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1 JOHN

[1 John 2](#)[1 John 3](#)[1 John 4](#)[1 John 5](#)

1 JOHN 2:1-17

[NEXT 3:1-24](#)

HISTORY:

First John was written to dispel doubts and to build assurance by presenting a clear picture of Christ. John was an aging apostle and perhaps the only surviving apostle at this time. He had not yet been banished to the island of Patmos where he would live in exile. John is the apostle of love. Love is mentioned throughout this letter. The letter is untitled and was written to the church at large. It was sent as a pastoral letter to several Gentile congregations; also written to all believers everywhere.

One of the issues he's dealing with is the teachings of the ¹Gnostics—this group who claimed to have special "knowledge". They believed that they had the only real, but secret keys to knowing God. They believed that anything physical was evil, and only non-physical things could be good. There were two groups that came from these teachings –

1. One believed that since anything physical was sinful, and since that means our physical bodies are sinful and beyond help, why not just go ahead and "party hearty"?
2. The other group believed they had the ability to alienate themselves far enough from sinful physical things that they could become "sinless" themselves.

2:1 ²**My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we [John includes himself] have an Advocate* with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.** The apostle is very tender in his words, "*My little children.*" It is almost as if he is saying to them, "*I have been around a little longer than you have; and if you sin – and you will – I am not going to kick you out of the family. I am still going to love you and I am still going to encourage you. I am still going to be there to put my arms around you.*" He tells them something very encouraging. He says, "*Listen, when you confess your sins you must know you have an Advocate with the Father who is Jesus Christ, the Righteous.*"

By using the term "Jesus," His earthly name and "Christ," His resurrected name, he depicts the fact that He is the only one who could ever stand in our behalf. He is the only human, being born of a virgin, to live sinless on this earth, fulfilling every requirement of the law. He is qualified to be our substitute on the cross. He is the one in heaven who is our representative. Every time we sin and then properly confess that sin, He stands there and speaks on our behalf. Now I don't know about you, but that makes me want to confess even that much more, knowing I have someone who is going to speak on my behalf, someone who knows that His blood has covered all my sin, whether it be past, present or future. Hallelujah! On the other hand, He knows

¹ <http://www.calvaryfullerton.org/Bstudy/62%201Jo/1998/621JO02A.htm>

² http://preceptaustin.org/1john_2_wayne_barber.htm#2:1-6

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when we half-heartedly confess anything before the Father. He knows our motive when we confess. So to reap the benefit of confession, we have to make sure we understand who is examining our hearts when we confess that sin before a "holy" God.

NOTE:

The word ***Advocate** is the word *parakletos* (*Helper, also referred to the Holy Spirit, the Comforter in John 14:16*). When someone was accused of something, someone would voluntarily, not by demand, step from the crowd, walk up, take his place beside the accused and speak on his behalf. He would speak in his defense. This is exactly what John is talking about here. You see, in the courtroom of heaven, God the Father is the Judge. And every sin is subject to the judgment of God. God the Father is the One who sent His Son into the world to die for our sin. Therefore, He is the One who is holding court here. When the devil, the prosecuting attorney runs to accuse us before the Father, which is what he does day by day. Then the Advocate, our defense attorney, now in heaven, steps alongside of us, takes His place and defends us. He speaks a word on our behalf. The Blood! Hallelujah! What gives Jesus Christ the right to plead the case of the believer? He is the only "*righteous one*." What is it that Jesus Christ pleads? For one thing...

- He does not plead the reputation of the believer.
- He does not plead the good works of the believer.
- He does not plead not guilty, that the believer did not commit sin.
- He does not plead the personal righteousness of the believer.
- He does not plead that the believer has been as good as he can be.

He pleads His own righteousness. How can He do this? It's in the next verse.

2:2 And he is the propitiation [or satisfaction] for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. Propitiation (Gk – *hilasmos*) is to sacrifice in order to appease; to satisfy; to cover; to pay the penalty for... It is a sacrificial word. In the Old Testament when a man sinned or something went wrong, he brought a sacrifice to God. The idea was that the sacrifice would appease and pacify God. It is connected with the blood that Jesus shed for us, **Chapter 1:7**, "*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.*"

Remember, the Mercy Seat was that solid gold piece that sat on top of the ark? What was in the ark? There were the tablets of the Law. The Law condemns all men, but on top of that was the Mercy Seat and God could look at man, not because He had fulfilled the Law, but because of the blood that was sprinkled on that Mercy Seat. When the High Priest would come in on the Day of Atonement, he would sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice on that Mercy Seat and immediately God said, "*I will meet you right there. I will fellowship with you in the blood at the Mercy Seat.*" "**Jesus is our Mercy Seat.**" It is through Him and His shed blood that we can enter into fellowship with God. His blood is not just a payment for our sin. It is the bridge that establishes a brand new relationship with God. Four things need to be said about propitiation:

1. God is the One who has to be appeased, satisfied. He is not the One to be reconciled to man. God already loves man. It is man who needs to be reconciled to God. God is righteous and holy and His righteousness and holiness have to be satisfied.
2. Jesus Christ is the propitiation, the satisfaction for sins. This means that His death was the perfect and ideal sacrifice.
3. **Propitiation** is the covering, the atonement. Christ covers our sins so that God no longer can see them.
4. **Propitiation** finds its' type in the mercy seat, that is in the lid of the ark where the sprinkling of the

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blood once a year with a perfect animal was made in the Old Testament. So, Christ's sacrificial death on the cross makes Divine forgiveness possible. It is God's mercy and grace in action to put us in a right relationship with Him.

