. They come to the Bible and read it, together with other religious literature. But it is possible to engage in all these ‘comings’ without ever coming to Jesus Christ himself. I beg you not to stumble over the simplicity of Christ’s invitation.”* (John Stott, *Why I Am A Christian* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2003), p. 127.)

4. Read 1 John 2:12-14. Why do you think John inserted this brief parenthetical? (See “Consult the Scholars” above)

5. Pastor Patrick believes 1 John 2:12-14 is written to all believers, but to believers in various stages of spiritual maturity. What does John have to say to each (“children,” “young men” and “fathers”) and why? How does this correspond to you and your spiritual journey?

6. Pastor Patrick referred to Romans 7 as “the ‘Empire Strikes Back’ of the Gospel story” (Referring to Romans 6, 7 and 8). What?! What did he mean by that?

7. Read James 1:2-4 and Romans 5:3-5. What is the purpose behind our suffering? What is it God is doing and/or working in us through difficulty? How specifically can you relate to what is said by John, James and Paul?

8. What immediate applications can be made in light of this text?

<sup>2</sup>John Stott, *Why I Am A Christian* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2003), p. 104.