

Contents

<i>Chapters</i>	<i>Page</i>
Forward -----	2
Introduction-----	3
 First John	
Chapter 1-----	4
Chapter 2-----	17
Chapter 3-----	48
Chapter 4-----	73
Chapter 5-----	94
 Second John	
Chapter 1-----	115
 Third John	
Chapter 1-----	128

Forward

Rev. Dr. Tomas Zatel is the principal of Bethany Theological Seminary as well as the moderator of Bethany Independent Presbyterian Church in Myanmar. He is a committed student of the Word. He has written a few series of devotionals to minister to his congregations across the country.

This “*As the Scripture Says*” series of devotionals from the epistles of John is one of the devotionals to make sense, to his co-ministers and students, of what John the Apostle has to say regarding his theology of love. The format of the devotionals is simple and straightforward. The contents of the truth from the epistles are deeply profound yet simply presented. I do hope that this simple book of devotionals will be of immense help as you take time to read the epistles with the spirit of meekness.

Tlang Than Kim
Registrar
Bethany Theological Seminary

Introduction

John the Apostle was one of the three most intimate disciples of the Lord Jesus. He personally knew and experienced the love of the Lord Jesus in a very special way. He testified that the Lord has loved His own disciples to the end (John 13:1). He identified himself as one “whom Jesus loved” in his Gospel (John 13:23, 19:26).

Along with the Gospel of John and the book of Revelation, he wrote these three epistles urging his readers to love one another in action. John paintakingly presents his theology of love in these epistles. This series of devotionals is written to help Christians read John's epistles more meaningfully and put into practice John's theology of love more conciously. This series is thoroughly proofread by teacher Alice out of her love for the Lord and His people and it, thus, has become much more understandable. May the Lord help us grow in our love for Him and His people more evidently!

**In His Grace,
Tomas Zatel**

The First Epistle of John

Chapter One

The word of life

*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard,
which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon
and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life –
(1John 1:1)*

John – the author of the epistle

1. He is the disciple and apostle of Jesus Christ (Cf. John 6:13-14)
2. He and his brother James were known as “sons of Zebedee” (Matt. 10:2-4) whom Jesus called “sons of Thunder” (Mark 3:17)
3. He, along with Peter and James, is Jesus’ close associate (Matt. 17:1; 26:37)
4. He identifies himself as ‘the disciple whom Jesus loved’ in his gospel (John 21:7, 20)
5. He also authors the book of Revelation (Rev.1:1)
6. He writes this epistle and the other two as an eye witness of Jesus

Jesus – the word of life

1. Jesus is the word that has eternally been “from the beginning”
 - a. He is the word that has no beginning in time and space
 - b. He is the word that is eternal
2. Jesus is the word “which we have heard...seen...looked upon...touched...”
 - a. He is the word enfleshed (Cf. Hebrews 10:5-7)
 - b. He is the word that is historical
3. Jesus is the word “which we have...”
 - a. He is the word who we can relate to

- b. He is the word who places us right in God's sight
(John 1:12)
- c. There is every possibility that we can have a personal intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus
- 4. Jesus is "the word of life" (1John 1:1, John 1:1)
 - a. He is the word that gives life (John 1:4)
 - b. He is the word that enlightens all (John 1:4)

Theological Significance of Jesus' being the Word of Life

- 1. Jesus is God's word to us
We are re-created by God through Jesus the logos (Cf. Gen.1)
- 2. Jesus is God's life to us
We are created alive in Jesus God's word of life
- 3. Jesus – the word of life – means
 - a. That God opts for our life, not our death
 - b. That He (Jesus) effectuates life in us the dead by virtue of who He is as the Logos
- 4. Fulfilling the Scriptures (God's Word) is the same as following Jesus (the word of life)!

