

**THE BIBLE SPEAKS:  
STUDIES FROM THE WORD OF GOD**



**HAROLD CAMPING**

# 1 John: God's Great Love

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## Chapter 1

We are going to be carefully going through the book of *First John* in order to see what God will teach us. This book is found near the end of the New Testament, and is also referred to as *The First Epistle of John*.

There is one subject we want to address before we get into this first chapter. We often make reference to the writer of a book in the Bible. For example, we say that the Apostle Paul wrote the Epistles, Matthew wrote the book of Matthew, John wrote 1 John and Revelation, the prophet Isaiah wrote the book of Isaiah, and so on. So we get the impression that the Bible was written by various writers. But when we get used to looking at the whole Bible, we come up with a different conclusion altogether. God used many people to pen the words in the Bible. So how do we know what to trust? Can we dare say that God Himself wrote the entire Bible?

What we must never lose sight of is the fact that the entire Bible is the infallible – which means absolutely correct - Word of God. God is the author of the Bible, which is His Book. We can say with no hesitation that the author of the Bible is God Himself.

But God used many people to serve as His scribes. A scribe is someone who writes something down as if he himself is the author. King David made this declaration in 2 Samuel 23:2: **“The spirit of the LORD spake by me, and His word was in my tongue.”** And we read in Jeremiah 36, for example, that God told the prophet Jeremiah to write into a book the words that God would give him.

God declared in 2 Peter 1:21 these important words: **“For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”** That is to say, as God wrote the Bible, He gave the words to the writers.

The writers of the Bible did not write their own words, but wrote God's words, as God gave them. That is why we can say with

confidence that the entire Bible came from the mouth of God. That is why we can say that the whole Bible is infallible; that is, it has no errors in it.

The translators of the Bible have occasionally made errors in translation, which is why there is no perfect translation, and we want to be careful to use the best possible version of the Bible, such as the King James Version. But the Word of God itself is perfect and infallible, as God wrote it.

God is the ultimate author of every word in the Bible, in the original manuscripts. That is why even though the Bible was written over a period of about 1,500 years, it is a very cohesive whole. So when we read a verse in the Bible we know we are reading the words that God put there for us to read. This is the only way we can understand how the whole Bible came into existence.

Indeed we can read in 2 Timothy 3:16 this very important statement: **“All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”**

With this statement, God is assuring us that every part of the Bible is to be understood as coming directly from God, and is therefore absolutely trustworthy as the Word of God. This is a stupendous proof that every word in the original manuscripts is trustworthy, and certain to be from the mouth of God - and there is no one in the universe who is more important than God Himself.

To be sure we understand that the entire Bible came from God, God gives this warning at the very end of the Bible, in Revelation 22:18-19:

**For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of this prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.**

What a solemn declaration! Are we listening? In other words, it is all or none. We cannot claim that parts of the Bible came from God and parts were written by men and are therefore not trustworthy. That is not possible, and is not right. We must realize that the Bible as it was

laid out and printed came entirely from Almighty God, and we put our entire trust in it.

If we doubt even one verse of the Bible, then we must doubt the entire Bible. That is why God gives us this very strong warning – we are not allowed to take anything away from what is written, or to add anything else. The Bible is complete as it stands.

With that principle firmly in mind, let us begin our study of the book of First John. God was guiding the Apostle John as he wrote in 1 John 1:1-2:

**1. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;**

**2. (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)**

The questions we immediately are faced with are: What was from the beginning? And, who are the “we” in these verses? First of all, what is **“that which was from the beginning”**?

We know from the first verse in the Bible, Genesis 1:1, that **“in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”** This was the beginning of the world as we know it. We also find reference to the beginning in the Gospel of John, chapter 1 verse 1, where we read: **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”**

So that which was from the beginning must be speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, for He is the very Word of God. He clearly identifies with the Word, and He is the Creator.

Secondly, we read here in 1 John 1:1, **“which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon.”** Who does “we” refer to?

God does not specifically give us this information. However, by virtue of the characteristics of what is declared in these verses, we can come to the conclusion that “we” refers to those who spent time with Jesus while He was physically present here on earth. The ones who spent the most time with Jesus were His 12 disciples, including the Apostle John, who is considered to be the writer of this book.

John is declaring that they have heard and seen and looked upon and handled the Word of life, who is Christ Himself. They bear witness that Jesus is the source of eternal life. He was with the Father, and now has shown it unto us. These things did happen, without any question. They are witnesses. Three times in the first three verses it is stated that they have seen it. They were eye-witnesses of the Lord Jesus and all that He said and did, so we know that what they wrote is dependable. These words of testimony were written for all who would read them.

We go on in verse 3:

**3. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.**

They now declare these things unto you, the readers, for the purpose of having fellowship with them, and ultimately with the Father and Jesus Christ His Son. We want to have fellowship with Christ, who is our Lord if we are a child of God.

And then in verse 4, the Bible declares,

**4. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.**

Why will these words give us joy? Because it is through Christ that we can be filled with joy.

Christ spoke similar words in the Gospel of John, chapter 15 verse 11, where He declared: **“These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be full.”**

God wants us to be filled with joy, but it is the joy that only He can give us, and is a result of our relationship with Christ. What a wonderful relationship! The eye-witnesses of Jesus are writing these things about Christ in order that we might have this kind of wonderful joy. Our joy will be full!

As we go on in this passage we will see how we are to walk in fellowship with Christ, and we will receive more instruction from God as to how we are to live as a child of God.

We read on in 1 John 1:5-7:

**5. This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.**

**6. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:**

**7. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.**

We don't know how that cleansing power of God works in our life when we bring testimony and bring the truth, but we know that this is a Biblical principle that God gives us. We have fellowship with Him if we are in the light as He is in the light, and that can be evidence that we have been cleansed from our sins.

To walk in the light means that every action and desire in our life is to be altogether obedient to the Lord Jesus, who is our King. That is what we have to think about when we claim to walk in the light. Am I really obedient to the Lord Jesus, and is He really the King of my life? It means that we will want to constantly examine what we believe and what we do, that truly our chief concern will be the complete obedience to Christ. That means we will constantly engage in examination of our life, to see if our actions are in agreement with our testimony. If our action is not in agreement with our testimony, then we are lying, and this is deadly serious in regard to our spiritual life.

The message being proclaimed here in 1 John 1 is that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. Christ is the light of life. When Christ was here upon earth, He had declared this openly and publicly. We read His words in John 8:12: **"I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."**

Christ Himself declared that He is the light of the world. We would never contest this statement. But the issue is: if He is the light of the world, do I, who claim to belong to Christ, follow Him very obediently? If I don't, then I don't want that light. If we are walking with Christ, we are walking in the light. We are no longer under the darkness of sin. If we are not walking in the light, we are walking in sin. Am I walking in the path that is the Lord Jesus, or am I walking in my own path?

Walking in darkness is terminology that refers to an unsaved person, because that person is walking in his own light, not in the light of Christ. The entire world is in spiritual darkness and in need of the light of Christ, who is the giver of eternal life. That is why we try so hard

to share the Gospel with the world wherever we can – the Gospel of the light of Christ.

What about those who say they have fellowship with Christ but actually walk in darkness? To “say” is to use words, but to “walk” is to use actions. In other words, if we say we have fellowship with Christ, we should be living a life that shows this to be true. There should be an on-going desire to have Jesus as the King and Owner of my life if I am walking with Him. If we say, “I know I am a child of God,” then we should be able to examine our lives honestly and examine the evidence of how we are living, to see if we are walking in a way that is pleasing to the Lord.

What is the light? The light of God is the Gospel, and has to do with doing His will. If we find that we are disobeying a law of God, we must make correction. That can be a situation that develops in the life of a child of God. This is the moment of truth: where is our daily walk? In the light, or in the darkness? Are we walking with Christ or walking with our own rules? If that is the case, we must pray for wisdom, and pray that God will guide us into His light.

There is no darkness at all in God. If we are still living in sin, then we are in spiritual darkness, and we are not in fellowship with Christ. To live in sin means to live in a disobedient way, and that is something we have to examine in our lives. We should be very serious about this. If we are not following Christ, we are not in the truth.

Our walk with the Lord must be according to God’s standards and ideas, not our own standards and ideas. That is why it is so wonderful that we have the Bible, and we have the principles of how we are to walk given to us in the Bible. And we should not fail to read the Bible again and again, and bring our concerns to the Lord, and pray for wisdom. We want to do it God’s way, and only God’s way. We know that the Bible’s standards are superior to those we find in our own thinking.

We can know we are a child of God because we are walking in His commandments, the way He has proclaimed that walk to be. So we should not hesitate to study our walk, and proclaim to others how they should walk. It is so wonderful that we can pray; we can cry out to God, “Oh God, give me truth. I don’t know what to do in this situation.” We must never forget the importance of prayer and the activity of prayer. It should be part of every believer’s life as he struggles to come closer to God.

This then is when we have true fellowship with Christ, as we follow Him. As we had read in 1 John 1:3, **“truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”** That is our true fellowship that we seek for and long for, and will find if we are a child of God.

We can of course have fellowship with other believers. We can talk about the Lord and about the Bible, and sing songs of worship. This is very enjoyable and uplifting for Christian brothers and sisters in the Lord. But ultimately our fellowship is with God.

God has more to say about fellowship. For example, we read in 1 Corinthians 1:9: **“God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”**

On the contrary, we read in Ephesians 5:11: **“Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”**

God is here again warning us against the darkness of sin. We are to be in the light of Christ, and to have nothing at all to do with the works of darkness in this world. If we are a child of God, we are called unto the fellowship of Jesus Christ. He is the only light in this dark world. This is the message being proclaimed in 1 John.

We now read in verses 8, 9 and 10 of 1 John 1:

**8. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.**

**9. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just 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.**

The word “just” in verse 9 has to do with the righteousness of God. God is absolutely righteous and perfect in all that He does, and when we talk about anything Jesus does, it is always perfectly just.

Clearly God is making the point that we are all sinners. We don't like this one bit, but here is a fact that we have to live with as a human being. By nature we are sinners, and the quicker we accept that as a fact, the more progress we will make in understanding God's provision for sinners. If we say that we do not sin, we are deceiving

ourselves, and we do not have truth. This statement is in the Bible and we cannot get away from it. I must declare that I do sin. The Bible instructs us that we are sinners, and there is no value in trying to deny what we read in the Bible, and what we know really to be the case in our individual lives.

All of us would like to declare, “I do not sin.” We may think God’s declaration about sin doesn’t include me because I am not very sinful. Or, I confessed my sins the other day so I’m fine. But this is utter nonsense. We don’t ever want to play games with sin. Sin is very real and very terrible. It is something that we have to deal with, and deal with honestly. I must declare that I do sin, even though I try to do things right. It is because I am conceived and born in sin, and I am part of a sinful world. Sin is always very close at hand in my life because this is a very sinful world. I don’t even recognize the sin in my life sometimes.

Therefore we need the healing power and remedy of Christ’s love and forgiveness, because what Christ’s love produced in the world made all the difference. He knows my confession that I know I am a sinner. There’s no point in trying to avoid that confession, because it is a fact, but right after that I can go to God pleading for mercy. That sin of mine is there whether I like it or not. But God knows all about it. There is nothing I can hide from God. God knows everything about the sin in my life. Every one of us needs Christ’s love and forgiveness.

But I am not as sin-free as I would like to believe. That is where the problem often lies – we don’t realize how much sin clings to us. We live in a sinful world; we are part of that sinful world; so that we no longer are able to distinguish our sinful lives from the world’s life of sin. And we get the naïve notion that we don’t live in sin. But it is not so. We have to face the fact that sin is very real in our lives.

But it doesn’t stop there. God came for sinners. He came to give forgiveness to sinners. That identifies with me: I am a sinner who needs the help of the Lord Jesus Christ. And Christ is telling us here that He can give us help. God reminds us that we have sin, and it is God’s business to forgive our sins.

The goal of a child of God is to be more sin-free. I know that sin is something ugly, and I want to be a child of God who has been washed clean. We only want to be obedient to Christ, whom we love. We know He is a forgiving God. It is so wonderful to be free from guilt because I know Christ will forgive me, because I am His child. Before we are saved we are trudging in dirty mud, as it were. We try to wash and just get dirtier. We want to walk out of the mud, and God will help us if we indeed are His child. But how do I become His child?

We read in 1 John 1:9: **“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”** Many people think that wonderful verse teaches that if we confess our sins, we can be saved as a result of that confession, right at that moment. If you isolate this verse, it can give that impression.

Theoretically that can be possible, but it is a verse that really shows us our condition and our need for Christ. It indicates a path we can walk. But we know from the rest of the Bible that nothing we do can save us. We can repeat this verse again and again, and still be just as unsaved. Salvation is God’s work entirely, and we wait upon God to do His work of saving, if He has chosen to save us.

As we walk with God and talk about these things, and search the Bible for more information, we have a desire to be clear of our sins. When God saves us, we come to understand that all of our sins have been paid for by the Lord Jesus Christ. Then when we begin to sense that God is working in our lives, we begin to look at our sin differently than before. I realize my desires are changing. I want more and more to only do God’s will. That must come into my life as something very important, and maybe there is hope for me that I too am becoming a child of God.

1 John 1:9 is written in the context of recognizing that we are a sinner who needs to confess his sin. Even after we are saved, sin continues to plague us. To make confession of sin is a necessary part of our relationship with God. **“If we confess our sin”** indicates that we must be sure that we do confess our sins. He – God Himself – is faithful and just to forgive our sins. What a promise! He is faithful and just and will certainly forgive us. We can depend upon it, because this is the Word of God, from God’s mouth. God is faithful and just! Praise God – He has forgiven my sins!

And He cleanses us from all unrighteousness. Why does He say “all”? Because God is assuring us that He will forgive all of our sins. Not just some of our unrighteousness - all unrighteousness. This is God’s declaration. God says plainly that He reacts to our confession.

When we are a child of God, we want to try to be as obedient to Christ as possible, because sin continues to plague us. We don’t hesitate to cry out to Him for mercy. The wonderful thing is that the more we go to Christ begging for forgiveness, the more our relationship with Christ grows. We should want to stay close to Christ. We want Him to be our Savior, and our only Savior. We know that Christ – the One we are learning about and learning to love devotedly – will forgive us.

Praise God for that kind of a Savior - Someone who makes promises and keeps His promises.

We know that He has promised to forgive our sins, but we want and need that right relationship all the time. That is something we need to cultivate, because by nature we also think we need the world. We don't need it at all, but we think we do. We need the world like we need poison! Confessing our sins will bring us closer to Christ, and help us have victory over all our sins. We want to be like Christ; that is our goal.

So as Christians we want to confess our sins to God regularly, as we strive to gain victory over all sin. But what does it mean to confess our sins? To confess is not just to say nice words to God. It means to be completely honest with God; to turn away from sin and ask for mercy for that sin, and hold nothing back as we confess our needs.

As a child of God we are to hate the sin in our life so badly that it is making us exceedingly uncomfortable. It is ruining our relationship with God. Sin should have no part in our life; it should be completely alien to us. Have you got that clearly in your minds? This is the nature of a child of God. So when we see sin in our life we are to cry to God for help and mercy.

But if there is no change as far as sin having residence in our life, then we are in trouble with God and we must deal with that by again crying out to God for mercy. We must ask God to help us hate the sin in our life and take it out. "Oh God have mercy; make this sin be completely gone out of my life." If we don't get that sin out of our life, it will continue to plague us and grab hold of us. We want God to be entirely active in helping us. We have to deal with this sin and pay attention to it, and ask God to pay attention to it, because we want victory over that sin.

After we have achieved victory, then the evidence that we really have victory is that the temptation to sin is gone. That sin is no longer troubling us. Otherwise that sin is still standing in the way of my right relationship with Christ, which I should have as a child of God. We must keep pleading with God; we don't have to hesitate at all. We need God's help again and again to protect us from sin.

Only after we have achieved victory over that sin can we feel our right relationship with Christ has been restored. Only then can we feel joy in our soul, because we know we have been forgiven and cleansed. When we finally frankly and honestly see our sin, and we openly confess to our Savior without any holding back - that is when we feel the joy of forgiveness and Christ's love.

I know that God forgave my sins when He saved me. That was God's action entirely, and my confession of sin was not necessary for salvation. However, I know I am clean with God because I confessed my sin. This is what I need again and again.

The Bible adds a solemn note with verse 10 that we must look at very seriously: **"If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us."**

To say that we make God a liar is very strong language. But that essentially is what we do if we insist we do not sin. If God's Word is not in us, we are walking in sin. Only God's Word can keep us from sin and give us victory over the sin in our life. But God must first do the work of salvation in our life by giving us a new clean heart. Only then will we be able to walk joyfully with Christ, and have a right relationship with Him.

