

SERMONS

ON

1 JOHN

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WALKING IN THE LIGHT

(I JOHN 1:1–2:2)

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I. Introduction

A. Please turn to 1 John 1:1.

B. While you are turning.... The early Church father, Irenaeus relates

that John, the disciple of the Lord, going to bathe at Ephesus, and perceiving Cerinthus [a early Gnostic heretic] within, rushed out of the bath-house without bathing, exclaiming, "Let us fly, lest even the bath-house fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within."¹

Where false teachers were concerned, John the "apostle of love" was still "a son of thunder," as Jesus had called him.

II. Exposition

A. Background

1. Author

a. The author of 1–3 John is the Apostle John, the son of Zebedee and brother of James.²

b. He is also the author of the gospel and Revelation.³

c. The early Church fathers Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus, Papias, Polycarp, Tertullian, and Eusebius attest John's authorship.

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2. Date

a. 1 John has been generally held to date from AD 85–90.⁵

b. The order is gospel, letters, then Revelation.

3. Locations

a. Origin

1) John was active in the Roman province of Asia Minor or modern Turkey at the end of the first century.

2) Therefore, John probably wrote these letters in Ephesus.⁶

b. Destinations

1) 2 and 3 John were addressed to specific churches and individuals.

2) 1 John appears to be a general letter and was probably circulated among the churches in Asia Minor.

3) Perhaps the same churches mentioned in Rev 2–3.⁷

4. Historical circumstances

a. The background for John's letters is the beginnings of a movement called Gnosticism.

1) They claimed superior knowledge (Gk. *gnōsis*), thus the name Gnostic (Gk. *Gnōstikoi*).

2) Gnostics believed that matter was evil.

a) Therefore, they had difficulties with creation and the incarnation.

i) They denied that the good God would create matter.

- ii) They speculated on numerous *aeons* or demigods between the good God and the evil demigod who created the physical world.
- b) Concerning the incarnation, there were two varieties of Gnostics.
 - i) The Docetic Gnostics (from Gk. *dokeō*, "to seem") denied the true humanity of Christ saying He only seemed to have a physical body, but was actually only a spirit being.
 - ii) The followers of Cerinthus (Cerinthian Gnostics) held that Jesus was merely a good man, and that the *aeon* Christ came upon Him at His baptism and left Him on the cross.
- c) Some Gnostics practiced asceticism avoiding the evil matter, and some practiced sinful license since they thought that matter could have no impact on their spirits.⁸
- b. The emperor Domitian (r. AD 81–96) persecuted Christians in Asia Minor.⁹

5. Style

- a. It fits the category of letter-essay.¹⁰
 - 1) The letter of 1 John lacks a greeting and close.
 - 2) The form is more like sermon than a letter.
- b. However, 2 and 3 John fill the conventions of Greco-Roman letter writing.¹¹

B. Exposition: 1 John 1:1–2:2

1. Introduction: fellowship (1 John 1:1–4)

^{1:1}What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life— ² and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us— ³ what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete (1 John 1:1–4).

a. The first four verses make up a prologue to this letter in which John states his purpose for writing.

1) "What was from the beginning" echoes the first word of the OT and refers to Jesus Christ as the Creator.

a) John wrote in his gospel, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being" (John 1:1–3).

b) *Jesus Christ, who is truly God, is the Creator of all including the material world.*

2) John's teaching is no novelty; it has existed since the beginning.¹²

b. John's testimony to the resurrected Christ involved the senses of hearing, sight, and touch.

1) The Gk. verbs translated "we have heard" and "we have seen" are perfect tense verbs, i.e. a past completed action with abiding results.¹³

2) The Gk. word translated "we have looked at" means "to have an intent look at someth[ing], to take someth[ing] in with one's eyes, with implication that one is esp[ecially] impressed."¹⁴

3) John took the same approach in his gospel:

a) Peter and John saw the empty tomb (John 20:3–10).

b) Mary Magdalene heard the Lord and conversed with Him as well as seeing Him (John 20:1–2, 11–18).

c) Thomas demanded that he touch the wounds of the risen Christ (John 20:19–29).

4) *John was being very clear that Jesus Christ had a physical body and was truly human as well as divine.*

c. John was combating an early form of Gnosticism.

1) Gnostics considered matter evil. Therefore, they did not believe that a good God would create matter.

2) The specific form of Gnosticism that John was seeking to counteract appears to be Docetic.¹⁵

3) Docetic Gnostics believed that, since matter was evil, Jesus only seemed to have a physical body.

- 4) Of course, this belief strikes at the heart of the gospel because, if Jesus did not have a physical body, He could not suffer and die for our sins.
- d. Jesus Christ is the Word of Life.
- 1) Grammatically, the phrase "Word of Life" can mean either "the life-giving Word," "the Word, which is life," or "the living Word."¹⁶
 - 2) John told us in the prologue to his gospel, "In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men" (John 1:4).
 - 3) Jesus said, "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself" (John 5:26).
 - 4) Therefore, in the context of John's writings, the meaning "the life-giving Word," or "the Word, which is life" (BNT) is the most likely.
- e. In this parenthetical remark, John explained that the life, the eternal life, was manifested.
- 1) That manifestation was that which John and the apostles had seen, and had given testimony.
 - 2) That eternal life is the Son of God who came from the Father God and was manifested to us.
 - 3) That manifestation is a Person, Jesus Christ.

4) This echoed the prologue to John's gospel, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

5) *John clearly has the incarnation in mind.*¹⁷

f. John picked up the thread of his thought referring again to "what we have seen and heard."

1) As before, these are perfect tense verbs expressing the abiding nature of what John has seen and heard.¹⁸

2) John explained that the purpose of his proclamation is fellowship, both with other believers and with the Father God and His Son Jesus Christ.

a) The Gk. verb translated "may have" is a present tense verb, i.e., "may keep on having."¹⁹

b) The Gk. word translated "fellowship" (*koinōnia*) means "close association involving mutual interests and sharing, *association, communion, fellowship, close relationship.*"²⁰

i) "The word indicates the setting aside of private interest and desire and the joining in w[ith] another or others for common purposes."²¹

ii) In secular Gk. *koinōnia* is used "of *partnership* in business."²²

iii) *Thus, John gave us a key to understanding this letter at the beginning.*

c) *The letter of 1 John is about fellowship with God and with other believers.*²³

i) Later, John will write, "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13).

(a) Therefore, some have concluded that 1 John is a collection of tests of the genuineness of faith that build assurance as we pass them.

(b) However, 1 John 5:13 applies only to the immediate context (1 John 5:4–13), and the only basis of assurance in that context is trust in the received testimony about Jesus Christ.

(c) Therefore, this view both leads to misunderstanding 1 John, and distorting biblical teaching about the assurance of salvation.

ii) Others have noted that John wrote, "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin" (1 John 2:1), and concluded that the entire purpose of 1 John is to keep us from sinning.

(a) Therefore, they see 1 John as a series of warnings aimed at stopping us from sinning.

(b) However, 1 John 2:1 occurs in a context where John was explaining that sin disrupted fellowship (1 John 1:8–2:2).

(c) Thus, making 1 John 2:1 the theme of the entire letter takes it out of context, and will lead us to misunderstand John's letter.

iii) *John's purpose is to bring his readers into close abiding fellowship with God and each other.*²⁴

g. John explained that the fellowship that he was writing to foster with God and with each other would result in the fullness of joy for the apostles.

1) The Gk. verb translated "made complete" is in the perfect tense, i.e., brought to completion and thereafter remaining complete.²⁵

2) Phillips paraphrased, "We must write and tell you about it, because the more that fellowship extends the greater the joy it brings to us who are already in it" (NTME).

2. Fellowship (1 John 1:5–2:14)

a. Walking in the light (1 John 1:5–2:2)

1) The place of fellowship is in the light (1 John 1:5–7).

⁵This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; ⁷ but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:5–7).

a) John said that an integral part of the message that he received from Jesus, and announced to them was that God is Light with no darkness at all.

- i) The Gk. verb translated "have heard" is in the perfect tense, which "indicates the abiding results of the hearing."²⁶
 - ii) John used Light to represent moral goodness and darkness to represent sin and evil.
 - iii) Therefore, John stated that God's nature is morally perfect without the slightest hint of sin and imperfection.
- b) John said that it follows those claiming to be in fellowship with God who are walking in darkness are lying and not practicing the truth.
- i) As noted before, the Gk. word translated "fellowship" indicates a close relationship or partnership.
 - ii) The Gk. verb translated "have" is in the present tense.
 - iii) The term "walk" is a Heb. idiom for "to conduct one's life, *comport oneself, behave, live* as habit of conduct."²⁷
 - (a) "Jewish teachers called their view of the way Jewish people should behave *halakah*, 'walking.'"²⁸
 - (b) Wuest translated this, "habitually ordering our behavior" (NTET).
 - iv) Jesus said, "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the

Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed" (John 3:19–20).

v) Therefore, walking in darkness would mean living as a habit of conduct in sin and trying to cover it up by pretending spirituality.²⁹

vi) This has been translated, "If we say, 'We have a relationship with God' and yet live in the dark, we're lying. We aren't being truthful" (GW).

vii) *John denied the reality of any and all claims to be in close relationship and partnership with God while we are covering up, as a habit of conduct, sinful behavior. This is not a test of genuine salvation, but it is a test of close relationship in partnership with God.*

c) However, John stated that living as a habit of conduct in the Light results in fellowship with one another.

i) The Gk. verb translated "walk" is in the present tense, "if we continue to live in the light" (NTLP).

ii) This has been translated, "We have a relationship with each other" (GW).

d) While living in the Light, the blood of Jesus God's Son cleanses us from all sin.

i) The Gk. word translated "sin" is an archery term that means literally "*a failing to hit the mark.*"³⁰

- ii) This indicates that walking in the Light does not mean sinless perfection for we are still being cleansed from sin while we walk in the Light.³¹
- iii) The Gk. verb translated "cleanses" is in the present tense, "continues to cleanse" (NTLP).³²
- iv) Paul wrote, "But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light" (Eph 5:13).
- v) The believer who desires a close relationship with God must live openly and honestly before God, and be responsive to all that God shows him or her including his or her own sin.
- vi) Our sins need not prevent a close relationship with God because, as we are open and honest with Him, He cleanses us by means of Christ's blood.³³
- vii) "But we cannot have fellowship with one another unless we have it with God in Christ, and to do that we must walk in the light with God."³⁴

2) Unconfessed sins keep us from walking in the light (1 John 1:8–10).

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us (1 John 1:8–10).

- a) John said that we are deceiving ourselves if we say that we do not still have a sin nature.³⁵
- i) The word "sin" without an article in John's writings refers to "a state of being sinful."³⁶
 - ii) Wuest translated this, "[indwelling] sin" (NTET).
 - iii) Some Gnostics believed that, since matter was evil, the soul was uncontaminated by sinful flesh. The Christian Science cult has similar beliefs today.³⁷
 - iv) Some today believe that they have reached a state of sinless perfection.
 - v) Such a denial indicates that the truth is not shaping that person's thoughts.³⁸
 - vi) Not being aware of sin does not mean one is free from it.³⁹ Paul wrote, "For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord" (1 Cor 4:4).
 - vii) John said that such a person claiming to be free from a sinful nature deceives him or herself.⁴⁰ However, they certainly do not deceive anyone else!
- b) This verse comes back to the thought of verse 7, and expands on it.
- i) The context is continuing fellowship not salvation.
 - ii) In order to maintain fellowship with God, we must be cleansed from sin.

- c) John states that, if we confess our sins, God will consistently and justly forgive us, and cleanse us from any other sin of which we are unaware.
- i) The Gk. word translated "confess" is "from a basic meaning *say the same thing.*"
- (a) It means "to share a common view or be of common mind about a matter, *agree....* to concede that something is factual or true, *grant, admit, confess.*"⁴¹
- (b) The verb is in the present tense "indicating a repeated acknowledgment of sin."⁴²
- (c) Wuest translated this, "if we continue to confess our sins" (NTET).
- (d) *We must repeatedly agree with God taking God's side against our own sin in order to maintain fellowship with Him.*
- ii) The Gk. word translated "faithful" means "pertaining to being worthy of belief or trust, *trustworthy, faithful, dependable.*"⁴³ *God's forgiveness is utterly dependable and consistent.*
- iii) The Gk. word translated "righteous" means "that which is obligatory in view of certain requirements of justice."⁴⁴
- (a) Christ Jesus died for every sin that we have ever committed and ever will commit.
- (b) God has met the requirements of justice.

- iv) The Gk. word translated "forgive" means "to release from legal or moral obligation or consequence, *cancel, remit, pardon.*"⁴⁵
- v) *Therefore, He is perfectly just in pardoning us.*⁴⁶.
- d) However, what about the sins that we are unaware of or have forgotten?
 - i) This question can cause an obsession with confession.⁴⁷
 - ii) John told us that, in addition to forgiving us for the sins that we confess, God cleanses us from "all unrighteousness."
 - (a) The Gk. word translated "to cleanse" is used "of religious and moral purity, as from sin and a guilty conscience *cleanse, make pure, make acceptable to God.*"⁴⁸
 - (b) The Gk. word translated "unrighteousness" means "an act that violates standards of right conduct, *wrongdoing.*"⁴⁹
 - (c) This has been translated, "cleanses us from everything we've done wrong" (GW).
- e) When God brings our sin to light, we must not react by denying it.⁵⁰
 - i) The Gk. verb translated "have ... sinned" is in the perfect tense, i.e., a past action with results up to the present.

- ii) We can either deny the standard by which that sin is measured ("Who is to say what really is sin?"), or redefine the sin away ("That's not a sin; it's a mistake.").
- iii) Some Gnostics did not regard the sins that they committed as truly sinful.⁵¹
- iv) To do this, makes God, who said that it is sin, a liar, stifles our conscience, and indicates a woeful ignorance of God's word.⁵²

3) Our Advocate (1 John 2:1–2)

^{2:1} My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ² and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of the whole world* (1 John 2:1–2).

- a) Some might conclude from what John has said concerning the reality of sin in the believer's life that he is encouraging sin.
 - i) John pointed out that he was actually writing to prevent sinning.
 - ii) John realistically taught that we must be on guard against our ever-present sinfulness if we are to have victory over it.⁵³
- b) When sin is committed, John wanted us to remember that we have a righteous Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ.

- i) The Gk. word translated "Advocate" (*paraklētos*) means "one who is called to someone's aid.... one who appears in another's behalf, *mediator, intercessor, helper*."⁵⁴
 - (a) It is used "as a legal technical term, as one who appears in another's behalf *advocate, defender, intercessor*."⁵⁵
 - (b) On earth, the Holy Spirit is God's Advocate with men, but Christ is man's Advocate with the Father in heaven.⁵⁶
 - (c) In God's court, "Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us" (Rom 8:33–34).
- ii) John called Jesus "the righteous."
 - (a) Paul wrote that God "made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor 5:21).
 - (b) As Paul wrote, "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:1).
- c) Our Advocate is also the Sacrifice that satisfied God's justice.

- i) The Gk. word translated "propitiation" means an "atoning sacrifice for sin *means of forgiveness*," i.e., a sacrifice that satisfies God's justice.⁵⁷
- ii) John explained that Christ's sacrifice was not only for us (Christians), but also for the entire world.
 - (a) The Gk. word translated "whole" means "being complete in extent, *whole, entire, complete*."⁵⁸
 - (b) For John, the Gk. word translated "world" (*kosmos*) is not neutral, but means "*the world*, and everything that belongs to it, appears as that which is hostile to God, i.e. lost in sin, wholly at odds w[ith] anything divine, ruined and depraved."⁵⁹
 - (c) John clearly taught that Jesus Christ died for every one of us.⁶⁰
 - (d) Of course, that does not render all saved, but it does render all savable.⁶¹

III. Applications:

A. About Jesus Christ...

- 1. He is our Advocate.
- 2. He is our atoning sacrifice.

B. What this says to us ...

- 1. Fellowship is based on truth.
 - a. What we believe does matter.
 - b. Ideas do have consequences.

2. We have fellowship with each other only when we have fellowship with God.
3. We have fellowship with God only while we walk in the Light.

LIVING IN THE LIGHT OF THE NEW COMMANDMENT (1 JOHN 2:3–11)

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May 23, 2010

I. Introduction

A. Please turn to 1 John 2:3.

B. While you are turning....

"I just *love* that hat!"

"Man, I really *love* the old-fashioned kind of baked beans!"

"But, Mom, don't you realize that Tom and I *love* each other?"

Words, like coins, can be in circulation for such a long time that they start wearing out. Unfortunately, the word *love* (or, as it is now sometimes spelled, *luv*) is losing its value and is being used to cover a multitude of sins.

It is really difficult to understand how a man can use the same word to express his love for his wife as he uses to tell how he feels about baked beans! When words are used that carelessly they really mean little or nothing at all. Like the dollar, they have been devalued.⁶²

The Gk. language, in which God inspired the NT to be written, is much more precise. There are four different words for love in Gk.: *agapē*, the highest love; *philia*, friendship love; *storgē*, family love; and (not used in the NT) *eros*, sensual love. John's focus in today's passage is on *agapē*.

II. Exposition

A. Background

1. We learned from the introduction to this letter that John's purpose in writing was fellowship.
2. The letter began with a section on fellowship, and we are still in that section.
 - a. We saw last week that fellowship requires conducting our lives honestly and openly before God responding to what He shows us.
 - b. John called that walking in the light.
 - c. We saw that unconfessed sin hinders walking in the light.
 - d. However, John reassured us that God will faithfully and justly forgive us and cleanse us if we would only confess our sin.
3. This week John will examine our lives in light of Christ's new commandment.

B. Exposition: Living in the light of the new commandment (1 John 2:3–11)

1. Knowing Him (1 John 2:3–6)

³ By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴ The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; ⁵ but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: ⁶ the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked (1 John 2:3–6).

