

The First General Epistle of John

Teaching Series Conducted At
West Side Church of God in Christ
Rockford, Illinois
by
Pastor Maurice A. West
August 2001



THE LEGAL DISCLAIMERS

There will be various translations of the Scriptures used in our study. If we depart from the King James Version, which will be our standard, what follows are the typical translations used:

- **Amplified Bible** – The Amplified Bible. Copyright © 1965, Zondervan Publishing House.
- **Net Bible** – The Net Bible. Copyright © 1996-2003, Biblical Studies Press
- **NIV** – The New International Version. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society.
- **NKJV** – The New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.
- **NLT** – The New Living Translation. Copyright © 1996.

At various times in this study, you may also find the following designations referring to reference material used to assist in putting together this study. Direct quotations will be shown in italicized text.

- {**Adam Clarke**} Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Whole Bible
- {**David Guzik**} Guzik, David. Enduring Word Ministries
- {**JF&B**} The Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary
- {**Matthew Henry**} Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible in One Volume
- {**Dake**} Dake's Annotated Reference Bible
- {**McGee**} Thru the Bible Commentary Series by Dr. J. Vernon McGee

If other references, commentators, or Bible translations are used they will be identified in the text.

INTRODUCTION

WRITER: The First Epistle of John was written by the Apostle John.

DATE: Written around 90-95 AD. It was written around the same time that John's Gospel was written. To understand this time, we must realize that Paul died around 67 AD so it was written very late in the Church age of the early church.

WHY WAS THIS BOOK WRITTEN: SCOFIELD: *"It is a family letter from the father to his little children who are in the world. With the possible exception of the Song of Solomon, it is the most intimate of the inspired writings. The sin of a Christian is treated as a child's offense against his Father, and is dealt with as a family matter (1:9; 2:1). Whereas Paul is occupied with the Christian's public position as a son, John has in mind the believer's nearness as one born of the Father."* Other writers talk about the idea that it was written to combat the philosophy of the Gnostics, which had come into the church. The epistle itself says it was written for 4 reasons:

- (1) that our joy may be full (1:4);
- (2) that we don't sin (2:1);
- (3) to warn against false teachers (2:26);
- (4) to strengthen our faith in Christ and assure us of eternal life (5:13).

KEY WORDS: "FELLOWSHIP;" "KNOW" - which appears 27 times; "LOVE" - which appears 33 times. This epistle has been called the epistle of certainties, i.e., there are many things that are not just based on faith but things that we **know**.

Chapter 1

DEFINITIONS

FELLOWSHIP - {DICTIONARY} - The condition of being sharers or partakers as in some activity. {GREEK} *koinonia* - communion, sharing in common; that which is the outcome of fellowship, a contribution (**Romans 15:26** *For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.*) [Note: the word for “contribution” in this passage is *koinonia*.] It represents [a] The share which one has in anything, a participation, fellowship recognized and enjoyed. In the more common sense it refers to the common interests and experiences of Christian men (Acts 2:42; Gal. 2:9). In our lesson, it refers to the sharing in the resurrection life possessed in Christ, and so of fellowship with the Father and the Son (I Jn. 1:3,6,7). [b] It also refers to fellowship manifested by action such as distribution to the needy in the church.

EXPOSITION

THERE ARE THREE DISTINCT PARTS OF THIS TEXT AND WE WILL APPROACH THE EXPOSITION IN THAT MANNER: 1) OPENING REMARKS AND THE WRITER’S CREDENTIALS; 2) THE BEGINNING STEPS TOWARDS FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD; 3) THE THREE BIG “IF’S” DEALING WITH SIN.

I. OPENING REMARKS AND THE WRITER’S CREDENTIALS (VV. 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 key words here are “which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon {to gaze with a purpose, study}, and our hands have handled” All of these words tell a story of a close physical relationship with the Messiah. His opening statements basically say: The Life was made evident or revealed to the apostles and now they collectively, though dead, speaking through John, want to share that with the Church.

II. THE BEGINNING STEPS TOWARDS FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD (VV. 3-7)

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. All that was discussed in vv. 1-2, John intends to share with the readers of this epistle to get us to the same level of fellowship that he has. He lets us know that his fellowship is definitely with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

*4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. Incomplete fellowship brings incomplete joy. For this reason, we must clearly grasp this fellowship and partake of it. The alternative is disappointment with God. It is absolutely essential that we operate at full joy (or delight) because that is the source of our strength (**Nehemiah 8:10** *Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.*). **DELIGHT** - that which brings extreme pleasure.*

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. There are absolutely no works of darkness in God. This is important to understand if we intend to have fellowship with Him. Before you can have fellowship with God, you must come to Him on His terms. The apostles learned this truth from Jesus.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: Our saying that we have fellowship with Him means nothing, if we are still engaged in the works of darkness. A key work of darkness that must be resolved is found in 2:9 - our relationship with the brethren.

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. If we walk in the light as (or in the same manner as) He (Jesus) is in the light then we get two results: (1) fellowship with one another. This fellowship is an automatic outgrowth of the consecrated life we are living as we stay in the same light that Jesus walked in. (2) The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. This is a continual process as the word is present tense. As long as I stay in the light, Jesus' blood is available to me to keep me clean. It is not an automatic process - the sin must still be confessed. However, in the light is the Holy Ghost to prick my conscience when I make a mistake.

III. THE THREE BIG "IF'S" DEALING WITH SIN (VV. 8-10)

(In looking at these verses, we must be careful to not violate the intent of verse 6 or I John 3:9 in the exposition. If we do, we paint a picture of the Bible being contradictory.)

8 IF we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. To understand this verse, we must look at John's audience. He is introducing to them the aspect of true fellowship with God. Since he is introducing this, it's apparent that they don't have it. Many of them may say that they are sinless and just don't have this fellowship. This verse comes to dispute this idea. If they don't have it, there must be some works of darkness still in them. These must first be dealt with.

9 IF we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we will just humble ourselves and confess our sins to God, He is faithful and just (fair; upright) to wipe the slate clean. When we do our part, we must trust God to do his part. God is providing us an avenue of escape from the penalty of sin.

10 IF we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. After giving us the truth in v. 9, John comes back to reiterate what was said in v. 8. Sin is a reality based on **Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.**

CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 1

My fellowship is based on one thing only as found in vv. 6 & 7: If I say that I have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, I lie, and do not the truth: but if I walk in the light, as He is in the light, I have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth me from all sin. If I don't maintain myself in the light of His glorious gospel, anything I do will be fruitless because there will be no fellowship.

Chapter 2

The chapter can be broken into six parts:

1. 3-4 The First Step - Do As God Says Do
2. 7-11 An Essential Commandment
3. 12-14 Steps Of Maturity
4. 15-17 The Importance Of Sanctification
5. 18-23 Maintain Doctrinal Purity Regarding The Position Of Jesus Christ In The Godhead
6. 24-29 Abide In Christ

INTRODUCTION: The theme of this chapter is that if you're going to walk in the light (be a Christian, be saved) you have got to deal with and conquer sin, especially in the area of loving your brother, separate yourself from the world (be sanctified), and watch those who would seduce you to walk in doctrines contrary to the doctrine of Christ.