The Life

*The life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us –
(1John 1:2)*

The life was made manifest

1. The “life” refers to
 - a. Jesus Christ who has eternally been the Logos (the Person)
 - i. Became flesh in history
 - ii. Was manifest openly
 - b. The physical revelation of Christ the pre-incarnate Logos (the Message)
 - i. This too is the personal disclosure of God Himself in Jesus His Son (Heb.1:1-2)
 - ii. This thus is the message
2. No wonder Jesus is the message-person/person-message Koyama per se

And we have seen

1. What have the Apostles seen when they looked upon Jesus?
2. They must have seen
 - a. Jesus – the eternal Logos
 - b. Jesus – the eternal life
 - c. Jesus – the message of the Father’s love (1 John 3:1, Cf. John 3:16)
3. They have known Jesus as such in the most personal and experiential way possible

And testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life

1. This is what John and the other Apostles are presently engaged in
2. They write to testify of who Jesus really is
 - a. Jesus is the Christ who has always been there since the very beginning
 - b. Jesus is the incarnate Word of God
 - c. Jesus is the very life of God
 - d. Jesus as the word of life is as physically real as the Apostles
3. They write to proclaim Jesus – “the eternal life ...”
 - a. Jesus as the eternal life itself is the kernel of Christian proclamation
 - b. Jesus as one with the Father is the central content of Christian faith
 - c. Jesus as the incarnate God is integral to Christian theology

What does it mean for us who take heed to the words of the apostles?

1. We are to entreat Jesus to create in us life, emphatically, His own life
2. We are to experience Jesus the word of life by abiding in His word
3. We are to enjoy our ‘common fellowship’ that comes as a result of faith in God and love for one another (1 John 1:4)

Fellowship

*That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we writing these things so that our joy may be complete
(1John 1:3-4)*

Fellowship (Gk- koinonia) is a term that speaks of a form of social relations based on the common goal and interest whatever it may be. For us Christians, fellowship refers to a form of social relationship anchored on our apostolic credos – “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all” – as can be read in the epistle of Paul to Ephesian brethren (4:4-6).

That which we have seen...

1. John and the other apostles are committed to proclaiming Jesus
 - a. As the eternal logos
 - b. As the eternal life
 - c. As the one with God the Father
2. They proclaim only what they have experienced (Cf. Acts 4:20)
3. The Apostles’ experiences and testimonies back up their proclamation

So that you too may have fellowship with us

1. The purpose of preaching/teaching is for the hearers/readers to believe in Jesus (John 20:31)
2. “So that” indicates the purpose behind the writing of the first epistle; it is meant to aid the readers
 - a. To share the same faith with Apostles
 - b. To partake in the common fellowship with the Apostles

3. Readers/hearers then are not only theologically but also socially identified with the Apostles
4. Only then, would the believers be not only spiritually but also directly/personally associated with God the Father and Jesus His Son

And we are writing ...that our joy may be complete

1. Seeing people coming to have faith in Jesus causes us to rejoice in the Lord
2. Witnessing how people join in the common Christian fellowship brings an exceedingly great joy to our hearts
3. This is how our joy in Christ can be fully complete
 - a. The joy of apostles is complete when all these things take place
 - b. The joy of readers/hearers is full when all these things are part of their life-experience
4. Let us find full and complete joy in the Lord through fellowshiping one another in faith!

God is light

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth (1John 1:5-6)

God is light; anything contrary to who God is is sin! Ones having fellowship with God must practice what is true and truthful.

This is the message ...

1. The definite message is being referred to
2. The message being pointed out is that God is light!
 - a. God is holy and good (ontologically)
 - b. God is righteous and true (morally)
 - c. God is beautiful (aesthetically)
3. No darkness is found in God; darkness refers to
 - a. Moral imperfections
 - b. Evilness or wrongdoing
 - c. Falsehood or lie
4. This message is that which the Apostles have received from God Himself (Cf. Gal. 1:12). It is exactly what they proclaim to the scattered brethren

If we say we have fellowship with Him...

1. Some people claim that they have fellowship with God
2. And their conduct however proves that the reverse is true
 - a. They may be good at talking
 - b. But they do not walk their talk worthily
3. The truth is that a person having fellowship with God will surely walk accordingly

- a. She will surely get rid of lies and falsehood from her own life
- b. She then will practice the truth

We lie and do not practice the truth

- 1. Lie comes to us so naturally when we set aside the truth
- 2. Lying is part of our nature when we are not part of the truth
- 3. Lying of course is anything but
 - a. The denial of the truth
 - b. The neglect of the truth
- 4. What is this truth being talked about?
 - a. That God is light is the truth
 - b. That this truth – God is light – brings us to opt for truthful living is true

That God is light is the message. This message is also the truth. And this truth must have a remarkable bearing on us God's children!