- a. John used language aimed those who claimed special knowledge (Gk. *gnosis*), the Gnostics.⁶³

- 1) The Gk. word translated "know" (*ginōskō*) is used twice in this verse and twenty-five times in this letter.
 - 2) It means "familiarity acquired through experience or association with pers[on] or thing.... to arrive at a knowledge of someone or someth[ing], *know, know about, make acquaintance of.*"⁶⁴.
- b. John said that the way that we know that we have arrived at a state of knowing God is by persistent obedience to His commandments.
- 1) The Gk. verb translated "we have come to know" is in the perfect tense, i.e., a completed action in the past with continuing results to the present.
 - a) Wuest translated this, "we have come to know Him experientially and are in that state at present" (NTET).
 - b) The idea is that one has so succeeded at knowing God that from here on you have mastered the subject of knowing God; you have arrived.
 - 2) The Gk. word translated "keep" means "to persist in obedience, *keep, observe, fulfill, pay attention to.*"⁶⁵ Paul warned Titus about those who "profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed" (Titus 1:16).
 - 3) *The true knowledge of God is not evidenced by mystical revelations, but persistent obedience.*⁶⁶

c. This is test, not of the reality of our salvation, but of the claim to have mastered knowing God.

1) Now, the Bible does speak of salvation as getting to know God.

a) Jesus spoke of eternal life as knowing God, "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3), but He used a present tense verb.

b) Paul wrote of salvation as coming to know God, "But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God" (Gal 4:9), but the verb tense that he used was an aorist, i.e., a snapshot action.

c) The tense that John used was a perfect tense, i.e., a past completed action with abiding results.

2) *This is a reality check for claims of spirituality.*

d. John bluntly wrote that the one who claims to have arrived at a state of knowing God, and does not persistently obey His commandments is a liar.

1) John has already touched on several false claims in the first chapter.

a) First, there were those that claimed a close relationship with God while walking in darkness (1 John 1:6).

b) Then, there were those who denied having a sinful nature or committing sins (1 John 1:8, 10).

- c) Now, this person claims to have mastered knowing God while not obeying His commandments.
- 2) The Gk. verb translated "I have come to know" is in the perfect tense, i.e., a completed action in the past with continuing results to the present.⁶⁷
- 3) The Gk. verb translated "keep" is a present participle, i.e., "keeps on not keeping."⁶⁸
- 4) John labeled that person a liar, and said that the truth was not in such a person. One has commented, "In such a person the truth is not a dynamic, controlling influence. He is seriously out of touch with spiritual reality."⁶⁹
- e. On the other hand, John wrote that the person who does persistently obey God's word gives evidence that their love of God has fully matured.
- 1) The Gk. verb translated "whoever keeps" is in the present tense, i.e., "whoever keeps on keeping."⁷⁰
- a) Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15).
- b) Jesus also said, "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me" (John 14:21).
- c) *The evidence of a mature love of God is obedience.*

- 2) The Gk. word translated "love" (*agapē*) means "an attitude of appreciation resulting from a conscious evaluation and choice."⁷¹ The phrase "the love of God" means grammatically "our love for God."⁷²
 - 3) The Gk. verb translated "has been perfected" is in the perfect tense, i.e., "stands completed."⁷³ This has been translated, "But those who obey God's word truly show how completely they love him" (NLT).
- f. John explained that we know that we are in continuing close fellowship with God when we reproduce the lifestyle of Jesus Christ.
- 1) John used the phrase "in Him" in a slightly different way than Paul.⁷⁴
 - a) For Paul being "in Him" was the position in which we were placed when we received Christ.
 - b) The Gk. word translated "in" is used in John "to designate a close personal relation in which the referent ... is viewed as the controlling influence: *under the control of, under the influence of, in close association with.*"⁷⁵
 - c) Therefore, for John being "in Him" means being in close relationship to Him and is equivalent to abiding in Him.
 - 2) The Gk. word translated "abides" "is a favorite of J[ohn] to denote an inward, enduring personal communion."⁷⁶

- 3) The Gk. word translated "ought" means "to be under obligation to meet certain social or moral expectations."⁷⁷
- 4) The Gk. verb translated "walk" is in the present tense, i.e., "keep on walking."⁷⁸
- 5) Wuest translated, "He who is constantly saying that he as a habit of life is living in close fellowship with and dependence upon Him is morally obligated just as that One conducted himself, also himself in the manner spoken of to be conducting himself" (NTET).
- 6) *The evidence of continuing close fellowship with God is reproducing the lifestyle of Jesus Christ.*

2. The old/new commandment (1 John 2:7–11)

a. The paradox (1 John 2:7–8)

⁷ Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard. ⁸ On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining (1 John 2:7–8).

- 1) In the next two verses, John used a paradox to make his point.⁷⁹
- 2) On one hand, John explained that he was not writing a novel commandment to them, but one that they had heard from the start.

- a) The law said to love fellow Jews, "You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD" (Lev 19:18).
- b) Moreover, the law also said to love strangers, "The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God" (Lev 19:34).
- c) Most of all, the law said to love God, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (Deut 6:5).
- d) Jesus Christ even said something similar:

One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And He said to him, "'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets" (Matt 22:35–40).

- e) *Therefore, in one sense the command to love was nothing new.*

- 3) On the other hand, John explained paradoxically that he was in fact writing a new commandment to them.

- a) Jesus Christ had called it a new commandment, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34).
- b) As Jesus inaugurated the new covenant in fulfillment of Jer 31:31–34, He gave only one stipulation, love. Since the new covenant is a grant covenant, a gracious gift received by faith, the stipulation of love is not a condition to receive it. Love is our response to what we have been freely given.
 - i) This is the law that God puts within us and writes on our heart (Jer 31:34).
 - ii) In addition, love fulfills the law (Rom 13:8–10).
- c) That new commandment is true in Jesus Christ.
 - i) Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).
 - ii) However, Jesus did more than that. He died for His enemies, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8).
 - iii) *Jesus Christ by His sacrificial death is the ultimate example of love.*
- d) It is true in them because, even now, darkness is passing away and the light is beginning to shine.

i) As they walk in the light, God's love shines from them, and darkness is passing away.

ii) *Love is what God wants from us.*

b. Love and hate (1 John 2:9–11)

⁹ The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. ¹⁰ The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. ¹¹ But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes (1 John 2:9–11).

1) Again, John wrote uncompromisingly that the one who claims to be continuously conducting their life openly and responsively in God's light, but habitually hates their fellow Christians is still in the darkness.

a) The Gk. verb translated "is" is in the present tense, i.e., habitual or continual action. This has been translated, "If anyone claims, 'I am living in the light'" (NLT).

b) The Gk. word translated "hates" means "to have a strong aversion to, *hate, detest*."⁸⁰

i) This is a present participle indicating habitual or continual action.⁸¹

ii) This has been translated, "while hating a brother or sister" (NRSV) and, "yet continues to hate" (NTLP).

c) The Gk. word translated "brother" means "a pers[on] viewed as a brother in terms of a close affinity, *brother, fellow member, member, associate*.... one who shares beliefs."⁸²

- i) This has been translated, "other believers" (GW), "his fellow Christian" (NET), or "a Christian brother or sister" (NLT).
 - ii) John clearly directed this warning at believers since only they could hate a fellow brother.
 - iii) It is naïve in the extreme to assume that Christians could never hate each other.⁸³
- 2) However, John stated that the person who habitually loves his fellow believer is continuously conducting their life openly and responsively in God's light.
 - a) The Gk. verb translated "the one who loves" (*agapaō*) means "love, especially of love as based on evaluation and choice, a matter of will and action."⁸⁴
 - i) The verb is a present participle, i.e., "the one who continually expresses loves [*sic*]."⁸⁵
 - ii) Williams translated this, "Whoever continues to love" (NTLP).
 - iii) Wuest translated, "He who is habitually loving his brother [Christian]" (NTET).
 - b) The Gk. word translated "abides" is used in this context "of someone who does not leave a certain realm or sphere."⁸⁶
 - i) In this case, the realm is being in the Light.

- ii) As we saw in 1 John 1:7, walking in the Light does not mean sinless perfection, but conducting one's life openly and responsively to whatever light God shows you.
- c) *The evidence of continuously conducting one's life openly and responsively in God's light is habitually loving one's fellow believers.*
- d) The Gk. word translated "cause for stumbling" (*skandalon*) means literally "a device for catching someth[ing] alive, *trap*," but figuratively "an action or circumstance that leads one to act contrary to a proper course of action or set of beliefs, *temptation to sin, enticement*."⁸⁷
- e) The story is told of

A man who was walking down a dark street one [and] saw a pinpoint of light coming toward him in a faltering way. He thought perhaps the person carrying the light was ill or drunk; but as he drew nearer he could see a man with a flashlight carrying *a white cane*.

"Why would a blind man be carrying a light?" the man wondered, and then he decided to ask. The blind man smiled. "I carry the light, not so *I* can see, but so that *others* can see me. I cannot help being blind," he said, "but I can help being a stumbling block."⁸⁸

- f) *Such a person causes neither himself nor others to stumble.*⁸⁹

3) In first century Rome, there was a conflict between Jewish and Gentile Christians over clean and unclean foods.

- a) Paul was convinced that, since we are no longer living under the Mosaic law, all foods were allowed (Rom 14:14).
- b) However, he wrote the Romans, "If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love.

Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died" (Rom 14:15 NIV).

c) *Yet today, the central question is whether we will learn to love one another, or not.*

4) John indicated that the result of habitually hating one's fellow Christians was living in the darkness, and having no idea where one is going because of being blinded by the darkness.

a) The Gk. verbs translated "hates," "is," "walks," and "is going" are all in the present tense indicating habitual or continual action.⁹⁰

b) The Gk. word translated "has blinded" refers to "God's judgment ... [to] cause someone *not to be able to understand, take away ability to comprehend.*"⁹¹

c) *Those who hate fellow Christians will lack direction and the ability to understand God's word.*⁹²

III. Applications:

A. About Jesus Christ...

1. Jesus Christ died for His friends and His enemies.
2. Jesus Christ by His sacrificial death is the ultimate example of love.

B. What this says to us ...

1. Reality checks concerning claims about spirituality ...
 - a. The evidence of true knowledge of God is not mystical revelations, but persistent obedience.

- b. The evidence of a mature love of God is persistent obedience.
 - c. The evidence of continuing close fellowship with God is reproducing the lifestyle of Jesus Christ.
 - d. The evidence of continuously conducting one's life openly and responsively in God's light is habitually loving one's fellow believers.
2. Warning: Those who hate fellow Christians will lack direction and the ability to understand God's word. They are in serious danger.
 3. Those who love their fellow Christians cause neither themselves nor others to stumble.
 4. Therefore, the question is will we learn to love one another?

FELLOWSHIP WITH LIGHT

AND NOT DARKNESS

(1 JOHN 2:12–26)

By Dr. Hal Harless

Foundation Fellowship of Greenville, TX

June 6, 2010

I. Introduction

A. Please turn to 1 John 2:12.

B. While you are turning.... I would like to share with you an editorial from Internet journalist, Mike Adams. I have omitted some names so that it will be about Mr. Adams' point and not the personalities involved. Mr. Adams wrote:

I cannot imagine why someone would dedicate himself to a religion that provides just one of many equally valid paths to salvation. That's why I was taken aback by my old friend's [*name omitted*] somewhat harsh treatment of a man who called his show some months ago and quoted John 14:6 as evidence that Christianity is the only path to heaven.

Of course, [*name omitted*] isn't a pastor and he tends to do things just to get a rise out of people. So his comments weren't nearly as objectionable as [*name omitted*]'s sidestepping of the "How many paths to heaven?" question on Larry King Live a few years ago.

For those who missed it, [*name omitted*] was asked by Larry whether people had to know Jesus in order to get to heaven. But, for some reason, [*name omitted*] couldn't bring himself to provide the simple answer found in John 14:6. It reads as follows in the NASB translation: "Jesus said to him (Thomas), 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me.'"

Just in case there are any millionaire pastors out there pretending not to get it (because it may hurt their book sales), the point is also made

in John 10:7–9: "So Jesus said to them again, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door; if anyone enters through me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.'"

Just in case anyone read the previous passage as saying, in effect, "I am one of many doors," Matthew 7:13–14 is instructive: "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it"....

And, finally, even the wealthiest of men aspiring to be a man of God (and multi-millionaire best-selling author) cannot possibly be confused after reading Acts 4:12: "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

It should be evident to anyone having only a passing familiarity with the New Testament that [*name omitted*] is simply pretending not to know the answer to the rather direct question posed to him by Larry King. At least two inter-related motives (for his decision to feign ignorance) are rather obvious.

1. [*name omitted*] is getting rich from book sales and is concerned that telling the truth about the exclusive truth claims of Christianity would result in a loss of income. It should go without saying that avoiding the truth results in a loss of souls for Christ. But [*name omitted*] seems to care more about lost income than he does about lost souls.

2. [*name omitted*] has a really big church and is concerned that telling the truth about the exclusive truth claims of Christianity would result in a loss of congregants. Of course, many pastors are overly concerned with the size of their churches. When they gather at conferences, "How big is your church?" is always the question most frequently asked by one pastor to another. And, of course, the bigger churches do tend to be the wealthier ones. It all goes back to the choice between lost souls and lost income.

Clearly, pastors who can't figure out—or pretend to be unable to figure out—the clear meaning of John 14:6 will have some explaining to do when they reach the other side. Much is expected of those entrusted with the awesome responsibility of leading a church.

Perhaps less is expected of the nominal Christian who flippantly dismisses the exclusive truth claims of Christianity. But, regardless, he is wrong to do so for at least two reasons:

1. When people shy away from exclusive truth claims they reinforce a dangerous trend in our society; namely the spread of relativism as a moral philosophy. Nowadays, people so frequently utter the phrase "It's true for you, but not for me" that the words "truth" and "belief" are seen as synonymous. They are not.

2. The moment a nominal Christian denies John 14:6 he becomes an ex-Christian. If a man says that many religions provide a path to salvation he is, in effect, saying that Jesus was not telling the truth when he said otherwise on numerous occasions. If Jesus was not telling the truth then he did not lead a sinless life. If Jesus was not telling the truth he could not be God or even a “great moral leader” as some prefer to call Him.

There is a powerful tendency these days for men to want to appear to be, above all things, tolerant. But G.K. Chesterton said it best when he said that tolerance is the virtue of a man without convictions. It might also be said that tolerance is the virtue of a man without salvation. Every man must choose between Truth and tolerance. He cannot choose both and expect to dine at the Great Supper.⁹³

II. Exposition

A. Background

1. We learned from the introduction to this letter that John's purpose in writing was fellowship.
2. The letter began with a section on fellowship, and we are still in that section.
3. John continues his focus on fellowship in today's passage by explaining those that we as believers do have fellowship with, and those we do not.

B. Exposition: Fellowship with light and not darkness (1 John 2:12–26)

1. Fellowship with John's audience (1 John 2:12–14)
 - a. Little children (1 John 2:12)

¹² I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake (1 John 2:12).

- 1) John was not addressing differing levels of maturity.

- a) If he had been, then the order would be little children, young men, and fathers. Instead, we find little children, fathers, and young men.
 - b) John addressed his entire audience as "little children (1 John 2:1, 18, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21).
 - c) Therefore, it is likely that John intended to address his entire audience from various points of view.⁹⁴
- 2) John, viewing his audience as "little children," notes that their "sins have been forgiven."
- a) Phillips paraphrased, "I write this letter to you all, as my dear children" (NTME).
 - b) The Gk. verb translated "I am writing" is in the present tense, and refers to this letter.⁹⁵
 - c) The Gk. verb translated "have been forgiven" is in the perfect tense, i.e., "have been forgiven with the result that they are forgiven."⁹⁶
 - i) Wuest translated, "your sins have been put away for you permanently" (NTET).
 - ii) *This is the minimal experience of all of God's children, even the very little ones: their sins have been and are still forgiven.*

3) "For His name's sake"—The name refers to the person in Middle Eastern thought.

a) Peter preached to Cornelius' household, "Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins" (Acts 10:43).

b) As Peter told the Sanhedrin, "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

b. Fathers (1 John 2:13a)

I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning (1 John 2:13a).

1) John's audience, viewed as fathers, has a personal knowledge of God.

a) The Gk. verb translated "know" is in the perfect tense, i.e., "have come to know in such a way as to continue to know."⁹⁷

b) Wuest translates this as, "because you have come to know experientially the One who is from the beginning, and as a present result are possessors of that knowledge" (NTET).

2) "Him who has been from the beginning"—God as creator.

a) John may be aiming this at the proto-Gnostics who often taught that the creator was not the highest god because matter was evil.

b) *John's audience has a mature relational knowledge of God.*

c. Young men (1 John 2:13b)

I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one (1 John 2:13b).

1) Viewed as young men, John's readers, have defeated the evil one.

a) The Gk. verb translated "overcome" is in the perfect tense.⁹⁸

b) Wuest translates, "you have gained the victory over the Pernicious One and as a present result are victorious over him" (NTET).

2) *John's audience knows how to and has defeated Satan. They will need this strength to battle the deceptions confronting them.*

d. Children (1 John 2:13c)

I have written to you, children, because you know the Father (1 John 2:13c).

1) John's audience, viewed as children, also knows their Father.

a) John in writing, "I have written to you," switched from the present tense to the past tense. This probably refers to the Gospel of John.⁹⁹

b) The Gk. verb translated "know" is in the perfect tense. Wuest translates, "you have come to know the Father experientially, with the present result that you are possessors of that knowledge" (NTET).

2) *As children, John's readers know their Father.*

e. Fathers (1 John 2:14a)

I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning (1 John 2:14a).

1) This essentially repeats 1 John 2:13a.

2) Only the tense of "I have written" has changed.

f. Young men (1 John 2:14b)

I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one (1 John 2:14b).

1) John's readers, viewed as young men, have three characteristics: they are strong; God's word abides in them; and they have defeated the evil one (see 1 John 2:13b).

a) Their strength comes from God. Paul writes, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might" (Eph 6:10).

b) This has been translated, "the word of God lives in you" (NIV).

2) *These strengths are critical in their battle with the world and the antichrists.*

2. No fellowship with darkness (1 John 2:15–26)

a. Do not love the world (1 John 2:15–17).