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: (1) The purpose of the things said in Chapter 1 regarding the forgiving power of Jesus Christ, was not so that we would have a way out to keep on sinning. (Chapter 1 speaks of **1 John 1:8-10** *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.*) But rather, they were written so that we would **NOT** sin. According to JF&B, the original Greek text not only spoke of stopping the *habit* of sin but *individual acts* of sin. (2) But, if while you are working to overcome and eliminate sin from your life, sin appears, **immediately** take it to God for forgiveness because He will forgive. Jesus Christ is not only our Savior, not only our Lord, not only King of Kings, but He is our **ADVOCATE** - 1. ONE THAT ARGUES FOR A CAUSE; A SUPPORTER OR DEFENDER. 2. ONE THAT PLEADS IN ANOTHER'S BEHALF; AN INTERCESSOR. 3. A LAWYER. THE WORD FOR **ADVOCATE** IN THE GREEK IS THE SAME WORD USED FOR **COMFORTER** IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN. IN THE GREEK, THIS WORD WAS USED IN A COURT OF JUSTICE TO DESIGNATE A LEGAL ASSISTANT, COUNSEL FOR THE DEFENSE.

2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. **PROPIATION** - 1. THE ACT OF APPEASING THE WRATH AND RESOLVING DIFFERENCES WITH AN OFFENDED PERSON IN ORDER TO REGAIN THEIR FAVOR. 2. (THEOLOGY) THAT WHICH MAKES PEACE WITH OR APPEASES; ATONEMENT OR ATONING SACRIFICE; SPECIFICALLY, THE INFLUENCE OR EFFECTS OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST IN APPEASING THE DIVINE JUSTICE, AND CONCILIATING THE DIVINE FAVOR. Not only is Jesus our lawyer in God's courtroom, He Himself is the atoning sacrifice, the sacrificial lamb given not only to the church but to the whole world. Because His sacrifice was so powerful, He cannot only handle our mistakes on the way toward a sin-less life, He has ample to handle the sins of the whole world.

3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. **COMMANDMENT** - AN AUTHORITATIVE MANDATE, ORDER OR LAW. The Greek says it is a precept, charge or injunction. The Apostle John in his epistles and gospel uses this term frequently. This verse gives a test for knowing whether you are saved or not: **DO YOU KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS?** *If you have in you, an ingrained,*

natural desire and urging to obey God and do His commandments AND YOU PERFORM THIS, you are saved; you know the Lord. No excuses! This is the answer. Later in this book, John expanded further on this talk about “commandments” which is needed because the first thing many think when they hear this term is “that’s too hard.” **1 John 5:3** *For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.* One writer said that there are over 170 commands in the Bible. Jesus saw this also and boiled all of these down to two so that we could realize the promise that His commandments are not grievous: **Mark 12:29-30** *And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: 30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.* Now the problem comes in with other commandments in the Scripture that broaden what is meant in these two. Without this broadening by the writers of the epistles, the flesh would naturally take a very loose approach toward obeying these two commandments.

4 *He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.* If there are 170 commandments, the Holy Ghost in us is bigger than that number. **NIV** *Therefore, if we do not keep His commandments, then our testimony is a LIE and the truth of Jesus Christ is not in us.*

5 *But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.* We are aiming for the victory in Jesus. To achieve that we must keep His Word (do as we are told through the Word of God). Once we do this, God will perfect His love in us bringing us into absolute victory where we’ll have the confidence that we are His and He is ours. As the love of God is perfected in us, this brings the assurance (WE KNOW!) that we are in Him. **NIV** *But if anyone obeys his word, God’s love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him:*

6 *He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.* To me, this is the key verse of this chapter and one of the key verses of the New Testament. Look at how it reads in the **NIV**: *Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.* The key word in this verse is **OUGHT**. When I think of this word, I think more in terms of the dictionary definition, “TO HAVE A MORAL OBLIGATION; TO BE CORRECT PROPER OR ADVISABLE; TO BE ASSUMED AS LIKELY, REASONABLE, OR NATURAL.” These definitions speak more towards a “preferable route” and if there’s a preference, you can chose one or the other. But look at this word in the Greek and you begin to see how strong it really is. It comes from the word *opheilo* which means “TO OWE OR IS BOUND TO.” If you testify that you are in Christ, you immediately bring yourself under the responsibility based on the Word of God to walk (have a lifestyle) in a way that would please God; in other words, be like Jesus. This is how He walked: **1 Peter 2:22-23** *Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: -and- John 8:29* *And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do ALWAYS those things that please him.*

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.* This is not a new commandment but comes from **Leviticus 19:18** *Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the*

children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the LORD. Jesus took up the same theme and added this **John 13:34** *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

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.* **NEW - RENEWED; FRESH.** This is the same use of the word as in 2 Cor. 5:17. In that passage, we are not new (as in lately made) but new as in beginning afresh. Everything about us physically is the same. **NIV** *Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.*

9 *He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.* No special translation is needed for this verse – if you hate your brother, you are still walking in darkness. Everyone understands that so we play games with the word, “hate.”

10 *He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.* If you love your brother (or your sister), then you’re walking in the light. **NIV** *Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is NOTHING in him to make him stumble.* Not only are you walking in the light, there is NOTHING to make you stumble. Using this then, most of our stumbling comes from our relationships with our brothers and our sisters. If we can master this, we ought to be on our way.

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.* John really hits this point by repeating verse 9 in a different format. Not only are you in darkness if you hate your brother, you can’t see with your spiritual eyes where you’re going. The fact that you have become content with hatred in your heart for your BROTHER without dealing with it, shows that there is an extreme spiritual problem which obviously you can’t see. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus: **John 13:35** *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

12 *I write unto you, LITTLE CHILDREN, because your sins are forgiven you for his name’s sake.* John changes the subject of the epistle from a focus on love (or maintaining fellowship) to various steps of maturity in Christ in order to achieve that fellowship. We’ll deal with these three verses at one time.

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.* These are the levels that we will go through in our quest for the fellowship with the Father discussed in chapter 1. In this part of the text, John identifies four categories of believers that he is writing to. By so doing, he also tells the basic qualifications for each of these levels. To reach that fellowship with the Father, our continuous growth through these levels is important.

LITTLE CHILDREN This is a point where having some type of Greek dictionary, may help you get an understanding of what the writer is really saying. In verse 12, the term “little children” in the Greek (*teknion*) has nothing to do with the age or status of the believers. It is a term of endearment used by a teacher speaking to his disciples affectionately to make a tender appeal. Jesus used the same word speaking to His MEN: **John 13:33** *Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you.* Therefore, John is speaking to every believer in general when he says about us “little children” that our sins are forgiven for His name’s sake. But in verse 13, he uses a different word (*paidion*) which refers to an infant just born. In this, it would refer to those who just came in to the body of Christ. He wants them to understand that you know the Father. Jesus also used this term in reference to grown men because they were new in the body of Christ, and probably acting like infants at the time. **John 21:5** *Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.* This might not seem like much but these are big things that God has blessed us with.