Another Illustration:

³Bible teacher G. Campbell Morgan told of a coal miner who came to him and said, "I would give anything to believe that God would forgive my sins, but I cannot believe that He will forgive them if I just ask Him. It is too cheap." Morgan said, "My dear friend, have you been working today?" "Yes, I was down in the mine." "How did you get out of the pit? Did you pay?" "Of course not. I just got into to the cage and was pulled to the top." "Were you not afraid to entrust yourself to that cage? Was it not too cheap?" Morgan asked. "Oh no," said the miner, "it was cheap for me, but it cost the company a lot of money to sink the shaft." Suddenly the truth struck him. What had not cost him anything -- salvation -- had not come cheap to God. This miner had never thought of the great price God paid to send His Son so He could rescue fallen humanity. Now he realized that all anyone had to do was to "get into the cage" by faith.

2:3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. Hold up, right there tells a truth! Do we know Him? Ever doubt if you really "*know God*"? What happens after being saved a little while and your zeal gets zapped; your evangelism energy starts evaporating; you begin to wonder have I really been changed? The same temptations still are after me! The point is clear; we must know God and we know Him by keeping His commandments. You just don't know about Him, you know Him.

2:4 He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar. and the truth is not in him. You are intimately acquainted with Him. His Spirit and your spirit have meshed together. If not, we are "*a liar and the truth is not in us.*" Now, do we keep God's commandments? You cannot live habitually in sin and never sense the obligation and responsibility to obey Christ and claim to be a Christian.

2:5 But whosoever keepeth his word in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know that we are in him.

Ask yourself three questions?

1. **Am I Keeping His Word? "Keep"** is the word "*tereo*" which comes from the word that means a warden, one who guards, one who keeps an eye on, one who therefore obeys. When we received Christ into our hearts through repentance and faith, we know Him experientially. A person who is birthed into His Kingdom senses that responsibility, senses that need to obey Him because it is God's Spirit within him, leading him to change. When you know God, you will lead a righteous life, although sin is still prevalent. Yes, a believer can sin. But he cannot live that way habitually. The point is: you will be moving in the direction marked out by the righteousness of God!

2:6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

2. **Am I Following His example?** KJV says, "**Abide**" – to remain, to stay in position. This is a continuous action. Walk as Jesus would walk and that is by faith. "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise*" Jh.5:19. In other words, He submitted Himself absolutely in

³ <http://www.calvaryfullerton.org/Bstudy/62%201Jo/1998/621JO02A.htm>
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obedience to His Father. Even though He was equal to Him, as the Man He submitted Himself in obedience. Take notice and don't listen to what man say. Watch how man walk. This will tell you whether or not they are truly a believer. Our walk speaks a whole lot louder than our talk. It's not words that count, its actions.

Quote:

*It is not what we eat, but what we digest that makes us strong;
not what we gain but what we save that makes us rich;
not what we read but what we remember that makes us learned;
and not what we profess but what we practice that makes us Christians.
-- Author unknown*

POINT:

You see, there is something that happens when you get saved. There is something that happens within. Obedience is not some mechanical thing that you do just so you can get the privileges and the perks. Obedience is something that you are divinely motivated to do from within. It is His Spirit in you. His Spirit in you will always let you know, "This is what God wants and this is not what God wants." You still have a will to choose against that, but the way that you know that you are a believer is that you sense the responsibility, you sense the calling, you sense the awesomeness of God, you sense the fact that you must obey Him. If that is not there, there is something missing somewhere in your life.

How can I know that I am a believer? Something in me compels me to obey the Lord Jesus Christ. I may not always do it, but I am miserable when I don't. And I don't doubt my salvation for God is operating in my life on a consistent basis. I don't doubt it. Because that conviction of sin and the compulsion to obey Him keeps me understanding that I am obviously His.

2:7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

3. **Am I Showing His Love?** (2:7-8) This is not a new commandment but an old commandment. What is so new about it? **Jesus Christ!** Jesus Christ gave love a new meaning. Jesus...
- Loved not only friends, but enemies.
 - Loved not only good people, but bad people.
 - Loved not only the righteous, but the sinner.
 - Loved not only the acceptable, but the rejected.
 - Loved not only the clean, but the dirty.

*"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" Jh. 13:34-35. **By our love!*** Our discipleship and our knowledge of God can be measured by whether or not we love our brothers and sisters in the Lord. The person who truly follows God has the love of God in him.

2:8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. Another fact about the new commandment of love is that love is now made known by the true light that shines and erases the darkness. The darkness refers to man's old idea of love; that he could react against anyone who mistreated him. But Jesus Christ, who is the light of the world, has now shone forth the truth. What is happening here? If I am of the light, if I am enlightened, if Jesus is in my life, who is the Light and Life of the world, and if I am daily walking in His light, then something is happening to prove the fact that He lives in me. It is putting out darkness that is around me.

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2:9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. Can a believer hate someone? Certainly not! They may dislike what they do or what they stand for, but not hate. If they choose to walk in the darkness, this is the effect of darkness. If they live habitually that way and choose not to love their brother, then their testimony to the world that they know Jesus Christ becomes bogus at that point and they may not really know Him, and are still in darkness. When a person says that:

- they are in the light;
- they are in Christ;
- they believe in Christ;
- they have been baptized in Christ;
- they belong to the church;
- they take the Lord's Supper;
- they read the Word of God;
- they pray to God;
- they teach His Word, but hate his brother.

Hate goes beyond the realm of anger and is the complete opposite of love. Well now you say, I don't hate him, I just don't like him; I don't know how to get along with him, or he just turns me off—his appearance, his behavior, or he mistreated me. Whatever the reason, the enemy will fester those spirits into a root of bitterness, and that is surely not love!