## Chapter 2

We are going on in the book of 1 John with Chapter 2. We read in the first two verses:

**1. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:**

**2. And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world.**

Who are these words directed to? Notice that God addresses this passage to "My little children." Who does God have in view?

The only ones who are God's children are the elect of God; that is, the ones chosen by God to become saved, and only God knows who they are. But in time they will become saved. We can call them the true believers.

That is how God views us if we are His elect children – He is our Heavenly Father, and we are just like little children in need of His care,

and that is because He elected us. He is concerned about us. Even though we have been saved, we still need to guard against sin in our lives.

But if we do sin, we have an advocate with the Father – Jesus Christ the righteous one. Christ is our advocate. An advocate is someone who intercedes on your behalf, or in your defense. A lawyer is an advocate because he intercedes on behalf of his client. If someone is going to become saved, he needs Jesus Christ as his advocate.

Every single person in the world commits sin, and when you sin you are going against God, so we all need someone to intercede for us. We are in trouble with God; we need an advocate. The one that we need is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. When He becomes our advocate, then there is hope for us. Christ makes intercession for us with the Father. What a tremendous promise - that He will be our advocate!

We can read more about this in Romans 8:34: **“Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.”**

This is telling us that Christ is the One who has found us in our sin and in our misery, and He has died to make intercession for us, to serve as our advocate, and to be there in our place so that we can begin to stand innocent of sin before God. How does Christ make intercession for us? We don't know – this is something only God understands. Christ makes intercession. He stands between us and God, and yet Christ is God. It is a divine mystery, but God wants us to know that He does this for us. Christ is the Son of God and our Savior; our Intercessor. He is everything that we want and need. But we have this assurance that Christ is our advocate if we sin. He is at the right hand of God making intercession for us!

But Christ goes even further than being our advocate. He also is the *propitiation* for our sins. This is not a word most of us are familiar with. Propitiation is a word from God that has to do with reconciliation or appeasement. Oh, how I want to be reconciled with God! Oh how I want to be brought into a saving relationship with Christ!

Propitiation has to do with the act of atonement, or acting as a substitute to take the guilt of someone else. This is one of the most wonderful pieces of information that the world knows about. We know that somehow God Himself took upon Himself the awful sins of those of us that He saves. He doesn't tell us how He did that. Only God knows the details, but He did it. We no longer are guilty of any of those sins.

Nothing could be more wonderful and exciting than that! Oh, what a Savior Christ is.

Christ took our guilt upon Himself. He actually took the blame for our sins. He died in our place to pay for our sins. Christ is the only One in the whole universe that could have taken those sins upon Himself. We are guilt free if He has taken upon Himself our sins.

Whose sins did He pay for? Verse 2 says for the sins of the whole world. This sounds then like Christ paid for the sins of everyone in the world, even those whom He is not planning to save. How can we put this together?

We know that can't be correct as it stands. We have learned very definitely from the Bible that Christ only died for the sins of the elect; those whom He had chosen for salvation. So we have to look carefully at the context of this verse.

The fact that Christ is the propitiation for the whole world means that any sins in the whole world that *will* be forgiven, will be covered by Christ. But notice: it doesn't say that every sin in the whole world will be forgiven. Christ will forgive those whom He has chosen; but there will those whose sins will not be forgiven. We don't know how the choice is made or how this happens, but definitely there are those whose sins will be forgiven, and those who will not be forgiven.

Christ is the One who made payment for all the sins He was going to forgive in the world. That is the atonement for sins. But the atonement is limited to the elect of God; those who have been chosen by God to be forgiven. We know we are one of God's elect when we find in our life an intense desire to do the will of God. That only comes to us when we are saved. He gives us this desire - we find we are constantly praying to do God's will and to turn from sin. This is a characteristic of someone who is God's elect. If that is not in my life, there is a strong probability that I am not saved, and these promises of salvation do not apply to me. This is a very serious matter, and cannot be ignored.

That means that those whose sins were not paid for will remain unsaved. Christ did not die for the sins of those who were never elected to salvation. Unfortunately there are many people in the world who are in this category of people.

Does that seem unfair? That means if you are not chosen by God you cannot become saved. But we can't know who God has elected to salvation, so we all can pray for God's mercy.

But the truth is, not one of us deserves salvation. We are all by nature in rebellion against God. But God in His providential mercy chose some individuals for salvation.

We don't know how or why, but we know it is true. What wonderful love and mercy!

Those who were reconciled to God are the true believers. They are the elect of God. This is a term that comes right out of the Bible. The Lord Jesus suffered and died and rose again in order to pay for their sins and provide forgiveness and reconciliation. If we are included in this group, it will make a tremendous impact on our lives and cause us to have a consistent love for Christ, because of His great love for us.

In Colossians 3:12 God Himself calls the true believers "the elect of God." That is, they are the chosen ones; the ones that Christ has reconciled to God and chosen for salvation. Christ is declaring that He is their Savior. The Lord Jesus suffered and died and rose again in order to pay for their sins and provide reconciliation, as we can read in Romans 5:10-11, "**we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.....the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.**" Atonement means Christ took our guilt of sin upon Himself so that we can stand clean and pure before God.

How do we really know if we are one of God's chosen people? God gives us an answer to that question in the very next verse in this chapter. In 1 John 2:3 we read:

### **3. And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.**

If we know Christ, it means we are one of His own. We belong to Him. And the proof of that ownership is the fact that we keep His commandments. Which commandments do we keep? The Ten Commandments? Yes, but the whole Bible is included in God's commandments. In other words, if we live in a way that is obedient to the Word of God, then we have given evidence that we are one of God's elect. The true believer has a tremendous on-going desire to be obedient to all the commandments of the Bible.

The entire Bible is written for our instruction, and we are to be obedient to everything God has written for us. To keep His commandments means to be obedient to the whole Bible. By nature that is not our desire, and we must go to God for help. We have to have an attitude of humble obedience. The life of a true believer should be a constant cry for help. That is how we show our love for Christ. We have a great desire to be obedient because of our love for Him, and it is a very real conscious love.

And if we are a true believer, we can love Him because He first loved us.

He saved His people because of His great love for them. And He gave us strength and the capability to love God. The average person by himself does not have that capability; we love this world. This world appears to be everything that we need. But that is not the life of the child of God. God gave us the capacity to love Him, and a tremendous inclination to love Him. He qualified us to follow that inclination so that we will begin to love Him the way God desires. We do not have that love unless God gives it to us and puts it in our hearts. He takes over in our lives and gives us that love. It will grow in us and be a deep and abiding love if we are a child of God. If it is not there we should be crying out to God for His mercy. Ultimately our desire is to be saved from our sins and rescued from eternal death.

Many people claim to know Christ, or claim to have a relationship with Christ. They claim to be a true believer, and they may believe that they are. But the proof is in the way we live out our lives. God declares in 1 John 2:4:

**4. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.**

Those are strong words, but they are God's words. That is what God declares. If someone claims to know Christ, but does not keep His commandments – that is, does not obey the Bible – then he or she is a liar. The truth is not in that person.

We may be able to fool other people, but we cannot fool God. God knows what is going on in our minds; in our hearts; in every part of our being. He sees our hearts, and He knows if we are telling the truth, or if we are a liar. He knows exactly where we are spiritually. He knows if we are telling the truth or if we are lying.

Christ knows who His people are. He knows exactly whether or not we are being obedient to His Word. And by the same token, if we are a true believer, God will give us the ability to come to the truth, and we will not be able to live with a lie. We will want to do it God's way, and God will give us the wisdom we need.

On the other hand, God has this to say about someone who keeps His Word and His commandments. 1 John 2:5 declares:

**5. But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him.**

In these verses of 1 John, God makes a clear distinction between someone who knows God and is obedient to God's Word, and someone who is not obedient and who does not know God, and yet claims to know God. These are the two types of people that God is concerned with. These are the people that exist in the world. One is saved; the other is unsaved. When we read these statements, they are like a sword going through our soul, because if there is any hesitancy in being completely obedient to Christ, we know things are not right between us and God. But we want to be a true child of God. We must make sure that we are honest and sincere and faithful in our obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ.

God states that the love of God is perfected in someone who keeps His Word. What does that mean? Let's go on to verse 6:

**6. He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.**

To keep God's Word, you recall, has to do with obeying the whole Bible. We know Christ if we keep His commandments. Those who keep His Word are those who know Christ in the sense of being saved. God states here in this verse that the love of God will be perfected in someone who keeps His Word.

These are tremendous statements for us to reflect on, because we live in such a wicked world, which makes an impact on every one of us. Any time we look at our actions and study them carefully we find that so much is not in accordance the way it should be. What is the reason? The reason is that the world makes its impact on us. So this study will help us to see ourselves, examine ourselves, and walk more perfectly before God.

Our lives should be shouting to the world that we love Christ. But there are so many situations that arise that make it so difficult to do it Christ's way and only His way. That is why we keep praying for God's mercy to help us to keep God's Word; to obey it; to be happy in it. To do that means that we have to be obedient to each and everything in the Bible.

If you think it is easy, then be careful. You might have a wrong understanding of the complexity of the Bible and the great importance of the things of the Bible. The first place to look is how we keep Christ's commandments, and the whole Bible is one commandment after another one. It is laying out God's plan for our lives: how we are to live,

and how we are to be obedient. Those who keep His Word are those who have a full commitment in their souls for Christ; they have the attitude of obedience to Christ.

Sometimes that is so difficult to attain when we see the temptations that come in this world. This world is a difficult place in which to live a clean moral life. It is impossible to live as holy as we ought to live, but we keep trying. We keep asking the Lord for wisdom and strength, and for a more intense desire to do it His way. And then things begin to work out to some degree.

What does it mean that the love of God is perfected in someone who keeps God's Word? The love of God to be perfected – how wonderful! If that could happen in my life I would be so happy, and once in a while that perfection feels like it is getting close. But it is so easy to find myself living the way I should not live.

I should want to do it God's way and no other way – that is the goal of the true believer; to do it the way of my King Jesus Christ, in all of His glory and perfection. I want to do it for my Lord. My love for Him must become a source of strength in my life, because as we look at ourselves, there is always a great need to be more faithful than we've ever been before.

As a true believer lives out his life and faces commitments and difficulties, there will be a growth of love for God and of obedience for God. We find that we want to obey God because we love Him. This is our hope. This is a real active desire that we want to see in our life. And we know it will only happen as we give up ourselves to Christ and He becomes more real in our lives. As we see our weaknesses, and increasingly realize the need for change and strength, Christ works in us in love.

Our love for Christ and our living for Christ is not an automatic reaction. That is, just because we are convinced that we love Christ, it does not necessarily follow that we live for Him. Do we really live for Christ? Is every one of our actions one of great love for Him? We discover that our love for Christ can be very weak. It needs to grow. In order for this love to grow we need to spend more time with the Lord. We should always be ready to give testimony of our love for Christ, and constantly pray for Him to increase our love. We must never hesitate to admit our weaknesses and our need for help. The sole giver of strength is God. He is the One who undertakes for us. We can't build our life on our own strength, but on God's strength alone. Our strength comes from the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is the way we need to live.

As we spend time in the Word of God, it reminds us again and again of our need for more help from God. And as we spend time in prayer, we have a greater and greater sense of God's love for us. The Bible tells us we are sinners and that we need Christ, and that He alone is our Lord. That means He is the sole Ruler over us and we are to follow Him and only Him.

These are stern commandments and they must be kept that way. Otherwise we end up building a worthless gospel that suits us but has no spiritual power in our lives of any kind. When the Bible speaks to us we'd better take notice and pay attention. We cannot ignore the Bible and make it less personal and direct. We need to stay on God's path, with God's help to listen to the Bible. We want to truly love God with our whole personality.

If we can say this and mean it, then we can have a more serious spiritual life, and we will be less inclined to bring in our own thoughts and ideas which are more acceptable to us but not spiritually helpful. And we will find that our love for God grows stronger and stronger. Our love for God and His love for us becomes a source of strength in our life. The Bible is God's Word and we'd better not hold it in disdain in any way. If we find we do, we really need to pray for wisdom and understanding.

We find that we want to obey God in all things because we love Him. We hope this is true; that it is a true love. This is how we know we are in Christ, because of this reciprocal love. But do I love Him in every single area of my life? If not, then He is not my King.

We cannot make excuses for not doing God's will. If we find we are not doing His will in some area of our life, then we must stop and pray for mercy. We need God's mercy, and we should not hesitate to ask for it, because God is a merciful God. We don't go to our friends for mercy; the place we have to go to is to God. "Oh God, have mercy on me. I am in trouble with You. I am not living the way I should." God is the only One who can help us as we become more and more broken before Him. This is a very spiritual activity that goes on in our life as the Holy Spirit works in our lives.

If we say we abide in Christ, we should be walking as He walked. That is to say, we should follow Christ's example in all things. Christ is full of grace and love and mercy. These characteristics should be in our personalities as well. We should forgive others as He has forgiven us.

The daily walk of a Christian should be different than someone who follows after the things of the secular world. We are to follow Christ each and every day, in all that we say and do.

God has been giving us principles to follow. We are to obey His commandments, keep His Word, and walk as Christ walked. These things are evidence that we have become a child of God. And in so doing, the love of God will be perfected in us.

We read in 1 John 2:7:

**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.**

God here is telling us that He has written this out long before we existed. These commandments are from God; they are rich in their meaning and their presentation to us. The old commandment which they had from the beginning would be referring to the Bible that was written up to that point in time; that is, the Old Testament writings. The New Testament believers had those writings for many years already.

Now God goes on in verse 8:

**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.**

“Which thing is true in Him” refers to the fact that it is given to us by the Lord Jesus Christ. He makes everything true. There is no limit to everything God has to teach us. We just have to keep studying and praying for wisdom, and now and then God gives us understanding, and we know something else that God wants to give us. So we can say the darkness is past and the true light shines.

God does not leave us with empty minds. He teaches us through the whole Bible, and the truth is there. We must search the Bible and never get tired of searching God’s wonderful Book that He has given us. Then the true light will begin to shine, and God will teach us the exact principle that God wants us to know. This is a new commandment that we are hearing now; it is added to what they already have from God, in order to make the whole story more complete.

The commandments of God are wonderful. Sometimes we read the commandments of God and we don’t understand them, so they don’t seem wonderful. But just because we have closed minds does not fault the commandments. We have to keep searching and keep pleading

with God, and slowly those commandments become real and understandable. They really help us down the path.

In 1 John chapter 1 God spoke about the darkness and the light. We read in 1 John 1:5: **“This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.”**

That is, we have read it and understood it so that we in turn can declare it to others. The Bible is for the peoples of the world, and so we patiently have to work in it, always with that attitude: I hope that some of this will be understood by someone else too, because it is so wonderful. That is what we are learning right now. The Bible is telling us that God has declared unto us that He is the light. He has nothing to do with darkness, which relates to the darkness of sin. There is no darkness in God. He is the very essence of light.

If there is darkness on the scene, it has to do with our ignorance - our minds that have not been fully opened as yet. That is the message: that God is light. We can continue to pray for the light which is Christ Himself. We want to make sure we are spending as much time as possible in the Bible, because that is where the light is. Christ who is eternal God is the very light. If we find we are in darkness we should be praying for the light of Christ. Light relates to salvation; darkness relates to sin. The light is where the Gospel is - where we can be taught and guided, and living in the light of the presence of God.

Now He is going to say more about this subject, as we read 1 John 2:9-11:

**9. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.**

**10. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.**

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

God has given us the mandate to shine forth the light of Christ to the world which is in spiritual darkness. That should be something that is seen in the lives of each one of us. If it is not seen, then we are living in a way that is not pleasing to God. Jesus is the light of the world,

and we are His companion light-bearers. To be in the light means to be in the light of Christ; the light of the Gospel. When God saves us we begin to abide in the light of Christ. We are no longer living in the darkness of sin.

The world is in spiritual darkness because of the curse of sin. Only the light of the Gospel can bring someone out from under spiritual darkness. When God saves someone, He brings that person out of the darkness and into the light of Christ.

But verse 9 is talking about someone who says they are in the light. That is to say, they believe that they are saved from their sins. Yet there is hatred in their heart for a brother. In the context of the Bible, the believers are brothers and sisters in Christ. So a brother can be a literal brother in a family, or it can be a spiritual brother.

But the point here is that there is hatred in this person's heart, which means that he is still walking in darkness. The love of Christ is not in evidence. Even though he thinks he is saved, he is deceiving himself.