YOUNG MEN Mature Christians who have demonstrated this by overcoming the influence of Satan in their lives and proving themselves to be strong by the evidence of the word of God abiding in them. These may be in the category of John 15:7.

FATHERS Mature, seasoned veterans who have reached that same fellowship with God that John and the apostles had. We should be striving to achieve this level. It’s interesting that John repeats the same phrase when speaking of the fathers, Ye have known him that is from the beginning. The mature, seasoned veteran knows God, knows His expectations, and walks in those expectations.

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. NIV Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. WORLD - kosmos PRIMARILY ORDER OR ARRANGEMENT; IT IS USED TO DENOTE THE PRESENT CONDITION OF HUMAN AFFAIRS IN ALIENATION FROM AND OPPOSITION TO GOD. IT ALSO REFERS TO THE SUM OF TEMPORAL POSSESSIONS. John changes his subject again and now focuses on SANCTIFICATION. **“Separation to God, Separation from the world, is the first principle of Christian living.”** -Watchman Nee. Watchman Nee’s illustration of our relationship to the world: *“Let us suppose that the municipal authorities...should decree that the school where you are employed must be closed. As soon as you hear this news you realize there is no future for you in that school. You go on working there for a period but you do not build up anything for the future there...or to use another illustration, suppose the government decides to close a certain bank. Will you hasten to deposit in it a large sum of money in order to save the bank from collapse? No, not a cent more do you pay into it once you hear it has no future. You put nothing in because you expect nothing from it...we still go on living in the world and using the things of the world, but we can build no future with them, for the cross has shattered all our hope in them.”*

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.** The illustration of this verse is best found in Genesis 3 in the temptation of Eve. There are three main parts to the world's system: **Genesis 3:6** And *when the woman saw that the tree was good for food,* ① Those things which appeal to the natural or sensual part of man *and that it was pleasant to the eyes,* ② Those things which arouse the eyes *and a tree to be desired to make one wise,* ③ Those things that appeal to our minds and egos - *she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.* All of this is in the world and is used to trap people in the world. If this is what we are longing after, we are not spiritual people and need to purge ourselves from these things. We also demonstrate that we love the world more than we love God.

17 **And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.** When you think about this world system that we're so in love with, realize that it will pass away along with the lusts that go with it. However, if we will perform the will of God, we abide forever, inheriting eternal life.

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.** Notice that John returned his focus to the little children. This use of the word "children" refers to an infant just born. His warning is directed to baby saints. **ANTICHRIST** – {Greek} *antichristos* – refers to being either against Christ or instead of Christ or a combination of the two. A false Christ is different because a false Christ (Matthew 24) rides on the expectation of the coming Christ but is still antichrist because he comes to be "instead of" Jesus. This word is only used by John in his epistles. "It is the last time" - from the beginning of the church age forward was considered "the last time." The church age is one of the final dispensations of the earth. "Many antichrists" - many who openly come against Christ or many false Christs. Antichrist goes beyond the normal opposition we see on the streets but goes further into those who actively work to bring down the influence of Jesus Christ on the earth. The existence of the spirit of Antichrist points to the conclusion of time.

19 **They** (the antichrist spirit) **went out from us** (not a local church but the fellowship of the saints), **but they were not of us; 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.** We probably get the notion from this verse that those who backslide right after getting saved didn't have it in the first place. That's not the point that this verse is making. "They" were those who were forced out by the Holy Ghost that they might be revealed to the church as possessing the spirit of antichrist. Their original intention may have been to stay hidden in the church with their antichrist ideals. This is the key. They are not just backsliders but antichrist. (We should also take note of the implication that this verse brings up - antichrists in the midst of the Spirit-filled church. How much more so among those not as powerful as these?)

20 **But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.** **UNCTION** – AN ANOINTING. **NIV** *But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.* Do we know all things? Of course not. If this were literally true, it would contradict other verses in the Scripture.

Why should God put teachers in the church? **Ephesians 4:11** *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and TEACHERS.* Why study? **2 Timothy 2:15** *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* However, because of this unction or anointing that we received when we were born again, we have the opportunity to know everything about God (**Matthew 13:11** *He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.*) This unction does not bring automatic knowledge and it does not excuse you from pursuing knowledge in the normal means -- study. But this anointing, as pointed out in the NIV, enables us to discern truth from falsehood.

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.*** This letter is to believers not unbelievers. And you know the truth because of the anointing in verse 20.

22 ***Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? HE IS ANTICHRIST, that denieth the Father and the Son.*** That which is uppercase is a strong statement. Additional definitions of antichrist (one or more may apply): A. Denial that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah. B. Denial of the existence of the Father & the Son. This is an attack on the Virgin Birth and on God being the Father of Jesus the man. C. Denial of the Sonship of Jesus; not that He didn't exist but that He wasn't the Son of God.

23 ***Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*** While on the subject of antichrist, we add this verse which is part of C in the prior verse.

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.*** **NIV** *See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father.* Because of what we have just discussed regarding those that were in the church with the spirit of antichrist, John begins this portion by saying "let that (the doctrine you received) therefore abide in you." **ABIDE** - to stand fast; remain; go on being; to stay; reside; to submit to (abide by); to live up to. **ABIDING** - continuing without change. **Key point.** Let the doctrine that brought you to Jesus, freed you from your sins and saved you, abide in you. This is what was from the beginning. We must keep that same freshness in our understanding of Jesus as we had when we first came to the Lord. If we do that, we'll continue in Jesus. This is the definition of abiding in Him.

25 ***And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.*** Our continuing brings us eternal life, and that's what we're striving for.

26 ***These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.*** **NIV** *I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray.* Part of the reason that this epistle was written was to counteract the effect of those who would **SEDUCE** -TEMPT, ENTICE, LEAD ASTRAY us

away from the pure doctrine of Jesus presented by the apostles. This is an INTERNAL problem that we must be aware of. Rarely does this attack come from outside of church circles (not referring to the church, the body of Christ).

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.*** NIV *As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit--just as it has taught you, remain in him.* At salvation, we receive a degree of the anointing of the spirit. (For proof: v. 20, Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13) **This is not, of course, the baptism of the Holy Ghost!** This is the anointing that Jesus spoke of (through this same Apostle John) in **John 14:26** ***But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall TEACH YOU ALL THINGS, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*** He goes further in speaking of the teaching ability of the Holy Spirit in **John 16:13** ***Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*** We have access to everything in Jesus but recall that this does not mean that we are not to be under someone for teaching and instruction (see notes on verse 20).

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.*** This use of the word “little children” is a term of affection to the whole church, not addressing anything to a literal child. Continuing (abiding in Him) gives us confidence and boldness at the appearing of Christ. ***Walking right before God in this present life strengthens our faith not because of what we have done but because we know we have pleased Him who has brought us out of darkness into His marvelous light!***

29 ***If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.*** Conclusion: Continuing in Christ demands righteous living. John reminds us once again of his running theme of maintaining ourselves in righteousness. It is essential for those that would be born of Him.