1) Because of what the world is (1 John 2:15a)

^{15a} **Do not love the world nor the things in the world (1 John 2:15a).**

- a) John warned us to stop setting our hearts on a world-system that is at war with God.
 - i) In keeping with the Gk. grammar, Williams translated this, "Stop loving the world" (NTLP).¹⁰⁰
 - ii) "Love" (*agapaō*) means "to have high esteem for or satisfaction with someth[ing], *take pleasure in*."¹⁰¹
 - iii) "World" (*kosmos*) means "morally, mankind as alienated from God, unredeemed and hostile to him."¹⁰²
 - iv) Wuest translated, "Stop considering the world precious with the result that you love it" (NTET).
- b) *The first reason that the believer must not love the world-system is that it is an evil system arrayed against God.*¹⁰³

2) Because of what the world does to us (1 John 2:15b)

^{15b} If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him (1 John 2:15a).

- a) This world-system arranges itself against God, and, if we love it, we do not love God.
 - i) The Gk. verb translated "loves" is in the present tense indicating continual or habitual action. Wuest translated, "If anyone as a habit of life is considering the world precious and is therefore loving it" (NTET).
 - ii) The Gk. phrase translated "love of the Father" has been translated as "love for the Father" (HCSB).¹⁰⁴

(a) Jesus warned, "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and wealth" (Luke 16:13).

(b) James warned, "Do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (Jas 4:4).

b) *The second reason that the believer must not love the world-system is that love for the world-system robs us of love for God.*

3) Because the world does not have God as its source (1 John 2:16)

¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world (1 John 2:16).

a) "All that is in the world"

i) Phillips paraphrased "world" as "world-system" (NTME).

ii) This is an exhaustive accounting of the things in the world-system.¹⁰⁵

b) The Gk. word translated "lust" means "unrestrained desire for something forbidden *lust, craving, evil desire,*" or "a desire for someth[ing] forbidden or simply inordinate, *craving.*"¹⁰⁶

i) The term flesh refers to our sinful nature.¹⁰⁷

(a) The Gk. word translated "flesh" is used "in an ethical sense ... as a sinful and sensual power tending toward sin and opposing the Spirit's working."¹⁰⁸

(b) Williams translated it "lower nature" (NTLP), and Wuest translated it as "the flesh [the totally depraved nature]" (NTET).

(c) Therefore, "lust of the flesh" includes unrestrained sensuality.¹⁰⁹

ii) "Lust of the eyes" includes unrestrained craving for that which appeals to us visually.

c) The Gk. word translated "boastful pride of life" means "*pretension, arrogance in word and deed ... pride in one's possessions.*"¹¹⁰

i) This has been translated, "the pride in one's lifestyle" (HCSB).

ii) The ancient Gk. philosopher, Theophrastus (c. BC 371–287), caricatured this sort of person using this same Gk. word:

[This] is the kind of person who will stand on the [sea-wall] and tell perfect strangers what a lot of money he has at sea, and discourse of his investments, how large they are, and what gains and losses he has made, and as he spins his yarns he will send his boy to the bank—his balance being a shilling. If he enjoys company on the road, he is apt to tell how he served with Alexander the Great, how he got on with him, and how many jeweled cups he brought home; and to discuss the Asiatic craftsmen, how much better they are than any in Europe—never having been away from

Athens. He will say ... that during the corn-shortage he spent more than fifteen hundred pounds in gifts to needy citizens. He will be living in a rented house, and will tell anyone who does not know the facts that this is the family residence, but he is going to sell it because it is too small for his entertainments.¹¹¹

d) These things are the world-system that is arranged against God.

i) All of these things are not "from ([ek], denoting 'of the source, fr[om] which someth[ing] flows or comes') the Father."¹¹²

ii) Wuest translated that this "is not from the Father as a source but is from the world as a source" (NTET).

iii) God is not the source of these things.

iv) *The third reason that the believer must not love the world-system is that all it contains does not have its source in God as the believer's life does.*

4) Because the world is temporary (1 John 2:17)

¹⁷ The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever (1 John 2:17).

a) John wanted his readers' focus to be on the things that are permanent, not those that are temporary.

i) "The world is passing away"—This world-system is temporary and is even now passing away.

ii) The Gk. verb translated "is passing away" is a present tense.

- b) John contrasts the transitoriness of the world-system with the person who does God's will.
 - i) The Gk. verb translated "does" is in the present tense.
 - ii) The Gk. word translated "lives" means "an inward, enduring personal communion."¹¹³
 - iii) The world-system is passing away, but God's reward is forever.
 - iv) *The fourth reason that the believer must not love the world-system is that it is temporary and will be replaced by the kingdom of God.*

b. Antichrist and antichrists (1 John 2:18–26)

1) Depart from the fellowship (1 John 2:18–19)

¹⁸ Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. ¹⁹ They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us (1 John 2:18–19).

- a) John addressed his entire audience as little children warning them that it is the last hour.
 - i) This was not the actual age of his audience
 - ii) This was a term of endearment from the aging apostle.
- b) How could John have said that "it is the last hour" two thousand years ago?

- i) Peter predicted "that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation'" (2 Peter 3:3–4).
 - ii) Jesus warned, "For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will" (Matt 24:44).
 - iii) The early Christians took seriously the teaching that Jesus could return at any moment.
 - iv) *They were living in the last hour, and so are we. We have been for two thousand years.*
- c) John explained that, although the antichrist is coming, many antichrists have already appeared.
- i) There will appear on the world-stage an individual called the Antichrist.
 - (a) The Gk. word translated "antichrist" (*antichristos*) is a compound of *anti* and *Christos* ("Christ").
 - (i) The Gk. word *anti* originally meant "opposite," but it also means "indicating that one person or thing is, or is to be, replaced by another, *instead of, in place of.*"¹¹⁴

(ii) Therefore, the Antichrist is both the opponent of
and the one who tries to replace Christ.¹¹⁵

(b) Jesus said that many would come claiming to be the Christ or Messiah (Matt 24:5, 15; Mark 13:6). He called them "false Christs" (*pseudochristoi*) (Matt 24:24; Mark 13:21–22).

(c) Paul called him the "man of lawlessness" who takes his seat in the temple claiming to be God (2 Thess 2:3–12).

(d) In Revelation, John called him the Beast (Rev 13:1–10; 16:10).

(e) In the OT, Daniel also called him a beast and a little horn (Dan 7:8–11).

(f) *Nothing that John wrote here in any way diminishes the clear Scriptural testimony to this coming evil person.*

ii) However, John wrote that, although there is an actual coming antichrist, that presently there are many antichrists.

(a) In John's day, it was the Cerinthian Gnostics, Jewish opponents, and false messiahs.

- (b) Today, we still have many cults and isms. Some arise and claim to be Christ; others deny His divine nature.
 - (c) There are even some so-called evangelicals who, to gain favor with Jewish people, deny that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah.¹¹⁶
 - (d) *Moreover, John said that we know from the appearance of these antichrists that it really is the last hour.*
- d) John noted twice that those antichrists had departed from Christian fellowships.
- i) Paul warned the Ephesian elders that "from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts 20:30).
 - ii) James used the same words to describe the legalists that the Jerusalem church and the apostles were repudiating, "We have heard that some *went out from us* without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said" (Acts 15:24 NIV, emphasis mine).
- e) John explained that the antichrists were never really part of the fellowship, or they would have remained.¹¹⁷
- i) This is a second-class condition in Gk., i.e., if-and-it-is-not-the-case.¹¹⁸

ii) However, their departure demonstrated that they were not truly part of the fellowship.¹¹⁹

iii) Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you" (1 Cor 11:19).

f) *The first characteristic of false teachers is that they depart from the fellowship.*¹²⁰

2) Deny the faith (1 John 2:20–23)

²⁰ But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. ²¹ I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth. ²² Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. ²³ Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also (1 John 2:20–23).

a) John wrote that his readers as true Christians had an anointing from God that enabled them to discern truth from falsehood.

i) The Gk. word translated "anointing" is from the same Gk. verb as "Christ" ("the Anointed One").

ii) John was making a pun with a point; they were able to discern the anti-anointed ones because, as little anointed ones, they had received an anointing from the Anointed One.¹²¹ That anointing is the Holy Spirit.¹²²

- (a) Paul wrote, "Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge" (2 Cor 1:21–22).
 - (b) Jesus also said, "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth" (John 16:13).
- iii) The translation "you know all things" (NKJV), or "ye know all things" (Darby, KJV, Webster) is incorrect.
- (a) Paul indicated that the state of complete knowledge is still future, "Now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known" (1 Cor 13:12).
 - (b) The better way to understand this verse is, "But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth" (NIV), or "all of you have the capacity to know [spiritual truth]" (NTET).¹²³
- b) John explained that his reason for writing was not that they did not know the truth. Instead, it was precisely because they knew the truth that John wrote them to avoid lies since they do not have their source in the truth.
- c) John asked rhetorically who the quintessential liar was if not the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ.

- i) The use of the article "the" indicates the liar "*par excellence*."¹²⁴
- ii) This denial refers to two groups in John's day: non-Messianic Jews who denied that the man, Yeshua from Nazareth, was the Messiah; and Cerinthian Gnostics who taught that the Christ came upon Jesus at His baptism, and left Him on the cross.¹²⁵
- iii) John labeled this person an antichrist, and stated that they did not just deny the Son, but also the Father.
- d) John elaborated negatively that denying the Son means that you had no relationship with the Father.
 - i) Jesus said, "He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him" (John 5:23).
 - ii) The reason for this is, as Jesus said, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30).
- e) John reiterated positively that confessing the Son means also having a relationship with the Father.
- f) *The second characteristic of false teachers is that they deny the faith.*

3) Deceive the believers (1 John 2:24–26)

²⁴ **As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.** ²⁵ **This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life.** ²⁶ **These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you (1 John 2:24–26).**

- a) John charged them to keep what they have been taught from their conversion.
- b) John promised them that, if they did, they would have an enduring personal communion with both the Son and the Father.
- c) The Gk. word translated "abide" means "inward, enduring personal communion."¹²⁶
 - i) John explained that this promise came from Jesus Himself, and is really experiencing eternal life.
 - ii) Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).
- d) John explained that he had written because there were those who were trying to deceive them.
 - i) Paul warned, "But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons" (1 Tim 4:1).
 - ii) The lost are already in Satan's camp, and he is not overly concerned about them. However, believers are a threat to him, and he desperately wants to neutralize them.
 - iii) *The third characteristic of false teachers is that they try to deceive believers.*

III. Applications:

A. Believers must not love the world-system because ...

1. The first reason that the believer must not love the world-system is that it is an evil system arrayed against God.
2. The second reason that the believer must not love the world-system is that love for the world-system robs us of love for God.
3. The third reason that the believer must not love the world-system is that all it contains does not have its source in God as the believer's life does.
4. The fourth reason that the believer must not love the world-system is that it is temporary and will be replaced by the kingdom of God.

B. The characteristics of false teachers ...

1. The first characteristic of false teachers is that they depart from the fellowship.
2. The second characteristic of false teachers is that they deny the faith.
3. The third characteristic of false teachers is that they try to deceive believers.

ABIDING IN CHRIST

(1 JOHN 2:27–3:10)

By Dr. Hal Harless

Foundation Fellowship of Greenville, TX

June 13, 2010

I. Introduction

A. Please turn to 1 John 2:27.

While you are turning.... George Sweeting tells the story:

In an Italian city stands a statue of a Grecian maiden with a beautiful face, a graceful figure, and a noble expression. One day a poor little peasant girl came face-to-face with the statue. She stood and stared and then went home to wash her face and comb her hair. The next day she came again to stand before the statue and then to return home once more. This time she mended her tattered clothing. Day by day she changed, her form grew more graceful and her face more refined, until she greatly reflected the famous statue. She was transformed in appearance!¹²⁷

Paul wrote, "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit" (2 Cor 3:18).

II. Exposition

A. Background

1. John's emphasis has been on the subject of fellowship.
2. However, in this section (1 John 2:27–4:21), John's emphasis becomes abiding.

- a. John had mentioned earlier an anointing (Gk. *charisma*) that enabled believers to discern truth (1 John 2:20); now, John picked up that theme again and united it with the theme of abiding in Christ.
- b. As we have seen before, the Gk. word translated "abide" "is a favorite of J[ohn] to denote an inward, enduring personal communion."¹²⁸
- c. Abiding is a major theme in 1 John; the Gk. word translated "abide" is used twenty-four times in 1 John, second only to John's Gospel (forty times).¹²⁹
 - 1) Although John has used the Gk. word translated "abide" eight times in 1 John 2:6–24¹³⁰, and three of those were in 1 John 2:24, he will use it sixteen times in this section, twice in this first verse.¹³¹
 - 2) Therefore, in this section, John addressed the subject of abiding, and the first abiding that he wrote of was abiding in Christ.¹³²

B. Exposition: Abiding (1 John 2:27–4:21)— Abiding in Christ (1 John 2:27–3:10)

1. Christ's anointing teaches you to abide in Him (1 John 2:27).

²⁷ **As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him (1 John 2:27).**

- a. God's anointing teaches us.

- 1) The anointing that enables believers to learn and discern truth must refer to the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:20).
 - a) Paul wrote, "Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge." (2 Cor 1:21–22).
 - b) That anointing, God's Holy Spirit, abides with us and we cannot lose it.
 - c) Jesus promised that "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you" (John 14:26).
- 2) Taken absolutely it would be hard to understand John statement that "you have no need for anyone to teach you" since he wrote them in order to teach them!¹³³
 - a) This may be a polite figure of speech.
 - b) King Agrippa wrote to Josephus:

King Agrippa to Josephus, his dear friend, sendeth greeting. It seems by what thou hast written, that thou standest in need of no instruction, in order to our information from the beginning. However, when thou comest to me, I will inform thee of a great many things which thou dost not know.¹³⁴

- c) Phillips paraphrased, "Yet I know that the touch of his Spirit never leaves you, and you don't really need a human teacher" (NTME).

- 3) However, even though God gifts some to be "pastors and teachers" (Eph 4:11), individual Christians are indeed able with the Holy Spirit's help to understand Scriptures for themselves.
 - 4) They certainly do not need the false teachers to explain the true nature of things to them.
- b. The anointing teaches us to abide in Christ.
- 1) This has been translated, "But you have received the Holy Spirit, and he lives within you, so you don't need anyone to teach you what is true. For the Spirit teaches you everything you need to know, and what he teaches is true—it is not a lie. So just as he has taught you, remain in fellowship with Christ" (NLT).
 - 2) *The first reason to maintain an inward, enduring, personal communion with Christ is that the Holy Spirit teaches us to do so.*
2. Confidence at Christ's coming (1 John 2:28–3:3)
- a. Abiding in Christ leads to confidence, not shame (1 John 2:28).
- ²⁸ Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming (1 John 2:28).**
- 1) John introduced an important sub-theme of discerning the true nature of people.
 - a) The Gk. word translated "appears" means "to cause to become visible, *reveal, expose publicly....* to cause to become known, *disclose, show, make known.*"¹³⁵

- b) It is translated as "appears," "appeared," and the adjective form as "obvious."
 - c) 1 John is tied with John's Gospel and 2 Corinthians for the most uses of this Gk. word (nine times).¹³⁶ However, since 1 John is smaller than these other books, it has the highest percentage of this Gk. word in the entire Bible.
 - d) Of 1 John's nine uses, six are in this section on abiding, and five of those are in this passage.¹³⁷
 - e) Therefore, John was interested in explaining how spiritual states may be made evident.
- 2) John exhorted his readers to maintain an inward, enduring, personal communion with Christ so that, when He comes for His Church, we can be confident, rather than ashamed of the life that we have been living.
- a) John employed a pun between "confidence" (Gk. *parrēsia*) and "coming" (Gk. *parousia*). John promised that, if they maintained an inward, enduring, personal communion with Christ, they would have *parrēsia* at the *parousia*, or "confidence" at the "coming."
 - b) Williams translated this, "unshaken confidence: (NTLP).
 - c) This idea is echoed again in 1 John 4:17 forming an *inclusio* of this section on abiding.¹³⁸

d) *Therefore, the second reason to maintain an inward, enduring, personal communion with Christ is so that we might have confidence when He returns for us.*

b. The evidence of being a child of God (1 John 2:29)

²⁹ If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him (1 John 2:29).

1) John pointed out that God is righteous, and, therefore, we can know that persons who do righteousness are born of God since they are displaying God's nature.

a) John used two different Gk. words for "know" in this verse.

i) The first Gk. word translated "know" is used of "having come to a perception or realization of something *know, understand, comprehend.*"¹³⁹

ii) The second Gk. word translated "know" (*ginōskō*) is used "of certainty gained through experience."¹⁴⁰

iii) Wuest translated, "If you know in an absolute manner that He is righteous, you know experientially that everyone who habitually does this aforementioned righteousness [which God is], out from Him has been born" (NTET).

b) John explained that we have evidence that someone has been born of God when we experience them displaying God's nature.

- 2) Nevertheless, John does not say that, if we do not see someone displaying God's righteousness, then that person is not born of God. In that case, we simply do not know.¹⁴¹

c. The honor of being a child of God (1 John 3:1)

^{3:1} See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him (1 John 3:1).

- 1) John asked us to take note of the honor that God the Father has given us in calling us His children.
- 2) Moreover, it is not merely an honorary title; we are, in fact, the children of God!
- 3) The Gk. word translated "world" (*kosmos*) refers to an organized system that is hostile to God.
- 4) However, the world-system does not recognize us as the children of God any more than it recognized Jesus as the Son of God.

d. The revelation of the children of God (1 John 3:2–3)

² Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure (1 John 2:28–3:3).

- 1) There is always a tension in the Christian life between the already and the not yet. John said that we are already the children of God, but we have not yet been displayed as such in glory.