In contrast, God says in verse 10 that the person who abides in the light loves his brother. And he is not stumbling, because he is in the light. The light of the Gospel keeps him on the right path.

Someone who has hatred in his heart is in darkness, God tells us, and is walking in darkness. He doesn't know where he is going because the darkness has blinded him. This is spiritual language, not literal language. Someone who is not saved is spiritually blind. He is not on the right path, and is not walking with Christ.

Do you have love in your heart for your brother? Or is there hatred lurking there? In the light of this Scripture passage, every one of us should examine our hearts. If we are a child of God, the love of God will be in strong evidence.

It is God who gives us love for our brothers and sisters. To have love for someone means that we want the very best for them. The very best is a right relationship with Christ. That is what we want for our brothers and sisters. That is the love we are to express as we walk in the light of Christ.

In the next few verses, God is specifically addressing children, young men, and fathers. We read in 1 John 2:12:

**12. I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.**

God first addresses little children. Little children can include those who indeed are young children, but little children can also include those who are new in the Kingdom of God and they are little children when it comes to their place in the Kingdom.

When we first become a child of God we are a little child in God's hands, and we are so glad that is so, and we can address God as Heavenly Father. Even little children, whether in actuality or because they have just come into the Kingdom of God, are important to God. In fact everyone that God has in mind is very important.

Even little children are in need of a Savior, and can be saved from their sins. A newborn baby can be saved from his sins as well as an adult can. The fact is that it takes the action of Christ Himself to do the work of saving, and nothing can prevent Christ from saving those He wishes to save. There is no human being anywhere who is not in need of a Savior, and most people don't even know of their need until Christ becomes their Savior.

We need a Savior to save us from our sins. We are the guilty ones, and our need is for Christ to be our Savior regardless of our age. Christ paid the penalty for those whom He saves. How He did that; why He did that - we don't know the answers to that, because salvation is God's business. But when we become saved it is because our sins were laid upon Christ, and He made the payment. If He did not make the payment there is no way we can be forgiven, and we are remain under the wrath of God.

Notice that Christ came to save sinners for His name's sake. For Jesus' sake He saved us; for His purposes; for Him altogether. We are not saved for our sake; we are saved for Christ's sake. Wonderfully we are living in the day of salvation, and Christ is the Savior.

All the glory of salvation goes to Christ. It is for His sake that we are saved. There is so much about this that is mysterious to us, but the point is that we cry to God for salvation, either for ourselves or our families or friends, and we know that it is only through Christ that salvation can come. That is good enough for any one of us. It is Christ's work altogether.

Let's go on with verses 13 and 14:

**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 ye have known the Father.**

**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 ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.**

Here God is beginning to develop a wider scope of knowledge. The fact is that God knows everything about everything. There is nothing that happens in the world that God does not know about. So as the Bible talks here about different groups of people, we need to think about the fact that there is no human being who does not need a Savior, and the Savior is the Lord Jesus Christ who is eternal God. Therefore we should never hesitate to beseech the Lord for salvation for myself and my loved ones.

**“Because ye have known Him,”** God says to the fathers in verse 13. What a fantastic blessing to know Christ. Christ is way beyond our minds, and we read this and know it is true. We accept it as true because God wrote it, but we cannot claim to understand all this because of our intelligence.

We don't know how anyone can know Christ from the beginning. God has stated it so it is true and trustworthy and we are thankful to God. The result of reading this is that we know that He can be our God and that He has been with us from the beginning of our salvation - from the beginning of His dealing with us in that very special spiritual way. And He has written unto us as young men and old men and babies, and in every walk of life.

Because of the statements here such as **“your sins are forgiven you”** and **“you have overcome the wicked one,”** we know these verses are addressed to individuals who have been saved from sin. They are children of God. God is here speaking to those who are true believers. They are children of God. That is why we are so filled with joy. You can know that something has happened deep in your heart when Christ becomes your Savior and Master.

Christ paid for the sins of the elect – that is, those whom He has chosen for salvation. This salvation can take effect in a little baby, a child, a young person, or an older adult. The timing of salvation is entirely up to God, because salvation is entirely God's business.

Here in verses 12 and 13, God addresses the little children. He declares that **“your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake”** and **“ye have known the Father.”**

Those phrases indicate clearly that these little children have had their sins forgiven because Christ paid for their sins. Payment for sin was

the first step in their spiritual life. Christ is their Savior. Consequently they have come to know God who is their Heavenly Father.

God goes on to address the fathers and the young men.

Young men may think they are very strong, but it is not until we know that Christ has saved us from our sins that we stand useful before God. We stand as though we are momentarily without sin. Yet we are careful to give all the glory to the Lord Jesus Christ, because we did not make any contribution of any kind toward our salvation. It is a gift of God.

When we become saved, at whatever age, it is all a gift of God. We can thank Him for such a wonderful salvation, and those words of thanks should be pouring from our lips because He indeed is the only One who could have brought that salvation into our lives. How wonderful to be saved; to be a child of God because of what Christ has done for me. And now I hope my life can be a testimony to my family and my friends. I want to be a testimony to them that they too may come to the point of crying out to God.

In both verses 13 and 14, God declares that He is writing to the fathers because they have known Him that is from the beginning. When God repeats something twice, it is because He is especially emphasizing something. God is emphasizing that the fathers know God who is from the beginning.

In Ephesians 5:23 we read that the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church. Therefore we know that God ordained for the husband to be the head of the household. As the head of the household he has a tremendous responsibility to his family.

Not only does he have authority over his family, but he is in charge of the spiritual nourishment of his family. He is to train up his children in the ways of the Lord. In Proverbs 22:6 God instructed, **“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”** This is the father’s responsibility.

Now here in 1 John chapter 2 God reminds fathers that they have known God from the beginning. They have no excuse to not train their children properly in the ways of God. The fathers have knowledge of God and years of spiritual experience that the children do not have. God emphasizes this knowledge of God.

God also declares twice that the young men have overcome the wicked one, who is Satan. God then indicates the source and means of their victory over the wicked one.

They are victorious because they are strong, and the Word of God abides in them. That is why they are strong – because the Word of God abides in them. God is not talking about physical strength, but about spiritual strength. They are strong in the Lord, even as young men.

God in this passage shows us His tremendous concern for His own. He is looking after His own children, and giving them guidance through His Word, which is written for them.

But God goes on in the next few verses in this chapter to give a strong warning. Whenever God deals with His people there is always warning, because God loves us and wants us to walk in a certain way. Unfortunately we don't always want the warning, and that is a terrible way to begin a relationship with our Father. We should go to Him with open arms and a willing mind and heart to whatever He is asking.

We read in 1 John 2:15-17:

**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.**

This is getting right at the heart of the matter, because sin comes from the world, and God says to not love the world, which means we have to keep our eyes on Him. We must be very sure we are listening to our Savior, and not listening to the world.

**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.**

**17. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.**

Here we have a real struggle developing. On the one hand God talks about our love for the world, and every one of us has a love for the world. We like the things that the world likes, and yet right at the beginning we find that we are going down a wrong path.

We must listen only to God, and then we are safe and secure with God. We can pray to Him for strength, and that He will keep the ideas of the world out of our thinking. We want to grow in grace and get stronger in our trust. We want this to be a time of spiritual victory,

not a time of spiritual accommodation with the things of the world. We need God to give us open eyes to see our need for God, and keep us from temptation, in order to stay faithful to God.

We are living in a world that has been designed by God with beautiful things, but that does not mean they are for us. We have to learn to distinguish what we should let into our minds and hearts.

Christ declared in Matthew 22:37: **“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.”**

Please notice that God wrote **“with all.”** How often do we really think about this, that this love for God is to be with all that we have at our disposal? This has to be, because if it is not with all, it will not be enough. Our minds will not stay focused on Christ as they should.

How obedient is mankind to these kinds of commandments? We must be honest – not very obedient at all. That is a confession that shows we have a long ways to go in growing more like the Master; in becoming more like the Lord Jesus and being obedient to Him the way He would have us. We have to listen to what God is saying and be obedient, and that requires constant prayer; that requires submission. We must recognize how desperately we need the help of God.

It is so easy to love the world because God created us to live in the world. But watch out: we must love only what God wants us to love. We must read the Bible and listen to what God is telling us, and He will show us how we are to live in this world. This world is deceptive on every hand and we need a lot of wisdom, so with great humility we should be praying for mercy and help to do God’s will, and only His will.

Do we really love God with our whole heart and soul and mind? Or do we love the world a little bit? We have to live in this world, so we must keep looking only at the Word of God for guidance. If we do this consistently and faithfully then we won’t get involved with this world, so that a love relationship develops. But if a love relationship with the world begins to develop, our love for God will diminish.

God gives us additional information and warning in this passage in 1 John 2:15, where He warns us not to love the world or the things in the world. He declared there: **“If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”**

We have no business beginning to love the things of the world. To love the world begins by loving the things of the world. God gave us such a beautiful world, and lovely friends. Yet our friends may ultimately draw us away from our love for Christ. We have to be so obedient to the things of God. We must ask the question all the time: Is

this the love of God and His Word, or is this driven by our love for the things of the world? This is the test. God has placed us in this beautiful world, and yet there are things we should not become involved in.

Why is this the case? God is testing us, and the moment we fall away from the things of God, we will find we are very dissatisfied with our life if we are really a child of God, because there is a desire in our life that we want to do it God's way and only God's way.

You might not think you love the world, if you claim to love God. But let's think about this honestly. This world is an emporium of temptation. God has given us a very wonderful, beautiful world.

Let's think about a possible scenario, to see how we can fall into temptation. Suppose you love jewelry, and one day you see a very beautiful piece of jewelry for sale. You see it and you want it, but you walk away from it. But you can't stop thinking about it and lusting after it, so after a bit you figure out a way you can buy it. You think that once you own it you will be satisfied and won't need anything else. That is how our mind often goes.

You finally get the money and go back to buy the beautiful jewelry (or whatever you have fallen in love with). Now you own it, and you show it to your friends, tempting others into wanting it. You might not show your God-fearing friends. You don't tell them because they will think unkindly about you. You have set up your life to be able to live with your desire which is secret at first and becomes more and more a part of your daily life.

That is how temptation goes. It makes a permanent impact on your life even though you hardly notice it. It becomes a part of your life you can't give up. If someone suggests you shouldn't do that as a child of God, you are offended. Can't happen, you say? The love of this world can be a snare, and it is far better to stay away from it, and don't even begin to play around with it in your mind.

Mankind has figured out how to have great riches, honor, and pleasure. If the world is our guide, and because we are of the world and these things are of the world, there is a unity, and the next thing we know, they have become a part of our life. Those are things that people lust after and strive for, instead of a right relationship with God.

The lust for the things of the world – no matter how beautiful or needful they look - are in direct opposition to living a godly life. Then we are living for this world. Are we saying that we are doing things God's way? The word *lust* means wrong desire. What may look like a right desire may be just lust. Anything we lust after that would create disharmony in our life is bad for us. It means to covet something. But

God told us in the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment: “**Thou shalt not covet.**” To covet something leads to the lust of that thing, and leads us away from God.

In 1 John 2:16 God details how easily sin and temptation come about. *The lust of the eyes*: we see something we like. *The lust of the flesh*: we admire it, we want it, and we’ve got to have it, whatever it is. *The pride of life*: when we get what we lusted after, we can’t wait to show it off.

Anything to do with lust or pride should not be found in the life of a child of God. God warns us strongly that if we love the things of the world, the love of the Father is not in us. We can’t have it both ways.

When we are tempted by merchandise that is beautifully displayed, or by the chance to make lots of money, or by a sinful activity – whatever the temptation – that is a test. Are we going to gaze at it; think about it; think about it some more? If we do that, we are hooked. We have failed the test.

We have seen that the problem of temptation is a huge problem for every person. That is the starting point of lust; we begin to desire things we should not have. God warned that if you love the things of this world, the love of the Father is not in you. That is a dreadful statement when you think about it. Can you love your wife? Can you love the beautiful flowers? God’s warning is that if we love the things of the world, the love of the Father is not in us. God has provided the beautiful people and things we love, but if you are a true believer, your love for God should supersede – that is, be much stronger and more vibrant in your life - any love you may have for the world. It is not a question of not having any love for things in the world, but a question of comparison. What is number one in my life?

God does not save us and then leave us on our own to work out our life. We are not to try to figure out everything by ourselves. Wonderfully, God is our Savior and King and spiritual Father; God is with us always. This is true, and more than that it gives us stability. We know we will succeed because Almighty God is with us. He will never leave us nor forsake us. He gives us help when we need it. And in this matter of temptation, He gives us help and instruction as well. God saves us and then gives us precious promises to be always here for us to call upon and so on. Many times we do feel lonely as if God has left us, and then we may begin to act like God has left us. And then we have problems because we are on our own. We must always have Christ with us, and therefore we never hesitate to pray for God’s assistance, and we can rest in that.

God helps us and gives us instruction as well. He is always standing by to give us help, if only we learn to ask Him for help. God shows us what to do when temptation for the things of the world crosses our path. If we begin to complain and take things into our own hands, we will get into trouble that will become more and more negative. The things to do is stop and think: God cares for me; I am His child. Therefore right now I should go to Him in prayer. He hears every word from my lips. I can lay out my problem. “ Oh Lord, forgive me for becoming tempted and trying to work things out on my own.”

God gives us even more help in Scripture. In 1 Corinthians 10:14 God tells us to “**flee from idolatry.**” In 1 Corinthians 6:18 He says to “**flee fornication.**” And in 2 Timothy 2:22 He declares: “**flee also youthful lusts.**”

So God tells us that we are to FLEE temptation. To flee means to run away from it as fast as you can! But where do we flee to, and how do we know how to flee?

Let’s read the rest of 2 Timothy 2:22, where God declares:

**Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.**

Christ is so close to us. We can stop what we are doing and right then and there begin to pray. When we pray we are praying to eternal God. The problem is that we don’t always do this, but the fact is there is the grand solution to our problems. We begin to pray! No matter how we pray, God knows we are praying, and He can hear our prayer. He is the only One in the whole world that actually can make a difference. God is the answer. We must remember that, and then we have hope no matter how bad our situation has become.

This is how we avoid lusting after the things the world has to offer - be it fame or fortune or sinful activities. The world offers many nice things, and if our eyes are focused on these things we are headed for trouble, because our eyes are being taken off of what is most important; namely a right relationship with our Savior, the blessed Lord Jesus.

Lust goes nowhere except downward, even though at the moment it looks so desirable. So we have to begin to flee from temptation and go to Christ. We follow after Him in order to stay on the right path. The way we get there is by prayer. Don’t ever hesitate to

pray. Do not think this is not the time for prayer. There is not a special time; the time is right now when you have a need to pour out your heart to Him. God is faithful to help us when we are headed for trouble.

The conclusion of the matter is reached in 1 John 2:17: **“The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.”**

The world will not continue; it only continues in our life as long as we keep our lustful eyes focused on whatever makes us lust. So we’d better turn our eyes away and talk to God in prayer, and then we will begin to get some victory.

To abide with Christ forever is what we want if we are a child of God. For Him to abide in our life means that we have to consciously focus our eyes on Christ. He is everything; He is the One we want to focus our eyes upon. The world and all the things the world has to offer will be gone in the measure that we focus upon Christ. But those who love the Father and are obedient to His Word will abide forever with God. That is another way of saying it is the evidence they have become a true child of God and forever are safe and secure in His almighty arms.

The key is commitment to Christ and His Word. If we really are committed to Christ and His Word we will find that we can more readily cry out to Him for further strength and commitment. It is like a never-ending stream, but we have to be conscious of this and get used to crying out to God for His mercy. Do you cry out to Him? If not, you’d better start, because that is where we have our hope. If God has saved us, we must keep our eyes upon Christ. We know that is the only place we can go, and we go there gladly and eagerly, with hope. We go there because we know that is where there is help coming to us. Only then will we do the will of God.

How do we keep our eyes on Christ? By staying in the Word of God. God has given us His Word. He has given us the ability to read. He has given us time to read. We have to start reading the Word of God, because it is God Himself who is speaking through the Bible. That is where we find our guidance. That is where God instructs us in the things of the Lord. It is God who gives us victory over sin and temptation. We pray for Him to take these things out of our mind and keep us focused on Him. It is His will to give us victory over sin and temptation. God’s plan is that we might be in this world and find the answer in Christ so that we get stronger and stronger in the faith; so that we become His child because He has saved us. In our own strength we would fail, but with God’s strength we will not fail.