Chapter 3

INTRODUCTION: This chapter can be broken out into four sections: verses 1-3 opening statements about the love of God, verses 4-10 key points about sin and the believer, verses 11-18 loving in both word and deed, and verses 18-24 are final words in this part to help us maintain ourselves before God. Once again, the main focus of this chapter is sin in the life of the believer and how the believer must look it at.

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.*** Look at how great the love of the Father towards us is. So great that He gave us opportunity to be called (and to become) the Sons of God. (**John 1:12** *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*) Because of this relationship that we have with God, the world doesn't know (or understand) us because it doesn't know God. This is why we must be saturated with the Spirit of God so that, as people know us, they get closer to understanding who God is.

KNOW - TO UNDERSTAND CLEARLY; TO HAVE EXPERIENCE OF OR FAMILIARITY WITH; TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN; TO HAVE SECURELY IN THE MIND OR MEMORY; HAVING FULL OR PRIVILEGED INFORMATION. Therefore, to know God is to understand Him clearly; it is to have an experience with Him; it is to be familiar with Him; it is the ability to distinguish between His works and the devil's works (Heb. 5:13-14); it is a point when we have Him and His ways securely in the mind or memory; it is the benefit of having access to private information such as the mysteries of God; it is to fully understand His ways. All of this, the world does not know. When you think about it, do you?

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.*** NOW (at this current time and in this life) we (who believe in Jesus and are striving for more of that fellowship) are the children of God. The apostle's speech is forward looking. He is not so concerned about the present life as he is about our future life with God. We don't know what we'll be like in that day but we do know that physically we'll be like Him for we'll have the ability to see Him as He is. (Remember God's words to Moses in Exodus when Moses requested to see God's glory? **Exodus 33:20** *And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.* This passage indicates that we will be changed to the point that we CAN see His face and live.)

3 ***And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*** If you have this same hope to see Him as He is, to be changed (transformed) into a new being, your life should be one of striving to be like Jesus. {DAKE} "The hope of the rapture is an incentive to purify one's self even as Christ is pure." The purity of Christ goes beyond the feeble righteousness that we can muster. Therefore, we must rely upon God's Spirit to bring us to this point.

4 ***Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. NIV Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. ① SIN IS A TRANSGRESSION AGAINST THE ENTIRE WORD OF GOD GOING BACK TO THE LAW. IT VIOLATES EVERYTHING ABOUT GOD.*** If you're going to strive for purity, the first thing you must deal with is sin. When we commit sin, we transgress the law and bring ourselves back under the penalty of the law - death. John's focus throughout this epistle so far is to continually deal with the issue of sin.

Before we leave this verse, we need to understand sin. Most things that we categorize as "sin" do not necessarily fall into this category. Sin, according to this verse, is transgression. Transgression refers to

wrongdoing, disobedience, offense, and lack of discretion. We often hear questions begin with the statement, “Is it a sin if I do thus and so?” To deal with this verse, we have to understand what sin is. The best way and the way that God has provided is through the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Jesus said of the Holy Ghost in **John 16:8** *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.* The Holy Ghost deals with sin in the world and in the life of the believer so that we can become overcomers.

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

② **JESUS CHRIST WAS BROUGHT INTO THIS WORLD TO TAKE AWAY OUR SINS.** He did it and, in the process, He remains as He started, uncontaminated by sin - He was a complete conqueror. This is Jesus’ position towards sin. Before we can advance, we must have the same position – able to deal with sin without being touched by sin.

6 *Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.* **NIV** *No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.* ③ **ONCE YOU ARE IN CHRIST, SIN MUST BECOME A**

THING OF THE PAST. If sin is not dealt with and overcome, then you don’t really know Him. **ABIDE** - TO STAND FAST; REMAIN; GO ON BEING. **ABIDING** - CONTINUING WITHOUT CHANGE. The true nature of this verse seems to imply that if we keep on sinning as in the old life, we don’t know the Lord. **Conquering sin is a natural result of salvation; it is the goal of everyone that belongs to Christ.**

7 *Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.* The admonition to those who are tempted to believe the “Eternal Security” or “Once Saved, Always Saved” doctrine is in the very first part of this verse: **Let no man deceive you!**

④ **HE THAT DOES RIGHTEOUSNESS IS RIGHTEOUS.** Righteousness (morally upright; without guilt or sin) cannot just be believed in - it must be an action.

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.* **NIV** *He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.* What are the works of the devil? **SIN!** ⑤

HE THAT CONTINUES TO SIN IS OF THE DEVIL. If we take this passage at face value it contradicts 1:9. However, the word “commits” here is meant to bring across the idea of “a continuous habit or to practice.” The “believer” who practices sin, or who is a regular sinner, is not a believer but of the devil. The devil sinned from the beginning and practices a continual lifestyle of sin; rebellion from God and transgression against His ways, His laws, and His desires.

The second part of this verse brings out the point that ⑥ **JESUS CHRIST CAME TO DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL – SIN.** Not only did He come to take away sin but to destroy its influence and its by-products (weights, habits, evil ways, etc.). This was the #1 reason Jesus came into the world: To take away sin and to destroy the works of the devil.

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.* ⑦ **AS LONG AS THE SEED (GOD’S WORD) ABIDES IN YOU, YOU CANNOT SIN.** **AMPLIFIED** *No one born (begotten) of God [deliberately and knowingly] habitually practices sin, for God’s nature abides in him -- his principles of*

life, the divine sperm, remains permanently within him -- and he cannot practice sinning because he is born (begotten) of God. NIV No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. This is a continual process. We don't get there and stay there without a lot of effort at keeping the flesh under control. The Word of God must rule us for this to be true. This is one of the most controversial Scriptures in the Bible because the sin problem has not been dealt with by the church. We have built walls of excuses for our actions rather than focusing on achieving this verse. {JFB} *"To be begotten of God and to sin, are states mutually excluding one another. In so far as one sins, he makes it doubtful whether he be born of God."* This verse also supports verse 5: Jesus came to take away our sins and in Him is NO SIN AT ALL. It is a contradiction to believe that after He has done this, that we should continue in sin. God forbid! It is a contradiction to believe that, since NOW we are the sons of God, that God has sons that look like Jesus except for sin. God forbid! {Matthew Henry} *"Religion is not an art, an acquired dexterity and skill, but a new nature. And thereupon the consequence is the regenerate person cannot sin. He cannot continue in the course and practice of sin."*

Do I seek to stop sinning or have I stopped sinning? To be born of God means that I have the supernatural power of God to stop sinning. In the Bible it is never -- Should a Christian sin? The Bible puts it emphatically -- A Christian must not sin. The effective working of the new birth life in us is that we do not commit sin, not merely that we have the power not to sin, but that we have stopped sinning. (My Utmost for His Highest, Oswald Chambers)

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. AMPLIFIED*** *By this it is made clear who take their nature from God and are His children, and who take their nature from the devil and are his children: no one who does not practice righteousness -- who does not conform to God's will in purpose, thought and action -- is of God; neither is any one who does not love his brother [his fellow believer in Christ.]* ⑧ **WHOEVER DOESN'T DO RIGHTEOUSNESS OR LOVE HIS BROTHER IS NOT OF GOD.** If you don't practice righteousness or love your brother, YOU ARE NOT OF GOD! The word "manifest" is powerful in this verse. It means to show or demonstrate plainly; to reveal; to give as evidence. Do you want to know who's side you're leaning on? It's in this verse. This goes beyond the testimony or the experience into a practical application of the Word of God. Adam Clarke, in his commentary, brings this out in an unusually strong manner: {Adam Clarke} *"No man is of God who is not ready on all emergencies to do any act of kindness for the comfort, relief and support of any human being."* {JF&B} *"There is no middle ground between the children of God and the children of the devil."*

11 ***For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.*** The message that we have heard from the beginning is simple: **WE SHOULD LOVE ONE ANOTHER.** This is the message that Jesus spoke and that John continues to repeat. **John 13:35** ***By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*** In spite of the simplicity of that message, it is the hardest thing for us to do. This verse is a repeat of 2:7. It's emphasized again for a reason.