Walk in the light

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (1John 1:7-8).

Walking in the light thus is none other than living a life patterned after the nature of God! Let us seek to behave like God.

But if we walk in the light...

1. That we truly walk in the light must result in having fellowship with one another
2. That God is indeed the light must be reflected in how we actually live each day of our life
3. Christian life therefore is
 - a. Reflective of who God is
 - b. Patterned after God the light
 - c. Inseparable to common fellowship of the believers

The blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us...

1. God forgives us of our sins on account of the blood of Jesus
 - a. God does not remember our sins any longer
 - b. God does not hold us accountable for our sins
 - c. But the sins remain in (within us) unless we are cleansed from them, thereby weighing us down as we run the race of faith (Heb.12:1)
2. Jesus cleanses us from all our sins through the shedding of his blood on the Cross

- a. Our sins are so deeply rooted in us that we hardly get out of them
 - i. Sins usually starts as acts
 - ii. Sins slowly turn out as habits
 - iii. Sins eventually become part of our nature
- b. It takes the blood of Jesus not only to be forgiven of all our sins, but also to be cleansed from all our sins positionally

The Example of David the Psalmist as to the practical cleansing of sins (Psalm 51)

1. Forgiveness of sins is pleaded for (Ps.51:1)
 - a. God may forgive us of all our sins in His abundant mercy
 - b. God may forget all our sins in His eternal love
2. Cleansing of sins is repeatedly asked for (Ps.51:2,7)
 - a. Wash us thoroughly from all our iniquity (Ps.51:2)
 - b. Cleanse us from all our sin (Ps.51:2)
 - c. Purge us and wash us (Ps.51:7)
 - d. And above all, ‘create in us a new heart...and renew a right spirit within us’ (Ps.51:10)

Let us never deceive ourselves that we have no sins. Let us stand truthful to the reality that we have sins and Jesus cleanses us from all of them. And let us seek to walk as cleansed and holy children of the light!

Confession of sins

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us
(1 John 1:9-10)*

We have already admitted that we have sins in verse 8 (of this chapter). To say otherwise is to deny the truth – all are sinners (Isaiah 53:6; Rom. 3:10-19, 23). What do we do after acknowledging our sinfulness in the sight of God?

If we confess our sins...

1. We are to confess our sins before God
2. In confessing our sins in the sight of God, we simply
 - a. Acknowledge our sins for what they really are
 - b. Treat our sins in light of God's point of view
 - c. Hate our sins as God does
3. We consciously and continuously admit that we are sinners standing in need of divine forgiveness and cleansing

He is faithful and just...

1. There is no denying the fact that God is faithful and just (Cf. 2 Tim. 2:13)

2. That God is faithful means
 - a. Whatever God says is true and trustworthy
 - b. Whatever God promises will come true
 - c. Whatever God utters will accomplish its purposes
3. That God is just means
 - a. Whatever God does is right and righteous
 - b. Whatever God administers and how He does is good and beautiful
4. God being faithful and just will surely forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness
 - a. He is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse us
 - b. He is faithful and just for our own good

His word...in us

1. God has forgiven us of our original sin on the account of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross (Rom.6:23)
2. God forgives us of our actual sins every time we treat them in the light of God's perspective (See also, Matt.5:29-30)
3. God cleanses us from all unrighteousness as we continuously consciously seek to walk in the light

This is how we are to keep God's word. This is also how God's word is evidenced in us! Only then, would we not end up making God a liar.

Chapter Two

Jesus our advocate

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world

(1 John 2:1-2)

My little children...

1. The author John considers his readers as little children
2. These little children of John the Apostle are taught
 - a. About Jesus as the eternal life (1 John 1:1-2)
 - b. About God as the light (1 John 1:5)
 - c. About the confession of sins (1 John 1:9)
 - d. About the forgiveness and cleansing of sins (1 John 1:9)
3. These things are passed on to them so that they may not sin
 - a. Sin as a power can be conquered (Rom.6:14)
 - b. Sin as a habit can be stopped

But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate...