We are going on in our study of 1 John, and we have come to chapter 2 verse 18. We read there:

**18. Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.**

Here God is calling us “**little children**” because we are babes in Christ. That is, we are not fully developed spiritually. We have much to learn, as God opens our spiritual eyes over time. “**It is the last time.**” What does that mean? The Greek word used here actually says, “It is the last hour.” This word “hour” can mean an hour that is either a literal 60 minutes, or it is figurative. In this instance we can take it to mean a figurative hour that is much longer than 60 minutes.

But why is it the last hour, or the last time? The last time for what? The rest of the verse gives us the sense that it is referring to the last days; that is, the end of everything is coming. In other words, in this context it appears that God is talking about the end of time, whenever that comes.

Because this was written about 2000 years ago, and the universe is still here, we must come to the conclusion that the “last time” refers to the whole time period from then until the very end of time. We could call this the whole New Testament era.

You have heard, He says, that Antichrist shall come. In the book of Matthew, chapter 24, Jesus had warned about the Abomination of Desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet. This was a reference to the Antichrist, who is Satan, as we will see later on in our study of the Epistle of 1<sup>st</sup> John.

This verse goes on to say, “**even now there are many antichrists.**” To be “anti” something is to be in opposition; to be an adversary. Satan is an adversary of Christ, and his followers are therefore also in opposition to Christ. We can rightfully come to that conclusion.

But the surprise comes in the next verse, where we read:

**19. They went out from us, but they were not of us; [i.e. not of Christ] for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.**

This verse implies that these adversaries had been with us; they had been part of us before. These antichrists had been involved with the true believers, but now have left because they are not of Christ. This tells us immediately that if someone is going to stay with the true believers, they will have to show more and more that they are of the same mind as the true believers. There can only be one Truth.

God indicates that this is evidence that it is the last time, or the last hour. God is saying we have proof that we are in the last hour; we are right near the end of time. Look out the window to see how much evidence you can see that guarantees we are in the last hour, and you will see nothing. So what does God mean?

The anti-Christians have been involved with us, and they stuck with us and acted like they wanted to be part of the truth, but now they have left us because they were not of Christ. So these people were very closely involved with the true believers, and gave evidence they were in agreement with what we think is truth. But God says they did not have the truth, and the fact they have left us is the evidence they did not have the truth.

We read in 1 Timothy 4:1, **“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.”**

Notice that these people being warned about have departed from the faith. They started out under the hearing of the true Gospel, but they left. And it is said that this will occur in the latter times, so that again relates to the last time we read about in 1 John 2:18.

We also can read in Matthew 24, where Jesus warned in verse 5, **“For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.”** And in verse 11 of that same chapter: **“And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.”**

Christ was warning that there would be many false Christ’s, who would come in the name of Christ. To be a false Christ is to be an anti-Christ. If it is not the true Christ, then it is false and in opposition to Christ. So this goes along with what we read in 1 John 2:18 and 19.

Because these false Christ’s look like the real thing, they will deceive many. Matthew 24 gives that warning twice. God is forewarning the true believers, both during the time the Bible was being written, and us today. It was true then, and it is true now. We must heed the warning and be sure we are following Christ, the true Christ, and not an imposter who actually is of Satan, the adversary of Christ.

These verses show us that Satan is a great deceiver. Only Christ is the truth; whereas Satan is a liar, and there is no truth in him.

We read in 1 John 2:20:

**20. But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.**

The word translated in this verse as “unction” is a Greek word that is elsewhere translated as “anointing.” The Greek word used here has the literal meaning of smearing or rubbing with oil.

To rub with oil is a very intensive action. It is not just a superficial sprinkling. This is an action that God is taking, therefore we know it is a spiritual anointing or rubbing with oil that is very important.

This spiritual anointing from God relates to salvation. When we have become a child of God, this is God’s action. The spiritual rubbing in of oil shows us that salvation is locked in; it has become an integral part of our personality. It is placed there by God Himself. What a dramatic picture of salvation God has given us!

We read about this, for example, in 2 Corinthians 1:21-22: **“Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.”**

Here God is explaining that when we become a child of God, God has chosen us for Himself, and He has anointed us spiritually. Furthermore, He has sealed us because of God’s intense action in our life. It is there to stay. We are sealed; that is, it is a completed action that will do in our lives what God intended to do.

But what does God mean that we know all things? We read in 1 John 2:20, **“But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.”** What things do we know?

Because God has saved us and spiritually anointed us, we will begin to learn all truth. We are in the environment where we will learn truths from God Himself. God will keep us safe from the deceivers. As we go on in our Christian walk and follow the Bible carefully, we will learn more of God’s truths. The more we learn of God’s truth, the more we are shielded from deceivers.

We read on in 1 John 2:21:

**21. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.**

God is warning us so that we won't be deceived. You are already prepared by God. You have heard truth and lies, He is saying, but you will know the truth because the Spirit of God is in you.

Satan is active in this world, and God has come to our rescue. God has saved you and anointed you – He has spiritually rubbed you with oil. You belong to Him, and He will keep you in the truth. Where is truth? The Bible is where we begin to learn truth. The Bible stands out as the great truth-giver. The Bible sets the standard for truth. There is no other true standard in the world.

In order for us to recognize false prophets who deceive we must keep looking in the whole Bible. Without the Bible we will be like a ship at sea without a rudder or a compass. Our goal is always to be true to the Word of God. If we are deceived by the lies of the deceivers – the antichrists - then we were never anointed by God. That is, we were never truly saved.

But God is telling the true believers that they know the truth. That is God's assurance. If God has done the work of giving us truth, we will know it is truth without any question at all, and we will not become deceived. The Bible was written by God, and He is the essence of truth. Remember, God said about Himself in John 14:6: **"I am the way, the truth, and the life."**

So far God has been telling us in this chapter that God will keep us in the truth, and shield us from deceivers who bring a wrong gospel in the name of Christ. Now in the next few verses God is going to give more emphasis to this subject and make it even more specific. We read in 1 John 2:22:

**22. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.**

We have learned before that Satan is a liar and the truth is not in him. God tells us this in John 8:44, where God also declares that Satan is the father of lies. This is a profound statement, and is not just casual or incidental. That statement is there to guide us and protect us from falling into the lies of deceivers who deny Christ as Savior.

Many people try to teach that they have the truth and they have the God of the Bible. But when we listen carefully to what they are teaching, we realize they are bringing in other ideas that are not found in the Bible. We can know by what they are saying that they have another authority, and not just the Bible alone and in its entirety.

False teachings are deceitful. They can sound very lovely and correct, but are a trap from Satan. They end up denying God altogether because they are not true. It is true that we are in a battle for truth. We must be certain always that everything we say begins with truth, and takes us further along the path to more truth.

This is only done by following the rules of the Bible. We must always stay in a direction that is permissible and in accord with what we have already learned from the Bible. The Bible is always to have first place in our thinking and in what we depend upon. We follow rules we learned from the Bible and thus we avoid becoming trapped by Satan and his lies.

To make this even more precise, God declares in 1 John 2:23:

**23. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth [or confesses] the Son hath the Father also."**

To deny the Son, who is the Lord Jesus, as Christ, would necessarily involve denial of the Father, since the Father cannot be known without the Son. The Father and the Son are one, and to believe in one is to believe in the other, because there is only one God. Jesus declares in John 10:30: **"I and My Father are one."**

If a gospel sounds true, but ultimately denies that Christ is the only Savior, then it is a lie. To deny that Jesus is the Messiah is to deny everything about God. This kind of belief can only come from Satan, who is a liar and an antichrist.

If you deny the Son, you cannot have the Son or the Father. But on the other hand, to confess the Son – to acknowledge Him as the Son of God - is to confess the Father. God is one God.

There are some people who profess to believe in God the Father, but insist that Jesus was just a good man; a prophet sent by God to teach the people. They are denying Christ, and therefore are denying God the Father as well. This type of teaching is completely against the truth of God's Word, and is unacceptable. It is a lie, and therefore comes from Satan, the father of lies.

Jesus Christ is God; that is the final summary of everything we have learned here. There is no question that Jesus is the Son of God and is equal to the Father in every aspect. We recognize that we cannot understand the relationship of the Godhead; that is a divine mystery. But there is no question that these things are true.

We walk by faith. If we are a child of God, God will give us the faith to believe all the truth of the Bible.

Let us go on in 1 John 2:24 and 25:

**24. Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.**

**25. And this is the promise that He hath promised us, *even* eternal life.**

God brings His Word to the true believers, and He is insisting that He will have prepared that individual for truth that will last him eternally.

Notice the double emphasis in verse 24: **“Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning”** and **“If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you...”**

Whenever God repeats something, we can be quite certain that it is a very important principle, and we should pay close attention.

God here emphasizes that you have heard the truth from the beginning, and it will abide in your life. None of us would know truth unless God had prepared us for that truth.

God guarantees that if He did the preparation in our hearts, the end result is that He will save us and remain in our hearts. We will continue in the Son and in the Father forever. In other words, we will live in the fellowship of the Godhead: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We will never be alone again.

And God’s great promise to us is that we will inherit eternal life if He has chosen us for salvation. He has brought truth into our lives, and He will abide with us, and we will inherit eternal life. That is God’s magnificent promise for those whom He has chosen, or elected unto eternal life. If He has chosen us, we will be faithful all the way to the end.

We must remember that there are those who are deceivers, and these wonderful thoughts of salvation do not come as a result of their work.

God reminds us of this again in verse 26:

**26. These *things* have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.**

God warns us to be aware that the deceivers will try to seduce you with another gospel, but they will not be successful. They cannot succeed because they are not speaking on behalf of God; they are speaking on behalf of Satan. But we who are true believers are protected by God Himself from this kind of wrong thinking. God will keep us in the truth if we are one of His own.

All that we have learned here is summarized by God in verse 27, where we read:

**27. But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him.**

We have been anointed by God into salvation. He abides in us and teaches us truth. He will teach us all things about truth, and we will continue to abide in Him.

God stresses over and over that we abide in Him. What a beautiful comfort that is! Nothing can be more wonderful than to abide in Christ. It means that Christ is everything to us. He walks with us and keeps us safe from lies. Through His Word, He teaches us truth in our hearts. He assures us that we are His own children and we will someday live with Him forever. What a grand and wonderful promise is given to the true believers.

We have to the last two verses in 1 John chapter 2. We have learned a lot of important Biblical truths in this chapter of the Bible.

Now this chapter will close with these words in verses 28 and 29:

**28. And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.**

**29. If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him.**

Remember, we are little children in God's sight. Like children, we have much to learn about the things of the Lord. God is teaching us through His Word.

Over and over in this chapter, God has stressed the importance of abiding in Christ. That is where every true believer abides – in Christ.

We walk with Christ every step of the way if we are living in a right relationship with Him.

But how can we be sure that we are in a right relationship with Christ? Remember, we learned in 1 John 2:3, **“And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.”**

This is the test. Am I constantly being obedient to God’s Word? My life should be a testimony of my relationship with God. There should be nothing in my life that is displeasing to God.

And in 1 John 2:6 we read: **“He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.”**

This is the key: we walk as Jesus walked. That is, we conduct ourselves in a way that is pleasing to God in every aspect. Jesus is our constant example of holiness and righteousness, and is also therefore a companion with us.

In verse 28, God is looking ahead to the day that Christ will return at the end of the world. This verse makes it clear that He is coming. Let’s read this verse again: **“And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.”**

What a glorious day that will be, when we see our Savior! On that day we do not want to be ashamed of the way we have lived as a Christian. We want to have confidence that we are a child of God, and therefore are completely prepared to meet Him.

However, even as a child of God, we struggle with sin in our living. Yet we know we have been forgiven if we belong to Christ. We abide in Him, and He keeps us on the path of righteousness. Apart from Christ, it is impossible to live righteously.

But any righteousness within us is a result of Christ’s righteousness. It’s nothing that we can take credit for. It’s what Christ has placed within us. We are made righteous through Christ and His righteousness. We can be righteous only because we are born of Him. That’s what we call being born again.

In Romans 6:18 God declares this about the true believers: **“Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”** That is to say, we have become the servants of God when He saved us from our sins and we became a part of the Kingdom of God.

Before God saved us, we were the servants of sin, but we have been made free from sin. That is, sin no longer has dominion over us, now that we belong to Christ. And the final end therefore is everlasting

life. Every true believer can look forward to this glorious future – living in eternity with Christ forever.

### Chapter 3

We have already examined the first 2 chapters of 1 John, and we have learned some wonderful truths about our relationship with God. Now let's go on to the next chapter. We read in 1 John 3:1 these words from the mouth of God:

**1. Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not.**

“Behold!” God is calling our attention here. He wants us to pay close attention, because this is what God has declared. What manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us. That is to say, what kind or degree of love He has freely given to His children.

Because of His great love, we can be called His children; His sons and daughters. This is the love that God has given to us. This is the greatest love God could show to us. We are poor, miserable sinners, deserving of death. And yet God in His infinite love and mercy has adopted us to be His sons and made us part of His family. He has given us the greatest honor by adopting us as His children, in spite of our sinful nature.

We can read more about this adoption in Romans 8:14-16, where God declared these wonderful words:

**For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.**

But the unbelieving world cannot begin to comprehend this much love. They do not have a relationship with Christ or with God the Father, so they do not know Him. Consequently they cannot know the true believers. They do not know us; they do not understand us. There is a vast cleavage between the true believers and those who cannot understand this concept at all.

In the viewpoint of the world, the Christians are to be pitied. Most people think that Christians really miss out on all the worldly pleasures. But these people cannot understand the godly standards that Christians follow that bring tremendous joy and happiness to the true believers. They do not understand that the source of joy for the child of God is Christ Himself and the Word of God, and not the pleasures of this world.

For the true believer, there is no greater joy than to know that we are a child of God. It is a different joy than the world can present. We can address God as our Heavenly Father. We are part of the family of God, and everything that goes along with that.

Let's go on with 1 John 3:2. We read there:

**2. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.**

Although we are still living on this sinful earth in our sinful bodies, we are already the sons of God if He has saved us. We are beloved by God. In His great love He has called us His children. He is our Father. That is wonderful in itself, already. We have a Father/son relationship that already exists, and will be there in the future.

But there is more! God is letting us know that we will be changed into something even better someday, for He states, **“it does not yet appear what we shall be.”** We will be like Him – like Christ. What can that mean?

Let's see if we can get some assistance from the Bible. In Philippians 3:20-21 God declares: **“the Lord Jesus Christ...shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.”**

No matter how physically beautiful and perfect we may appear to be, our body is vile in comparison with the enormously beautiful, glorious body that God has appointed for us when we shall be changed, and shall be like Christ. When will this happen? We read in 1 Corinthians 15:51-53:

**Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on in corruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.**

In other words, God will give us a new perfect body of some sort, because we are going to live with Christ for eternity. This change will take place at the time of Christ's return, when He gathers all His elect together. The elect includes each and every person who has become saved, and therefore is going to spend eternity with the Lord Jesus.

When Christ shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. We don't understand the fullness of that statement, but it surely is glorious beyond measure, from the moment that He appears.

The day when Christ shall appear to us has to refer to the coming of Christ at the end of time. We can know a little bit about this, and it is a good idea to read these Scripture passages to see what information God, in His wisdom, has given us.

We read in I Corinthians 13:12: **"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."**

Right now we cannot see Christ. We know a lot about Him through His Word. But we still walk by faith, not by sight. But the day will come when we will be face to face with Christ. Then we shall see Him as He is, and we will know Him perfectly. That will be the glorious day when we will be with Him. Rejoice!

We cannot understand these things. We read about them and we say our wondering words, but the fact is, it is all going to happen as God has declared it. For God has given us these glorious promises that every true believer can hold on to.

All the true believers who have died are already in Heaven with Christ. The Bible tells us that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8). What a comfort that is! You have loved ones who have died. Where are they? If they were true believers, they are with Christ right now enjoying all these blessings we are talking about. When Christ returns, then every believer will see Him this way.

But when will Christ return to gather all of His elect? That's a question that rings all the time in our minds. That part we cannot know, nor do

we need to know. Leave it with the Lord Jesus Christ. He knows what He is doing! It will be when He is completely ready. Let's wait upon the Lord, because it is so marvelous to know that He is in charge – both of the act itself as well as the timing of the act. It is much better for us to just wait upon God. But we do know it will be something super-glorious! Anything we thought was glorious in the past is nothing at all compared with the glory of seeing Christ as He is, and this is coming in the future.

We might think we are entitled to know, because we are God's elect. There was a time when I believed very strongly that we would know the date of Christ's return. But I was wrong, as were a lot of other people. We were demanding too much from God. God needed to humble us and bring us back down to size, because we still are living in this world. We can be thankful that what we know is enough for any human being to know.