2:10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. It's not just that we obey, but the idea that we are carefully studying God's ways, carefully looking at what is pleasing to Him, that we are careful to do all that God desires of us, still means we must love. We have the idea that if we love someone, then we have to always bend over backwards and never say anything that might possibly upset them. Yet Paul says that sometimes growing up involves "*speaking the truth in love*" Eph. 4:15. But as we are seeing here in 1John, we need to be sure that when it comes to discipline, it is never done in hatred or anger, but in love. Two wonderful things are said about the person who loves his brother:

1. He is a man who abides in the light, that is in Christ. You see Christ is love and love is in Christ. What does it mean to abide or walk in love? Scripture spells it out in 1Corth. 13.
2. The man who loves his brother has no occasion of stumbling in him. Love doesn't stumble another person.

Examples:

You might be okay with drinking a little wine with supper, and the Bible doesn't condemn drinking wine, it condemns drunkenness. Yet if you drink wine in front of someone who is an alcoholic, and they think to themselves, "well if he can do it, so can I", you are leading them into their sin, and hardly showing love to them.

Perhaps you feel you can handle watching a PG-13 movie with nudity in it. Perhaps you can honestly say that the scenes don't cause you to lust. But if you bring someone to that movie who admits they have a lust problem, are you showing love to them?

The word for "**stumbling**" is the word "*skandalon*." Scandal comes from that. It is the word that refers not to a trap that captures you, but it refers to the trigger that snaps the trap. There is a certain trigger which causes the trap to shut. It is not talking about the trap itself as much as it is talking about the trigger. In other words, you are going to pull the trigger on a trap that is already set if you choose not to love your brother. There is a trap there, and that trap will imprison you and that trap will injure you and may wreck your life like you have never known before when a believer chooses not to be consistent in loving his brother.

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2:11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whether he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

Two things:

1. He that hateth his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, not knowing where he's going.
2. The darkness can blind you.

Finally, there is the disorientation of walking in darkness. People who choose to walk in the darkness think they know where they are going. The picture here is of a person who hasn't got a clue where he's walking. He has no clear goal. He doesn't know where he is going. Why? because he has chosen to walk in darkness.

Example:

How often a person has opposed a good project simply because he was upset with the leader. The great good of the project is often clearly visible, but hatred blinds the mind and more tragically the heart so much so that a person makes a fool out of himself without even knowing it. Tragically, he often causes damage and division among people, and his soul is doomed to be in darkness forever. In the light you can see where you're going. In the darkness, you can't. Love gives direction for those who don't have the light. You have the light. Walk in the light. Love hurts in order sometimes to heal. The proof of that is the love you have sacrificed for your brother. It pays off!

2:12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. John uses the present tense and says *"I write to you."* He is not, of course, writing to literal children, in this passage. This metaphor refers to the level of spiritual maturity. In one sense all the believers are like little children. And at one time he could have said the same for himself. So, we see this is written to, because, and for. God is the one who has forgiven them.

4

To the little children among you, that is, the newborn Christians.	Because your sins are forgiven for Jesus' Name sake.
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If you are a newborn Christian, remember this: ●your sins are forgiven; ●you no longer are guilty of sin; ●you no longer are to be judged for sin; ●you no longer are to be condemned for sin; ●you no longer are to be punished for sin. You have trusted Jesus as the great Bearer of your sins. You believe that Jesus Christ took your sins upon Himself and bore the condemnation and punishment for them. You believe Jesus Christ became your substitute in bearing the judgment for your sins. Therefore, you are cleansed of sin and forgiven.

God forgives our sins for Christ's sake. God destined that Jesus Christ have many adopted brothers and sisters; many believers who follow and attach themselves to Him, worshipping and serving Him throughout eternity. It is for Christ's Name sake that young believers; young children in the faith remember what Christ has done, so they wouldn't fall back into the world, and its pleasures and possessions, but they are to focus and concentrate upon Jesus Christ, upon the glorious fact that He has made it possible for our sins to be forgiven. And they were to guard against returning to the world and its enticements for Christ's Name sake!

2:13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because we have known the Father. There are three groups addressed in this passage. John still uses the present tense. You might be still wondering is he addressing the various age groups in the church: the fathers, young men, and little children, for they would all be there in church including women. Why are

⁴ (chart of A Plummer. The Epistles of St. John. The Pulpit Commentary, Vol.22 ed. by HDM Spence and Joseph S. Exell. Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1950, p.23.)

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they not addressed? Well, the women are included, because he is addressing the various stages of spiritual growth.

To the spiritual fathers among you, that is the spiritually mature with a deep and rich knowledge of God.	Because you have known God and have been faithful from the beginning.
To the young men among you, that is, the mature believers.	Because you have overcome the wicked one.
To the little children among you, that is, the newborn Christians.	Because you have known the Father.

- We must never forget our spiritual growth; where we come from.
- We must never forget how we've grown in Christ from the beginning of our conversion; how far we've come.

Right after we accept Christ, the wicked one attacks us with far greater force than ever before, but we become overcomers as we stay faithful to Christ. Remembering and staying focused upon Jesus Christ is the only way a person can finish the Christian race faithfully and receive their reward. Continue to grow until He calls you home.

2:14 I have written unto you fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because we are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. But here, John uses the past tense when addressing the fathers and young men using *"I have written unto you..."* Because John has written to them, and this means they have matured.

To the spiritual fathers among you, that is the spiritually mature with a deep and rich knowledge of God.	Because you have known God and have been faithful from the beginning.
To the young men among you, that is, the mature believers.	Because you are strong, have the Word of God abiding in you, and have overcome the wicked one.