1. Sin is no longer an alternative way of living this life on earth
2. But when a person ends up sinning against God unwillingly, he should be assured that Jesus the advocate will come to his rescue
3. Jesus is our “advocate with the Father” (1 John 2:1)
 - a. He is the one being called alongside to help (Cf. John 16:7)
 - b. He is the one defending for us, acquitting us of our sins
4. Jesus our advocate is the Messiah (Christ) as well as the righteous.

It is in Jesus our Savior that we are not only declared but also made righteous.

He is the propitiation for our sins...

1. Not only Jesus is the advocate, but He also is the propitiation for our sins and the sins of the whole world
2. The word “propitiation”
 - a. Connotes the idea of covering (mercy seat in the OT)
 - b. Refers to that which makes fellowship between us and God possible
3. Jesus died on the cross both for Christians (and the would-be Christians) and the whole lot of people in the world
4. Jesus being the advocate and the propitiation for sins
 - a. Satisfied the full demand of the justice of God
 - b. Paid the full price of sin(s)
 - c. Delivered the ultimate punch-line of the everlasting mercy of God
5. In Jesus is no separation between the Gift of eternal life and the Giver of that gift (the eternal life)

Shall we always stay confident that Jesus our advocate will walk alongside us as we struggle against sin and its consequences! Let us be challenged to appreciate Jesus as the one not only defending for us but also acquitting us of our sins! May we be challenged all the more to hold Jesus as the life and the life-giver!

Intimate relationship

And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says “I know him” but does keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him

(1John 2:3-4)

And by this we know

1. The phrase “by this” is
 - a. Indicative of a pattern
 - b. Reflective of a process
 - c. Descriptive of an agency
2. What John ascertains is that there is a way to know thing(s)
3. Whether we actually know Jesus or not can be
 - a. Checked up
 - b. Verified
4. Whether we have a close and intimate relationship with Jesus or not can also be tested and proven

That we have come to know him

1. This is more than having mere knowledge of the Lord Jesus
2. This is more of having a close relationship with the Lord Jesus
 - a. We are to know Jesus as a person
 - b. We are thus to develop an intimate relationship with Jesus
3. Christianity does not revolve around a system of beliefs (certain core values), but is hinged on the person of the Lord Jesus
4. How do we have such a close relationship with Jesus?

If we keep his commandments

1. Only by keeping His commandments, then would we know Jesus
 - a. Personally,
 - b. Experientially, and
 - c. Intimately (John 15:14)
2. Obedience to Jesus will see us staying true and faithful to Him
3. Anything less than obedience is a lie

Whosoever says “I know him”...

1. Oral confession as to who Jesus is, is of importance (Rom.10:10)
2. Moral commitment as to whatever Jesus commands is of significance
3. Anyone confessing Jesus as the Christ would definitely
 - a. Be morally committed to keeping all His commandments
 - b. Be faithfully bound (enslaved) to the person of Jesus
4. Anything other than this makes us liars
 - a. We simply fail to walk the talk
 - b. We are mere liars; we are neither truthful nor faithful

Obedience to Jesus is integral to discipleship. Our obedience to the Lord Jesus would see us coming to know Him better, relate to Him more closely, and serve Him more effectively.

Walk as Jesus did

But whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked

(1 John 2:5-6)

But whoever keeps his word...

1. The word “but” differentiates the liar mentioned in verse 4 of the same chapter
 - a. From the ones keeping the word of Jesus
 - b. From anyone obeying Jesus’ commands
2. The word of Jesus to be kept is
 - a. A reference to what Jesus has taught and preached
 - b. A reference to what Jesus has commanded and commissioned us
 - c. A reference to that which Jesus exemplified for us
3. Anyone who keeps the word of Jesus will see the love of God being matured (Gk. teteleiotai) in him

By this we may know that we are in him

1. Salvation we have in Christ is that which we need to be certain about
2. Our doctrine of Jesus Christ tells us whether we are indeed saved (1 John 1:1-4)

3. Our act of obedience to the word of Jesus testifies that we are truly saved (1 John 2:5)
4. This is how we know for sure that we are saved (“we are in him”)

Whoever abides in him ought to walk...