God has a timetable that is perfect, that will take place. It is enough to know that. As a child of God I too can wait for Him to come, and He always keeps His promises, so we know He will come. We know He will carry out His promises, and we don't have to ask for more. We should thank God for His promises, and patiently wait, as we revel in the wonder of being a child of God. Oh, to be one of God's elect!

In Matthew 24, for example, God declares several times that we will not know the time of His return. In Matthew 24:36 He states: **“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only.”**

And in verse 44 we read, **“Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.”**

Our instruction is to be ready for the return of Christ. How can we be ready? We are to live out our life on this earth in a way that is pleasing to God, aware that someday every true believer will be with Him for eternity. What could be more glorious than that! The future is glorious, that is, for the true believer, who can look forward to seeing our Savior, Jesus Christ, face to face.

So with that future ahead of us, we know we have hope. Let's go on now in our reading of 1 John 3:3:

**3. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.**

This hope is in Him – in Christ. We have hope first of all in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is always our hope. But because a hope is

provided to be within us, that expands the hope beyond what we had expected. It is a reality within our life. That is where the hope is expressed in us; that we have hope to be as pure as Christ, because we have become His children. We are born of Him spiritually. Christ is the ultimate source for purification; the cause of our purification. Everyone who has been adopted into the family of God is a son of God, and therefore wants to be as pure as Christ. Christ is the ultimate source for purification.

The child of God looks forward to having the glory of Christ in eternity, but right now he lives in hope. But we want the glory of Christ to begin to show in our present life. We have come under the care and under the watchful eye of our Savior Jesus Himself. Our hope is in the promises of Christ, and consequently we have tremendous encouragement to cry out to God. When we are able to cry out to God freely, we are going to find in our lives that God will provide for us and help us to become pure as Christ is pure.

Christ has given us the glorious promise that we will be like Him when He shall appear. But while we're waiting for that blessed, awesome day, we want to be as much like Christ as possible. That's the nature of a child of God. We want to be more like our Master; more like our Savior, so that Christ might be seen in us. We want the purity of Christ to be seen in us. And when we talk about the purity of Christ, we are talking about every aspect of His life. We want that to overflow into our lives. That is the intense desire of every child of God.

But when we talk about striving after Christ's purity, we are faced with the ugly picture of sin, as we read on in the next verse, 1 John 3:4:

**4. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.**

Whosoever commits sin? Does that statement include me? Do I live sinlessly? Any one of us knows that we have to go constantly to our Savior and pray for forgiveness. That's every one of us. Sin always surrounds us and is baiting us. We are always troubled a little bit by sin, and we don't want to be.

We are all sinners, aren't we? No one can make a claim that sin is good. We all have to be facing the fact that sin is couching at our door, ready to grab hold of us. So we pray constantly: "Oh Lord, keep me from sin." Sin is the transgression of the law of God, so therefore I should make it a habit to go constantly to the law of God to understand

it. I don't want sin to cling to me or be in evidence in me. I want my sin to be gone. And the more I live for Christ, the more I have a tremendous desire to do God's will, and the less sin will be seen in me. As the old Chorus goes: *"Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me."* That should be our desire.

In Romans 3 God declares that by the law is the knowledge of sin. This is of course talking about the law of God, the Bible, which is God's law book. And when we look at God's law book carefully, with an open heart and an open mind and an open desire to be more like the Master, then we see the law. We see that God is talking about me, and I don't want any sin in my life. So I can go constantly, and must go constantly to my Savior, that I might walk more faithfully.

Not only that, but in James 2:10 we read: **"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all."**

That sounds hopeless – who can keep the whole law perfectly? Nobody can. By that definition, every one of us is guilty of breaking the whole law of God. How are we to understand that? But really what God is doing is reminding us of our need to go to Christ.

We live in a sinful world, and we should not be surprised if we get caught up in it from time to time. So that is why it is so wonderful that every time, every hour of the day that we feel guilty before God, we can cry to Him for forgiveness again. And we can know that sin is forgiven. We can know that Christ has mercy on sinners, and He will help us keep the law of God more perfectly.

We want to be as much like Christ as possible. But we cannot live sinlessly without the help of Christ. We can know that Christ is always present with us, and we can thank Him for helping us to walk in a way that is more like Him. He helps us; He strengthens us. We need Christ! That's where prayer enters in. We should never hesitate to pray, and we never want to pray in a lofty way. We pray humbly, asking for mercy again and again. It is the Lord Jesus, who is eternal God, that is able to help us, and will help us, to walk in a way that is truly pleasing to God. That we can be assured of.

So we are reminded of our need to go to Christ to plead for removal of our guilt, and for new strength to walk in a way that is altogether pleasing to God Himself. These verses that speak of this give us assurance that we must go to Christ. We never should get the idea that we can come up with the strength we need. No, we keep going to Christ because we need His help, and we will receive His help. We cannot possibly remove our own guilt of sin. Christ must be there.

What assurance that gives us! Christ will never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). When we cry out to Him in desperation, He is there to help us. This is so wonderful and makes such a difference in our lives.

Christ is the only remedy for the final removal of sin. He helps us to live in a way that is pleasing to God. He is our Savior, so to go to Him is the logical solution, and is a wonderful solution to our sin problem. When we learn to do that and do it without any hesitation, we just pour out our need to Christ and He is there to help us, and to strengthen us again and again. We plead with Him for forgiveness and for His righteousness.

The Bible directs us where to go – to the feet of Christ to plead for mercy. Christ is the giver of wonderful mercy. That is clear when we go on to 1 John 3:5, where we read:

**5. And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.**

According to God's own program, Christ, our blessed Savior, is the only source of salvation. God says that He; that is, Christ, was manifested to take away our sins. God outlined His salvation program in His Word, the Bible.

We never want to forget the wonder of God's love in providing salvation for any one of us. If we are not going to depend upon Christ, we are wiped out. We are going to remain sinners. But we go to Him with a broken and a contrite heart. We acknowledge that we do not deserve salvation at all. We never want to forget that the wonder of God's love is providing salvation and forgiveness for any one of us. We can't understand it, but we know Christ came to save us. He is the Savior, and there is no other.

Christ is the only One who can take away our sins, because He is the sinless One. The love of Christ for His own people is incredibly awesome. We cannot understand it, but we discover that when we are the recipients of His love, it changes our life in every way. We are a new creature in Christ.

Christ is our great hope when we find we have committed sins in spite of our quest for purity. We want to be pure, and only because we can go to Christ can we expect to have that purity from Him. We lay everything at His feet and cling to His promises, and know that He has forgiven our sins.

As we go on in our examination of 1 John 3, we will read some very surprising words in the next few verses that we must look at very carefully.

We read in 1 John 3:6:

**6. Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him.**

Now we're going to jump down to verse 9. We'll go back to verses 7 and 8 a little bit later. Verse 9:

**9. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.**

Now, I read these two verses because verses 6 and 9 both seem to indicate that if you abide in Christ, you are no longer a sinner. That is, you no longer commit any sin after you are saved. That is what we read in these verses at face value.

But we know right away that cannot be the right explanation of these verses. Any one of us who claims to be a Christian cannot look at himself or herself honestly and say, "Yes, I am sinless. I no longer sin now that I am a Christian." We all see sin in our lives, or in the lives of other Christians. Therefore there must be a different explanation.

A true believer has a loving relationship with Christ and with his Heavenly Father. He knows Christ and is known by Him very intimately. Not only that, but if we are saved, we are not going to be judged for our sins, because they have been paid for. Our sins have all been covered by Christ's blood. We are no longer in bondage to sin, because we are servants of God.

But does that mean we do not and cannot commit sin? Sin is the thing we are constantly on guard against. We hate to see sin in our lives, but it keeps cropping up. It is a daily battle. What is the answer to these difficult verses?

We must understand that we are two parts: body and soul. When God saves us, He gives us a new, resurrected soul. That means we have a new soul that is perfect and sinless. Something wonderful – something eternal - has happened in my life. Something has happened that is way beyond any human understanding, and we praise God because we know it could only come from God.

Sometimes God calls this our soul, sometimes our heart, as we read in the book of Ezekiel, where God describes salvation in Ezekiel 36:26-27. We read there:

**A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do *them*.**

God here is describing a spiritual act. He is speaking about replacing our old sinful heart with a new heart. He has put His Spirit within us at the moment of salvation. That is, we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. We call this being born again, or born of God. It is not something we can see or notice, because it is a spiritual act performed by God. But we will see the results in our life as we begin to live for Christ.

This new resurrected soul is a living soul that has eternal life. It will never die. So in our soul existence, we can say that our soul is perfect and sinless. In our new soul, we will not and cannot commit sin. We dare to say this only because of what we have been reading in the Bible, God's Book. We did not read it in a commentary or in some person's idea about salvation; we read it in the Bible.

But this soul is still part of an earthly body that is not perfect. When we come to truth, we must always give the whole truth, and therefore there are things said that we don't really like to say, but they are still true and must be said. So we say this soul is still part of an earthly body. We will not be in a situation where we absolutely cannot sin. Our body cannot become perfect as long as we are living on this sinful earth. We remain an integral part of it, and there are things we do not understand. But we do know that something has happened in our life that is super wonderful. At the moment of salvation we have been given a new, resurrected soul, although we still live on sinful earth and have a sinful body that causes us to sin.

This is the struggle. We have a perfect, living soul that is part of a sinful body. We don't want it to be that way, but it is the way God has left it in us. The Apostle Paul wrote about this struggle in Romans 7, where he laments the battle going on within him because of this very situation.

We read in Romans 7:22-25:

**For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.**

That statement by the Apostle Paul really lays it on the line. Why do we keep struggling with sin? Why can't we stop sinning altogether? We don't want to sin because of our living soul, so there is really a mighty war going on within our bodies. Our body drags us down into sin.

We are able to have victory over sin in some ways, but we cannot have total victory until we go to Heaven. When we go into Heaven our life on earth is ended, and we are able to leave our human nature behind altogether. So we walk very carefully to avoid sin and temptation, and we can avoid sin to a high degree, but over and over we fail, and it makes us feel so bad. But wonderfully we can go again and again to our Savior.

We have hope that God will restrain sin in our lives because of His wonderful promises that we belong to Him. This is what we understand by these verses that state that we do not commit sin. This is only part of the picture. In our soul existence we do not sin because we have been given a new resurrected soul at the moment of salvation. But there is still a big problem. We still have a body that has an old nature that is sinful.

We cannot understand this issue because it is spiritual. It is a spiritual concept and God has not given us this ability to understand all spiritual things. In other words, we are still growing in grace. We are still growing in the things that Christ wants us to know about. So we walk by faith, and keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, our Savior. We wait upon Christ to give us the strength; give us the rationale; give us all that is necessary, so that hopefully as time goes by we will be walking more and more in a way that is pleasing to our blessed Savior.

Let's go back to 1 John 3:7. We read there:

**7. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous.**

God first of all is putting us in our proper category. “Little children.” We are not professors of knowledge who know everything. We are little children in God’s sight. When your 3-year-old child comes to you with a question, he does not come full of knowledge; he comes asking very simple questions about things. You normally are giving him very simple answers because you know his mind is still very small, and you want him to understand some of what you tell him.

When we talk about Christ coming to help us, we should be thanking Him in our soul that He treated us as children, because we don’t know anything in ourselves. It must come from the Lord Jesus, and he teaches us bit by bit. We are little children, and that is the way we should want Jesus to teach us. No matter what we do as an adult, we still are a little child in Christ’s sight. We should react to Him very humbly and listen humbly and not take on any airs of pride when we are taught the Word of God in any of its aspects. We must listen carefully.

Humility is the first step. Once we learn to be humble – and it is a learning process – so that we are able to sort out truth from error, we will begin to learn. This is where we begin to have spiritual learning.

We are all spiritually destitute by nature. That means we have no knowledge in ourselves. We all should be ready to learn. So many people say they are ready to learn, but deep down they really want to tell others all that they know about Jesus. Our attitude should be: I want to know everything possible about Jesus. He is all important. Spiritually, when we come to such an important subject as the Lord Jesus, I am a little child.

This is the time when I must practice humility. By nature none of us are humble. We all think we are something, but really we aren’t. We are waiting to be taught. We must go to the Bible; we must read it more carefully; more patiently; more often. It must be my guide, and I have to listen to what I am reading very carefully. That is a good place to begin.

The real news is in the Bible and it comes to us as we listen to the Word of God. So we must listen to it more and more. We have to get rid of the idea that because I have read the Bible so often, I don’t have to be told any more from the Bible. But we can never listen to the Word of God too often. It is God who has something to say to us.

So the first thing we know we must do is to examine our lives. Do I see sin in my life? I would be astounded if anyone could look at his life and not see some sin. Sin is always couching at the door, waiting to jump in and create a problem in our life. So we should never hesitate to call again and again upon God. I hope this is true of you – that no man

can deceive you because you only want to listen to the Lord Jesus, and the best place to listen to Him is right from the Bible.

Many people go around bragging that they do everything God's way because they read the Bible all the time and therefore don't sin very much. But is that true? I must look at my life honestly and examine myself carefully. We must ask God to strengthen us; we cannot be used of God unless we are prepared by Him. That is the beginning point. We plead for God's mercy so that we can do it His way altogether. There is no short cut of any kind.

Let's go on in our study to 1 John 3:8. At first reading this verse will seem very straightforward, but we have learned that the Bible is sometimes very complex. We read in 1 John 3:8:

**8. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.**

Now, we are all familiar with who the devil is. The Bible calls him the devil, or Satan, or the wicked one, or the evil one. He is sometimes referred to as a great dragon or a serpent. Without question, the devil is the spiritual being that brought sin into the world back in the Garden of Eden. He is the great adversary of God, and the Bible has a lot to say about him.

In this verse, God states that the devil sinned from the beginning. We do not know exactly when Satan rebelled against God along with some of his fellow angels. But wicked Satan came into the Garden of Eden at the beginning of the world, and deceived Adam and Eve with his lies. And then for His own purposes, God gave Satan the rule over this sin-cursed earth.

In John 12:31, God called Satan the prince of this world, and in 2 Corinthians 4:4 he is called the god of this world. God, in His infinite wisdom, has allowed Satan to operate in this world within the boundaries God has set for him, as God's election plan was carried out for mankind.

We know that Satan rules over the unbelievers therefore, but does he have any power over the true believers? A true believer belongs to the Kingdom of God, after all. Because a true believer no longer serves Satan, what about when he falls into a sin? We have the righteousness of Christ, don't we? Can we possibly be trapped by the devil?

As a matter of fact, God warns the true believers to watch out for Satan! We may not think we are at risk once God saves us. However, God gives us a strong warning in Ephesians 6, where He instructs us to put on the whole armor of God.

In Ephesians 6:11, God instructs us to **“Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”** The word ‘wiles’ means deceitfulness or trickery. The devil is the great deceiver and a liar. Don’t ever take him as an incidental enemy.

God goes on in Ephesians 6:12: **“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”** God is talking about the power of the devil. And then verse 16 talks about quenching **“the fiery darts of the wicked.”**

God is certainly warning us against Satan! God is telling us we need the armor of God in order to withstand Satan’s power. This is an important warning; one that we want to be totally aware of, because we can be tricked and coerced by Satan. Satan is a real wicked foe.

The idea of armor suggests warfare. There is a war going on – against the rulers of the darkness of this world. This is not a simple skirmish or something we can dismiss. It is very deceptive, and we do not want to be tricked by Satan. We want to stand tall and strong with our eyes on Christ, solid in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The armor of God includes truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the Gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

God is telling us how to withstand Satan; how to use great care as we live in this world, because Satan is powerful. He is deceptive; he is a crooked enemy. But wonderfully he is under the power of God’s might. He cannot go outside of that power; therefore we know he has limitations. But we have to steadfastly and patiently wait for God to help us and warn us. God is so good to us, and He does help us.

So in other words, we do need to be concerned about Satan, because he is very active and very deceptive, and we do not want to be deceived. Of course, if we belong to Christ, Satan cannot ultimately have victory over us. But until Satan is put under the power of God completely, he is a very formidable foe. He is alive and he does exist. The Bible makes that very clear.

Satan may try to tempt us in every way to sin, and we are not strong against temptation in ourselves. We know that is true. We need Christ to be our strength! With Christ’s help we will have victory over

Satan and over sin every time Satan comes against us. But we must recognize that Satan is our enemy if we belong to Christ. And therefore that quest of Satan to get victory over us can be expected at any time. Satan is the enemy of Christ and therefore of ourselves.