- a) The Gk. word translated "appeared" and "appears" means to reveal or expose publicly.
 - b) When we see Jesus Christ revealed publicly, we will be glorified physically as He is.
 - i) Paul wrote, "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known" (1 Cor 13:12).
 - ii) Again, Paul wrote, "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself" (Phil 3:20–21).
- 2) John wrote that the practical value to the doctrine of the imminent return of Christ is that it leads one to purity.
- a) The Gk. words translated "has" and "purifies" are present tense verbs, expressing continual action.
 - b) Wuest translated this, "And everyone who has this hope continually set on Him is constantly purifying himself just as that One is pure" (NTET).
 - c) The Gk. word translated "hope" means "the looking forward to someth[ing] with some reason for confidence respecting fulfillment, *hope, expectation*."¹⁴²

3. The revelation of the children of God and the children of the Devil (1 John 3:4–10)

a. Sin and the Savior (1 John 3:4–5)

⁴ Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. ⁵ You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin (1 John 3:4–5).

- 1) John equates sin and lawlessness.
- 2) The Gk. word translated "lawlessness" means "*lawless deeds, which originate in a lawless frame of mind.... the product of a lawless disposition,*" or "*contempt and violation of law, iniquity, wickedness.*"¹⁴³
- 3) *John also pointed out that Jesus Christ's mission was to take away sin, and that Jesus was sinless.*
 - a) The Gk. word translated "appeared" means to reveal or expose publicly.
 - b) Jesus came on the public scene to take away sin.¹⁴⁴
 - i) John the Baptist said of Jesus, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).
 - ii) He did so by dying to pay the legal debt that we owed for our sin.

b. Sin and abiding (1 John 3:6)

⁶ No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him (1 John 3:6).

- 1) John concluded logically that maintaining an inward, enduring, personal communion with Christ is incompatible with sinning.

- a) The Gk. words translated "abides" and "sins" are present tense verbs.¹⁴⁵
 - b) Wuest translated, "Everyone who in Him is constantly abiding is not habitually sinning" (NTET).
 - c) Peterson paraphrased, "No one who lives deeply in Christ makes a practice of sin" (Message).
 - d) *John was making a statement about that person's spiritual condition, not their salvation.*
- 2) John continued by noting that those who are sinning are not looking at Jesus and not continuing in close relationship with Him.
- a) The Gk. word translated "has seen" means "to be mentally or spiritually perceptive."¹⁴⁶
 - b) The Gk. verbs translated "has seen" and "knows" are in the perfect tense, a past action with results in the present.
 - i) Wuest translated, "Everyone who is constantly sinning has not with discernment seen Him, nor has he known Him, with the result that that condition is true of him at present" (NTET).
 - ii) Peterson paraphrased, "None of those who do practice sin have taken a good look at Christ. They've got him all backwards" (Message).

iii) *John did not deny their past experience, but he did question the present reality.*¹⁴⁷

iv) Hodges commented that "we should therefore not read [this] ... as though these words implied a *never*. They do not. John simply means that when a person **sins**, at that point he has acted in blindness and ignorance of God."¹⁴⁸

c) *Again, John was making a statement about their spiritual condition, not their salvation.*

c. The source of righteousness is Christ (1 John 3:7).

⁷ Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous (1 John 3:7).

1) John reiterated the principle that he had stated in 2:29 that righteous actions give evidence of a righteous nature.

2) Then he added that the righteousness displayed corresponds to the righteousness of Christ.

3) *In other words, Christ is the Source of the righteous nature that produces righteous actions.*

d. The source of sin is Satan (1 John 3:8).

⁸ the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).

1) However, John explained that sin shows that one's source is the devil.

- a) The Gk. word translated "of" refers to "the source, fr[om] which someth[ing] flows or comes."¹⁴⁹
- b) Wuest translated, "out of the devil as a source" (NTET).
- c) Jesus once rebuked Peter saying, "Get behind Me, Satan!" (Matt 16:23).
- d) Hodges explained, "Thus, in this context, to be **of the devil** means 'to be doing the devil's work.'"¹⁵⁰
- e) John noted that Satan was the original sinner in the universe (see Isa 14:12–15; Ezek 28:11–15).

2) Moreover, Jesus Christ appeared to destroy Satan's works.

- a) The Gk. word translated "appeared" means to reveal or expose publicly.
- b) *Jesus Christ came on the public scene to destroy Satan's works.*

e. God's sinless seed (1 John 3:9)

⁹ No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God (1 John 3:9).

- 1) John states that the new creature that we are does not sin, indeed, cannot sin because it has God's own nature.
 - a) Again, the Gk. word translated "of" refers to "the source, fr[om] which someth[ing] flows or comes."¹⁵¹
 - b) The Gk. word translated "seed" means "genetic character, *nature, disposition, character.*"¹⁵²

- i) Grammatically, "cannot sin" and "is born of God" refer to the "seed" since the pronoun "he" is not in the Gk.
 - ii) Williams translated this as, "the God-given life-principle" (NTLP).¹⁵³
 - iii) Peter wrote that we were born "of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God" (1 Pet 1:23).
 - iv) As James said, "In humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls" (Jas 1: 21).
- c) *Therefore, the third reason to maintain an inward, enduring, personal communion with Christ is that it is in keeping with who we really are.*
- 2) The word "practices" (NASB), "continue" (NIV), or "makes a practice of" (ESV) are attempts to resolve the apparent contradiction between 1 John 1:8–10 and 3:9.
- a) However, if we sin daily, how is that different from sinning habitually? How much sin would be too much?
 - b) Besides John was not saying that the seed of God cannot sin much; he was saying that the seed "cannot sin."¹⁵⁴
 - c) John is not contradicting what he said in 1 John 1:8–10.
 - i) *He was not ignoring here the fact that we have an old sin nature, but he was pointing out that sin's source is never from our new nature.*

- ii) Paul experienced this struggle between his old and new natures. He concluded, "But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me" (Rom 7:20).
- d) When we sin, we are acting contrary to what we really are as children of God with a new nature from Him, and we conceal rather than manifest our true nature.¹⁵⁵
- f. Spiritual parentage is revealed by behavior (1 John 3:10).

¹⁰ By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother (1 John 3:10).

- 1) John concluded that the children of God and the children of the devil become apparent by observing their behavior.
 - a) The Gk. word translated "obvious" is from the verb "appears".
 - b) It does not say that the "who does not practice righteousness" is not born "of God"! Instead, it says, "is not of God." The translation, "Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God" (NIV) is simply wrong.
- 2) John explains that the one who does not do righteousness nor love his brother does not have God as the Source of their behavior.¹⁵⁶
 - a) Again, the Gk. word translated "of" refers to "the source, fr[om] which someth[ing] flows or comes."¹⁵⁷

- b) Hodges explained, "He **is not of God** in the sense that God is not behind what he is doing. He is not on God's side. He is doing the devil's work and not God's work."¹⁵⁸
- i) This is not about salvation, but the source of one's behavior.
- ii) After all, only a true Christian can fail to love his brother.
- c) *The fourth reason to maintain an inward, enduring, personal communion with Christ is that it demonstrates publicly that you are a child of God.*

III. Applications:

A. Jesus Christ ...

1. Jesus Christ is sinless.
2. Jesus Christ is the Source of the righteous nature that produces righteous actions.
3. Jesus Christ's mission was to take away sin.
4. Jesus Christ came on the public scene to destroy Satan's works.
5. Jesus Christ is coming again for His Church.

B. We should abide in Christ ...

1. The first reason to maintain an inward, enduring, personal communion with Christ is that the Holy Spirit teaches us to do so.
2. Therefore, the second reason to maintain an inward, enduring, personal communion with Christ is so that we might have confidence when He returns for us.

3. Therefore, the third reason to maintain an inward, enduring, personal communion with Christ is that it is in keeping with who we really are.
4. The fourth reason to maintain an inward, enduring, personal communion with Christ is that it demonstrates publicly that you are a child of God.

ABIDING IN LOVE

(1 JOHN 3:11-24)

By Dr. Hal Harless

Foundation Fellowship of Greenville, TX

June 20, 2010

I. Introduction

A. Please turn to 1 John 3:11.

While you are turning....

London held its breath in June 1987. While working on a building site, a construction foreman thought his workers had hit a cast iron pipe while using a pile driver. After picking up and then dropping the huge object, they realized the pipe strangely resembled a bomb.

It was—a 2,200-pound World War II bomb, one of the largest the Germans dropped during the blitz, which killed more than fifteen thousand Londoners. After evacuating the area, a ten-man bomb disposal unit worked eighteen hours before finally deactivating the seven-foot device.

Hatred is like an unexploded bomb. Unless it's deactivated it can detonate and cause great damage.¹⁵⁹

There are people today walking around with hatred in their heart just like an unexploded bomb. Take for example this classified ad:

Wedding dress for sale, never worn.
Will trade for .38 caliber pistol.¹⁶⁰

Today's passage is just such a life and death matter. John wrote explaining the experience of abiding death because of hate, and the experience of life because of abiding in God's love.

II. Exposition

A. Background

1. We are in a section (1 John 2:27–4:21) where John's emphasis is on abiding, maintaining an inward, enduring, personal, close communion.
2. Last week John spoke of abiding in Christ and the confidence that can give us at the return of Christ for the Church.
3. This week, John will explain abiding in love and the confidence that we can have in prayer because of it.

B. Exposition: Abiding (1 John 2:27–4:21)—Abiding in love (1 John 3:11–24)

1. Love one another (1 John 3:11–18).

- a. Love is not (1 John 3:11–13)

- 1) Brotherly ... hate (1 John 3:11–12)

¹¹ For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; ¹² not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous (1 John 3:11–12).

- a) In this section, John explained that we are to abide in love.
- b) He began by reminding his readers that it has always been part of the Christian message to love one another.
 - i) Jesus Christ said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34–35).

- ii) The Gk. word translated "love" (*agapaō*) is the highest love, *agapē* love, and is in the present tense indicating habitual or continual action.¹⁶¹
- iii) Wuest translated, "We should habitually be loving one another with a divine and self-sacrificial love" (NTET).
- c) First, John gave us two examples of what love is not.¹⁶²
- d) We might expect love from a brother. However, in his first counter example, John contrasted the Christian message with Cain's behavior toward his brother Abel.
 - i) The account is in Gen 4:3–15.
 - ii) As we have seen, the Gk. word translated "of" refers to "the source, fr[om] which someth[ing] flows or comes."¹⁶³
 - iii) John explained that Cain was from the source of the evil one because he killed his brother.
 - iv) The Gk. word translated "slew" means "slaughter" (NAB).¹⁶⁴ Williams translated this word as "butchered" (NTLP).
 - v) John elaborated that Cain killed his brother because of religious jealousy.¹⁶⁵
 - vi) *Clearly, brothers can hate each other. Hatred can even have a religious motivation.*

2) The world's hatred (1 John 3:13)

¹³ **Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you (1 John 3:13).**

a) John provided us with a second counter example in the world-system's hatred of believers.

i) Grammatically, John said to stop being surprised.¹⁶⁶

ii) This is also a first-class condition, i.e., if-and-it-is-the case.

iii) Wuest translated, "Stop marveling, brethren, if, as is the case, the world hates you" (NTET).

b) As we have seen, in John's thinking the "world" (*kosmos*) is the world-system arranged against God.

i) Jesus said, "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you" (John 15:18–19).

c) *John said that we should not be surprised by hatred from the world-system; brotherly hatred is the real aberration.*¹⁶⁷

d) Significantly, John addressed them as brothers here for the only time in this letter.

i) Hodges commented:

The proposition that no true Christian could possibly hate another Christian is so unrealistic on its face that it is astounding that this is often maintained in regard to the text before us. Nothing John says here gives the slightest support to this view. Its proponents are reduced to saying that **his brother** must really mean something like "his purported brother." However, this is nothing but reading *into* the text what one wishes the text to say.¹⁶⁸

ii) Brotherly hatred is a sad, terribly, destructive aberration.

Nevertheless, it is possible, and that is the reason that John warns about it.

(a) King David had Uriah the Hittite murdered after committing adultery with his wife, Bathsheba (2 Sam 12:9).

(b) Peter warned his fellow Christians, "Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer" (1 Pet 4:15).

iii) *Only a Christian can hate his brother; a non-Christian is not his brother.*

b. Love is (1 John 3:14–18)

1) Abiding in life, not in death (1 John 3:14–15)

¹⁴ We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. ¹⁵ Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him (1 John 3:14–15).

a) John then explained what love is.

b) He said that we could perceive that we have transferred from death to life when we love our brothers. This is the "proof of this transition, not the ground of it."¹⁶⁹

- c) John said that the one who does not love abides in death.
 - i) This is not the same as saying that person is unsaved.
 - (a) The verb "abides" is a present tense verb, and describes that person's present state.
 - (b) As we have seen, the Gk. word translated "abides" "is a favorite of J[ohn] to denote an inward, enduring personal communion."¹⁷⁰
 - (c) The little preposition translated "in" can be translated "in," "with," or "by."
 - ii) *Therefore, John said that the person who does not love is still abiding all right. That person has an inward, enduring, personal communion ... with death!*¹⁷¹
- d) John stated that everyone who hates his brother is a murderer.
 - i) John echoed Jesus in this:

You have heard that the ancients were told, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER" and "Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court." ²² But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, "You good-for-nothing," shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, "You fool," shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell (Matt 5:21–22).

- ii) John added that no murderer has an inward, enduring, personal communion with eternal life.
 - (a) These verbs are all present tenses.
 - (b) John is not saying that hatred causes one to lose salvation.

(c) *However, hatred is incompatible with a present, deep, inward, continuing experience of God's life.*

2) Following Jesus' example (1 John 3:16)

¹⁶ We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren (1 John 3:16).

a) John states that we know love because Jesus Christ gave His life for us.

i) The Gk. word translated "know" is used "of certainty gained through experience."¹⁷²

ii) The verb is in the perfect tense, "we have come to know and still know."¹⁷³

iii) Wuest translated, "We have come to know by experience" (NTET).

iv) The Gk. word translated "life" (*psychē*) means "the derivative existence of all living creatures, including human beings *life-principle, physical life* ... earthly existence in contrast to supernatural existence *life, natural life, one's life on earth.*"¹⁷⁴

v) Jesus said, "I lay down My life" (John 10:17).

(a) The Gk. word translated "for" (*hyper*) means "*in behalf of ... in place of, instead of.*"¹⁷⁵

(b) Paul wrote, "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8).

(c) *This speaks of Christ's substitutionary atonement; He died in our place.*

b) Therefore, we have an obligation to follow His example and lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

i) The Gk. word translated "ought" means "to be under obligation to meet certain social or moral expectations."¹⁷⁶

ii) Wuest translated, "We have a moral obligation" (NTET).

iii) The Gk. words translated "lives" and "for" are the same as were used of Christ's sacrifice.

iv) *Following Christ's example, we are obligated to give up our lives in behalf of our Christian brothers and sisters.*

3) Love is practical (1 John 3:17–18).

¹⁷ But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? ¹⁸ Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth (1 John 3:17–18).

a) John, knowing that the opportunity to lay down our physical lives may not occur, brought up sharing our goods with a brother in need.

i) Wiersbe commented, "But the test of Christian love is not simply failure to do *evil* to others. Love also involves doing them *good*."¹⁷⁷

ii) The Gk. word translated "goods" (*bios*) means "resources needed to maintain life, *means of subsistence*."¹⁷⁸

- iii) Williams translated, "But if anyone has the world's means of supporting life" (NTLP).
 - iv) *Sharing with other Christians things that sustain life is a way of laying down our lives.*¹⁷⁹
- b) John asked, assuming you harden your heart against such valid needs, how God's love is a deep, inward experience in your life? The expected answer is negative.
- i) The Gk. word translated "closes" means "to prevent passage at an opening, *shut, lock, bar.*"¹⁸⁰ A barrier is secured against natural human compassion.¹⁸¹
 - ii) The Gk. word translated "how" is used "in rhetorical questions that call an assumption into question or reject it altogether."¹⁸²
 - iii) Grammatically, the phrase "the love of God" means either "love from God," or "God's sort of love."¹⁸³
 - iv) *If we will not lift a finger to meet a practical need, then we certainly will not give our life for others!*
- c) John urged his "little children" to love, not with words and speech only, but in deeds and truth.
- i) This has been translated, "Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions" (NLT).

ii) Williams translated this, "let us stop loving with words or lips alone" (NTLP).

iii) Words can lie, actions tell the truth, or, as we say in Texas, "Talk is cheap."

iv) *John wanted our love to be practical, not merely verbal.*

2. Confidence in prayer (1 John 3:19–22)

a. Assurance and the condemning heart (1 John 3:19–20)

¹⁹ We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him ²⁰ in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things (1 John 3:19–20).

1) John said that we could be assured that we truly love the brothers and sisters by our actions.

a) When we go to God in prayer, our heart may condemn us because we fall so far short of the love that Christ showed.

i) The word "heart" has been translated "conscience" (GW, NET).

(a) Conscience is fallible.

(b) Sometimes our conscience will accuse us when we are guiltless and forgiven by God.

(c) Sometimes our conscience will excuse us when something is objectively wrong.

(d) We all have blind spots in our consciences.

- ii) The security of our relationship with God is an objective reality, but assurance has a subjective element involving feelings.
 - (a) Our feelings can keep us even from going to God in prayer because we feel so guilty.
 - (b) However, John said that we could use objective facts to answer our feelings.
 - (c) This has been translated, "we ... will convince our conscience" (NET).
- 2) John also said that we could find assurance in the fact that God is omniscient, and knows more than our consciences.
 - a) This has been translated, "Even if we feel guilty, God is greater than our feelings, and he knows everything" (NLT), and, "even if our own feelings condemn us, that God is greater than our feelings and knows all things" (NJB).
 - b) Barclay translated, "If there are times when our conscience condemns us, we will be able to assure ourselves before him by remembering that God is greater than our conscience, and that he knows all about us" (BNT).
 - c) *Since God knows all things, He knows the objective reality of your forgiveness, and is greater than your accusing heart.*¹⁸⁴

b. Confidence (1 John 3:21–22)

²¹ Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; ²² and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight (1 John 3:21–22).