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.*** We are not to be as Cain who killed his brother out of jealousy and spite. Cain could not handle Abel's blessings or Abel's life. Abel's works were righteous and when church people see someone else performing what they have developed excuses for not doing, it makes them angry, resentful, and dangerous. At that point, we see the reality of their life come out.

13 **Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. NIV** *Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you.* Where you should be surprised is when they don't. {DAKE} *"Expect no better treatment from the world than Abel received from Cain."* That means, expect them to do anything up to and including killing you.

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.** We have the assurance of the fact that we now live in a changed state by the fact that we exercise the love of God unconditionally. On the other hand, if we do not have this love, **WE ARE NOT SAVED!**

15 **Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.** The awfulness of murder: Murder cuts off a person from any further service to God and from any additional preparation for eternity. In this verse, he who hates his brother is called a murderer; for the sin lies in the inward disposition of which the act is only the outward expression. **How can you tell if you hate someone?** The easiest way appears to be to examine your feelings towards them. If their death or just getting them out of your life would not bother you but actually give you some relief, that is the spirit of a murderer. You don't have to be the one that kills them, just as long as they're gone. Hate is a strong word that we must be careful of. It's easy to fall into and easy to rationalize away.

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.** Are you unconvinced that God loves you? Here is evidence – He laid down His life for us. Because of what He did, we ought to do likewise and lay down our lives for the brethren, other saints of God. {JF&B} *"If we don't lay down our lives literally, we ought to lay them down virtually by giving our time, care, labors, prayer and substance."*

17 **But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?** This verse could be started with the word, "Therefore," to demonstrate its direct link to the previous verse. Since the Lord laid down His life for us, in our demonstrating that we have the same mind, we start with the simple things. If you can't pass this test, how dwells the love of God in you and how do we expect to then lay down our very lives? **NIV** *If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?*

18 **My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.** Therefore, if you truly love it will be shown in your **ACTIONS**. The intent of this verse seems to be to call to our attention the fact that this is not automatic. In other words, just because you love you will have deeds to demonstrate it. We must motivate ourselves to go beyond the flesh to show our love. **LOVE IS AN ACTION WORD.**

19 **And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.** Are you concerned about whether you're saved or not? (We all should, on a regular basis, examine ourselves and be concerned about this.) Love in action brings assurance to our hearts that we have passed from death to life; it builds up our faith. But be cautious; let this love be not only toward your friends but to everyone.

20 **For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.** So if after listening to this, we feel condemned in our heart, God is greater than this heart of ours and knows everything that we have done and exactly where we are in Him. So if our heart condemns us, don't pass it off. This may just be the tip of the iceberg. Get it straight because God is greater. If we, who love ourselves, can see a little bit, there's probably much more.

21 ***Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.*** But if our heart does not condemn us, we can be confident that God will not either. (**CAUTION:** These verses assume that the believer has a healthy conscience that has been conditioned by the Word of God to adequately judge right and wrong. **Hebrews 5:13-14** *For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*)

22 ***And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.*** And because our heart does not condemn us, we can ask whatever and expect to receive it from Him because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. This is one of the first steps in eliminating doubt. **FIX YOUR LIFE AND YOU'LL FIX YOUR FAITH.** But remember, the commandments we are talking about in the context of this chapter have to do with demonstrated love for the brethren. The writer reminds us of this in the next verse.

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.*** The commandment (singular) of God is two fold: Believe on the name of the Lord Jesus (rely on Jesus Christ for salvation) and Love one another. You can't separate them, you can't have one without the other, they are one.

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.*** To answer what John wrote in his gospel in verse 15:7 (*If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*), this verse is given. Within the verse, there are two answers: (1) Keeping His commandments allows us to abide in Him; (2) We know that we are in Him by His Spirit which He has given unto us. Are you still unsure about where you stand in God? You need the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit of God assures us of our position in God.

Chapter 4

INTRODUCTION: There are two parts to this chapter (knowing this helps us to relate to where Scriptures are in the Bible so we can find them easily): Verses 1 – 6 deal with uncovering the spirit of antichrist within the church while verses 7 – 21 give us a number of thoughts on love.

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.*** Notice how this verse reads. It does NOT say “try the spirits by the Spirit” but that’s exactly how you WILL do it. You will use the Gift of Discerning of Spirits and not judge after man’s judgment. {Matthew Henry} “*Follow not every pretender to the Spirit of God.*” Just because a person comes to you with a testimony of being Spirit filled, they must yet be tried or examined or tested. We don’t do this because of any outward skepticism but because many false prophets are out there. Now what do you do if you don’t have the Gift of Discerning of Spirits? Then go to the next two verses to get your answer.

2 ***Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: BY THIS YOU KNOW THE SPIRIT OF GOD.*** These next two verses provide us with the test. These verses focus on how the person views Jesus Christ. Before I leave this, don’t think of Jesus Christ like we do today. Look at Him the way the Bible looks at Him: Jesus of Nazareth, the Anointed One of God who proceeded from God and IS God. Can they stand that test? **PART 1 OF THE TEST: Every person who confesses the literal incarnation of God into the person of Jesus Christ along with His death, resurrection, ascension and ability to save us in the same manner as Romans 10:9 is of God.** Are they automatically of God? It seems clear from the verse that if one can satisfy this requirement, we should accept them as being 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. PART 2 OF THE TEST: {Dake} “Every spirit inspiring any teacher to deny the incarnation, His passion, death, bodily resurrection, and bodily ascension into heaven is not of God and is antichrist.”*** If this test is made before anything else is looked at, there may be no need to examine the person further. Too often we embrace another religion based on the lifestyle (counterfeit holiness) and ignore these important doctrinal points. Many major religions today are antichrist and yet we fellowship with them in defiance of **2 John 10-11** ***If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.***

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.*** An outstanding confession is hidden within this verse: **GREATER IS HE THAT IS IN YOU, THAN HE THAT IS IN THE WORLD.** You don’t have to put up with the foolishness of the spirit of antichrist -- you have overcome this spirit. Therefore,

don't feel that your holiness must make you make accommodations for this spirit. Don't be brought into bondage by this spirit. Confess who you are in Jesus!