We read in 1 John 3:8, the second part of this verse, **“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”**

When Christ Jesus came to earth, Satan tried very hard to destroy Him. We read in Luke 22:3 that Satan entered into Judas, one of Christ’s disciples, and caused him to betray Jesus to the chief priests in order to bring about His death. Satan surely thought he had victory over Christ.

Jesus allowed this to happen, of course, because He had a master plan that included His death and resurrection. Christ had paid for sin before the foundations of the world. How He did that, we do not know. But He came to this earth to show the world His sovereignty, His mercy, His glory, His victory over death, His victory over Satan – all those things. It was a tremendous demonstration! Christ was showing us His power over Satan. Christ was the ultimate and final victor.

We know that Jesus Christ destroys the works of the devil. Christ is the deliverer of fallen man from the power of Satan. He rescues souls out of Satan’s hands. The unbelieving world follows after Satan and continues to be deceived by him. But not so the true believers. They are rescued by Christ. He does indeed rescue us. It is so wonderful to read about these things, because if we are true believers we need God’s power to stay free of Satan’s deceptive wiles. Only Christ can deliver us.

But ultimately God will destroy this corrupt world and all its wickedness, including Satan.

But the true believers belong to Christ forever, throughout eternity future. What can be better than to know that? So we continue working for Christ knowing we have to remain patient. We are going to see Satan winning again and again, but that does not mean for a moment that this is pointing to an ultimate win of Satan. Satan is the loser because he is against God. His time will definitely come to an end.

We have been carefully going through the book of 1 John, and we have come down to 1 John 3:10 – 12, where we read:

**10. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.**

**11. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.**

**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.**

There we have the beginning of grievous sin. God has been talking about righteousness. Back in 1 John 3:7 we had read, "**He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous.**" We had seen that verse to mean that a saved person has the righteousness of Christ, and it should become a part of his personality.

In contrast, verse 10 says that "**whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God...**"

In other words, only the child of God can do righteousness. Only the child of God can be considered to be righteous, because of the righteousness of Christ. The unbelievers cannot be righteous because they do not belong to Christ.

Verse 10 contrasts the children of God and the children of the devil. Those are the two categories of people. The righteousness and love for one's brother are manifest; that is, clearly visible. That is God's declaration.

God's message to us is that we should love one another. And then God calls our attention to Cain, who slew his brother Abel. We can read that account back in the fourth chapter of Genesis.

Cain and Abel, the first two sons of Adam and Eve, each brought an offering to the Lord. God accepted Abel's offering, but rejected Cain's offering. As a result, Cain killed his brother Abel.

God states plainly here in 1 John 3 that Cain belonged to the wicked one, who is Satan, and that Cain killed Abel because of Abel's righteousness. God is using Cain and Abel as a prime example of righteousness versus unrighteousness. The spiritual state of their hearts was evident by their actions. Cain did not love his brother at all, and his hatred or jealousy caused him to commit murder.

God declares that Cain killed Abel because Cain's works were evil, and Abel's works were righteous. God reports this to us so that we can know these things. God is showing us the kind of righteousness a true believer should have.

On the surface, Cain's offering to God may have looked just as good as Abel's offering, but God looked upon their hearts. He would

have seen that there was something terribly wrong with Cain's offering, because there was something terribly wrong with Cain's heart. He knew that Cain's heart was evil, just as He knew that Abel's heart was righteous.

Cain and Abel belonged to the first family that lived on this earth. When sin came into this perfect world, the impact was immediate and tremendous. And when Cain murdered Abel, it set the stage for how mankind was going to turn out because of sin.

Murder was not just a passing phenomenon. It continued throughout the Bible and throughout history, right up until our day. Because the world is under the power of sin and Satan's wickedness, the world is full of murder, which really demonstrates how wicked the heart of mankind has grown.

This earth is an arena that is possessed with sin - sin of the most terrible nature. One of the leading sins we see everywhere is the terrible sin of murder: mankind killing mankind. Therefore as we see the grievous nature of sin, we see that death is the ultimate end. We can also see why there is a terrible penalty for sin.

We all can see how terrible this is. The same hatred shows up today as it showed up in the heart of Cain. Man today is as sinful as ever.

If we did not have the Bible, and did not know about the victory of Christ, we might assume there would never be victory over sin. The whole world would be lost if it were not for the Lord Jesus. But because God enters into the picture, sin loses its power in the lives of the true believers. Sin has no power over Christ and His people. Christ came to give us victory over sin.

Victory over sin is possible through Christ alone. It does not come from our resolve or strength. The victory comes because of Christ. Christ has done everything necessary to give us this tremendous victory.

God commands us to love one another. The heart of a true believer should be filled with love for his fellow man. As Christ loves us, so we should love one another. We are able to do this because we have the Spirit of Christ if He has saved us. He puts the love in our hearts that He requires. All the activity is Christ's activity. It isn't because of us; it is because Christ has taken possession of our life. So we are finally able to live a life that is pleasing to Christ.

Yet the thoughts of sin and its consequences can really weigh us down. But because we have the Bible, and we know it is completely

true and trustworthy, we know that there is something better that is guaranteed to come.

The children of God are able to look forward to living in the new heaven and the new earth that God has promised, where there will be no sin at all. There will only be perfection with Christ, forever and ever. Knowing this, the true believers should be living with rapturous joy, even though we live in a very sinful world. What a glorious future awaits the child of God!

We have come to 1 John 3:13. This is a very interesting and surprising verse. We read there:

### **13. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.**

In other words, if you are a true believer, you can expect the unbelieving people of the world to hate you. Why would that be? To give us an idea, we can read John 15:18-19. We read these words that Jesus spoke:

**If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.**

The idea, then, is that the people of the world love their own kind. They do not love Christ or His followers. The Christian who lives a godly life is very different from a worldly person who follows the world's standards of living. He is viewed by the world as very strict, very narrow, and perhaps very judgmental, just because of his godly standards. He consequently is shunned by what he would call worldly people, who care nothing for God or the Bible. There is a vast difference between God's standards set forth in the Bible, and the way most people choose to live. God does not allow any lying or cheating, for example. He does not allow divorce for any reason, or remarriage after divorce. These are harsh standards for most people.

True believers know they must live by the standards set forth in the Bible. They must follow God's standards for living and not the world's standards. God knows people's hearts, and therefore He tells the children of God: **"Marvel not my brethren if the world hate you."**

Let's go on:

**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.**

**15. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.**

When we become born again, God states that we have passed from death into life. We have come out of the kingdom of Satan, and into the kingdom of God. We now possess eternal life.

One indication that this has happened is that we love the brethren. God expects us to love others, and He helps us in this regard. He declares that if we don't love our brother, we still abide in death. That is, we still are not saved.

In verse 15 God equates hatred with murder. That seems rather extreme, doesn't it? To feel hatred for someone is certainly not as bad as taking his life. But the point is this, that the sin of hatred is just as bad as murder from God's viewpoint. This is a sin that shows we are not saved.

We know that a true child of God should not be a murderer. His heart should be filled with love for his fellow man; not with hatred of any kind. It seems logical for us to love our brethren. The brethren would include all these who profess Christ as their Savior. So naturally we would love them.

But we don't always feel love as we should. God is telling us in these verses that a lack of love for our fellow Christians is an indication that we may not be saved. We need to look at our heart very honestly. If there is any hatred we should be crying out to God for mercy. How do we view our brethren? Always with love? That is what God requires of the believers. We are to love our brethren as God loves us. That is, we are to show the love of God for our brethren in Christ at all times.

As we have gone through the book of 1 John, God has been teaching us about some of the differences between the true believers and the unbelievers. Our love for our brothers and sisters in Christ is one evidence of the fact that God has saved us.

As we go on in 1 John 3 we will see more evidence of the impact of God's salvation. We read in 1 John 3:16:

**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.**

It is the Lord Jesus Christ who laid down His life for us. That is a fact we know very well. Christ gave His life for the sake of the elect, and thereby sets a terrific example for all of us who are believers.

Christ took upon Himself all of our dirty, rotten sins, so that we could have eternal life. The terms “dirty, rotten sins” makes us recoil, but that is the truth about the nature of sin. We need to remember that all the time – sin is rotten. Yet Jesus paid the full price for the sins of His elect people in order to give us the marvelous gift of salvation.

Now God is telling us here, in this verse we just read, that the true believers should also be willing to lay down their lives for the brethren. We should be ready to put our love into action without any hesitation.

He is showing us what true love for the brethren is, illustrated by the love of Christ for us. It isn't just a nice thought or conversation; it requires action. We could say that we have arrived at the knowledge of what true Christian love is. It requires action.

Now, the question is, how do we lay down our lives? Christ literally laid down His life for us. We are told we that we all should lay down our lives for the brethren. This applies to all of the true believers. What is God asking of us? How can we give up our life for someone? How do we lay our lives down on the altar of service to our fellow man?

One way we can do that is to give generously of our time, our care, our labors, our substance, and our prayers. All of these things enter into action as we are trying to faithfully live our lives in a way that is pleasing unto God.

In other words, we should be willing to do anything necessary to help one of our brothers or sisters in Christ, to the glory of God. That is, if any one of our brothers or sisters in Christ has a need that we recognize, we should immediately become available to assist that individual. This is a beginning point for Christian service.

Our life should not be dearer to us than God's own Son was to Him. How dear was Jesus the Son of God to His heavenly Father? We know from the Bible that He was extremely dear to God, and yet He was given up to be our sin-bearer.

God goes on in the next verse to expand on this idea of giving of ourselves to the brethren. We read in verses 17 and 18:

**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?**

**18. My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.**

God is instructing us that we are to show our love for the brethren by our actions. The word “bowels” indicates one’s very essence - his very being. We don’t just talk about our love; we demonstrate that love with generosity. Love with generosity is the key. How much loving service do we give sometimes and do not do it in truth? We may want it to look like service for God, but our heart is not in it. This is not the way to give Christian service.

If someone has a physical need, and we have the means to help out, then we should do so willingly and unselfishly. We are to show compassion and caring. These actions should come from our heart, a heart of love.

For example, let’s suppose you have a friend who is elderly, and her husband dies, and she has no other family. Without financial assistance, she will die of hunger. You have some money. You were going to use it to pay bills or buy some things. But this lady is desperate for help. We should be ready to give help as quickly as possible when we sense a need.

Will you wait to first see if anyone else will help her out? Or will you immediately step forward and give her the money she needs? This is an opportunity for you to lay down your life for her, by putting her needs ahead of your own.

So we should always consider the needs of others first, even ahead of our own needs. This is the normal reaction of a true child of God. This is what we should expect of a Christian, without any question. This is what God expects of us.

It is so easy to talk about our love and our care for others. That sounds nice and kind and thoughtful. But God is putting us to the test. He is calling us to action. Our good works are an outpouring of our faith in Christ. Good works are not a requirement for salvation, but rather they are evidence that God has worked in our heart and life.

Instead of being self-centered, we should have become centered on God and others when we became saved. Our love for the brethren should be always in evidence by the way we live and behave ourselves in a needy world.

As we go on in this chapter of the Bible, God will give us more instruction about how we are to live as Christians. We want to know all there is to be known about living and walking as a child of God.

We read in 1 John 3:19 - 21:

**19. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.**

That is to say, when we see this love at work in our lives, we can be assured that we are of the truth. In other words, we want a positive statement that is telling us that we indeed have found the truth. We go in the next verse:

**20. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.**

**21. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence toward God.**

If our heart condemns us, it means we are not sure of our salvation at all. But God can assure us. One of the greatest concerns of a child of God is whether or not he is truly saved. We may think we are saved, but then we have a bad day, and we are not sure. Our heart condemns us at times, as it were. That is why it is so wonderful to go back to the Bible and read it again and again. There is where our assurance comes from.

We find we are asking, "How do I know I'm really saved? Maybe I'm not." But we cannot rely upon our feelings, which are very untrustworthy. When we listen to our feelings we get into trouble. When we have doubts we must go back to the Word of God. What does it declare? And there is where we find our assurance.

God is greater than our heart; He knows all things. He knows the true state of our heart in relation to Him. So we want to pray to our Lord for help, and we cannot be too proud to cry out to Him for mercy and assurance that we are His child. If we cannot get that assurance then we have to begin to pray for salvation. We have to trust the Word of God. God is the only one that can help us.

We can know that if God is meaningful to our lives, it means that He has led us down the right path. We trust Him; we don't trust ourselves. Our trust must be based upon the firm foundation of God's love and faithfulness. We have to keep our eyes focused on the faithfulness of God. If I know that I have trusted Christ to be my Savior, I know I am safe with Him because of His faithfulness.

Our foundation cannot be based upon our own feelings. That would be a very shaky foundation. We need something solid, and there is no more solid foundation upon which to entrust ourselves than upon God Himself. We cannot base our relationship with God purely on how we feel in His presence. We know it has to be because we have learned that God is God. He is our Lord. He is absolutely trustworthy.

As we examine our lives and our walk with Christ, we must be honest in our examination. As a child of God, we are to be obedient to God's Word. We are to love others, as Christ loves us. We are to be ready to lay down our lives for the brethren, and so on. And the more we begin to think about these things, the more solid our trust in Christ will be.

God has given us standards to live by, that are evidence of our walk with Christ if we are really listening to them with an intense desire to be obedient. But even then, at times our feelings cause us to doubt our standing with God. We are so blessed that God is still there, because we are wavering. At times we are unsure, but that does not make a difference in what God is doing for us. He is there faithfully waiting upon us.

God gives us some assistance with this matter in Romans 8:16, where we read: **"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God."** In other words, God will assure us that He has saved us.

That is why we can have confidence toward God when we are in true fellowship with God, and our heart does not condemn us. We can have the confidence that God has saved us if we truly believe with all our hearts that Christ is our Savior. We have a sense of need, and we must come to Christ in total humility.

When we have doubts, we can pray for the assurance of salvation. No matter how shaky we feel, we can start to pray. We know that our own thinking is not trustworthy, and that our knowledge of all things is very slender. But God knows all things. He is far greater than our heart. We can always cry out to God for mercy, knowing He will help us. What a wonderful God we serve!

We trust in what God's Word says about what it means to be saved. We cannot trust how we feel about it. God's Spirit bears witness with our spirit, and He will give us more and more trust in Him.

God will give us the assurance we need, and thus give us confidence in our standing with Christ. We trust entirely in Christ and God's Word. We trust in God's promises, knowing He keeps His promises.

We serve such a loving God, who cares so much for His children. What a blessed confidence He gives us. One of our beloved hymns declares, *Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine*. This is the assurance God puts within our hearts when we walk in truth. God gives us assurance that we are His children as we see His love at work in our lives.

Now we are going on to verses 22 and 23, to learn more about this subject.

We read in 1 John 3:22:

**22. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.**

The person who walks in the kind of obedience and love this passage speaks of will experience answered prayer. This does not mean that God is rewarding our obedience by giving us what we pray for. But rather, this emphasizes the fact that when we are in fellowship with God, that results in our love and obedience to be in God's will, which is the key to answered prayer. We are in complete harmony with the will of God. This harmony is the goal of every true believer.

In John 15:7 Christ made a similar statement when He declared: **"If ye abide in Me, and My words abide you, ye will ask what ye desire, and it shall be done unto you."**

That is, when we are living in fellowship with Christ, we abide in Christ, and we will keep His commandments. Along with that, we will want to do God's will, and the things we ask for from God will be in accordance with His will. Those will be things we desire. We will do the things that are pleasing in God's sight, and there will be intense harmony between ourselves and God. That is our goal in life.

We are not in this world developing a kingdom for ourselves. We are here to develop the Kingdom of God. Therefore our number one desire will be to try to please God. The nature of true fellowship with Christ is to have an on-going desire to be pleasing to God. The wonderful effects of this desire will be that the love of God will be flowing towards us.

God has set up a wonderful arrangement for us. As we live a godly life, we will find a growth in our desire to be pleasing to God. So we should want to be pleasing to God in everything that we do. And we will discover that as we grow in grace, our own pleasure will be less and less significant. But the pleasure of serving Christ will increasingly impact our lives.

In fact, we will find that as we pray for God's will to be done, and not our own will, many of the things that God desires for us will directly and personally benefit us. God's love for us is so wonderful that we should have every desire to please Him in every aspect of our lives, and not to please ourselves.

We should be praying constantly for God's direction and guidance in order to be in His will, and thus please Him with our actions. When we go through an hour or an afternoon of time, and look back at it and see that during that time period we had an intense desire to be pleasing to God, and that we carried out this goal - what a delight! That is our goal because we love Him more and more.