1) If we do reach the point that our feelings are not condemning us, we can approach God confidently in prayer.

a) The Gk. word translated "confidence" (*parrēsia*) means "a use of speech that conceals nothing and passes over nothing, *outspokenness, frankness, plainness....* a state of boldness and confidence, courage, confidence, boldness, fearlessness."¹⁸⁵

b) This is the same Gk. word that John used at the beginning of this section (1 John 2:28) to describe the confidence that we can have at Christ's coming if we are abiding in Him.

c) *Now, John told us that we could have confidence in prayer when we are abiding in God's love.*¹⁸⁶

2) John said that, when we have that confidence, we will receive what we ask for in prayer because we keep two conditions: we are keeping His commandments, and we are doing what pleases Him.

a) John elaborated on His commandments in the next verse.

b) The phrase doing "the things that are pleasing in His sight" is essentially the same as obeying God's will.

- i) John will write a little later, "This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us" (1 John 5:14).
- ii) Phillips paraphrased, "We receive whatever we ask for, because we are obeying his orders and following his plans" (NTME).
- iii) Disobedience short circuits prayer. The Psalmist said, "If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear" (Ps 66:18).
- iv) *God did not give us prayer so that we could get our will, but so that we could accomplish His will on earth.*¹⁸⁷

3. Obedience and abiding (1 John 3:23–24)

- a. The two commandments (1 John 3:23)

²³ This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us (1 John 3:23).

- 1) People often speak of the Ten Commandments (Exod 20:1–17; Deut 5:6–21), and the Orthodox Jews speak of the 613 commandments.¹⁸⁸
 - a) However, John said that there are really only two commandments: that we believe in Jesus Christ, and that we love one another.

b) Jesus replied to those who asked Him what work God wanted them to do, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent" (John 6:29).

2) The new covenant (Jer 31:31–34) is a grant form of covenant, and, as such, is a gift to be accepted in faith.

a) Grant covenants also have stipulations or commands.

i) However, they are not conditions for the blessing since the blessing has already been given.

ii) The order is not do, and you will be blessed; but you have been blessed, therefore, do.

iii) The new covenant has only one stipulation, Jesus' new commandment to love one another (John 13:34).

b) Wiersbe observed, "Faith toward God and love toward man sum up a Christian's obligations. Christianity is 'faith which [works] by love' (Gal. 5:6)."¹⁸⁹

b. Keeping the commandments (1 John 3:24)

²⁴ The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us (1 John 3:24).

1) John said that the one who keeps these two commandments gives evidence that he has a deep, inner, enduring, mutual communion with God.

- a) As we have seen, the Gk. word translated "abides" "is a favorite of J[ohn] to denote an inward, enduring personal communion."¹⁹⁰
 - b) *The evidence of this communion with God is faith in Jesus Christ and love for one another.*
- 2) John informed us that we are aware of this communion because of the Gift of the Holy Spirit.
- a) The Gk. word translated "know" is used "of certainty gained through experience."¹⁹¹
 - i) Wuest translated this as "know experientially" (NTET).
 - ii) John will repeat this, "By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit" (1 John 4:13).
 - iii) Paul wrote that "hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (Rom 5:5).
 - b) *The Holy Spirit communicates the communion that we have with the Father and the Son to us.*
 - c) We will see next week that we should not listen to all of the spirits that are out there...

III. Applications:

A. Jesus Christ ...

1. Voluntarily gave up His life for us; He died in our place.
2. God knows all things, He knows the objective reality of your forgiveness, and is greater than your accusing heart.

B. To us ...

1. We should beware of harboring hatred for a brother or sister.
 - a. It will introduce the experience of death into your life.
 - b. It will rob you of the experience of God's life.
2. We have a moral obligation to follow Christ's example.
 - a. We should lay down our lives if necessary for our brothers and sisters.
 - b. Sharing with other Christians things that sustain life is a way of laying down our lives.
 - c. Our love must be practical, not merely vocal.
3. We can have confidence in prayer when we are abiding in God's love.
 - a. We keep His commandment to trust Christ and love one another.
 - b. We do what is pleasing in His sight.
 - c. God did not give us prayer so that we could get our will, but so that we could accomplish His will on earth.

ABIDING IN TRUTH

(1 JOHN 4:1–6)

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I. Introduction

A. Please turn to 1 John 4:1.

B. While you are turning ...

When I moved to the great state of Texas, I was immediately confused by many of the local terms. One term in particular that would puzzle me was "same difference." Folks would say, "That's OK. It's all the same difference." After living most of my life in Texas, I now know that they meant, "it's all the same," or "there's no difference." However, initially, it was very perplexing! The Gk. language in which the NT was originally written is much more precise than this concerning sameness and difference. The Gk. has two words, *heteros* and *allos* that are both often translated as "another." The Gk. *allos* means "another person or thing of the same kind."¹⁹² However, the Gk. word *heteros* means "another of a different kind, different, not identical with what was previously referred to."¹⁹³ These words are important in two key passages, Gal 1:6–8 and 2 Cor 11:3–4.

When confronting the Galatians about their defection to legalism, the Apostle Paul writes, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called

you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel" (Gal 1:6 KJV). The Gk. word used is *heteros* ("another of a different kind"). Some newer translations notice this and translate it as "a different gospel" (Gal 1:6 NKJV, ASV, NASB, NIV, RSV, ESV). Paul continues, "which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ" (Gal 1:7). The word "another" here is based on the Gk. word *allos* ("another of the same kind"). The word "distort" (Gk. *metastrephō*) is a very strong term. It means to "change, alter ... someth[ing] into someth[ing], oft[en] its opposite."¹⁹⁴ Paul is saying that there are no alternative gospels! Any other gospel is of a totally different kind and ends up changing the gospel into its opposite.

In a situation that sounds strangely contemporary, Paul had to warn the Corinthians about being too tolerant. Paul writes:

But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully (2 Cor 11:3–4).

They were so tolerant that they graciously received error and falsehood! This passage gives us an insight into the nature of deception. They were willing to receive "another (Gk. *allos*) Jesus." That is, another Jesus of the same kind, a very similar Jesus. Initially, the error was slight and the distortion was small. However, the result was receiving "a different (Gk. *heteros*) spirit" or "a different (Gk. *heteros*) gospel"! You start with a small distortion or error and end up with total untruth.

Two lines may be almost parallel one inch apart. They may be off by only one degree. Within 12 inches, I doubt that we could see the difference, which is less than a quarter inch. However, at one mile, how far would the lines be apart? 92 feet. How far at 100 miles? 1.75 miles. By the time that you would get to Fresno, CA, you are in Costa Mesa, CA 262 miles away instead. The farther one goes, the wider the divide. When it comes to God's truth, it's not all "the same difference"!

II. Exposition

A. Background

1. We are in a section (1 John 2:27–4:21) where John's emphasis is on abiding, maintaining an inward, enduring, personal, close communion.
2. John spoke of abiding in Christ and abiding in love.
3. Today's passage is about abiding in truth.

B. Exposition: Abiding (1 John 2:27–4:21)— Abiding in truth (1 John 4:1–6)

1. Test the spirits (1 John 4:1–3a).

^{4:1} Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; ³ and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God (1 John 4:1–3a).

- a. John wants us to abide in the truth.
- b. However, not everything that is spiritual is from God, and we must not uncritically accept everything claiming to be spiritual.

- 1) Grammatically the phrase "do not believe" means "stop believing" (NTET, NTLP).¹⁹⁵

- 2) So-called spiritual people with teachings contrary to the apostolic teaching were influencing John's readers.
- 3) Therefore, we are to test the spirits to determine their source. That involves an active discernment of spirits, human, divine, or demonic.
 - a) The Gk. word translated "test" originally meant "*assay, test* [metals, to see if they be pure]," but came to mean "to make a critical examination of someth[ing] to determine genuineness."¹⁹⁶
 - b) Wuest translated, "But put the spirits to the test to see whether they are of God and for the purpose of approving them if they are, and finding that they meet the specifications laid down [as to orthodoxy in doctrine], put your approval upon them" (NTET).
 - c) As Paul said, we must "examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good" (1 Thess 5:21).
 - d) *Source matters; only that which has its source in God is acceptable.*
- c. Then, as now, the world has many false prophets.
 - 1) The Gk. word translated "false prophets" (*pseudoprophētēs*) means "one who falsely claims to be a prophet of God or who prophesies falsely, *false/bogus prophet*."¹⁹⁷

- a) There was an abundance of false prophets in both the pagan and Jewish worlds of the time.¹⁹⁸
 - b) Jesus warned about such false prophets, "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves" (Matt 7:15).
 - c) He even warned that false messiahs might actually work signs (Matt 24:11, 24; Mark 13:22).
 - d) Peter warned us, "false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies (2 Pet 2:1).
- 2) The Gk. verb translated "have gone out" is in the perfect tense, "implying that they had already established themselves among the people."¹⁹⁹
- 3) "World" (*kosmos*) for John is the evil world-system.²⁰⁰
- 4) Our fellowship must be based upon abiding in the truth.
- d. We must ascertain the true Spirit of God, and the test is doctrinal.
- 1) The Gk. word translated "you know" is a present tense of the verb, which is used "of certainty gained through experience ... *be sure of*."²⁰¹
 - 2) The verb can either be translated as an indicative (fact), "you know," or an imperative (command), "you must make sure."

3) Hodges notes:

According to the Lord Jesus, **false prophets** were to be tested "by their fruits" (cf. Matthew 7:16–20). Contrary to popular interpretation, this does *not* mean that they were to be tested by their *works*. On the contrary, as Matthew 12:33–37 proves, their fruits are their *words*! Indeed, as the Lord Himself said, they "come to you in sheep's clothing" so that they *look like* sheep when in reality they are "ravenous wolves" (Matthew 7:15). Their *behavior* does not set them apart from the sheep, but their *message* does! Here, in our epistle, this is precisely the kind of test that John goes on to specify.²⁰²

4) Paul wrote to the Corinthians concerning false teachers:

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds (2 Cor 11:13–15).

5) *We ascertain the source of spirits by the content of their teaching.*

e. The test involves the active confession of the full deity and humanity ("flesh") of Jesus Christ.

1) The Gk. word translated "confesses" is "from a basic meaning *say the same thing,*" and came to mean "making a public statement of what one believes *profess, confess, acknowledge.*"²⁰³

2) The phrase "come in the flesh" refers to the incarnation.

3) The verb "come" is in the perfect tense, i.e., Jesus Christ came in the flesh and continues in a human body.²⁰⁴

- 4) This has been translated, "Jesus as the Christ incarnate" (MOFFATT), "Jesus Christ as having come incarnate" (MLB), and, "Jesus Christ has come in human form" (GOODSPEED).
- 5) Barclay translated this, "Everyone ... who accepts and states as an article of faith that Jesus Christ came in a human flesh and blood body" (BNT).
- 6) This is contrary to both the Docetic Gnostics and the Cerinthian Gnostics.²⁰⁵ Hodges explains that

some or all of the Revisionists may have held to the doctrine that **Jesus** was a mere man and that the divine **Christ** was an incorporeal, spiritual being who descended on Him at His baptism, but departed from Him before He died.²⁰⁶

- 7) Paul says, "Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus is accursed'; and no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12:3).
- 8) *One can mouth the words, but consistent confession indicates that God is the source.*

f. Avoidance of confessing Jesus indicates that the spirit's source is not God.

- 1) Hodges comments:

It is noteworthy that John does *not* say **every spirit that denies**, but rather **every spirit that does not confess**. Heretical teaching can mask the full extent of its deviation from the truth by simply failing to affirm some pivotal biblical truth. This is often done to make its false doctrine more palatable to the Christian audience it seeks to reach. But, says John, even the failure to *confess Jesus as Christ come in flesh* is a clear indication that the religious outlook in question **is not of God**. If a

religious leader or movement cannot speak loud and clear about the fundamental Christological and soteriological truth that **Jesus** is the **Christ**, then that leader or movement does not have its source, or dynamic, in **God**.²⁰⁷

2) Feel free to ask pointed questions, true teachers should have nothing to hide.

3) *We must carefully evaluate, not just what teachers confess, but also what they avoid confessing.*

2. The spirit of Antichrist (1 John 4:3b)

this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world (1 John 4:3b).

a. John says that Antichrist is not here, but his spirit is.

1) In 1 John 2:18, John reminded us that the Antichrist is coming, but many antichrists are here now.

2) Now, John points out that the spirit of antichrist is not just coming; it is now here.

3) The term "spirit of antichrist" has been translated, "the spirit of the Anti-Messiah" (CJB).

4) Some speak of Christophobia; this is its source.

5) The spirit of antichrist increasingly controls the world-system.

b. Most false teaching has both vertical and horizontal dimensions.

1) Vertically, false teaching arises from misunderstanding Whom that the Redeemer is.

a) On one hand, the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is both God and Man.

- i) Those, such as the Docetic Gnostics that John was combating, which emphasize the deity and deny the humanity, remove His point of contact with the human race.
 - ii) This takes away Christ's ability to redeem us; Jesus Christ as God cannot die for us.
 - b) On the other hand, those, such as the Cerinthian Gnostics, Ebonites, Arians, Jehovah's Witnesses, and The Way International, that believe Him to be less than divine, also take away His ability to redeem us.
 - i) If Jesus Christ is not God, then His death is not sufficient to redeem us.
 - ii) If He is merely a man, then the Redeemer Himself needs redeeming.
 - c) *False teaching inevitably results when we lose sight of both the deity and the humanity of Jesus Christ.*
- 2) Horizontally, false teaching arises from misunderstanding whom that the redeemed are.
- a) On one hand, the Bible teaches that we have all sinned, need redemption, and cannot save ourselves.
 - i) If the extent of our lostness is denied, then we in some sense may be our own redeemers.
 - ii) This leads to a works salvation.

b) On the other hand, the Bible teaches that we are capable of receiving the redemption offered to us. If this is denied, then fatalism follows, such as we see in Islam.

c) *False teaching also inevitably results when we lose sight of either our need of redemption, or our ability to receive the redemption offered in Jesus Christ.*

3) *Ideas have consequences.*²⁰⁸

3. The spirit of truth and the spirit of error (1 John 4:4–6)

⁴ You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. ⁵ They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶ We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error (1 John 4:4–6).

a. The believer's source is God.

1) Barclay translated, "Your life has its source in God" (BNT).

2) Believers do not belong to this world any more than Jesus did.

3) Jesus said, "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:14).

b. The indwelling Holy Spirit makes victory possible; we lack the power in ourselves.

1) "Have overcome" is in the Gk. perfect tense.²⁰⁹ Wuest translated, "you have gained a complete victory over them and are still victors" (NTET).

- 2) The basis for that victory is that "He who is in you," is greater "than he who is in the world."
- a) "He who is in you" is the Holy Spirit (1 John 4:2). The Holy Spirit indwells all believers (1 John 3:24; Rom 8:9).
 - b) "World" (*kosmos*) for John is the evil world-system.²¹⁰ John will tell us later, "We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one" (1 John 5:19).
 - c) Therefore, "he who is in the world" refers to Satan.
 - i) Jesus called Satan "the ruler of this world" (John 12:31).
 - ii) Paul even called him "the god of this world" (2 Cor 4:4) and "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph 2:2).
 - iii) *Nevertheless, the One who is in us is infinitely stronger.*
- c. Many Christians worry about demonic possession and curses.
- 1) The Bible says that God has "rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son" (Col 1:13).
 - a) The Gk. word translated "rescued" means "to rescue from danger, *save, rescue, deliver, preserve.*"²¹¹
 - b) The Gk. word translated "domain" means "the right to control or command, *authority.*"²¹²
 - c) *God has rescued us, and Satan has no authority, control, or command over us.*

2) Concerning curses: the Bible says, "Like a fluttering bird or like a flying swallow, so a curse without cause does not come to rest" (Prov 26:2 NET).

3) Pastor Chuck Smith comments:

How important it is for us to remember that the victory is already ours because of the One who lives in us. Satan is the god of this world, temporarily, because man handed it over to him. But God lives in us, if we have accepted Him, so we don't have to worry about Satan. God will take care of him.

Christians don't have to worry about getting possessed by demons. We have the Holy Spirit of God living in us. He won't share His temple with those losers.²¹³

4) Paul told the Ephesians that, in spiritual warfare, their goal was to "stand firm" (Eph 6:11, 13).

5) *In spiritual battles, it is crucial to realize that Jesus Christ has already won the victory.*

d. This is reminiscent of two OT events.

1) When the King of Aram sent his army to capture the Prophet Elisha at Dothan, the

attendant of the man of God had risen early and gone out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was circling the city. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" So he answered, "Do not fear, for *those who are with us are more than those who are with them.*" Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." And the LORD opened the servant's eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. When they came down to him, Elisha prayed to the LORD and said, "Strike this people with blindness, I pray." So He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha (2 Kgs 6:15–18 emphasis mine).

a) One prophet took that entire military force captive.

b) *The Prophet Elisha was sort of a biblical Audie Murphy!*

- 2) King Hezekiah told his army when the Assyrians besieged Jerusalem, "Be strong and courageous, do not fear or be dismayed because of the king of Assyria nor because of all the horde that is with him; for *the one with us is greater than the one with him*. With him is only an arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles" (2 Chr 32:7–8 emphasis mine).
 - a) King Hezekiah and Isaiah the prophet prayed and "the LORD sent an angel who destroyed every mighty warrior, commander and officer in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned in shame to his own land. And when he had entered the temple of his god, some of his own children killed him there with the sword" (2 Chr 32:21).
 - b) *We have help that the world-system cannot see.*
 - c) *God and one is a majority.*
- e. John teaches us that source determines the message to which we listen.
 - 1) The antichrists' source is the world.
 - a) "World" (*kosmos*) for John is the evil world-system.
 - i) This has been translated, "These people belong to the world" (GWN) and, "Those people belong to this world" (NLT).