5 ***They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. NIV They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them.*** The false teachers and preachers are part of the world. Because of that (not necessarily an additional sign) but as a natural consequence, their conversation and thoughts are of worldly things. Because they connect with these worldly things, naturally, worldly people listen to them. This is an additional test to see where someone really is.

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. NIV We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood. On the other hand, the saints are of God. Those that know God, will hear us. Those that don't know the Lord, will not hear us.*** This goes beyond differences of opinion but has to do with doctrinal error. **BY THIS (WHETHER SOMEONE EMBRACES BIBLICAL DOCTRINE) YOU KNOW THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH AND THE SPIRIT OF ERROR.** This should not be new because Jesus taught this when dealing with the Sadducees on the subject of resurrection. **Matthew 22:29 Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.** Ignorance of the Scriptures and ignorance of the enormity of God's power plays right into the hands of the false teachers and brings them, and those that hear them, into error.

7 ***Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. NIV Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.*** Though this is a command, the apostle makes a passionate appeal to the church. Let us love one another! This appeal rings true throughout the ages as denominational walls have made the people of God suspicious of each other because of man's labels. We must love the saints. Why? Love is a demonstration of the fact that we are of God. Those that love are born of God and know God. They demonstrate all of this by the fact that they love. In this verse and the next one, we see five characteristics of love as it applies to the believer:

- ① **Love is of (or comes from) God.** You don't have to worry about real love being something false or from the devil because it comes from God.
- ② **Everyone that practices love is born of God.** CAUTION! Does this mean that everybody out there on the street that loves each other is saved? No, because we must understand the word behind the English word "love." In the Greek the word used here is *agapao* which goes along with its corresponding word, which many may be more familiar with, *agape*. This has been called the "characteristic word of Christianity." In other words, if I had to summarize what it means to be a Christian in one word, that word is LOVE. This word for love refers to

the essential nature of God. It can only be seen by the actions that it takes. Love in action is seen in **John 3:16** *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life* and **Romans 5:8** *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* Only one that's born of God can practice this type of love. The other word in the Scriptures for love is *phileo* which means tender affection. *Agape* is an unselfish love, ready to serve, while *phileo* springs from man's emotions and conveys the thought of cherishing. *Agape* love is universal, excluding no one while *phileo* love is selective and driven by the emotions. We must be careful with this. First, what type of love do you set out to practice? Is your love unselfish and not hindered by what others think or do to you? Second, do you expect others to love you unselfishly AND emotionally? God is looking for an unselfish, unconditional love from His children. Then we'll be like Him.

- ③ **Everyone that loves is coming to know more and more of God.** This will be explained more in the next verse. Since God is love, the more we love like God, the more we must know Him for how else could we love like Him?

8 ***He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*** NIV *Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.* The references to the NIV are not always added to clarify but, as in this case, to also enforce what has been said. Here are the fourth and fifth characteristics of love as it applies to the believer:

- ④ **He that doesn't love doesn't know God.** How can this be? How can you make such a bold statement? The answer is found in the next verse.
- ⑤ **God's very essence and nature expresses the sum total of love, God IS love.** Since God is love, if we are going to be like Jesus and "proceed from God," we must also be 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.*** {DAKE} "The giving of God's only begotten Son is the fullest proof of the infinite love of God and that all men can find full mercy." So often the devil attacks us with the thought, "God doesn't love me." Just remembering the fact that He gave us Jesus ought to be enough to eliminate that foolish thought.

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.*** NIV *This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.* PROPITIATION - THE ATONING SACRIFICE FOR SINS. IT REFERS TO A MEANS BY WHICH SIN IS COVERED AND FORGIVEN. Before leaving this word, remember the Old Testament Passover in Egypt. When the death angel came, he passed over those that had the blood on the door post. That blood was a propitiation or a means to cover that household. The death angel would not look through the blood so anyone could have used it to be

spared on that night. So the key is that this is love: Love is not in the fact that we loved God but that, while we were yet sinners, He loved us, and sent us a remedy for sin, Jesus Christ.

11 ***Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.*** NIV *Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.* This is another time that the NIV was used to reinforce the King James Version. People of God, it's simple. Since God loved (and still loves) us, we ought to love one another. Before leaving here, look at that word, "ought." Let's go back to 1 John 2:6 to pick up our definition of the word again. This is that same word *opheilo* that we talked about there. It means "TO OWE OR IS BOUND TO."

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. LOVE SHOWS THE REALITY OF GOD.*** Since no man hath seen God at any time, we must show Him by the love we have to one another. While on this, sometimes we miss the point regarding growth in God. The verse here is very clear: If we love one another, God lives and remains in us and His love is brought to perfection IN US. **The key to growth in God is based on our love for one another.**

13 ***Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.*** NIV *We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.* **EVIDENCE: BY THIS WE KNOW THAT WE DWELL IN HIM.** According to the Word, God gives His Spirit to those that obey Him - our obedience has secured it for us and we can have confidence that we dwell in Him and He in us because of this verse. Romans 8:13 - the **Spirit** is the power we need to kill all the works of the flesh. Without it, it cannot be done. If this be so, why is it that we have so many believers who claim to have His Spirit and who have no desire to mortify the deeds of the flesh?

14 ***And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.*** We - the apostles who physically saw Jesus.

15 ***Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.*** Think of the most horrible persecution to go through up to and including death. To be released from this persecution, you must deny the fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. If you say that He is the Son of God, this will bring a death sentence to you. **This is what the apostle is talking about because that's what this verse meant in his day.** This verse cannot be taken merely at face value because of the time we live in. Today, Christianity, in spite of our supposed separation of Church and State, is the State Religion. Almost everyone confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, yet most of those do not have God dwelling in them and they are not in God.

16 ***And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*** The entire essence and nature of God is wrapped up in one word: **LOVE**. Everything else about His nature is a by product of this love. He that dwells in the *agape* love that ONLY God can provide, dwells in God and God

in him. The world wants to see a change that sanctifies God in their eyes and not us (refer to Numbers 20:7-12).

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.*** NIV *In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him.* Perfect love brings boldness in the day of judgment (“because if you love Me, you’ll keep My commandments...”).

PERFECT LOVE = PERFECT OBEDIENCE = PERFECT FAITHFULNESS = BOLDNESS BEFORE GOD

This verse is the answer to 1 John 3:2b ***but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*** We shall be like Him because we shall have already practiced being like Him (“as he is, so are we in this world”). {Dake} “By God dwelling in us, by our dwelling in Him, by having the fullness of love in our lives, and by the perfection of that love in daily manifestation, we may have boldness in the day of judgement. This is possible because we are like God -- holy, pure, loving, good, and true in this world.” It is very simple: **WE CAN HAVE BOLDNESS WHEN WE COME BEFORE GOD BECAUSE WE LIVE LIKE JESUS.** This boldness is described so well in the book of Hebrews. **Hebrews 4:16 *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*** We can do this when our love is perfected.