- We must never forget how God has grown and matured and developed us in Christ; our relationship with God.

Believers, no matter their stage of spiritual growth must never forget who it is they know: God the Father. We have the greatest privilege in all the world; the privilege of knowing God Himself; of being adopted into the very family of God, and of becoming a son or a daughter of God. The believer receives the great privilege of calling God *"Father."* Those that are rich in deep knowledge know Him and are faithful, but must never be lifted up in pride as though they know God and have arrived.

- Mature believers have strength, but must remember where their strength comes from (all through Jesus Christ). Believers must never trust the power of the flesh or mental determination.
- Mature believers must have the Word of God abiding in them, studying and living in the Word of God.

2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Is John telling us that we are to hate all material things? No, that's not what John is saying. The Gnostics taught that everything physical and material was bad and only the spiritual was good. They went so far as to say God could not have become man because the body is evil. However, the Bible tells us that after God created the world He said, *"It is good"*. So what is this *"world"* that John talks about? John is talking about a way of thinking or an approach to life. If you will, John is talking about worldliness, or living our lives by the values of the world rather than the values of God. The world is a system or order of man-made governments and societies, some good and some bad, but none perfect. The world means a system of sin—lust, evil, and pride. It is full of people who are in rebellion against God. Therefore, believers must not love this sinful system or order of the world.

Authentic faith is not of the world, but rather knowing and believing the truth about Jesus Christ. Choose either to love the world or to love the Father. You cannot straddle the line. The Father is a jealous lover

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who deserves and demands total allegiance. Loving the Father begins at the cross when you receive His supreme gift of love, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the substitute for our sins.

The people to whom John is writing are church members. They have professed Christ, yet John has to charge them not to love the world. Some in the church had returned or were apparently about to return to the world. Scriptures pronounces the terrible truth; "*the love of the father is not in [them].*" Three things happen to believers that cause them to return to the world and to love the world.

1. Some begin to enjoy nature and the beauty of earth so much that they no longer worship regularly. They forsake the worship of God and the study of His Word in order to be out in nature—fishing, golfing, hiking, camping, etc.
2. Some become so involved in man's government and social organizations that they become more attached and faithful to them than they do to God and His church and its mission of salvation.
3. Some become so hungry for the world and its things that they begin to return to its pleasures and possessions.

2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. Worldliness begins in the heart and characterized by three attitudes.

1. **Lust**—desire, craving, longing, desire for what is forbidden.
 - a. **Lust of the flesh** (*Read Gal.5:19-21*).
 - b. *James 1:13-15 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: (14) But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. (15) Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*
 - i. "**Lust**" refers to a strong desire or impulse
 - ii. "**Flesh**" refers to our fallen nature, which is not eradicated at salvation.
 - c. The desire God created in us is to be concentrated and focused on the things that God has put before us. But when that focus becomes the things of the flesh and pleasing the flesh, then that is the lust that we are never to love. That is a lust that did not come from God. It came from this world and the one who rules in it.
 2. **Materialism**—craving and accumulating things.
 - a. **Lust of the eyes.** The word for "**Eyes**" is "*ophthalmos.*" We get the word ophthalmology from it. It primarily means the physical eye through which the inner perceptions are formed as we view the outer world. In the spiritual sense, what our eyes delight to look upon depicts our inner spiritual condition.
 - b. What do you enjoy looking at? What do you enjoy watching? That will tell you something about what is going on inside. It is feeding it. The more you look at it, the more it feeds the lust of the flesh which wants to be pleased and pampered.
 - c. The flesh is activated by what it sees. Make a covenant with your eyes that you will look on the things that God wants in your life.
 - i. If you were driving down the road and your eye caught something and you fixated on this object even after you had driven past it, your car would eventually veer off the road or crash into another vehicle. This illustrates that what we focus on will determine where we go.
 - ii. Just channel surfing and your eyes come upon something, and you just immediately

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know, this is not for my eyes; lust can't live here.

3. **Pride**—obsession with one's status or importance.

a. **Pride of life.**

- i. "**Pride**" tells you that this person is self-centered and focused upon himself and wants people to notice him. It is the word "*alazonia*." It means thinking of oneself to be what he is not. You've seen people so proud of what they have done, they keep talking about it, and the hope is, they will never have to leave it—this reminds me of the rich young ruler who could not give all he had to the poor for Salvation.
- ii. The word "**Life**" is the key here. It is not the word "*zoe*," which means the essence of life. That is what Jesus is. It is the word "*bios*" meaning basically that it is life in its physical manifestation, referring to that which one has and that which one does; a boastful pride in who I am and what I have. That there is probably nothing beyond this life, therefore, he is to get all the comfort, pleasure, luxury, honor, and glory that he can while here.

b. Pride drives the eyes to look upon the things that will feed the flesh.

When the serpent tempted Eve (Gen.3:6), he tempted her in these areas. When the devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness, these were his three areas of attack (Matt.4:1-11). All of these, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, work together and they are not from the Father. They are from the world. We are not to love these things that trigger the flesh to act like the world and cause us to stumble where the Father is not seen in us.

2:17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. We are challenged as to why we are not to love the world. It is because in verse 17, "*And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.*" John is drawing a contrast for us.