- ii) Barclay translated, "Their life has its source in the world" (BNT).
- b) "They speak as from the world"—Since the world-system is their source, their message is also from the world-system.
 - i) This has been translated, "they speak from the world's viewpoint" (CJB, NLT), "they talk from a worldly point of view" (MLB), and "speak from the viewpoint of the world" (NIV).
 - ii) Barclay translated, "Therefore, their message has its source in the world" (BNT).
- c) Therefore, not surprisingly, "the world listens to them."
 - i) One paraphrase has, "They talk the world's language and the world eats it up" (MESSAGE).
 - ii) The tenses in this verse are present tenses indicating the statement of a general, timeless fact.²¹⁴

2) *Source determines the audience for the message.*

- f. Those whose source is God, and who have a growing experiential knowledge of God, listen to the Apostle John and those in fellowship with him; those who are from a different source will not listen.²¹⁵

- 1) "We" refers to the Apostle John and those in fellowship with him.

- 2) The Gk. word translated "he who knows" is a present participle; of the verb used "of certainty gained through experience *know, come to know, be sure of.*"²¹⁶
- 3) Jesus made the same point, "He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God" (John 8:47).
- 4) Attention to this response will make clear truth and error.
 - a) This same Gk. verb for "know" was used earlier in this verse.
 - b) Wuest translated this, "know experientially" (NTET).
 - c) *Response to the apostolic message reveals one's source.*

III. Applications:

A. Jesus Christ ...

1. Is fully God.
2. Is fully Man.
3. False teaching inevitably results when we lose sight of both the deity and the humanity of Jesus Christ.

B. To us ...

1. Source matters; only that which has its source in God is acceptable.
 - a. We ascertain the source of spirits by the content of their teaching.
 - 1) One can mouth the words, but consistent confession of the truth indicates that God is the source.
 - 2) We must carefully evaluate, not just what teachers confess, but also what they avoid confessing.

b. Response to the apostolic message reveals one's source.

2. Spiritual warfare

a. In spiritual battles, it is crucial to realize that Jesus Christ has already won the victory.

b. The Holy Spirit in the believer is infinitely stronger than Satan.

c. God and one is a majority.

ABIDING IN GOD

(1 JOHN 4:7–21)

By Dr. Hal Harless

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I. Introduction

A. Please turn to 1 John 4:7.

B. While you are turning ...

There's a story about a kindergarten teacher who asked a boy what he was drawing. Without pausing to look up, he said, "A picture of God." The teacher smiled and responded, "But nobody knows what God looks like." The boy carefully put down his crayon, looked her squarely in the eye, and declared, "After I'm finished here they will."²¹⁷

John told us in his gospel that no one has seen God at any time. However, as we will learn today, there is a way for God to become visible.

II. Exposition

A. Background

1. We have been in the section (1 John 2:27–4:21) where John's emphasis is on abiding, maintaining an inward, enduring, personal, close communion.
2. John spoke of abiding in Christ, abiding in love, and abiding in truth.

3. In today's passage, John concludes this section by writing about abiding in God, which involves seeing God, knowing God's abiding, maturing in God's love, and responding to God's love.

B. Exposition: Abiding (1 John 2:27–4:21)—Abiding in God (1 John 4:7–21)

1. Seeing God (1 John 4:7–12)

a. God is love (1 John 4:7–8).

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love (1 John 4:7–8).

1) John exhorts us to "love one another."

a) His reason is that God is the source of this love.

b) John uses the highest Gk. word for love (*agapē*).

c) He uses the present tense, i. e., "let us continually or habitually love one another."

d) *We cannot truly love one another from our own resources; we need love from God.*

2) John then tells us two things about the one who habitually or continually loves:

a) First, he or she is born of God.

i) God is the source of his or her spiritual birth (see John 1:12–13).

ii) "Is born" is a perfect tense verb in Gk.; the birth took place in the past and the result continues.

iii) Such love is not possible for the unsaved.

b) Second, he or she knows God.

i) The Gk. word translated "knows" refers to experiential knowledge. "To know God means to be in a deep relationship to Him."²¹⁸

ii) This is a present tense verb.

iii) *The one who loves is both a child of God and also presently well acquainted with God.*

3) Logically, the converse is not necessarily true.

a) It does not follow that, if one is a child of God, then one will love.²¹⁹

i) This is similar to the statement, "If it is raining and I am outside without an umbrella, then I will get wet."

ii) That may be true. However, that does not make the statement, "If I am wet, then I was outside without an umbrella and it is raining," true.

iii) I may have been in the swimming pool on a sunny day!

b) It also does not follow that one who does not love is not a child of God.

i) John also says that the one who loves has ongoing experiential knowledge of God.

ii) It may be that, although born of God, their relationship with God is not what it should be.

- 4) The one who is not loving is not experiencing God.
 - a) "Love" is a Gk. present tense verb.²²⁰
 - b) The Gk. verb translated "does ... know" is a grammatical construction used to present a timeless truth.²²¹
 - c) *That truth is that lack of love shows a lack of acquaintance with God.*
 - d) This refers to a lack of maturity, not salvation.
 - 5) Love is an attribute of God's very nature.
 - a) The statement "God is love" is an instance of Colwell's rule.²²² It indicates grammatically that "love" refers to a quality.²²³
 - b) All that God does is loving, even His judgment.²²⁴
 - c) However, the converse of the statement is not valid; love is not God.²²⁵
 - d) *Those who are well acquainted with God should reflect His love.*
- b. God's love manifest to us (1 John 4:9–10)

⁹ By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:9–10).

- 1) The cross has demonstrated God's love.
 - a) Paul makes a similar point, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8).

b) The Gk. word translated "only begotten" means "being the only one of its kind within a specific relationship, *one and only, only*" or "being the only one of its kind or class, *unique (in kind)*."²²⁶ It has been translated, "one and only" (HCSB, NET, NIV, NLT).

c) *In the cross of Jesus Christ, God's love is manifest to us.*

2) Our love for God does not demonstrate love.

a) It is not the case that "we loved God."

i) The Gk. verb translated "loved" is a perfect tense. We have not loved God in the past and continued to do so to the present.

ii) Hodges observes:

To begin with, we note that God's **love** was not a response to ours: **not that we loved God, but that He loved us**. Love which is displayed only toward those who already love us does not measure up to this standard. Thus Jesus Himself said, "For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?" (Matthew 5:46). True Godlike **love** for our Christian brother does not require that our brother love *us!*²²⁷

b) Instead, God loved us and "sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

i) The Gk. word translated "propitiation" is the sacrifice that satisfies God's justice.

ii) The Gk. word translated "sins" was originally an archery term meaning "a *falling to hit the mark*," and came to mean "a departure fr[om] either human or divine standards of uprightness."²²⁸

iii) *God's love is demonstrated at the cross, not ours.*

c. God's love manifested through us (1 John 4:11–12)

¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us (1 John 4:11–12).

1) John closes this paragraph by concluding that God's example provides us with a moral imperative to love one another.

a) "Beloved"—John begins this verse as he did verse 7 thus framing an *inclusio* or bookend structure.

b) "If God so loved us" is an echo of John 3:16, "For God so loved the world...."

c) This is a first-class condition, i.e., if-and-it-is-the-case.²²⁹

d) "Love" is a present tense verb, i. e., we ought to continually love one another.²³⁰

e) *We ought to follow God's example and love one another.*

2) John proceeds from writing about those who love to God's love and the way that we can perceive it.

a) John reminds us that deity is invisible.

i) As he said in the gospel, "No one has seen God at any time" (John 1:18).

- ii) God is without an article in the Gk. and is before the verb; therefore, grammatically this is referring to deity as a quality.²³¹
 - iii) This has been translated "God in His [invisible] essence" (NTET).
- b) Even though deity is invisible, there is a way to perceive God in our midst.
- i) If we love, we know two things: first, God abides in us; and, second, we, as a group, reach maturity in God's love.
 - ii) The Gk. word translated "love" is a present tense verb meaning "habitually" [NTET], "practice loving" [NTLP], or are "continually loving one another."
 - iii) The Gk. word translated "abide" means "an inward, enduring personal communion."²³² One commentator suggests "God is 'at home'" as a translation.²³³
 - iv) The Gk. words translated "in us" can also be translated "among us."²³⁴
 - v) *We experience fellowship with God as a church when we love one another.*
 - vi) The Gk. word translated "perfected" means "*bring to an end, bring to its goal/accomplishment.*"²³⁵

vii) This is a perfect tense verb, i.e., we reach a state of mature love and thereafter enjoy it.

viii) Wiersbe comments, "Men cannot see God, *but they can see us*. If we abide in Christ, we will love one another, and our love for one another will reveal God's love to a needy world. God's love will be experienced *in us* and then will be expressed *through us*."²³⁶

ix) *Thus, even though deity is invisible, God may be obvious among us if we love each other.*²³⁷

2. Knowing God's abiding (1 John 4:13–16)

a. Because of the Spirit (1 John 4:13)

¹³ **By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit (1 John 4:13).**

1) We experientially know this intimate fellowship with God because "He has given us of His Spirit."

a) One explains, "That is to say, we *participate in the same Spirit* that God has.... That is to say, the God of love is loving our brethren through us by the power of His Spirit."²³⁸

b) "Has given" is a Gk. perfect tense verb.

i) The Spirit was given at our conversion, "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor 12:13).

ii) However, as we are filled with the Spirit, the results continue to the present (Eph 5:18).

2) *The Holy Spirit is the only one who can produce such love in us, "the fruit of the Spirit is love" (Gal 5:22).*

b. Because of Jesus Christ (1 John 4:14–15)

1) Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world (1 John 4:14).

¹⁴ We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world (1 John 4:14).

a) John teaches that true love must be modeled on the sacrificial death of Christ.²³⁹

i) This refers to the Father's sacrifice in sending the Son.

ii) Moreover, it also refers to the willing sacrifice of the Son in giving His life.

b) In Jesus' incarnation and death, we have the perfect model for loving behavior.

2) Jesus Christ is the Son of God (1 John 4:15).

¹⁵ Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God (1 John 4:15).

a) Consistent confession of Jesus Christ is a condition of mutually abiding in intimate fellowship with God.

i) The Gk. verb translated "confesses" is in the aorist tense.

ii) This is a grammatical construction used to present a timeless truth.²⁴⁰

iii) God reserves intimate, personal communion for those who confess the deity of Jesus Christ.

iv) As we have seen, the Gk. word translated "abides" means to maintain "an inward, enduring personal communion."²⁴¹ This is a mutual personal communion, Him with us and we with Him.

b) This does not refer to salvation and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit both of which are conditioned on faith alone.

c. Because of abiding in God (1 John 4:16)

¹⁶ We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him (1 John 4:16).

1) John says that we have a settled experiential knowledge and faith in God's love for us.

a) The Gk. word translated "have come to know" and "have believed" are in the perfect tense.²⁴²

b) The Gk. words translated "in us" can also be translated "among us."²⁴³

c) It should be noted "that the stress here is once again upon the corporate experience of God's **love**."²⁴⁴

2) Love is an attribute of God's very nature.

a) John restates positively what he said earlier, "The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4:8).

- b) As before, "God is love" indicates grammatically that "love" refers to a quality.²⁴⁵
- c) Since John repeated this, it would seem to be important that we get the message.
- d) God's essential nature is love.
- e) *Therefore, the person who loves experiences a deep, intimate, personal, mutual communion with God.*

3. Maturing in God's love (1 John 4:17–18)

¹⁷ By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love (1 John 4:17–18).

- a. John began this section on abiding in 1 John 2:28 by stating that, if we abide in Him, we can have confidence when we see Him at the rapture.
- b. The love that becomes "perfected" is God's love in us.²⁴⁶
 - 1) This is maturity not sinless perfection.
 - 2) The Gk. word translated "perfected" means "*come to maturity.*"²⁴⁷
 - 3) Now, John has come full circle by saying that those with mature love can be confident in the Day of Judgment.
 - a) The "day of judgment" is not the Great White Throne since, as Jesus promised, everyone who believes "has eternal life,

and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life" (John 5:24).

b) Instead, it refers to the "day of Christ" when believers' works will be judged (1 Cor 1:8; 3:12–15; Phil 1:6, 9–11; 2:16).²⁴⁸

4) *Just as Jesus Christ was on a mission of love to the sinful world, so are we.*

c. Fear and mature love are incompatible.

1) No believer need ever fear God's punishment; our works will be judged for rewards (1 Cor 3:12–15), but our salvation is secure (John 5:24).²⁴⁹

2) If we are keeping God's command to love our brothers, we can be sure that God's judgment of our works will also be positive.

3) Therefore, mature love casts out fear.

a) The Gk. word translated "perfect" means "pert[aining] to being mature, *full-grown, mature, adult*."²⁵⁰

b) The Gk. words translated "casts out" (*exō ballei*) literally means "throws out." This has been translated, "expels" (NLT). This is not speaking about the "fear of the Lord," which is reverential awe.

c) Fear is itself a sort of punishment indicating that one is not mature in love.²⁵¹ Darby translated the Gk. literally, "fear has torment" (DARBY, see KJV, WEBSTER).

- i) This has been translated, "If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment" (NLT).
- ii) The Gk. word translated "punishment" means the "infliction of suffering or pain in chastisement."²⁵²
- iii) The Gk. word translated "is ... perfected" is in the perfect tense, i.e., "has not reached maturity."

4) *The believer who is afraid of God's punishment has not reached maturity in God's love.*

4. Responding to God's love (1 John 4:19–21)

¹⁹ We love, because He first loved us. ²⁰ If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹ And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also (1 John 4:19–21).

- a. Our love is a response to His love; God is the Initiator.
 - 1) "We love," i.e., the love that we have for God.²⁵³
 - 2) The Gk. word translated "love" is a present tense verb.
 - 3) Unless we are secure in His love, we will be not able to continually love God or others.
 - 4) John reminded us before, "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).
 - 5) God's love is the only adequate source for our love.
- b. John indicates that the claim to love God and hating a brother is false.

- 1) God is perfectly deserving of our love; our brother does often not deserve love.
- 2) Actions not feelings demonstrate our love; we are to love "in deed and truth" (1 John 3:18).²⁵⁴
- 3) Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15).
- 4) The Jewish philosopher Philo states that "it is impossible that the invisible God can be piously worshipped by those people who behave with impiety towards those who are visible and near to them."²⁵⁵
- 5) *The evidence of our love for God is keeping His commandments.*

c. *God commands that we love our brother.*

- 1) Jesus said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34).
- 2) One comments, "If one loves God, he cannot refuse love to the image of God that meets him in his brother."²⁵⁶
- 3) *Therefore, love for God and love for our brother is practically the same thing.*²⁵⁷

III. Applications:

A. Jesus Christ ...

1. Is the Son of God
2. Is the Savior of the world
3. God is love.

B. To us ...

1. Abiding in God ...

- a. We cannot truly love one another from our own resources; we need love from God.
- b. The one who loves is both a child of God and also presently well acquainted with God; lack of love shows a lack of acquaintance with God.

2. Showing God ...

- a. In the cross of Jesus Christ, God's love is manifest to us.
- b. Thus, even though deity is invisible, God may be manifest through us if we love each other.

3. Maturing in God's love

- a. The believer who is afraid of God's punishment has not reached maturity in God's love.
- b. The evidence of our love for God is keeping His commandments. God commands that we love our brother. Therefore, love for God and love for our brother is practically the same thing.

OVERCOMING

(1 JOHN 5:1-21)

By Dr. Hal Harless

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July 11, 2010

I. Introduction

- A. Please turn to 1 John 5:1.
- B. While you are turning ...

Martin Luther was once asked how he overcame the Devil. He replied, "Well, when he comes knocking on the door of my heart, and asked, 'Who lives here?' the Lord Jesus goes to the door and says, 'Martin Luther used to live here but he has moved out. Now I live here!' The Devil, seeing the nail prints in My hands and My pierced side, takes flight immediately."²⁵⁸

John has written of fellowship, walking in the light, and abiding in Christ. Today, John will conclude his letter with overcoming.

II. Exposition

A. Background

1. We concluded last week the section (1 John 2:27-4:21) where John's emphasis is on abiding, maintaining an inward, enduring, personal, close communion with God.
2. In today's passage, John concludes this letter by writing about overcoming. John writes about the overcomer, overcoming faith, and overcoming prayer.

B. Exposition: Overcoming (1 John 5:1–21)

1. The overcomer (1 John 5:1–5)

a. Born of God and loving the family of God (1 John 5:1–2)

^{5:1} Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. ² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments (1 John 5:1–2).

1) John gave us his definition of a Christian when he wrote that

"whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God."

a) John never adds anything to simple trust as a condition of salvation.

i) The Gk. word translated "believes" means "to consider someth[ing] to be true and therefore worthy of one's trust, *believe*."²⁵⁹

ii) *We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.*

b) This would answer the objection, "Sure, I am supposed to love my brother, but who is my brother?"

c) John would reply that your brother is anyone who simply believes that Jesus is the Christ.

i) The Gk. words translated "is born" and "born" are perfect tense verbs, i.e. the action took place in the past and the results continue to the present.

- ii) This has been translated, "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been fathered by God, and everyone who loves the father loves the child fathered by him" (NET).
- d) If one loves God, then one should love His children.
- i) This love comes not from the lovability of the fellow believer, but from love for God.²⁶⁰
 - ii) Notice that John does not say that everyone who is born of God automatically loves those born of God.
 - iii) John is saying that lack of love for those who are God's children reveals a lack of love for the Father, not a lack of true conversion.
- 2) One could object, "How do I know that I love the children of God?" Is such love a matter of mere emotion?
- a) John wrote that we know that we love the children of God when we meet two conditions: we love God, and we observe His commandments.
 - b) The Gk. word translated "know" is used "in contexts relating to familiarity acquired through experience."²⁶¹ Wuest translates it, "we know experientially" (NTET).
 - c) The Gk. verbs translated "love" and "observe" are in the present tense indicating continual or habitual action.²⁶²

i) This has been translated, "This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands" (NIV).

ii) *Obedience to all that God has told us to do is the yardstick of our love for God and His children.*

b. Born of God and obeying God (1 John 5:3)

³ For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome (1 John 5:3).