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.*** NIV *There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.* {AC} “The man who feels that he loves God with all his heart can never dread Him as his Judge . . . he has nothing of that fear that produces terror or brings torment.” Are you afraid of God as the judge? Does the Great White Throne Judgement of Revelation 20:11-16 make you nervous? Examine yourself! Perfect love (the love of God being practiced in our lives) drives out this fear. I don’t have to worry about God as the Judge when I have patterned myself after Him as my Father. Let’s look at two words for fear out of the Scripture:

FEAR - {GREEK} ***phobos*** - (1) Towards God (the fear of God) - it is the fear that will inspire a constant carefulness in dealing with others in His fear; (2) Flight, that which is caused by being scared, then, that which may cause flight; (3) It is also applied to how one deals with superiors. {DICTIONARY} An emotion excited by danger, evil, or pain; apprehension; dread; to be afraid of; be fearful of; to look upon with reverence or awe. Another Greek word used in the Scripture is ***deilia*** - cowardice (shamefully excessive fear of something); timidity (easily frightened; full of fear).

WHAT TYPE OF FEAR ARE WE TALKING ABOUT? WE ARE NOT TALKING ABOUT COWARDICE FOR 2 TIM 1:7 AND REV 21:8 BOTH USE THE WORD “FEAR” BUT THEY ARE BETTER RENDERED “TIMIDITY” AND “COWARDLY” RESPECTIVELY. NEITHER OF THEM HAVE ANY PLACE IN THE LIFE OF ANY BELIEVER. WHAT WE ARE DEALING WITH IS THE FEAR OF DEATH AND FACING THE UNKNOWN, IN OTHER WORDS, GOD AS JUDGE AND, POTENTIALLY, EXECUTIONER. WE DON’T HAVE THAT FEAR BECAUSE OUR PERFECT LOVE FOR HIM AND OTHERS HAS CAST THAT FEAR OUT. HE THAT DOES FEAR HAS NOT BEEN MADE PERFECT IN LOVE. THEY OBVIOUSLY HAVE SOME REASON TO FEAR. ONCE THEY CORRECT THESE REASONS IN THEIR LIFE, THEY SHOULD BE WITHOUT FEAR.

Hebrews 2:14-15 *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*

When we were without Christ, the devil had the power of death over us and he used this power to develop fear in us. We had every reason to be afraid because we weren’t prepared to meet God.

Romans 8:15 *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.* We have not received the spirit of bondage, which leads us back into the fear of facing God. (**phobos**) The spirit of bondage brought fear to us. **BONDAGE = SLAVERY.** Under bondage, repayment for lack of performance or disobedience was severe (in other words, payback was rough!). With the Spirit of Adoption, we have access to the same relationship with the Father that Jesus had (look at Mark 14:36 and Galatians 4:6 for examples).

19 ***We love him, because he first loved us.*** Per {JF&B}, the “him” in this verse is omitted in the oldest manuscripts. In fact, look how the NIV reads in this verse: ***We love because he first loved us.*** With it removed, it makes the verse fit in with the theme of the whole book: **CHRISTIANS MUST LOVE.** Verse 10 also reinforced this. It’s not that we love Him but that He loved us and gave His life for us. But, as the verse is written, it still portrays a great truth: I can only love Him because of the love which He first showed to me in dying for me. Without that act, I could never truly love.

20 ***If a man say, 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?*** NIV *If anyone says, “I love God,” yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.* This verse is the key to any discussion on love: If you have a problem loving your brother - forget about testifying about your love for God! The words of John are stronger than usual. If you hate your brother and testify

of your love for God, **YOU ARE A LIAR!** (This is the fourth time that John has used the word “liar” in this book and the second time where the word is used toward the people of God.) The formula he presents after that point makes perfect sense. We’ve never seen God and most of us have never heard His voice audibly, yet we testify that we love Him. We see our brother, see their pain, see their joy, hear their voice, and we can’t stand them. Indeed, if this is you, you are a LIAR!

21 **And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.** {Adam Clarke} *“The love of God and the love of man can never be separated. He who loves God will love his brother; he who loves his brother gives this proof that he loves God.”*

Once again, as John closes this chapter, he repeats his reference back to **John 13:35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.** Prove what Jesus has done in your life by your love for your brother.

Conclusion to this Chapter: Let us be careful to maintain Scriptural purity. Watch for the spirit of antichrist because it is in the church. While we’re doing that, follow our perfect example, Jesus Christ, and love our neighbor as ourselves. Develop that perfect love through the Holy Ghost.

Chapter 5

The chapter can be broken into 3 parts: (1) final words from John on the new birth - verses 1-5; (2) the witness of Jesus Christ - verses 6-15; (3) concluding remarks to the church - verses 16-21.

(1) FINAL WORDS FROM JOHN ON THE NEW BIRTH

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.* To better understand this verse, we must turn to the New International Version. **NIV** *Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well.* To be born of God is the salvation experience. Every promise to those that are “born of God” is available to those who have salvation. Those that love the one doing the birthing (God) also should automatically love those others who have been birthed. Jesus and John, through the Holy Ghost, continually emphasize the same theme: The saints must love one another.

2 *By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. BY THIS WE KNOW THAT WE LOVE THE SAINTS.* The key to knowing that I love the children of God is that I love God and keep His commandments. Actually, this can't be separated. Jesus said, **John 14:15** *If ye love me, keep my commandments.* The only way you can demonstrate a love for Jesus is through obedience to what He says. According to Dake, there are 1,050 commandments in just the New Testament. Don't be overwhelmed by the sheer number of commandments that are there. The Spirit of God will enable us if we just have a willing and obedient mind and heart.

3 *For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.* This verse brings out John 14:15 from the prior verse. The love of God is shown in obedience to His commandments. “His commandments are not grievous.” **GRIEVOUS** - burdensome; heavy, hard. (See Mt 11:28-30; 1 Co 10:13) When His commandments seem grievous, it is because there is too much of the flesh in us fighting against them. **Proverbs 13:15** *Good understanding giveth favor: but the way of transgressors is hard.* The only way we can express our true love for the Lord is to keep His commandments.

4 *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.* **NIV** *for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.* Our victory over the world is automatic and complete by our saving faith in Jesus Christ. As long as we rely upon His blood to save us, we are kept from the influences of the world. We move toward the world when we become self-righteous, claiming that it's because of our personal holiness that we're saved. **Hebrews 11:6a** *But without faith it is impossible to please him.* This verse not only applies to our faith in Him to bless us but our faith in Him to save us.

5 ***Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*** The first step of faith is to accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Son of God. Beyond this, there is no faith for overcoming. The ones that will overcome the world are those that have done this. Then we will become like Jesus. **John 16:33** ***These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.***

(2) THE WITNESS OF JESUS CHRIST

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.*** NIV ***This is the one who came by water and blood--Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.*** Water, blood & the Spirit – the testimony of the humanity and sonship of Jesus Christ. The water and blood point to **John 19:34** ***But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.*** The water and the blood also point to the fact that Jesus came to be the perfect sacrifice. In the Old Testament, the sacrifice was washed with water before its blood was shed. In the New Testament, Jesus came to John to be baptized (water) to begin His ministry and came to the cross (blood) at the end of His ministry. The Spirit of God in the world is the third witness in the same manner that it gives us the evidence in verse 13 of the previous chapter. **1 John 4:13** ***Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.*** The Spirit of God testifies to our adoption and to the Sonship of Jesus Christ. {JF&B} “By water, when His ministry was inaugurated by baptism in the Jordan, and He received the Father’s testimony to His Messiahship and divine Sonship...He came by the blood of His cross. These two past facts in the Lord’s life are this abiding testimony to us, by virtue of the permanent application to us of their cleansing and atoning power.”