- One part of the contrast is, "*things that are passing away.*" It is like a river and a rock. A river is constantly flowing away. It is going away. You can have a little boy put his sail boat in the river and he will watch the sailboat go away and disappear. It is moving away. Every bit of it is passing away. Not only the world, but he says the lusts are passing away. What does that mean? It means your body is dying. The world and its lusts pass away at death.
- The second contrast is that "*he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*" Remember the example of the river and a rock. Well the river is constantly flowing away, but the rock is something that is steady, stable and it will always be there. This is what he is saying, why would you anchor yourself to something that is temporary and passing away?

The luster and the prided man holds on to the world and its worldly desires, while the obedient man does the will of God, and will abide (stay steadfast) forever. He knows something; the world will pass away. It is important to know this, for it means that the lusts of the world will pass away as well. He will not be able to take a single pleasure or possession with him when he leaves this world. He loses all of the world's accumulation that he had enjoyed. It is of naught! A new heaven and earth will be created by God where only righteousness will dwell. This is the reason the obedient and wise man turns away from the world and turn to God. He truly wants God and the life God offers—the life that is both abundant and eternal. Therefore, he seeks after the will of God, to do what God commands so that he may live with God forever.

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SUMMARY:

⁵John makes it clear that Christians do not have to sin (2:1). The death of Christ was sufficient to care for the sins of the whole world (2:2). There is no such thing as limited atonement! The result of a believers new life in Christ should be a life lived according to His commandments (2:3-4). Further proof that we belong to God can be found in the fact that our lives are consistent with His Word (2:5). It is not enough just to declare truth with our lips, it must be lived out in our lives (2:5- 6). *D.L. Moody once said, "A Christian is either a walking Bible or a walking label."* Up to this point John has been talking about "the commandments" in general; but now he focuses on one single commandment and that is that God's people love one another (2:7-8).
⁶When a Christian says that he loves the brethren, while he actually hates another believer he is a liar (2:9).

What happens to a believer who does not love the brethren? It brings the following tragic results:
This person lives in darkness, though he probably thinks he is living in the light (2: 9).

This person becomes a cause of stumbling (2:10).

This person is stunted in his spiritual growth (2:11).

⁷John points out three categories of believers, three stages of spiritual development. The three stages of Christian growth are children, fathers, and young men (2:12-14). John writes to little children (that is new Christians), because your sins are forgiven for His name's sake. He writes...

- *"I write unto you, little children" (2:12).*
- *"I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the father" (2:13).*
- *"I write unto you, fathers (spiritual mature with a deep rich knowledge of God) because you have known Him that is from the beginning" (2:13, 14).*
- *"I write unto you, young men, (mature believers) because you have overcome the wicked one," (2:13); "because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you" (2:14).*

John adds, don't continue your love for the world (meaning after you have been saved) (2:15). ⁸John points out that the world system uses three devices to trap Christians: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (2:16). The world is passing, and its lust; but the one who does the will of God abides forever (2:17).

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⁵ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/tests-of-true-knowledge/>

⁶ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/i-john-27/>

⁷ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/i-john-212/>

⁸ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/worldliness-is-a-matter-of-the-heart/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

I JOHN 3:1-24NEXT 4:7-21

SYNOPSIS:

1. What we are - "sons of God" (3:1)
2. What we shall be - "like him" (3:2)
3. What we should be - "pure" (3:3)

3:1-10 (3:1) tells us who we are—members of God’s family. (3:2) tells us who we are becoming—reflections of God. (3:3) tells us the incentive of God’s love—live pure lives. John does not deny that Christians sin. There is the need for deliverance for whoever commits sin, that is, keeps on sinning, for they transgress the law (3:4). The **provision for deliverance**: Christ took away our sins, for He had no sin (3:5). The **proof of deliverance**: abiding in Christ we do not sin and if we sin we have not known Him (3:6). We are not to be deceived about the matter of sin and righteousness (3:7). For the person who keeps on sinning is of the devil, for the devil sinned from the beginning. The Son of God came to earth for this purpose—to destroy the works of the devil (3:8). The **result of deliverance**: whosoever is born of God does not commit sin; for God’s seed remains in him and he cannot sin because he is born of God (3:9). Therefore, love reveals one’s true nature. It will show that one is either a child of God or of the devil (3:10). God loves us and makes us His children. There is no greater love than the love of God. Why? - Because He loves us, He is bound to show us His love. The world will not know Him unless love is practiced among the brethren (3:1-10).

3:11 **For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.** John was not teaching something new. Since the beginning of gospel proclamation, love has been the central theme of Christianity. John emphasizes what they heard from the beginning through the apostles: the proclamation that we should love one another.

3:12 **Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.** Love does not persecute the righteous. The extreme case is used to illustrate the point—that of murder. Cain did not love his brother, therefore he was of that wicked one, the devil, and persecuted his brother. Cain committed the very first murder on earth: he killed his own brother Abel. Why? - Because Abel was a believer. Abel believed God; that he was to worship God exactly like God said, by the blood of a sacrificial animal. Cain did not accept such a belief. He felt that if he brought the fruit of his own hands to God, then God would accept him because of his hard work and because he worshipped and gave offerings to God. God accepted Abel’s worship and offering, but not Cain’s. Therefore, he became jealous and envious of Abel and killed him.

3:13 **Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.** John says don’t be surprised; don’t wonder, if we love Christ, and the world persecutes us, they hated Christ because they do not know Him. People who live good lives expose and shame those who don’t. If we live for God, the world will often hate us because we make them painfully aware of their immoral way of living.

⁹ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/a-clear-description-of-gods-children/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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3:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Love is the proof that one has passed from death to life. A lack of love indicates that one is spiritually dead; abides in death. Spiritual death speaks of a person who is dead while still lives.