1) John explains that these two criteria are really the same, because the love of God consists of keeping His commandments.

a) The "love of God" should be taken as "our love for God."²⁶³

b) This has been translated, "For this is what love for God is" (HCSB).

c) Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15).

d) *Love and obedience are inseparable.*²⁶⁴

2) One might object that God's commandments are too difficult.

a) The Gk. word translated "burdensome" literally means "heavy" and came to mean "a source of difficulty or trouble because of demands made."²⁶⁵

b) However, John would reply, "His commandments are not burdensome."

i) Jesus said, "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light"
(Matt 11:30).

ii) *The next verse gives us the reason that His commandments are not too difficult for us.*

c. Born of God and overcoming the world-system (1 John 5:4–5)

⁴ For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ⁵ Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? (1 John 5:4–5).

1) The reason that God's commandments are not too difficult is that "whatever is born of God overcomes the world."

a) This refers to the new creature in Christ, and not to the saved individual, sinful nature and all.²⁶⁶

i) The Gk. words translated "whatever is born" are neuter.

ii) Therefore, the translation "whatever" (ASV, HCSB, KJV, NASB, NKJV, NRSV, RSV, WEBSTER [1833]) is correct, not "everyone" (ESV, NAB, NET, NIV, NJB).

iii) *The new creature in Christ has the power to do God's will.*²⁶⁷

b) The Gk. word translated "overcomes" means "to win in the face of obstacles, *be victor, conquer, overcome, prevail.*"²⁶⁸

i) It is a present tense verb.²⁶⁹

ii) *With the Spirit's help, the new creature can emerge victorious over the world-system.*

- 2) John also wrote that our faith has conquered the world-system, "this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith."
- a) This is an accomplished fact due to our union with the Victor, Christ, and our position in Him.
 - i) The past tense indicates that this already true.²⁷⁰
 - ii) This has been translated, "This is the conquering power that has conquered the world: our faith" (NET).
 - iii) Paul wrote to the Colossians, "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son" (Col 1:13).
 - b) The evil world-system (*kosmos*) and Satan are defeated every time someone comes to faith in Jesus Christ.²⁷¹
- 3) John teaches that the key to the Christian life is faith.
- a) The Gk. verbs translated "overcomes" and "believes" are both in the present tense.
 - b) Paul wrote to the Galatians, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me" (Gal 2:20).
 - c) *Continuing overcoming depends on continuous faith, not relying upon our own strength.*²⁷²

2. Overcoming faith (1 John 5:6–13)

a. The witnesses (1 John 5:6–8)

⁶ This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. ⁷ For there are three that testify: ⁸ the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement (1 John 5:6–8).

1) John explains that Jesus Christ's coming involves, not just His baptism (water), but also His death (blood).

a) The Cerinthian Gnostics believed that the Christ came upon the man Jesus, but left Him at the cross.

i) Therefore, while they could acknowledge that Jesus was Christ at His baptism, they would deny that Jesus was the Christ at His death.

ii) To their way of thinking, only the man Jesus died on the cross, not the Christ.

iii) That ripped the heart out of the gospel since a mere man could not die for everyone.

b) That is the reason that John emphasized that Jesus always was the Christ up to and including His death.²⁷³

i) One translation has, "And Jesus Christ was revealed as God's Son by his baptism in water and by shedding his blood on the cross—not by water only, but by water and blood. And the Spirit, who is truth, confirms it with his testimony" (NLT).

- ii) *Any modern theology that makes Jesus Christ out to be a mere man suffers the same fatal flaw as those ancient heresies.*
- c) John says that the Holy Spirit bears testimony to both the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ.
 - i) The Spirit as to His essential nature is truth.
 - (a) This is similar to John saying that "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 16), which meant that God's essential nature is loving.²⁷⁴
 - (b) Therefore, in the same way the Holy Spirit's essential nature is truth.
 - (i) Jesus called the Holy Spirit, "the Spirit of truth" (John 15:26; 16:13). This would be grammatically the same as calling the Spirit, "the truthful Spirit."
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 - (ii) Jesus Christ predicted that "when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me" (John 15:26).
 - ii) *The Spirit of truth bears absolutely trustworthy testimony to Jesus Christ.*
- 2) John says that there are three witnesses to Jesus Christ.

- a) The Law stipulated that "on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed" (Deut 19:15).
 - b) This is reminiscent of Jesus' dialogue in John 5:31–47 where He detailed His supporting witnesses.
- 3) The KJV adds the words, "in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. (8) And there are three that bear witness in earth."²⁷⁶
- a) These words appear in only eight Gk. manuscripts the earliest of which is the tenth century.
 - b) Therefore, we can be certain that this addition does not belong in the NT.²⁷⁷
- 4) John lists his witnesses to Jesus Christ as the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and notes that they all agree.
- b. The response to the witnesses (1 John 5:9–10)

⁹ If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son. ¹⁰ The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son (1 John 5:9–10).

- 1) John observes that we accept human testimony.
 - a) This is a first-class condition, i.e., if-and-it-is-the-case.²⁷⁸
 - b) In fact, we do commonly accept human testimony, and we should if it is credible.
- 2) John argues that we have even more reason to accept God's testimony concerning His Son.

- a) "Since we believe human testimony, surely we can believe the greater testimony that comes from God" (NLT).
 - b) Jesus said, "the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me" (John 5:37).
- 3) John starkly presents our only two options.
- a) On one hand, the one who trusts in the Son of God has internalized the testimony.²⁷⁹
 - b) On the other hand, the one who refuses to trust God has acted as if He were a liar in that he has rejected the testimony that God has given about His Son.
- c. The testimony (1 John 5:11–13)

¹¹ And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹² He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. ¹³ These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life (1 John 5:11–13).

- 1) John says that the message that God has testified to is that He has given us eternal life, and that there is only one place to find that life, in His Son.
 - a) One translation has, "this life is found in his Son" (GW).
 - b) Eternal life is not merely life of endless duration.
 - i) The unsaved have that; or rather, they have eternal death.
 - ii) Eternal life is both an endless life and a quality of life.
 - iii) Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

- 2) John explains that the one who has the Son has the higher life.
 - a) The Gk. translated "has" and "have" is in the present tense.
 - i) Eternal life is a present continuous possession.²⁸⁰
 - ii) It is not pie in the sky by and by when we die.
 - b) The original Gk. has a definite article before "life."
 - i) One translation has, "The one who has the Son has this eternal life; the one who does not have the Son of God does not have this eternal life" (NET).
 - ii) The Gk. word translated "life" (*zōē*) refers to "transcendent life" as contrasted with "life" (*bios*), which means "life and activity associated w[ith] it."²⁸¹
 - iii) *However, the one who does not have the Son dose not have this higher life.*

- 3) John explains that he has written this section to provide assurance of salvation.²⁸²
 - a) The Gk. word translated "know" means "to have information about.... to grasp the meaning of someth[ing], *understand*."²⁸³ It is primarily informational knowledge, not relational knowledge.
 - i) Wuest translates it as, "may know with an absolute knowledge" (NTET).

- ii) Phillips paraphrases, "I have written like this to you who already believe in the name of God's Son so that you may be quite sure that, here and now, you possess eternal life" (NTME).
 - b) The promise of God is the basis for assurance of salvation.
 - i) Any attempt to ground assurance on our own performance simply make assurance impossible.²⁸⁴
 - ii) *The first thing that John wants us to know as he concludes his letter is that believers have eternal life.*²⁸⁵
3. Overcoming prayer (1 John 5:14–19)
- a. Confidence in prayer (1 John 5:14–15)

¹⁴ This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him (1 John 5:14–15).

- 1) John moves now to the confidence that we can have in prayer.
 - a) The Gk. word translated "confidence" is the same word that was used in 1 John 2:28; 3:21; 4:17.²⁸⁶
 - b) John explains that, if we ask anything according to His will, God will hear us.
 - i) The Gk. word translated "ask" here and in the next verse means "to ask for, with a claim on receipt of an answer, *ask, ask for, demand.*"²⁸⁷

(a) One translation is, "We are confident that God listens to us if we ask for anything that has his approval" (GW).

(b) Phillips paraphrases, "we are certain that he hears every request that is made in accord with his own plan" (NTME).

ii) Pastor Chuck Smith comments:

Prayer was never intended as a vehicle by which I can get my will done on the earth. Prayer is the vehicle by which I cooperate with God in order to get His will done on the earth. Even Jesus prayed, "not as I will, but as You will" (Matt. 26:39).

I have an agreement with God. If I ask God for anything that is not according to His will, I want Him to just ignore it. Even if I get upset and pout and complain, ignore it!²⁸⁸

iii) James writes, "You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures" (Jas 4:2–3).

iv) *Prayer is not a tool to get my will done; it is a means to get God's will done on earth.*²⁸⁹

2) John elaborates that, if God hears our requests, we have those requests.

a) The Gk. word translated "we know" is primarily informational knowledge, not experiential knowledge.

b) Wuest translates, "we know with an absolute knowledge" (NTET).

- c) This is a first-class condition, i.e., if-and-it-is-the-case.²⁹⁰
- d) *The second thing that John wants believers to know is that God answers prayer.*

b. Prayer for a sinning believer (1 John 5:16–17)

¹⁶ If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this. ¹⁷ All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not leading to death (1 John 5:16–17).

- 1) John tells us to pray for a sinning brother or sister, if their sin does not lead to immediate death, and John promises that God will give them life.
 - a) The Gk. word translated "pray" is the same word as "ask" in the previous two verses, and means "to ask for, with a claim on receipt of an answer."
 - b) However, John points out that some sin leads to physical death.²⁹¹
 - i) OT examples include Nadab and Abihu who disobeyed God (Lev 10:1–7), and Uzzah who touched the Ark of the Covenant (2 Sam 6).
 - ii) NT examples include Ananias and Sapphira who lied (Acts 5:1–11), and the Corinthians who had disrespected the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:30).
 - iii) He is not speaking of a particular sin, but rather, he is referring to a quality of sin.²⁹²

c) Even though he does not command prayer for that quality of sin, John does not forbid it.²⁹³

i) John does use a weaker term for prayer.

ii) The Gk. word translated "should make request" means simply "to put a query to someone, *ask, ask a question....* to ask for someth[ing]."²⁹⁴

2) John explains that he is not reducing the seriousness of all sin, but he is saying that not all sin is of such a quality as to lead to death. This has been translated, "All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death" (NIV).

c. Confidence the new creation is beyond Satan's grasp (1 John 5:18–19)

¹⁸ We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him. ¹⁹ We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one (1 John 5:18–19).

1) John reminds us that sin does not have its source in the new creation in Christ.

a) The Gk. word translated "we know" is primarily informational knowledge, not experiential knowledge.

b) Wuest translates, "we know absolutely" (NTET).

2) If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, the real you does not and cannot sin.²⁹⁵

3) Moreover, that seed of God within us keeps us safe.²⁹⁶

a) The evil one cannot even touch the new creature in Christ.

b) This has been translated, "the evil one cannot harm him" (NIV).²⁹⁷

c) *The third thing that John wants us to know is that the new creature in Christ, the real you, does not sin.*

4) John contrasts the believer who knows that he or she is from God with the entire world that is under Satan's power.

a) The Gk. word translated "we know" is primarily informational knowledge, not experiential knowledge. Wuest translates, "we know with an absolute knowledge" (NTET).

b) The Gk. word translated "world" (*kosmos*) refers to the evil world-system arrayed against God.

c) The Gk. word translated "lies" means "to be in a recumbent position, *lie, recline*."²⁹⁸

i) This is a passive verb.

ii) Satan has rocked the world-system to sleep.²⁹⁹

d) *The fourth thing that John wants us to know is that the Christian life is the real life as opposed to the world-system's Satanic delusion.*

4. The true God, Jesus Christ (1 John 5:20–21)

²⁰ **And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.** ²¹ **Little children, guard yourselves from idols (1 John 5:20–21).**

- a. John concludes that the Son of God came and gave us insight so that we might be able to know the true God experientially.
 - 1) The Gk. word translated "we know" is primarily informational knowledge, not experiential knowledge. Wuest translates, "we know with an absolute knowledge" (NTET).
 - 2) The Gk. word translated "understanding" means "the faculty of thinking, comprehending, and reasoning, *understanding*."³⁰⁰
 - 3) The Gk. word translated "know" the second time is used "in contexts relating to familiarity acquired through experience."³⁰¹
 - a) Wuest translates, "may be knowing in an experiential way" (NTET).
 - b) *Jesus Christ has given us insight so that we might have a personal relationship with both Him and God the Father.*
- b. John explains that, as believers, we are both in God and in His Son, Jesus Christ.
 - 1) The Gk. pronoun translated "this one" refers to "the person or thing comparatively near at hand in the discourse material, *this, this one*."³⁰²
 - 2) Therefore, John is clearly saying that Jesus Christ "is the true God and eternal life."³⁰³
 - 3) This has been correctly translated, "He [Jesus Christ] is the true God and eternal life" (BBE, DARBY, ESV, HCSB, NAB, NIV, NRSV).

4) One translation even has, "This Jesus Christ is the real God and eternal life" (GW).

c. Therefore, since Jesus Christ is the true God, John admonishes them to avoid all idols or false gods.

1) This has been translated, "Dear children, keep away from anything that might take God's place in your hearts" (NLT).³⁰⁴

2) Peterson paraphrases, "Dear children, be on guard against all clever facsimiles" (MESSAGE).

3) Wiersbe comments, "*The thing we serve is the thing we worship!* Whatever controls our lives and 'calls the signals' is our god."³⁰⁵

4) *Jesus Christ is the real thing; we must accept no substitutes!*

III. Applications:

A. Jesus Christ ...

1. Is the true God and eternal life
2. Desires a personal relationship with us

B. To us ...

1. The first thing John wants us to know that believers have eternal life.
2. The second thing John wants believers to know is that God answers prayer.
3. The third thing John wants believers to know is that the new creature in Christ, the real you, does not sin.

4. The fourth thing John wants believers to know is that the Christian life is the real life.
5. Our faith overcomes the world-system.

- ¹ Irenaeus, *Contra Haereses* 3.3.4.
- ² Glen W. Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:300, 302.
- ³ A. T. Robertson, *WPNT* 6:199–200.
- ⁴ Irenaeus, *Contra Haereses* 3.1.1; Polycarp, *To the Philippians* 7.1–2; Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 3.39; Robertson, *WPNT* 6:201; Robert Yarbrough, "1 John," *ZIBBCNT* 4:177; Zane C. Hodges, *BKCNT* 881.
- ⁵ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:197, 201; Yarbrough, "1 John," *ZIBBCNT* 4:177; Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:301.
- ⁶ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:201.
- ⁷ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:201; Yarbrough, "1 John," *ZIBBCNT* 4:178–79; Hodges, *BKCNT* 881.
- ⁸ Irenaeus, *Contra Haereses* 1.26.1; 3.3.4; 1.28.1; Robertson, *WPNT* 6:200–1; Yarbrough, "1 John," *ZIBBCNT* 4:180–81; Keener, *BBCNT* 735–36; Hodges, *BKCNT* 881; Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:294–96.
- ⁹ Yarbrough, "1 John," *ZIBBCNT* 4:182.
- ¹⁰ Craig S. Keener, *BBCNT* 735.
- ¹¹ Keener, *BBCNT* 747, 750.
- ¹² Hodges, *BKCNT* 883.
- ¹³ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 591; Robertson, *WPNT* 6:204.
- ¹⁴ BDAG .445–46.
- ¹⁵ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:204–5; Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 591; Keener, *BBCNT* 737.
- ¹⁶ The Gk. *tou logou tēs zōēs* is either an objective genitive, a genitive of apposition, or a descriptive genitive. See Wallace, *GGBB* 116–19, 95–100, 79–81; Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 591.
- ¹⁷ Hodges, *BKCNT* 883.
- ¹⁸ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 591; Robertson, *WPNT* 6:206.
- ¹⁹ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:206.
- ²⁰ BDAG 552–53.
- ²¹ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 591. See also Robertson, *WPNT* 6:206.
- ²² LSJ 969–70; MM 351.
- ²³ Hodges, *The Epistles of John* 50; Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:307.
- ²⁴ Hodges, *BKCNT* 883–84.
- ²⁵ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 591.
- ²⁶ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 591.
- ²⁷ BDAG 803; Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 592.
- ²⁸ Keener, *BBCNT* 737.
- ²⁹ Hodges, *BKCNT* 884–85; Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:310.
- ³⁰ Thayer, *GELNT* 30–31.
- ³¹ Hodges, *BKCNT* 885.
- ³² Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:311.
- ³³ Hodges, *The Epistles of John* 61.
- ³⁴ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:207.
- ³⁵ Hodges, *The Epistles of John* 62; Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:311.
- ³⁶ BDAG 50–51.
- ³⁷ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:208; Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:311.
- ³⁸ Hodges, *The Epistles of John* 63.
- ³⁹ Hodges, *BKCNT* 885.
- ⁴⁰ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 592.
- ⁴¹ Friberg, *ALGNT* 281; BDAG 708–9; Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 592.
- ⁴² Robertson, *WPNT* 6:208; Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 592; Hodges, *BKCNT* 885.
- ⁴³ BDAG 820–21.
- ⁴⁴ BDAG 246–47.
- ⁴⁵ BDAG 156–57.
- ⁴⁶ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 592.
- ⁴⁷ Hodges, *BKCNT* 886.
- ⁴⁸ Friberg, *ALGNT* 209. See also BDAG 488–89.
- ⁴⁹ BDAG 20–21.
- ⁵⁰ Hodges, *BKCNT* 886.
- ⁵¹ Keener, *BBCNT* 737.
- ⁵² Robertson, *WPNT* 6:208; Hodges, *BKCNT* 886.
- ⁵³ Hodges, *BKCNT* 886.
- ⁵⁴ BDAG 766.
- ⁵⁵ Friberg, *ALGNT* 296; Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 592; Keener, *BBCNT* 738; Hodges, *BKCNT* 887.
- ⁵⁶ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:209.