1. John the apostle takes another word “abide” to speak of obedience. The word “abide” has an idea of
 - a. Remain true to the things taught
 - b. Remain faithful to that which was passed on
2. This is how the importance of obedience is reinforced. Because of the words “ought to,” obedience is
 - a. Of requirement,
 - b. Of expectation,
 - c. Of duty, and d. Of compliance
3. Ones truly obedient to Jesus
 - a. Are responsible for walking in the same way Jesus did
 - b. Are expected of the lifestyle Jesus exemplified
 - c. Are required to walk, following Jesus
4. To ‘walk in the same way he did’ means
 - a. Having the same mind towards all things (1 Cor. 2:16)
 - b. Having the same love for God and others
 - c. Having the same spirit of faith
 - d. Having ‘proof that Christ is speaking in us’ (2 Cor. 13:3)

May the Lord enable us to grow in loving God and others as we keep on obeying Jesus! God’s love in us can grow mature only if we are absolutely obedient to the Word. Obedience after all is no longer a choice but a demand from the Lord. Once we are God’s, we are expected to walk as Jesus did.

The new commandment

*I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. At that time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining
(1 John 2:7-8)*

I am writing you no new commandment...

1. John has no new commandment to write to his readers
2. All that he has as one of the apostles of Jesus is the commandment given by the Lord Jesus Himself
3. The commandment John and the readers (who have already believed in Jesus) have is the old commandment
 - a. God's commandment of love (Deu.t 6:5)
 - b. Jesus' commandment of love (John 13:34)
4. The commandment of course is the word they have heard; the word in this context refers to
 - a. The gospel of the Lord Jesus
 - b. The commandment of the Lord Jesus to love one another as He has loved us
5. No wonder that John takes up the phrase "from the beginning" to anchor the giving of the commandment in time (historical time)
6. It is the old way God has ordained for us, which is
 - a. Precious ,
 - b. Permanent, and
 - c. Something we must search for (Jer.6:16)

At that time, it is a new commandment...

1. The newness of the commandment is not to be understood in terms of time (chronology) but in terms of added meaning the commandment conveys
2. The old commandment is indeed the new (Gk-kainen) one because
 - a. Jesus has lived it out throughout His life
 - b. Jesus has validated it by His own example

Which is true in him and in you...

1. The truth that God commands us to love Him above everything else is true in Jesus
 - a. Jesus loves God with all His entirety (Matt 22:37)
 - b. Jesus loves God, and thus never tested God (Matt 4:7)
2. The truth that Jesus Himself commands us to love one another is also true in you (us the believers)
 - a. We learn to love one another because the Spirit of Christ enables us to do so (Gal.5:22)
 - b. We learn to love one another as we obey Jesus

Because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining

1. Light and darkness are obviously different
2. Jesus is the light of the world (John 8:12); Jesus is the true light that enlightens us (John 1:4)
 - a. Receiving Jesus as Lord and Saviour, we slowly but surely begin to see what is right in God's sight (2 Cor.4:6)
 - b. Once we have welcome Jesus into our life, God enables us to change the way we are meant to be (2 Cor.5:17)
3. Indeed the true light is shining in

No cause for stumbling

Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling

(1 John 2:9-10)

In light no darkness. Anyone walking in the light has no cause for stumbling!

Whoever says he is in the light

1. This is the claim made
2. But the claim made must be measured up by the walk one takes up
3. Is a person what he is as he claims to be so?
4. Or does a person walk her talk?