- A person who wastes his life in riotous living is spiritually dead.
- A person who has not partaken of Christ is spiritually dead.
- A person who does not have the spirit of Christ is said to be spiritually dead.
- A person who lives in sin is spiritually dead.
- A person who is alienated from God is said to be spiritually dead.
- A person who sleeps in sin is spiritually dead
- A person who lives in sinful pleasure is dead while he lives.
- A person who does not have the Son of God is dead.
- A person who does great religious works, but does the wrong works is dead.

3:15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Someone who is characterized by hate has never experienced the new birth. Love doesn't hate, so whoever hates his brother is a murderer. Hate is equal to murder. Many people feel that they are acceptable to God and that God will never reject them, yet they have all kinds of negative feelings against others. A person who hates has the very same feelings and spirit that the murderer does—a spirit of anger, bitterness, and contempt. God looks and judges by the heart. Some can camouflage what is in their heart, but not from God. Note: no murderer has eternal life, and the same implications are also for the person who hates his brother.

3:16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. John is saying: by this we know love; we know what real love is. It's from Christ's example in dying for us.

- When we were without strength, totally unable to help ourselves or to save ourselves (Rom.5:6).
- When we were ungodly (Rom.5:6).
- When we were sinners (Rom.5:8).
- When we were enemies of God, rebelling, cursing, neglecting, ignoring, denying, and rejecting God (Rom.5:10).

Despite all this, Jesus Christ died for us; God took our sins and the guilt and placed them upon Jesus, and He paid the judgment for all. Why? - Because He loves us enough to die for us, even when we opposed Him. He has done all this for us. It comes down to what we ought to do. The real test of Christian love is not simply failure to do evil to others, but will you lay down your life for the brethren! The meaning is that saints ought to risk their lives, and expose themselves to dangers, for the sake of their brethren. We prove whether or not we know the love of Christ by our love for others, even for those who do us evil.

3:17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?— "*This world's good*" relates to necessities of life; livelihood; the means to sustain life. This is not to mean that a person must be rich to be obligated to his brother. It only means that he has the sustenance that his brother needs. However, if we have the bare necessities of life and see a person in need, how can we close our hearts against him and say that God's love dwell in us?

3:18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. ¹⁰One may love

¹⁰ http://biblehub.com/1_john/3-18.htm
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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in word only, and yet the affectionate words may be quite sincere; and this is a common case. People say kind things which they mean at the moment, but afterwards they do not take the trouble to act kindly. But to love with the tongue only is far worse. This is to say kind things which one does not mean, and which one knows to be unreal. Deeds are needed to complete the kind word; truth is needed to correct the insincere tongue.

3:19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. "*Hereby*" refers to what was said in verse 18. Our deed and truth play a tremendous part in our action of love we demonstrate toward others. We are to practice real love, not just talk about it. When we do that kind of love (love in action), it gives our hearts assurance and confidence coming before God. We are of the truth because others feel our love. We are of the truth because we do what we say when we're going to do—being real disciples under the real Shepherd—belonging to God who is Truth.

3:20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. So, if our heart (our conscience), condemns us, we don't have that assurance and confidence to come before Him, for His greatness is greater than our hearts. And we want to please God, for He knows all things about us, and will correct our behavior. He knows how to deliver us from guilt and condemnation and He knows how to remove all condemnation from our hearts. How? By love! - By loving us so much that He would give His only begotten Son to die for us.

3:21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. If our conscience is clear, then we really have that confidence to come toward God; having nothing in our way. Our hearts are full of assurance and confidence knowing that all things are well with us and God. There is no more condemnation or guilt. We know that we are forgiven and cleansed through the blood of Jesus.

3:22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. This lets us know that when we keep God's commandments, and do what pleases the Father, whatever we ask; whatever we pray, we receive of God (mind you, do you see the stipulation; the condition?). The only way we can receive the things we ask is to obey God. He cannot reward our unfaithfulness nor our disobedience. If a child disobeys his father, he displeases his father. The same is true with God.

3:23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. If a person wants a clean heart, he must do these two things in this verse:

1. First, he must believe on the name of God's Son Jesus Christ. What does it mean to believe on the name? A person's name stands for what he is; the kind of person he is; and the kind of things he does. Therefore, to believe on the name of Jesus Christ means to believe in all that He stands for and in all that He is. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Promised Savior and Messiah of the world!
 - a. He is the Son of God who has come to earth to reveal God.
 - b. He is the great advocate and sacrifice for man and his sins.

Believing on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is the only way a person can ever have a clean heart before God.

2. Second, he must love all others. This is God's commandment to us.

3:24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us. The person who keeps God's commandments (believing in His Name and loves others) dwells in God and God in him.

- We dwell in God: This means that we take up residence in God, live and walk in Him, live and move

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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and have our being in Him. It means we make our home in Him.

- God dwells in us: This means that He takes up residence in us, lives and moves, and has His being within us. It means that God makes a home in our hearts.

How do we know God dwells in us? - By the Holy Spirit!— *"we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us."* The Holy Spirit of God seals and guarantees us, gives us absolute assurance. He lives in us, talks to us, shares with us, leads and guides us, disciplines us, convicts and convinces us. He is our constant and permanent companion. He never leaves us nor forsakes us. He is always infusing us with the assurance and confidence of God with His presence and power.