- ⁵⁷ Friberg, *ALGNT* 204; Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 592; Keener, *BBCNT* 738; Hodges, *BKCNT* 887; Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:314; Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965) 125–85.
- ⁵⁸ BDAG 704.
- ⁵⁹ BDAG 561–63.
- ⁶⁰ Robert P. Lightner, *The Death Christ Died: A Biblical Case for Unlimited Atonement*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1998).
- ⁶¹ Hodges, *BKCNT* 887.
- ⁶² Warren Wiersbe, *BECNT* 2:485.
- ⁶³ Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:315.
- ⁶⁴ BDAG 199–201. See also Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:318; Hodges, *BKCNT* 888.
- ⁶⁵ BDAG 1002.
- ⁶⁶ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 593; Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:315.
- ⁶⁷ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 593.
- ⁶⁸ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:210; Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 593.
- ⁶⁹ Hodges, *BKCNT* 888.
- ⁷⁰ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:210.
- ⁷¹ Friberg, *ALGNT* 30.
- ⁷² Robertson sees it as an objective genitive (Robertson, *WPNT* 6:210–11). Wallace sees it as either objective or plenary (Wallace, *GGBB* 116–21). Barker disagrees and sees it as a subjective genitive (Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:318) as also does Hodges (Hodges, *BKCNT* 888). See also Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 593.
- ⁷³ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:211.
- ⁷⁴ Hodges, *BKCNT* 888–89.
- ⁷⁵ BDAG 326–30.
- ⁷⁶ BDAG 630–31.
- ⁷⁷ BDAG 743. See also Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 593.
- ⁷⁸ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:211.
- ⁷⁹ Keener, *BBCNT* 738.
- ⁸⁰ BDAG 652–53.
- ⁸¹ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 593.
- ⁸² BDAG 18–19. See also Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:318.
- ⁸³ Hodges, *BKCNT* 889.
- ⁸⁴ Friberg, *ALGNT* 30.
- ⁸⁵ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 593.
- ⁸⁶ BDAG 630–31.
- ⁸⁷ BDAG 926. See also Robertson, *WPNT* 6:212; Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:318.
- ⁸⁸ Wiersbe, *BECNT* 2:490.
- ⁸⁹ Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:317.
- ⁹⁰ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 593.
- ⁹¹ Friberg, *ALGNT* 386.
- ⁹² Hodges, *BKCNT* 890.
- ⁹³ Mike Adams, "John 14:6 for Dummies," *TownHall.com* [on-line], May 31, 2010, accessed June 5, 2010, <http://townhall.com/columnists/MikeAdams/2010/05/31/john_146_for_dummies>.
- ⁹⁴ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 94–101; *BKCNT* 890.
- ⁹⁵ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 593; Robertson, *WPNT* 6:213.
- ⁹⁶ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 95.
- ⁹⁷ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 593; Hodges, *Epistles of John* 96.
- ⁹⁸ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 594; Robertson, *WPNT* 6:213; Hodges, *Epistles of John* 97.
- ⁹⁹ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 593–94.
- ¹⁰⁰ BDAG 644–46; MM 407–9; Robertson, *WPNT* 6:213. See also C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1959) 135–37; Robertson, *GGNT* 853–54; BDF 172–74 §§ 335–37; Wallace, *GGBB* 714–17. Wallace sees two ways to take the present imperative + *mē*: 1) cessation of activity in progress; and 2) a general precept (Wallace, *GGBB* 724–25).
- ¹⁰¹ BDAG 5–6.
- ¹⁰² Friberg, *ALGNT* 235. See also Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 594; Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:321; Hodges, *BKCNT* 891; *Epistles of John* 101; Lightner, *1,2,3 John & Jude* 32.
- ¹⁰³ Wiersbe, *BECNT* 2:491–97.
- ¹⁰⁴ This is an objective genitive (Wallace, *GGBB* 112–21). See also Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 594; Robertson, *WPNT* 6:213; Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:322.
- ¹⁰⁵ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 102.

¹⁰⁶ Friberg, *ALGNT* 164; BDAG 372.
¹⁰⁷ Lightner, *1,2,3 John & Jude* 32–33.
¹⁰⁸ Friberg, *ALGNT* 346. See also Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 594.
¹⁰⁹ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 103.
¹¹⁰ BDAG 40. See also Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 594; Hodges, *Epistles of John* 103; Wiersbe, *BECNT* 2:494.
¹¹¹ Theophrastus, *Characters* 23.2–6.
¹¹² BDAG 295–98. See Robertson, *WPNT* 214.
¹¹³ BDAG 630–31. See also Hodges, *BKCNT* 891.
¹¹⁴ BDAG 87–88.
¹¹⁵ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 594; Robertson, *WPNT* 215; Lightner, *1,2,3 John & Jude* 36.
¹¹⁶ John Hagee, *In Defense of Israel* (Lake Mary, FL: Frontline, 2007) 132–45. I wonder what Pastor Hagee thinks the word "Christ" means?
¹¹⁷ Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:324.
¹¹⁸ Robertson, *WPNT* 216
¹¹⁹ Robertson, *WPNT* 215; Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 594.
¹²⁰ Wiersbe, *BECNT* 2:498–501.
¹²¹ Robertson, *WPNT* 216; Hodges, *Epistles of John* 111.
¹²² Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 594; Hodges, *BKCNT* 891.
¹²³ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 111.
¹²⁴ Robertson, *WPNT* 217; Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 594.
¹²⁵ Keener, *BBCNT* 740; Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:325; Lightner, *1,2,3 John & Jude* 37.
¹²⁶ BDAG 630–31. See also Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 594.
¹²⁷ Zuck, *The Speaker's Quote Book* 69.
¹²⁸ BDAG 630–31.
¹²⁹ When one considers that 1 John is a much smaller book, the Gk. word *menō* is a much higher percentage of 1 John than John's Gospel.
¹³⁰ 1 John 2:6, 10, 14, 17, 19, 24 (three times).
¹³¹ 1 John 2:27 (twice), 28; 3:6, 9, 14–15, 17, 24 (twice); 4:12–13, 15, 16 (three times).
¹³² Hodges, *BKCNT* 892.
¹³³ Yarbrough, "1 John," *ZIBBCNT* 4:195.
¹³⁴ Josephus, *Life* 65 (366).
¹³⁵ BDAG 1048.
¹³⁶ 1 John 1:2 (twice); 2:19, 28; 3:2 (twice), 5, 8; 4:9.
¹³⁷ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 129.
¹³⁸ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 123.
¹³⁹ Friberg, *ALGNT* 277; Robertson, *WPNT* 6:219.
¹⁴⁰ Friberg, *ALGNT* 99; Robertson, *WPNT* 6:219.
¹⁴¹ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 127; *BKCNT* 893.
¹⁴² BDAG 319–20. See also Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 595.
¹⁴³ BDAG 85; Thayer, *GELNT* 48; Hodges, *Epistles of John* 132.
¹⁴⁴ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 133.
¹⁴⁵ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 595.
¹⁴⁶ BDAG 719–20.
¹⁴⁷ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 596; Hodges, *Epistles of John* 135–36.
¹⁴⁸ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 136.
¹⁴⁹ BDAG 295–98.
¹⁵⁰ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 140.
¹⁵¹ BDAG 295–98.
¹⁵² BDAG 937.
¹⁵³ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:223.
¹⁵⁴ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 596; Wallace, *GGBB* 522–24; S. Kubo, "1 John 3:9: Absolute or Habitual?" *AUSS7* (1969): 47–56; Hodges, *Epistles of John* 134–35, 140–44; *BKCNT* 894.
¹⁵⁵ Hodges, *BKCNT* 895.
¹⁵⁶ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 152–53.
¹⁵⁷ BDAG 295–98.
¹⁵⁸ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 153.
¹⁵⁹ Zuck, *The Speaker's Quote Book* 188.
¹⁶⁰ Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll's Ultimate Book of Illustrations & Quotes* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1998)

- ¹⁶¹ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 596.
- ¹⁶² Hodges, *BKCNT* 896.
- ¹⁶³ BDAG 295–98.
- ¹⁶⁴ BDAG 979; Friberg, *ALGNT* 371; MM 617; Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 596; Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:335.
- ¹⁶⁵ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 154.
- ¹⁶⁶ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:224.
- ¹⁶⁷ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 155; *BKCNT* 896.
- ¹⁶⁸ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 155. See also Hodges, *BKCNT* 896.
- ¹⁶⁹ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:225.
- ¹⁷⁰ BDAG 630–31.
- ¹⁷¹ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 157–60; *BKCNT* 896–97.
- ¹⁷² Friberg, *ALGNT* 99.
- ¹⁷³ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:225; Hodges, *Epistles of John* 160.
- ¹⁷⁴ Friberg, *ALGNT* 414.
- ¹⁷⁵ BDAG 1030–31.
- ¹⁷⁶ BDAG 743; Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 596.
- ¹⁷⁷ Wiersbe, *BECNT* 2:511.
- ¹⁷⁸ BDAG 176–77.
- ¹⁷⁹ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 161.
- ¹⁸⁰ BDAG 546–47; Friberg, *ALGNT* 231.
- ¹⁸¹ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 596.
- ¹⁸² BDAG 900–1.
- ¹⁸³ The Gk. phrase *hē agapē tou Theou* is either a descriptive genitive (Wallace, *GGBB* 79–81), or a genitive of source (Wallace, *GGBB* 109). Wallace thinks that it might be a plenary, both objective and subjective, genitive meaning something like "love *from* God that produces our love *for* God" (Wallace, *GGBB* 119–21). I respectfully disagree since the context is love for our brother not God. See also Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 596; Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:339.
- ¹⁸⁴ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 597.
- ¹⁸⁵ BDAG 781–82. See also Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 597.
- ¹⁸⁶ Hodges, *BKCNT* 897.
- ¹⁸⁷ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 166–69.
- ¹⁸⁸ Maimonides, *Seper Hamiṣvôt*.
- ¹⁸⁹ Wiersbe, *BECNT* 2:514. See also Hodges, *Epistles of John* 168.
- ¹⁹⁰ BDAG 630–31.
- ¹⁹¹ Friberg, *ALGNT* 99.
- ¹⁹² Friberg, *ALGNT* 44.
- ¹⁹³ Friberg, *ALGNT* 176.
- ¹⁹⁴ BDAG 641.
- ¹⁹⁵ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:229; Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 597.
- ¹⁹⁶ LSJ 442; BDAG 255–56.
- ¹⁹⁷ BDAG 1097.
- ¹⁹⁸ Plutarch, *Caius Marius* 17.1; Philo, *Special Laws I* 58 (315); Josephus, *J. W.* 6.5.2 (285–88); Yarbrough, "1 John," *ZIBBCNT* 4:200.
- ¹⁹⁹ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:229; Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 597; Lightner, *1,2,3 John & Jude* 60.
- ²⁰⁰ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 597.
- ²⁰¹ Friberg, *ALGNT* 99.
- ²⁰² Hodges, *Epistles of John* 176. Jesus' statement, "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit" (Matt 12:33) occurs in the context of speech. Matthew 12:31–32 concerns blasphemy, 12:34–35 concerns the mouth speaking from the heart, and 12:36–37 concerns being judged for one's words.
- ²⁰³ Friberg, *ALGNT* 281.
- ²⁰⁴ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 597.
- ²⁰⁵ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:230; Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:340; *Archaeological Study Bible: An Illustrated Walk Through Biblical History and Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005) 2029.
- ²⁰⁶ Hodges, *John* 177.
- ²⁰⁷ Hodges, *John* 178.
- ²⁰⁸ Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997) 174–77.
- ²⁰⁹ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:230; Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 597.

²¹⁰ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 597.
²¹¹ BDAG 907–8.
²¹² BDAG 352–53.
²¹³ Smith, *The Word for Today Bible* 1660.
²¹⁴ These are gnomic presents (Wallace, *GGBB* 523–25).
²¹⁵ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:231.
²¹⁶ Friberg, *ALGNT* 99.
²¹⁷ Em Griffin, *The Mindchangers* (Tyndale House, 1976) 16, quoted in "A Picture of God," *Bible.org: Illustrations* [on-line], accessed July 3, 2010 <<http://bible.org/illustration/picture-god>>.
²¹⁸ Wiersbe, *BECNT* 2:516.
²¹⁹ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 183–84; "1 John," *GNTC* 2:1217; *BKCNT* 898.
²²⁰ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:232. This may be a gnomic present (Wallace, *GGBB* 523–25).
²²¹ Wallace, *GGBB* 562.
²²² We have the same construction in John 1:1 concerning Jesus' deity.
²²³ Wallace, *GGBB* 256–65; Hodges, "1 John," *GNTC* 2:1217; *BKCNT* 899.
²²⁴ Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:342.
²²⁵ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:232; Wiersbe, *BECNT* 2:515–16.
²²⁶ BDAG 658; Hodges, *John* 185.
²²⁷ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 186–87.
²²⁸ Thayer, *GELNT* 30–31; BDAG 50–51.
²²⁹ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:233; Lightner, *1, 2, 3 John & Jude* 65.
²³⁰ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:233.
²³¹ Wallace, *GGBB* 256–65; Lightner, *1, 2, 3 John & Jude* 66.
²³² BDAG 630–31.
²³³ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 189.
²³⁴ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 189; "1 John," *GNTC* 2:1218; Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:344.
²³⁵ BDAG 996.
²³⁶ Wiersbe, *BECNT* 2:519.
²³⁷ Hodges, *BKCNT* 899–900.
²³⁸ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 190.
²³⁹ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 188–89.
²⁴⁰ Wallace, *GGBB* 562.
²⁴¹ BDAG 630–31.
²⁴² Robertson, *WPNT* 6:234.
²⁴³ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 197.
²⁴⁴ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 197.
²⁴⁵ Wallace, *GGBB* 256–65.
²⁴⁶ Lightner, *1, 2, 3 John & Jude* 68.
²⁴⁷ LSJ 1770.
²⁴⁸ Hodges, "1 John," *GNTC* 2:1220; *BKCNT* 900.
²⁴⁹ Lightner, *1, 2, 3 John & Jude* 68.
²⁵⁰ BDAG 995–96.
²⁵¹ Hodges, "1 John," *GNTC* 2:1220–21; *BKCNT* 900; Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:346.
²⁵² BDAG 555.
²⁵³ Lightner, *1, 2, 3 John & Jude* 69.
²⁵⁴ Hodges, "1 John," *GNTC* 2:1221.
²⁵⁵ Philo, *Decalogue* 120.
²⁵⁶ Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:347.
²⁵⁷ Hodges, "1 John," *GNTC* 2:1221.
²⁵⁸ Roy B. Zuck, *The Speaker's Quote Book* 405.
²⁵⁹ BDAG 816–18.
²⁶⁰ Hodges, "1 John," *GNTC* 2:1221–22.
²⁶¹ BDAG 199–201.
²⁶² Robertson, *WPNT* 6:237.
²⁶³ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 214; "1 John," *GNTC* 2:1222; Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 598.
²⁶⁴ Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:349.
²⁶⁵ BDAG 167–68; Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 598.
²⁶⁶ Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:349.
²⁶⁷ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:238; Wiersbe, *BECNT* 2:524–25.

- ²⁶⁸ BDAG 673.
- ²⁶⁹ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:238.
- ²⁷⁰ Hodges, "1 John," *GNTC* 2:1223
- ²⁷¹ Hodges, *Epistles of John* 216; Lightner, *1,2,3 John & Jude* 72.
- ²⁷² Wiersbe, *BECNT* 2:525; Hodges, "1 John," *GNTC* 2:1223.
- ²⁷³ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:239; Yarborough, "1 John," *ZIBBCNT* 4:205; Keener, *BBCNT* 744; Lightner, *1,2,3 John & Jude* 73; Wiersbe, *BECNT* 2:527; Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:350; Hodges, *BKCNT* 901; "1 John," *GNTC* 2:1223.
- ²⁷⁴ Hodges, "1 John," *GNTC* 2:1223.
- ²⁷⁵ This is an attributive genitive (Wallace, *GGBB* 86–88).
- ²⁷⁶ In Gk. *en tō ouranō, ho patēr, ho logos, kai to Hagion Pneuma; kai houtoi hoi treis hen eisi. (8) kai treis eisin hoi martyrountes en tē gē....*
- ²⁷⁷ Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart, Deutschland: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994) 647–49; Keener, *BBCNT* 745; Hodges, "1 John," *GNTC* 2:1224.
- ²⁷⁸ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:241; Lightner, *1,2,3 John & Jude* 75.
- ²⁷⁹ Hodges, *BKCNT* 901; "1 John," *GNTC* 2:1225.
- ²⁸⁰ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 599.
- ²⁸¹ BDAG 430–31; 176–77.
- ²⁸² Hodges, *BKCNT* 902; "1 John," *GNTC* 2:1225.
- ²⁸³ BDAG 693–94.
- ²⁸⁴ Hodges, "1 John," *GNTC* 2:1225–26.
- ²⁸⁵ Wiersbe, *BECNT* 2:528–32; Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:356–57.
- ²⁸⁶ Hodges, "1 John," *GNTC* 2:1226.
- ²⁸⁷ BDAG 30.
- ²⁸⁸ Smith, *The Word for Today Bible* 1662.
- ²⁸⁹ Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:354–55; Hodges, *BKCNT* 902.
- ²⁹⁰ This is a rare construction in that, although it uses *ean* instead of *ei*, the verb is in the indicative mood, not the subjunctive. See M. Zerwick, *Biblical Greek* §§330–31; Robertson, *WPNT* 6:243; Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 599.
- ²⁹¹ Lightner, *1,2,3 John & Jude* 80; Hodges, *BKCNT* 902–3.
- ²⁹² Lightner, *1,2,3 John & Jude* 79; Wiersbe, *BECNT* 2:530–31.
- ²⁹³ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:244; Yarborough, "1 John," *ZIBBCNT* 4:208; Hodges, *BKCNT* 903; "1 John," *GNTC* 2:1227.
- ²⁹⁴ BDAG 395.
- ²⁹⁵ Hodges, *BKCNT* 903; "1 John," *GNTC* 2:1227.
- ²⁹⁶ Hodges, *BKCNT* 903.
- ²⁹⁷ Robertson, *WPNT* 6:244–45; Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 599.
- ²⁹⁸ BDAG 537–38; Friberg, *ALGNT* 227.
- ²⁹⁹ Hodges, "1 John," *GNTC* 2:1228.
- ³⁰⁰ BDAG 234; Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 599.
- ³⁰¹ BDAG 199–201.
- ³⁰² BDAG 740–41; Wallace, *GGBB* 326–27; Barker, "1 John," *EBC* 12:357; Hodges, "1 John," *GNTC* 2:1229.
- ³⁰³ Rogers, *NLEKGNT* 599.
- ³⁰⁴ The Lat. Vulg. has, "*filioli custodite vos a simulacris.*"
- ³⁰⁵ Wiersbe, *BECNT* 2:532.