God is the author of all goodness, and when we experience it in our lives, we are filled with joy. This results in an even better relationship with God. In other words, all we are doing is helping ourselves to do what God wants us to do.

Another aspect of this relationship is seen in the next verse in this passage, 1 John 3:23. We read there:

**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.**

To believe on the name of Christ is not talking about intellectual knowledge. It does not mean to merely believe that Jesus exists. Rather, to believe on His name means putting our whole trust and confidence in Jesus as our Savior and Lord. It means to hold Him in the highest regard. No one in this world should be more desirable than Christ as the recipient of our praise and glory and obedience.

And we are commanded to love one another. This is not optional. It is a command, and requires an action of our will. It is a firm command from God which we must follow.

Jesus had given us this commandment to love also in John 15:12, where He declared: **"This is My commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you."** This is the standard for our love for others. God in His kindness has given us a wonderful standard to follow.

We must always remember that any and all commands given by Christ are of the utmost importance. Therefore it is very desirable for us to follow His commandments and obey them with our whole being.

We must understand that our obedience to Christ is a result of the fact that God is already doing a work of grace and mercy in our lives.

It is only because Christ has saved us that we are capable of believing and loving as He requires us to do, as His children. And our understanding of this gives us the assurance that we belong to Christ.

How wonderful it is to know that as we live our lives in obedience to Christ and His commandments, we are walking closer and closer to Him. It makes us have a greater and greater desire to be obedient to our precious Lord. Obedience to His laws is a prime desire of true children of God. We love others as He loves us, and we love Christ above all.

We have come down to the last verse of the book of 1 John chapter 3, verse 24. There we read:

**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.**

In order to help us understand all the pronouns in this verse, let's clarify this a little bit with some explanation: **"and he** [the true believer] **that keepeth His commandments** [that is, Christ's commandments], **dwelleth in Him** [in Christ]; **and He** [Christ] **in him** [in the true believer]. **And hereby we know that He** [Christ] **abideth in us, by the Spirit which He** [the Spirit] **hath given us."**

This verse really summarizes all that we have been talking about in the past few studies. These are the things God has been teaching us about our life as a child of God.

To say that someone dwells in Christ, or abides in Christ, is a beautiful testimony of our true relationship with Christ after He saves us. This relationship will cause us to want to keep God's commandments.

What could be more wonderful than to dwell in Christ? As a true believer, your dwelling place – your home - is in Christ.

We have read in Romans 8:16, **"the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."**

And Romans 8:9-10 tells us that anyone who belongs to Christ has the Spirit of God in him. The indwelling Holy Spirit gives us assurance. We read there:

**But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is***

**dead because of sin, but the spirit *is* life because of righteousness.**

Therefore God could declare in 1 John 3:24, **“and hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us.”**

We cannot be abiding in Christ and not know this is true. God has given us His Spirit, and He abides in us. How can we possibly understand these things? We can't. It is way beyond our comprehension. But we know it is all true, because God wrote these things in His Word, the Bible. We have the confidence that these things are true, because this is what God tells us about the true believers and His relationship with them. And we know that God is the essence of truth.

The person who does not keep God's commandments does not have the confidence that he abides in Christ. Nor does he or she have the assurance of the Holy Spirit's presence in their life.

God has already given us one basis for this assurance – if we love one another. This love for the brethren is evidence of God's work of love in us.

So we have learned that, first of all, when God saves someone, the Holy Spirit indwells that person. In addition, Christ abides in him and he abides in Christ. As a result of this new spiritual relationship, you will love your brothers and sisters in Christ, and you will keep God's commandments.

Although your body is still dead in sin because of your old nature, you have a new resurrected soul that is perfect.

As we read in Romans 8:10, the spirit is life because of righteousness. Whose righteousness – ours? No, it is because of Christ's righteousness. It is Christ that makes all the difference in our lives.

The Word of God is the sword of the spirit, the Bible tells us. That is, the Holy Spirit uses the Bible to bring about salvation. Therefore, one evidence of salvation is a delight in the teachings of the Bible, so that there is a strong, on-going desire to do the will of God; that is, to be obedient to the Bible both in doctrine and in practice. Practice has to do with the way we conduct ourselves because we have read the Bible.

A saved person has become a citizen of God's kingdom. He has become indwelt by God the Holy Spirit. He has received a new resurrected soul in which he never wants to sin again.

Therefore we would expect that such a person would have a great preoccupation with the Bible, which tells him about his Savior and about salvation. The Bible is the rule book God has given us. When we are ruled by the Bible, then every one of our actions is going to be in accordance with the Word of God.

Over and over in 1 John, God has told us that if we know Him we will keep His commandments. If we do not find in our life an on-going desire to be obedient to the Word of God, then in all likelihood we are not saved. Of course when we have doubts of our salvation, the wonderful fact is that we can always go to God and plead for His mercy.

When we see that our faith is weak, this may indicate that we are not yet saved, though not necessarily. But it is always right to pray to God for His mercy if we are not saved, or if we have already become saved and we do fall again spiritually. We should never hesitate to cry to our blessed Lord for forgiveness.

If I am truly saved, nothing I can do can endanger my salvation. I have been given eternal life. Praise God for His marvelous love and mercy!

## Chapter 4

We have examined the first 3 chapters of the book of 1 John, and now we have come to chapter 4, where God has more to say to the believers.

We read in 1 John 4:1-3:

- 1. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.**
- 2. Hereby know ye the spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.**
- 3. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of**

**antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come: and even now already is it in the world.**

We know right away that this epistle is addressed to the brethren in Christ, because it is addressed to the beloved. The beloved are the fellow-believers. God is starting out this chapter with an admonition: **“Beloved, believe not every spirit.”**

The beloved are warned to not believe everything they hear, just because someone says it is a message inspired by God. Already in the early church there was a big problem with false teachers, just as we have this problem today. So we are to try, or test, the spirit of the teacher, because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

This brings to mind what we read in 1 John chapter 2, where the true believers were warned about antichrists, and those who had left the brethren because they were not of them. This is the same kind of language here in 1 John 4:1. The false prophets have gone out into the world because they are not of God.

Then in verse 2 we are given a method of testing: **“every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.”** To confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh means to believe that He is the Son of God who came to earth and humbled Himself to become a man, yet He never ceased to be God. The person of the Son of God is the center of all true Christian belief.

There are many ways to test teachers to see if their message is truly from the Lord. One way is to check to see if their words match what God says in the Bible. Another way is to see their fruits. But the Apostle John here gives us a very important test: what do they believe about Christ? Do they teach that Jesus Christ was fully God and fully man?

When Christ came to earth, He became a man in every respect except that He did not sin. However, He did not give up the Godhead in any way. Christ never ceased to be eternal God. This fact should be evident in the message that we are hearing.

According to 1 John 4:3, every one that does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God, and is the spirit of antichrist. Jesus had warned that the antichrist would come, and the source of the denial of Christ is seen as **“the spirit of the antichrist.”**

That word “it” in verse 3 can be more correctly translated as “he.” The antichrist was already in the world when this was written. That can only be referring to Satan.

The false teachers are not of God; they are of Satan, who is the great deceiver. That is the danger. Because Satan is so deceitful, his followers can seem to bring the truth.

We can read other Scripture passages such as 2 Corinthians 11:14 that tell us that Satan comes as an angel of light. This means that Satan and his own followers can look and sound like Christ and the true believers, but they do not bring the truth of the Gospel.

Even when Jesus was still here on earth, He warned against false prophets in sheep's clothing, who inwardly are ravening wolves (Matthew 7:15). A false teacher of the gospel can sound genuine, and thus God gives us these solemn warnings, and tells us how to test the spirits.

A true teaching is of God. That is, it has its origin in God, and is faithful to God's Word in every way. God says we will know the Spirit of God. But we have to listen carefully to the message. Is it of God? Or of the antichrist?

The admonition to test the spirits is in order to establish the validity of the claims of any teacher who claims God as the origin of his message.

When Christ asked His disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" Peter made his great confession: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:13-16). That should be the heartfelt confession of every true believer.

This admonition to beware of false teachers can sound very daunting, and make us feel uneasy about the possibility of false teachers. However, in 1 John 4:4, the next verse in this passage, Christ gives the true believers tremendous encouragement about false teachers.

We read in 1 John 4:4:

**4. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.**

What beautiful, comforting words! You are of God, little children. God is our heavenly Father and we are His children. We belong to Him! Not only do we belong to our heavenly Father, but we have His Spirit within us. And God's Spirit is infinitely more powerful than Satan.

"**He that is in you**" is God's Spirit, if you are truly saved. "**He that is in the world**" is Satan, who is the prince of this sinful world.

Satan rules the hearts of the unbelievers. But God rules the hearts of His children.

Because God is so much more powerful than Satan, He can say that we have overcome them; that is, the true believers have overcome the false teachers who have the spirit of antichrist.

These dear children who are of God did not overcome the false teachers because of their great intelligence. Not at all. The Christians who lived in the days of the early church were not delivered from Satan's deceitfulness by themselves. No, they were delivered from evil by the One who dwelt within them. It was the greatness of God that kept them straight. And it is the greatness of God that will keep us straight today.

When you see the success of evil throughout history, you can see that the enemy has great power. The world is full of evil and violence, bringing untold despair and heartache. We can easily see the power of the enemy, Satan. Wickedness is everywhere we look. If you look at the history of the world, it looks like Satan is winning the battle because the world is incredibly wicked.

But of course that is not true, in spite of appearances. We know that God is more powerful than Satan and all evil. In fact, God is so much more powerful that there is no contest.

In our hours of darkness or despair, in faith we must always turn to God and the Scriptures. The Scriptures reveal the truth about God and how He is so much greater than anything or anyone, including the powers of darkness.

The Bible is our great source of hope. God constantly reminds us in the Bible that if we belong to Christ, we abide in Him and He abides in us. We are able to live in His strength, not just our own. What could be more wonderful than that?

So, knowing that this is true, when we are testing the spirits whether they are of God, as we were instructed in verse 1 of this chapter, we go to God's Word for guidance. We do not rely on our own abilities of discernment. We seek guidance from God's Spirit that dwells within us.

We go on now in verses 5 and 6:

**5. They are of the world; therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.**

**6. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.**

Here is the comparison. Verse 5 describes someone who is of the world, while verse 6 describes someone who is of God. These two groups of people have a different authority, and therefore a different message.

Those who are of the world have a message that only the world – that is, the unbelievers – will hear. That audience will not listen to God’s words of truth. But those who are of God will hear a message from God’s Word. Jesus had told us back in John 10:27, **“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”**

So this business of testing the spirits leads us to this conclusion. As God points out here in 1 John 4:6, this is how we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. We ask the question: Is the message of God or of the world?

That word “error” in verse 6 can also be translated as “deceitfulness.” If we are not in the truth, we are in error. That is, we have been deceived into believing something that is not true. Only God can keep us on the right path of truth. Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. There is no other absolute truth in this world.

Let us go on to 1 John 4:7.

**Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.**

We see here right away that our love for others is related to God’s love. The Bible says that love is of God. For a correct understanding of love, we always have to go back to what God has said. This verse seems to imply that everyone who loves someone knows God, and we know that is not true of everyone. Let’s read on:

**8. He that loveth not knoweth not God: for God is love.**

**9. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.**

**10. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.**

Remember, “propitiation” is a word that means forgiveness or reconciliation. It is a word that should cause us to rejoice.

We should note that in verse 10, the words “to be” have been inserted by the translators, but were not in the original manuscript. So verse 10 should correctly read:

**Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son, the propitiation for our sins.**

Christ was the covering for sin because of the great sacrifice of His life. He was able to forgive our sins because He took our guilt upon Himself. All of this is included in the sense of the word “propitiation.” Christ was already the propitiation for our sins when God sent Him to live on earth, in order to show us His great love.

Throughout this book of 1 John, God has been telling us to love the brethren. In these verses He is giving us even more information about love, because it clearly is a very important subject.

God’s love for us is the example we are to follow as we think about our love for others.

We find the key in verse 9. God showed us His great love when He sent Christ into the world. Jesus, God’s only begotten Son, died in our place. He paid for the sins of His chosen elect. In His great love for the brethren, He gave His life for us.

God gives us the greatest definition of love in verse 10: **“Herein in love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us.”**

It is God’s love that is at the forefront. Because He loved us, we are able to love God and others in the way God expects of us.

All of this is tied together in 1 John 4:11, **“Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.”** This verse ties back into what we had read in 1 John 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.”**

Christ laid down His life for us, and that is the kind of love God expects us to have as well. As God manifested His love to us, so we are to manifest (show) our love to others.

God’s love is demonstrated to us by God through Christ. In other words, it is not only seen, but it is demonstrated. It is put out there for us to look at. Those who do not know God do not know His love. It is because of God’s love that we are able to have the right kind of love, and to live through Christ, as we read in verse 9. We belong to Christ if He has saved us.

God’s love for us is really beyond comprehension. We talk about it, we sing about it; but we really cannot understand it. God

chose us from the foundations of the world, and He laid out a salvation program so that we would belong to Him for eternity.

Christ suffered and died and rose again in order to pay for our sins and give us the wonderful inheritance. It was all done before God even created the world. And the inheritance includes everything that had to do with our salvation.

We can't possibly understand any of that. But as a true believer, we know that it is all true. God loved us when we were dirty, rotten sinners.

What did we read in verse 11? **"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."** If God so loved us; that is, if He loved us in this manner and magnitude, so we should love one another.

If God loved us when we were so unlovely, we should also love others who seem unlovely. God expects us to love others no matter what they are like. Of course we easily love our families and our close friends. There may be many people in our Christian circles who are easy to love because they are so nice and so kind, and so on.

But we are to love all the brethren: even the ones who are hard to love because of a difficult personality; even the ones we can't seem to get along with. We are to love them the same way – with all of our heart.

God's love for us was not conditional. He chose His elect in a way known only to Him, but it surely was not because they were especially good people. Every sin we commit is an affront to God, and is known to God. Yet He forgave all our sins because of His great love.

Let's go on. We read in 1 John 4:12-14:

**12. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us.**

**13. Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit.**

**14. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.**

No one has seen God at any time, because of course He is a spirit Being. We know Him and we pray to Him, but we do so in faith. We walk by faith, not by sight.

And yet God has appointed His children as the recipients of His love. And as a consequence of His love for His children, they are able to

love one another. It is because of Christ dwelling within us that we are able to have genuine love for the brethren. Verse 12 tells us that His love is perfected in us.

We had read those same words back in 1 John 2:5, “...**whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him.**”

The word “perfected” has the sense of being brought to completion or fulfillment. As God’s love works in us, our love for God and for the brethren should be increasing and becoming more perfect in God’s sight. It is attaining its proper maturity, so to speak. God’s love for us is not without results. Whatever He gives us to do, we as His children will strive to do it with perfection.

God dwelling in us and we in Him is a relationship that could only come from God. We as human beings could never establish this type of relationship with God, or even imagine such a possibility.

This same relationship is described in John 15 where Jesus declares that He is the true vine and the believers are the branches. So He abides in us and we abide in Him. Abiding and dwelling are exactly the same thing, and God makes a strong point about this relationship.

In 1 John 4:13 God tells us that we know that this is the case because He has given us His Spirit. He is repeating what He had told us in 1 John 3:24, “**And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us.**”

That is our proof that God abides in us: His Spirit. Where the Spirit of God is, there God is. His Spirit at work within us causes us to develop the fruit of the spirit, such as we read about, for example, in Galatians 5:22-23, “**The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.**”

These characteristics should be seen in the life of every true believer, as a result of being indwelt by the Spirit of God. The first fruit in the list is love, the subject of 1 John 4. God tells us repeatedly that God is love. He has shown to the world the greatest love this world has ever known. He is the source of our love for others. It is because of His love that the true believers, who are His children, are able to manifest love to others.

God’s love was manifested to us when Christ came to earth, and mankind beheld Christ’s great sacrifice on our behalf. We are His representatives on earth, and as such we show our love for God by manifesting our love for the brethren.

The apostles were eye-witnesses of Jesus Christ. They walked with Him and talked with Him, and beheld His suffering on the cross.

Therefore the Apostle John can declare in verse 14: **“We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son, the Savior of the world.”**

As in verse 10, the words “to be” were not part of the original manuscript, but were inserted by the translators, so I have left them out of this reading of verse 14. God the Father sent His Son Jesus Christ the Savior into the world. This is the manifestation of God’s love for His own.

We know that everything God is telling us is all true. The internal evidence of the indwelling Spirit is confirmed by the external evidence of the eyewitnesses. They are witnesses to the fact of the Father sending His Son, the Savior of the world.