7 ***For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.*** There is controversy among the commentators about this verse. Everyone seems to agree that everything after *in heaven* to *in earth* is not included in any of the original manuscripts but got added somewhere along the way. However, this is where the King James Version must be relied upon because, of all the translations, this one has stood the test of time. On the same token, this is not a verse to use to prove the Trinity. The entire Bible does that. The commentators do agree on one point, though, the word “three” is a masculine word in the original Greek pointing to three persons. So without telling who they are, the original text still said there are three that bear witness and these three are Persons.

8 ***And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.*** This points back to verse 6. Only the Holy Spirit is able to uncover the mystery contained in the water and the blood. This mystery points to the Lord’s baptism and crucifixion, as well as our spiritual washing in the His Blood and our natural holiness

(cleansing with water). (The term “natural holiness” is used to denote actions to be viewed by all to evidence our inner holiness.) These all are in agreement.

9 ***If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.*** All of these make up the witness of God. If we can receive man’s witness (The Lord Jesus has saved me!), why not God’s (This is My Beloved Son)? His is greater.

10 ***He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.*** When we believe on Jesus, we have the witness of who He is within us because of His Spirit. A saint does not need any other witness because the certification is within. No saint will ever have doubts about the deity of Jesus.

HE THAT DOESN’T BELIEVE HAS MADE GOD A LIAR BECAUSE IT’S GOD’S TESTIMONY THAT IS REFUSED. BY REFUSING IT, YOU DENY IT’S TRUTHFULNESS AND, HENCE, THE SOURCE (GOD) IS A LIAR. WHEN ONE REJECTS CHRIST AS SAVIOR, HIS LIFE IS SAYING, “NO, JESUS IS NOT THE CHRIST, THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD. WHAT GOD HAS SAID IS NOT TRUE.”

11 ***And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*** These next two verses put out two important points for us that believe: ① **GOD HAS PROVIDED MANKIND WITH A MEANS TO ETERNAL LIFE AND THAT IS THROUGH HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST, ONLY. Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.** {DAKE} “Eternal life is only in Jesus. All who are in Him have this eternal life and all out of Him do not have it.”

12 ***He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*** Here’s the second point: ② **HE THAT HAS JESUS HAS LIFE AND HE THAT DOESN’T (NO MATTER WHAT HIS SUBSTITUTE IS) DOES NOT HAVE LIFE.** Stop fooling the world. It DOES matter what you believe! Without saving faith in Jesus Christ, and Him alone, they are lost.

13 ***These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*** This is John’s THIRD stated reason for writing this epistle (#1-1:4; #2-2:1). All of these things were written to the church that we may **know** that we have eternal life and that we may continue to believe in (trust in, rely upon) His name.

14 ***And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:*** This verse is an explanation of **John 15:7 *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be***

done unto you. {JF&B} “If we knew God’s will thoroughly, and submitted to it heartily, it would be impossible for us to ask anything for the spirit or for the body which He would not perform; it is this ideal state which the apostle has in view.” Because we believe in Him, we can have this confidence. This confidence says that our prayers are heard in spite of the circumstances. Let us make this our confession: **IF I ASK ANYTHING ACCORDING TO HIS WILL, HE HEARS ME.**

15 ***And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*** On the converse, if we know that He hears us, we know we will get what we asked for. It may not be today or tomorrow but because of His faithfulness, we know it will come to pass.

(3) CONCLUDING REMARKS TO THE CHURCH

16 ***If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.*** John makes these additional points about sin: **FIRST** – NIV **IF ANYONE SEES HIS BROTHER COMMIT A SIN THAT DOES NOT LEAD TO DEATH, HE SHOULD PRAY AND GOD WILL GIVE HIM LIFE. I REFER TO THOSE WHOSE SIN DOES NOT LEAD TO DEATH.** Two key points are made at the beginning of this verse: a) this verse is based on what we SEE, not what we hear about. (“Believe half of what you see and none of what you hear” is the old saying.) We should pray for our brother if we SEE them sin. If we pray, God will restore him. b) This is sin from a child of God (a brother or sister). This is an additional step to **Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.** This verse tells us what we should do (restore them) and John tells us how to do it (pray for them). There is much controversy among the commentators regarding the “sin which is not unto death” but let’s just say, if we see a saint in sin, we should pray. If they are not restorable, the Spirit of God will surely let us know. **SECOND** – NIV **THERE IS A SIN THAT LEADS TO DEATH. I AM NOT SAYING THAT HE SHOULD PRAY ABOUT THAT.** There is a sin unto complete spiritual death. Prayer cannot help this sin. Look at **Hebrews 6:4-6 4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.** Again, only the Spirit of God can provide us with the guidance to know whether we are dealing with this type of sin.

17 ***All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.*** **THIRD** – ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS IS SIN. John expands on what he said back in I John 3:4. Not only is sin a transgression of the law, all unrighteousness is sin. EVERY unrighteous act, even of believers, is sin. {AC} “Every act contrary to justice is sin - is a transgression of the law which condemns all injustice.”

18 ***We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.*** **FOURTH – HE THAT IS BEGOTTEN OF GOD KEEPETH HIMSELF.** First, we have a reminder from chapter 3 that believers do not sin. This point was made very clear by the apostle in that chapter. In keeping with the same theme, to overcome sin, we must keep ourselves. **THE REASON THAT A BELIEVER IS STILL ENGAGED IN SIN IS BECAUSE OF THEMSELVES.** We learn to keep ourselves by learning how the world wants to enslave us (I John 2:15-17). Jude gives us the formula for how to do this in his very brief epistle: **20 *But ye, beloved, BUILDING UP YOURSELVES on your most holy faith, PRAYING IN THE HOLY GHOST, 21 KEEP YOURSELVES in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*** To keep ourselves involves building up our faith (***faith comes through hearing, hearing of the word of God***) and we must pray in the Spirit. (Note: John, the “apostle of love” has now given us FOURTEEN points on sin in this very brief book.)

19 ***And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.*** We are of God, not of the world. The world is not only wicked, it LIES (relaxes, languishes, abides) in wickedness. That’s why we must sanctify ourselves (set ourselves apart from) from the world.

20 ***And we KNOW that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may KNOW him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.*** What an amazing verse! The reason why many are not saved is because what little understanding they do have is not enough for their carnal minds. But once you get saved, you wonder in yourself what took you so long. It’s because we didn’t understand when we were out there in the world. Notice how many things we know in this verse. We KNOW that the Son of God has come and we KNOW Him that is true.

21 ***Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.*** Avoid idolatry, false gods, and have no idols in your heart and lives. Love God, the true and living God, first and last.