And hates his brother is still in darkness

1. One who claims to be Christian and yet hates his brethren is still in darkness
2. This kind of being Christian is self-contradiction in term, to say the least
3. Hatred one smoulders against one's brother is that which courts God's punitive judgment (Amos 1:11)
4. One following Jesus is to love even his enemy, traditional or circumstantial

Whoever loves his brother abides in the light

1. Abiding in the light means that
 - a. We love our brethren
 - b. We 'care for' our brethren in a practical way
2. Love substantiates our relationship with God
3. Love embodies our walk in the light
4. Love among brethren is that which counts in God's sight
 - a. We are told to love
 - b. We are shown how to love
 - c. We are enabled to love
5. As we love brethren,
 - a. We know that we are not in darkness
 - b. We know that we are of the light
 - c. We know for sure that we are of God –the light

And in him there is no cause for stumbling

1. Loving God, we obey God
2. Loving Jesus, we follow Him
3. Loving Brethren, we serve them
4. For us who loves God and brethren, there is no stumbling block
 - a. As to how we follow Jesus
 - b. As to how we obey His commandments
 - c. As to how we treat our brethren
5. It is safe and right to follow such a disciple of Jesus who abides in the light!

Hatred is foreign

But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes
(1 John 2:11)

Hatred, permanent and perpetual, is not merely the absence of love but emphatically the presence of anti-love.

But whoever hates his brother...

1. The conjunction 'but' differentiates this verse from the former one, in that the former is about loving a brother, whereas this one about hating a brother
2. Anyone who claims to be a Christian and yet hates his brother
 - a. Is a false brother
 - b. Is not a true Christian
3. Such a person is in the darkness, thereby
 - a. Subjecting himself to the influence of spiritual principalities
 - b. Living under the spell of spiritual authorities
 - c. Suffering the deadness of the spiritual-intellectual-moral darkness
4. This one walks in the darkness
5. This 'walk' portrays a lifestyle; the person thus
 - a. Clings on to what is evil
 - b. Practices what is wrong
 - c. Continues in sinning

And does not know where he is going

1. This is an intellectual state of a sinning person
 - a. As to where he is actually going to
 - b. As to where what he is doing actually leads him to
 - c. As to where he will eventually end up
2. There are things we must know for sure; we must know
 - a. What we are doing at all
 - b. How we may end up as the result of what we choose to do
3. This is part of what it means to be perished as the wicked (Psalm 1:6a)
 - a. The wicked does not know how the path he chooses would end
 - b. God does not know the way of the wicked (Cf. Psalm 1:6b)

Because the darkness has blinded his eyes (2 Cor.4:4ff)

1. The word 'darkness' must be understood afresh
 - a. As spiritual deadness
 - b. As moral decay
 - c. As hatred toward brethren
2. This kind of darkness blinds the person
3. A person hating his brethren tends to be blind toward God and his neighbors

Shall we do all that we can to be the kind of person God wants us to be!
May we seek to walk as God does!

Writing

I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake. I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one
(1 John 2:12-13 a,b)

Writing

1. People seek to communicate through writing
2. John, one of the apostles of Jesus, did the same
 - a. He reminds his readers of who Jesus really is
 - b. He re-assures his readers of the truth handed down to them
 - c. He relates to his readers as close ones
3. Writing such a letter as this was and still is a powerful tool of communication

Little children

1. The wide readership of John includes children
2. John takes trouble to address those children
 - a. Specifically
 - b. Endearingly
3. He reminds them of the fact that their sins are forgiven
4. Indeed their sins are forgiven for the name's sake of the Lord Jesus
5. What does it mean by the phrase "for his name's sake"?
 - a. On account of what the name of Jesus stands for
 - b. Due to what Jesus actually accomplished on the Cross

- c. For the glory and honour due to Jesus
- 6. The name of Jesus would be at stake if God had not forgiven our sins
- 7. We whose sins are forgiven should seek to live for Jesus alone

Fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning

- 1. John also addresses 'fathers' who would definitely read his letter
- 2. He highlights the fact that they have known him who is from the beginning
- 3. This "him" who is from the beginning
 - a. Is Jesus the man of Nazareth
 - b. Is Jesus the Christ of God
- 4. The clause "who is from the beginning" refers to
 - a. The appearing of Jesus in history
 - b. The appropriating of Jesus as Lord and Saviour in one's own life
 - c. The appreciating of Jesus as the One from eternity in the past
- 5. One's acknowledgement of Jesus as THE Lord and Saviour is worth highlighting

Young men, because you have overcome the evil one

- 1. One of John's reader-groups is none other than young people
- 2. The young people have overcome the evil one
 - a. They have defeated Satan in Christ
 - b. They have also been delivered from the dominion of the evil one (Cf. Matt 6:9ff)
- 3. Young people should be strong in the grace of God to resist against the temptations of Satan

Writing

I write to you, children, because you know the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one
(1 John 2:13c-14)

I write to you, children...