SUMMARY:

The message heard from the beginning was of love; love one another (3:11). The example given was of Cain who was wicked and slew his brother Abel. Cain's works were evil but his brother Abel's was righteous (3:12). Even though you are to love one another, don't be surprised if the world hates you (3:13). If we love other Christians it proves that we have been delivered from hell and given eternal life. But a person who doesn't have love for others is headed for eternal death (3:14). Anyone who hates his Christian brother is really a murderer; a murderer does not have eternal life within (3:15). (3:11-15)

¹¹Christ left an example for us as He willingly laid down His life for us (3:16). This means serving with no thought of receiving anything in return. The test of Christian love is not in great testimonies about love, but in quietly helping a brother who is in need (3:17-18). If we do not even help a brother, it is not likely we would ever *"lay down our lives for the brethren."* Love of the brethren is an indication that one is *"of the truth"*, just as it was an indication that one had passed from death to life (3:19; 3:14). If our own hearts condemn us, God knows it, for He's greater and knows all things (3:20). And if we don't have condemning hearts our conscience is clear and we are able to come before God with confidence (3:21). Then whatever we ask in prayer, we'll receive, because we keep God's commandments and do the things that please Him (3:22). He gives us the commandment: believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another (3:23). So as we keep His commandments, we dwell in Him, and He in us. He does this by the gift of His Holy Spirit He has given to abide in us (3:24). (3:16-24).

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¹¹ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/love-is-an-action-not-a-feeling/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

SYNOPSIS

1 John 4:7-12 "**Beloved**" is how John starts many of his passages. He's telling the people of Ephesus that they are much loved. He does not want them to forget that! There were so many wrong ideas he wanted to correct. He wanted them to know the truth as he calls them "*dearly loved friends*." Everyone believes love is important, but we usually think of it as a feeling, but, in reality, love is a choice and an action. **Loving one another proves seven things:**

1. that we are born of God and know God (4:7-8).
2. that we see God's love, because He revealed His love by sending His only begotten Son showing us how to love one another (4:9-11).
 - God saved mankind by giving us a Savior, His Son to die as our propitiation; appeasement—God's mercy and grace in action to put us in right relationship with Him.
 - Therefore, "*Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought to love one another.*" - **It's our Demonstration.**
3. that God's Spirit dwells within us growing stronger as we love one another (4:12-13).
 - **We cannot see God, because He is Spirit; "No man hath seen God at any time..."** Jh.1:18.
¹²**What we can see is His effect. We cannot see the wind, but we can see what it can do. We cannot see electricity, but we can see the effect it produces. The effect of God is love.**
 - God is only known by Love, only by His Spirit who dwells within the believers. Therefore, when a person honors God's Son by believing, God takes that person and puts His Spirit into the person, thereby maturing His love more and more in us.

4:13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. How do we know that we dwell in God and He in us? - By the power of the Holy Spirit whom the Father has given us. The Spirit bears witness within our spirit by His continuous relationship and we continue to trust and obey God's Word.

4:14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Loving one another proves...

4. that our testimony and confession are true (4:14-16). The apostles have seen and testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. We today know and testify by His Spirit. God's love for us was proven by the sacrificial death of His Son, Jesus.

4:15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. By the Father sending the Son to be the Savior of the world, those who make confession and believe Jesus is the Son of God, God will dwell in him and he in God. Therefore, our confession brings the great promise.

4:16a And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. This all builds up to the fact that we

¹² <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/love-is-an-action/>
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have a great confession: known to us (by the Holy Spirit) and believed (by faith) the love God has in regard to us.

4:16b God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Dwelling in God, who is Love will surely produce love in us. Three points to stress:

1. God is love.
2. Believers must love.
3. If we dwell in love, then we dwell in God and God dwells in us. God is joined to us and we to Him.

4:17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. Loving one another proves...

4. that God perfects our love, giving us boldness in the Day of Judgment (4:17).

A Day of Judgment is coming when all persons will be brought before the great Judge Himself. But note the most wonderful thing: we can be delivered from judgment. How? – By living a life of love. Perfect love is the love that has been perfected in us by God, to love others. If we allow love to live itself out through us, then we will have boldness in the Day of Judgment. Such love casts out fear, giving boldness in the day of judgment. The more we love, the more we grow; the more we grow, the more we become perfected in love. And the more we grow and become perfected in love, the more assurance and boldness we have about the future judgment. God will give us the assurance that we shall not be judged, but on the contrary, we shall be rewarded.

4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. Loving one another proves...

5. that God delivers us from fear (4:18).

- If we really love someone, there is no need to fear him.
- Perfect love casts out fear. When love grows, fear can't stay. The two are incompatible. Therefore, growing love fulfills perfect (complete) love.
- Because fear has torment, it shows that it thinks about and expects punishment or suffering or loss. A person feels that something is going to happen to him. Fear causes anxiety, dread, alarm, fright, panic, and terror.
- Fear means that a person is not perfected in love.
 - The person is not fully grasping the love and care of God for him.
 - The person is not loving other people like he should; not growing more and more in love. And fear can have our eyes upon self, not upon God.

We can resolve our fears first by focusing on His immeasurable love for us, then we can allow Him to love others through us.

4:19 We love him, because he first loved us. Loving one another proves...

6. that we love God (4:19-21). How do we know that we love God? There are three ways:

1. Because He first loved us. When Adam sinned, He loved us; when we were lost in sin, He loved us; before Jesus even went to the cross, He loved us, when Jesus was nailed to the cross, He love us; when Jesus was beaten, He loved us; when Jesus died on the cross He loved us; and when He resurrected Jesus, surely He loved us, which meant we were able to be resurrected also. He has given us another chance.

Hallelujah! From the beginning of the foundation of the world God so loved us!

4:20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother

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whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?– We love God...

2. Because we do not hate our brother. If we love God, it is impossible to hold feelings against our brother. Why? – Because the Word says, 4:16b "*God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*" Therefore, if we have the nature of God in us, then we will also love our brother. John says we can't pretend to love our brother and still hate him. Love has to be practiced, especially on our brother.