How can we really know whether someone’s confidence in their salvation does proceed from the Holy Spirit? Those who trust that they are truly children of God have discovered that they hate sin, and they do not want to go against God’s will. They now have a strong and on-going desire to do God’s will.

This kind of testimony is the testimony of the Holy Spirit in their lives. As we read in Romans 8:16, **“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”**

Now we have come to a couple of very interesting verses in this chapter. We read in 1 John 4:17-18:

**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.**

**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.**

We have already learned that God is love, and that His saved children abide in Him and in His love. Therefore God can go on in verse 17 and declare: **“Herein is our love made perfect...”**

Our true love for God assures us of God’s love for us. Or to put it another way, God’s perfect love for us enables us to love Him in return. It is this love that will give us boldness in the Day of Judgment.

The Bible frequently speaks of the Day of Judgment, in reference to the final day of this universe. This final day will be the end of any possibility of salvation, because God will be finished with this earth. It will be destroyed on that day. This is a day that should strike fear into the hearts of mankind. But for a true believer, there is no fear.

In fact, we look forward to that day when all of God's children will go to live with Christ.

In reality though, when a person dies unsaved, that is judgment day for him. It is death that is in view when God speaks of judgment. We have often read Romans 6:23 which declares: **"The wages of sin is death."** Mankind in general fears death, because it is so alien to us.

But God's love takes away that fear of death. The true believers know that they do not need to fear death or judgment. They know that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. What could be more wonderful? That is why God says we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment.

**"Because as He is, so are we in the world."** As Christians, we should want to be as much like Christ as possible. God tells us that we are to be perfect and holy, as Christ is perfect and holy. We read, for example, in Ephesians 1:4, **"According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love."**

And Matthew 5:48 declares, **"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."**

That is our calling as Christians. We are to be like Christ as we live out our life on earth. It is Christ whom the Christians ought to resemble. We are to be like Christ, to the extent of denying ourselves, and seeking total identity with Him, because we abide in Him and He abides in us. Christ's love for us was self-sacrificing, and that is the kind of love we should have for others.

There is no fear in love, we read in verse 18. Perfect love casts out fear, because fear has torment. Fear of any kind brings torment into our being. To be fearful is an awful way to live. But the love of Christ takes away our fears. Not only fear of judgment, but any fear at all.

That is because we put our trust altogether in Christ. If we are living in fear, we have not been made perfect in love. We have not put our trust in Christ. We are trying to make it in our own strength.

But how can we be perfect in love? That seems impossible. God is giving us the requirement of perfection for all those who are saved. Yes, it is impossible, without Christ. But for those who are in Christ; who abide in Him, love Him, follow Him, obey Him – to the fullest extent of their ability – those people will be given the blessings of God. They will be made perfect in love.

The completeness of love means we do not cower in fear before God or dread His judgment. All the judgment we ever deserved was poured out on Jesus Christ in our behalf when He paid for our sins. Love

and fear are incompatible. For the Christian, love is first of all the Father's love for us. That love is powerful and life changing.

The fear we are speaking of should not be confused with our reverence for God. We as true believers are God-fearing people. We have the fear of God. That is, we have the greatest awe and reverence for God. We know we are completely accountable to Him.

Our fear of God and our love for God make us desire to be more and more obedient to God's commands. We obey Him gladly, knowing God loves us with perfect love.

In our examination of 1 John chapter 4, we have come to the last 3 verses in this wonderful chapter. We read in verses 19 to 21:

**19. We love Him, because He first loved us.**

**20. If a man says, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?**

**21. And this commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.**

It is important to understand the truth of verse 19. We love God because He first loved us. God doesn't love us because we loved Him. He loved us first, and our love for Him followed.

The wonderful fact is that when God loved us, He gave us the capability to love Him in return. If God had not prepared our lives by loving us first, we would never love Him, because by nature we are more likely to move in a direction away from Christ.

Our love for God is not a result of our goodness, but is given to us by God as He prepares us for His wonderful love. We can never take any credit for having a love for God. The reason we can show love is because we have a loving Savior who puts love in our hearts. The Lord Jesus Christ is the one who gets all the credit and all the honor for the fact that He is our Savior. His love is far more wonderful than any speech or language can express. We should never fail to realize that any and every aspect of our love, as it is seen in our life, is only a function of God's grace working in our life.

God does the whole work of saving us, and we cannot take any credit for the fact that we have come to love God, and the fact that He has saved us has brought us completely under His love. If God had not chosen us for salvation we would never love God.

But God goes on in verse 20 to remind us that we must put our love in action. That is, our love for God must show up in our genuine love for others. So if we profess to love God, but hate our brother, God says we are a liar. He declares that if we can't love our brother whom we see, then we cannot love God whom we cannot see.

God knows our hearts, and we cannot deceive Him by declaring we love Him if it isn't the truth.

The reason we are able to love our fellow brother or sister is because God loved us first and gave us that love for others. Everything backs up to our relationship with Christ, and He gives us the impetus for every aspect of this that is happening. When Christ impacts our lives, then we will love our brother.

Therefore God can say in verse 21: **“And this commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.”** If we are unable to do this, it is a sign we are not saved.

We can know that God is the reason for any kind of righteous love we are manifesting in our lives. God is in charge of our love, and He makes love for our brethren a reality in our lives.

Remember, we had read these words in 1 John 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.”**

That gives us a reason for self-examination. If we cannot truly find in our hearts a love for our brother, then we are in trouble. We need to keep this in mind always. These verses in 1 John 4:20-21 repeat this principle. God is again making the point that if He has saved us, and we are a true believer – that is, Christ is definitely our Savior - that will show up in our love for our brethren. It will make our love for our brothers altogether different than if Christ is not the King of our life.

On the other hand, a love for any unrighteousness immediately shows that we are at odds with God. It means that we are showing that we do not love God the way that we should. Any wrong action we take, shown by dishonest living or whatever it may be, immediately tells us that our life is still bound up in sin, and we don't really have any desire to live for Christ.

God is teaching us principles. He is showing us truth. He has been talking about the way He loves us and we should also love Him. God lays it out for us in this book of 1 John, as well as in other parts of the Bible. Because it is in the Bible, it is absolutely true and trustworthy. We don't argue with the Bible. We must pray for wisdom that we indeed might understand how important this is for our lives.

This subject is so important because God's love for mankind is the very reason He has chosen us for salvation. Christ was willing to come under God's wrath to pay for our sins out of His great love. The love of God is magnificent!

Does God love us so much because He saw something good in us? No, not at all, because there is nothing good in us! Mankind is inherently sinful by nature.

The Bible declares in Romans 3:10-12,

**There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, They are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.**

That seems harsh, but that is what God declares, so we know it is true. God sees our hearts, and He sees our sin.

Yet in spite of our sinful hearts, God has loved His chosen ones. It is only because of His great love that He brings His wonderful work of salvation and replaces unrighteousness with righteousness. Christ in His great love comes to abide within us if we are His children, and He gives us His righteousness. And He is the one that makes us His child.

He promises to abide in us and we will abide in Him. He loves us and gives us love for others. We don't love others because they are such wonderful people, but because God puts His kind of love in our hearts. And so we begin to find the ability to love others the way we should.

We are able to love the brethren the way that God loves us. That sounds impossible, but it is not impossible if we only wait upon God. We keep praying; we keep a broken heart before God. It is all because of God's great love.

## Chapter 5

Throughout the book of 1 John, we have been learning a lot about God's love for His children, and our responsibility to love God and our brothers and sisters in Christ. This subject of God's love for the brethren is continued on in the next chapter in more detail.

We read in 1 John 5:1:

**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.**

Let's look at the first part of this verse. We read that whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. To believe that Jesus is the Christ means to believe He is the only Savior. Only He could pay for our sins. There is no other means of salvation.

To be born of God means to be born again – to be saved. It means that God has made us His child. We are not born of God as a result of the fact that we believe in Jesus. We are able to truly believe in Christ only because God has done the work of salvation in our hearts. It is God's work entirely.

We learned in 1 John 4 that we love God because He first loved us. God takes the first action. He loved us and He saved us, and consequently we are born again and we are able to truly believe on Christ and love Him.

The second part of 1 John 5:1 must be looked at carefully to understand the terms "begat" and "begotten." Who is this talking about?

We know that Jesus is God's only begotten Son, as we read in John 3:16, "**For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.**"

But God uses this same word, "begotten" to apply to His children – the ones He has saved and brought into the family of God. The same Greek word in the original manuscript is translated as both "born" and as "begotten."

So when we read in verse 1: "**every one that loveth Him that begat**" – that is God – "**loveth him also that is begotten of Him**" – that is the brethren. They are the ones who have become sons of God. Here we see that this is a very tightly knit family. In other words, God again emphasizes that if we love God, we also love the children of God.

Let's go on in 1 John 5, to verses 2 and 3. We read there:

**2. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments.**

**3. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous.**

All through chapters 3 and 4 of 1 John, God had stressed that a true believer not only loves God, but he also loves the brethren. This indeed is one of the indicators that someone has been saved. If we love God, we must also love our brethren.

This principle is reiterated here in verse 2 of chapter 5. When we love God and keep His commandments, we know that we will also love the children of God, who are the brethren we have been told to love.

Obviously, loving God and keeping His commandments are strongly related, as we see in these two verses. If we love God, we will keep His commandments. His commandments are the whole Bible, which we are to obey. Our obedience to God is a result of our salvation. Because we now love God, we want to obey Him in all things. We want to read the Bible and find out how to obey God, and how to walk as a Christian. That becomes the goal of our life.

With our love for God comes the desire for obedience. Before we were saved, we were in rebellion against God, but now as His children, we are under His love and we love Him in return. Our love for God should show up in our life.

God declares that His commandments are not grievous. In fact they become very joyful for us to do. Is that really so? Do we find it difficult to be obedient to God's commands?

It will be difficult if we are still trying to have our own way. When we put ourselves under God's will, and want to be in God's will in all things, we will find it is a lot easier to be obedient to God's commands. One of the signs of salvation is an on-going desire to do God's will. That is because it has taken hold of our whole being.

This is where we must examine ourselves. Do I have this on-going desire? Or do I still want my own willful way? Because if I am really honest about this, I will have a good idea of where I stand with God, as I think through this question. This is very, very important question that we must look at.

We have learned that to love God means to keep His commandments and to love the brethren. These are signs that we really love God. God gives us indicators. If He has saved us, we will love Him as we should. We will have an on-going desire to do His will. We will genuinely love the brethren. If we are one of God's children, we will be able to live our lives as God has commanded. We will do so joyfully and lovingly.

What a privilege we have to be in fellowship with our loving Savior, Jesus Christ. What a great and loving God we serve!

Now we are going on in this chapter, and we will read 1 John 5 verses 4 and 5:

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

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

As we have learned, to be born of God means to become His child. That person, God declares, overcomes the world. This is what we expect to see in the life of a true believer, when we are convicted that Jesus is the Son of God.

There are three aspects that are included in these statements about overcoming the world: the new birth, our faith, and the belief that Jesus is the Son of God. These three things taken together give a child of God the ability to overcome the world.

To overcome the world means that the world no longer has any control over us. We are living for Christ now, not for the world. The pleasures and fears that relate to the world cannot overtake us. Our faith delivers us and gives us victory.

God stresses that we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God, to begin with. This is not just an intellectual belief, but a heart testimony. Our faith is not contingent on us; it is based on Christ's work. He has done what He must do our behalf, so we can put our entire trust in Him with no reservation of any kind.

We know that Christ has indeed made complete payment for our sins, and given us victory over sin. We therefore have full assurance that we can put our trust in Christ, and we will be safe and secure. Nothing can take away our security in Christ.

Our faith becomes an integral part of our life and gives us a sense of victory. Faith identifies wholly with Christ. Christ is the faithful One, and He has given us the gift of faith.

Our faith is adequate to give us victory over the world because Christ is the victor.

As true believers, we have come to lean on Christ and trust in Christ completely. Our trust begins with the belief that Jesus is the Son of God, and is eternal God. Therefore He is everything we could possibly need.

Christ has overcome the world, and He includes us in that victory over the world. Or to say it another way, Christ is the victor over sin and death, and we can have faith in Him and be included in the victory that He has accomplished. Because we believe in Christ as the Son of God, He has given us faith in Him, and the ability to overcome the world.

Verses 1 through 5 of this chapter are all inter-related. God has wrapped it all up in a complete package.

We believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. God gives us our belief and our faith. He gives us love for Him and the brethren. Because we love God we are able to obey His commandments, and we do so joyfully. As an outcome of all this, we have overcome the world. The world no longer has any power over our lives.

What is the victory over the world? Our faith. The person who believes that Christ is the Son of God—that is to say, who is truly saved—has victory over the things of the world. The world does not recognize that Christ is anything. But they cannot lie to us about Christ or drag us down, because we have victory. We are not at risk of defeat. We are the winner. We have truth on our side. God's emphasis in 1 John 5:4-5 is on victory.

Because we have a relationship with Christ, the Son of God, there is victory. Because we have trusted in Christ, we are the victors, because Christ is the ultimate victor.

These are not just empty words. Christ won all that was necessary. He is recognized as Eternal God. He is the total victor who has overcome every obstacle. Christ obtained all that He desired; He is the winner. He won the victory over death and over everything caused by sin. When we become saved, all of these truths are ours.

Now we live with that knowledge, and it is a new world for us when we become saved.

I know I can be a child of God because Christ won the victory over sin and death and Satan. Because of Christ, we who are His children have overcome the world. This is such a glorious victory that we should want to shout it out to the world: "Christ has won the victory over death and sin!"

The first few verses of Chapter 5 of 1 John have stressed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Verse 6 goes on to say, **“This is He...”** referring again to Jesus Christ. We read in 1 John 5:6:

**6. This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.**

Jesus Christ came by water and blood; not by water only, but by water and blood. God really emphasizes this fact by declaring it twice in this verse.

The ministry of Jesus here on earth was officially begun when He was baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. We can read this account in Matthew 3:16-17:

**And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo a voice heaven, saying, this is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.**

God the Father gave verbal testimony that Jesus is His Son. In addition, John the Baptist gave his testimony in John 1:32-34, when he declared:

**I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him.....and I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God.**

The Holy Trinity was in evidence at that moment: Jesus Christ, the Son; the voice of God the Father, and the Holy Spirit descending like a dove. This was the witness that Jesus indeed was the Son of God, the Christ.

But 1 John 5:6 declares that He came by water and blood. The blood must refer to the blood He shed when He paid the penalty for our sins. We read for example in Colossians 1:20, **“And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself...”**

It is the Holy Spirit that bears witness of these facts, because the Spirit is truth.

We go on in 1 John 5:7-8:

**7. For there are three that bear record 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, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.**

Here we see very plainly the description of the Holy Trinity: The Father, the Word, who is Christ, and the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit. And these three are one. God is three distinct persons, yet one God.

When we speak of the Trinity, we are including all three persons of the Godhead, but we are speaking of one God. This is a divine mystery. Many people have tried to understand this by making some kind of earthly analogy, but in reality we cannot even begin to understand the Trinity. Nor should we, because we know only as much as God has revealed to us. We must accept the fact of the Trinity entirely in faith.

God is three Persons in one, and they all bear record that Christ is the Son of God. These three bear record in heaven, we read in verse 7. But in verse 8, we read about the three that bear witness in earth: the spirit, the water and the blood, and these three agree in one.

This statement is in agreement with what we read in verse 6: He, that is Jesus, came by water and blood, and the Spirit bears witness.

John the Baptist came baptizing with water, but he was not the Messiah. It was the shed blood of Jesus Christ that gave the water baptism its spiritual significance. Water baptism is symbolic of the spiritual cleansing we receive when God saves us. We are spiritually dirty, and God makes us clean. This spiritual cleansing is possible only because Christ has paid for our sins by shedding His blood.

Indeed, God declares in Romans 6:3, **“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?”**

God has emphasized in these verses in 1 John 5 that Jesus came by water and blood, and God in the person of the Trinity has testified that this is true. We have God’s testimony that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, our only Savior.

Only Jesus could have paid for our sins by coming under the wrath of God. Only Jesus could have come to earth as the Son of God to manifest His great love to the world.

Only God could have written these words in 1 John 5 with such authority, because the Spirit is truth. It is this essential truth which gives His witnesses such infallible authority. Indeed we are astounded beyond

measure when we read these things and put them all together. And if we say that we know everything about this, we do not have truth, because only God has the authority to understand what He has accomplished, and it is simply wonderful.

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***Note: This is the last study recorded by Harold Camping. He was unable to finish this study of 1 John 5 before the Lord took him home.***