4:21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also. We love God... Because we keep His commandment. What is His commandment? If we love God we are to love our brothers also. People say that they love God, well then the stipulation is that they will have to love his brother too. *Mark 12:30-31 "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your.*

SUMMARY:

When we become Christians, we receive the Holy Spirit. God's presence in our lives is proof that we really belong to Him and gives us the power to love. We know and testify by God's Spirit that the Father sent His Son to be the Savior of the world for He shows us how to love one another. Our confession allows Jesus to dwell in us and we in Him; believing at all times that God loves us (4:13-16a).

God is love and believers must love. If we dwell in love, for He dwells in us, then we dwell in God! "*As we live with Christ, our love grows more perfect and complete; so we will not be ashamed and embarrassed at the Day of Judgment, but can face Him with confidence and joy, because He loves us and we love him too.*" Fear is not an option, for perfect love casts out fear. Fear causes torment when it's not made perfect in love. God loved us first. If we see our brother everyday and yet hate him, but say we love God whom we haven't seen, we are liars, pretending to love our brother while hating him. As we are commanded, love your brother as you love God. Love has to be practiced, especially on our brother (4:16b-21).

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5:1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. How can we tell if we really believe in the only living and true God? This is the discussion of this last chapter of First John. We must be born of God? If we have been born of God, then we definitely have believed in God. God would not have given His divine nature to a person who does not believe in Him. Therefore, if we have the divine nature of God, if we have been truly born again, then we believe in God, and He is our living and true God. But how can we tell if we have been born of God?

1. The saved person believes Jesus is the Christ (5:1, 5).

- **believing Jesus is the Christ (5:1)**; believes that Jesus is God's Son; God Incarnate; begotten of God; our Savior, then, in that belief, one is born of God. Being "*born of God*" means a spiritual birth, a rebirth of one's spirit, a new life, a renewed soul, a regenerated spirit. The new birth is so radical a change in a person's life that it can be described only as being born again. Something so wonderful happens to the soul that it is just like a new birth. It is a spiritual birth, a birth beyond the grasp of man's hands and efforts. It is so radical, so life-changing, and so wonderful that it can be wrought only by the love and power of God Himself!

- **The new birth is a necessity.** A person will never see (Jh.3:3) nor ever enter (Jh.3:5) the Kingdom of God unless he is born again (Jh.3:7).
- **The new birth is a spiritual birth**, the birth of a new power and spirit in our lives. It is not reformation of the old nature (Rom.6:6). It is the actual creation of a new birth within— spiritually.
 - By water, even the Spirit ▪ By the Will of God (Jam.1:18) ▪ By incorruptible seed, even by the Word of God (1 Pt.1:23) ▪ By God from above (1 Pt.1:3) ▪ By Christ who gives both the power and right to be born again (Jh.1:12-13).
- **The new birth is a definite experience**, a real experience.
 - By believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (1 Jh.5:1) ▪ By the gospel as it is shared by believers (1 Cor.4:15; Phile.10) ▪ By the Word of God (1 Pt.1:23) or by the Word of Truth (Jam.1:18).
- **The new birth is a changed life**, a totally new life. A person proves that he is born again...
 - By doing righteous acts (1 Jh.2:29) ▪ By not practicing sin (1Jh.3:9; 5:18) ▪ By loving other believers (1 Jh.4:7) etc.

A person who is "*born of God*" loves God; he can't help it! God just floods our hearts with His love, and others that are His children love him too.

5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

2. **The saved person loves and obeys God (5:2-4).**

- **Love God and others; obey His commandments (5:1b-3).** The person who really believes God, really casts himself upon God and does what God says; depends upon God's Word and believes His Word works. The key is believing who God says He is, then you can love Him and obey Him.

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5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. If we love God, this is not an optional commandment, obey God, then we can love one another. There is no other way to show God that we love Him, except by doing what He says. Some people think that God's commandments are grievous, burdensome; it restricts them, but the exact opposite is true, we have to remember that His love is rewarding.

- Jesus Christ gives rest to the soul.
- Jesus Christ never allows a trial or temptation to come upon a person beyond what the person can bear.
- Jesus Christ gives a person the greatest hope; the greatest promises of reward in all the world.
- God gives all true believers His Spirit, and the Spirit gives all the assurance that one could ever need.
- God gives the true believer fellowship with Himself and with Christ, and floods the heart of the believer with joy.

5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

- Overcomers are born of God and this victory that overcomes the world is our faith (5:4). Being born of God has brought about a renewed soul; a regenerated spirit. Our victory over the world is our faith in Jesus Christ.

5:5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?—

- **The person who overcomes the world is the person who believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (5:5).**
 - That means that God gives the believer victory over all the trials and temptations of Life.
 - That means that God gives the believer victory over all the forces and difficulties of life.
 - That means God gives the believer victory over sin.
 - That means that God gives the believer victory over death.
 - That means that God gives the believer victory over judgment.
 - That means that God gives the believer victory over fear and despair and fills him with love, joy, and peace.
 - That means that God gives the believer victory over Satan and all other spiritual forces.
3. The saved person has his prayers answered (5:14-15).
 4. The saved person does not live in continuous sin (5:18-21).

SUMMARY:

Everyone that believes Jesus is the Christ is born of God. Then everyone who loves the Father loves the one who is born of Him—we are His children, begotten of Him. The proof comes when we keep His commandments and they are not troublesome; grievous. Those that are born of God overcome the world's ways. And that overcoming victory over the world's ways is our faith, believing that Jesus is the Son of God (5:1-5).

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