1. Children are addressed well too
2. One of the reasons for their being included in John's audience has to do with the fact that they know the Father
 - a. God as the Father in heaven
 - b. God as the Father of the Lord Jesus
 - c. God as the Father of us all (Romans 8:15-16)
3. John seeks to urge the children to grow in their knowledge of God as the Father

I write to you, fathers...

1. Fathers stands for parents
2. They have known "him who is from the beginning"
3. This "him" refers to Jesus the Christ of God
 - a. They must maintain their knowledge of Jesus as the Christ
 - b. They must remain in Jesus the eternal life
4. They too must seek to live as people who know Christ Jesus

I write to you, young men...

1. This phrase “young men” includes young women
2. One obvious feature of the youngsters is strength
 - a. Mentally strong
 - b. Physically strong
3. This natural strength is a gift of God
4. But this gift of strength alone can do much and no more
5. The word of God must be added to this gift of strength
(Cf. Matt.4:4-11)
6. Only then, will they be able to overcome the evil one

CHALLENGES WE MUST EMBRACE

1. Let us seek to grow in our knowledge of Jesus as the Christ of God
2. Let us do all our parts to grow in our knowledge of God as the
Father
3. Let us also seek to abide by the Word of God so as to overcome all
kinds of temptation

Loving the Father

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world – the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions – is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

(1 John 2:15-17)

Do not love the world...

1. This is an imperative use of the verb 'love'
2. We are not to love the world
3. We are not to love the things in the world

If anyone loves the world...

1. This is the conditional use of if (Gk-'ean')
 - a. It raises doubts concerning the fact that born again Christians end up loving the world
 - b. It is most unlikely that genuine Christians will love the world
2. If that were the case,
 - a. The love of the Father will not remain in such people
 - b. God the Father will cease loving such people
3. The implication thus is that true Christians will not love the world

For all that is in world – the desires of the flesh...

1. The world is full of worldliness
 - a. The desires of the flesh
 - b. The desires of the eyes
 - c. The pride in possessions
2. All of these are contrary to who and what God the Father is
3. This is part of the reason why the love of God is not in ones who love the world

And the world is passing away...

1. Added to this is the impermanent and transitory nature of the world
 - a. It is passing away
 - b. It is passing away along with its desires
2. Contrarily, those of us who do the will of God abide forever
3. This is another reason why the love of God the Father is not in one who keeps on loving the world (and the things in the world)

CHALLENGES TO TAKE UP

1. Let us stop loving the world
2. Let us rather seek to grow in loving God the Father
3. Let us set our hearts and minds on things above

The Last Hour

Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore, we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

1 John 2:18-19

Children, it is the last hour...

1. John affectionately addresses his readers
2. John wisely warns them of the antichrists
3. John repetitively confirms that the last hour has arrived

As you have heard...

1. The sign of the last hour is but the appearance of antichrists
2. The coming of many antichrists
 - a. Has been told
 - b. Has been heard
 - c. Is now public
3. The logical conclusion therefore is that the last hour has come

They went out from us...

1. There were some who left the Church
 - a. They suffered the shipwreck of their faith
(1 Timothy 1:19-20)
 - b. They deliberately chose to sin against God
(Hebrews 10:26ff)
 - c. They actually left the Christian common fellowship
(1 John 1:3)
2. Some reasons why they left us
 - a. They were not of us
 - b. They were others, compared with us God's people
3. They left us to prove that they were not part of us
 - a. In God's election
 - b. In God's economy of Salvation

If they had been of us...

1. This 'if' (Gk-ei) describes that which is contrary to fact
2. The people who left us
 - a. are in reality not part of us
 - b. though they might have got well acquainted with us
3. If they were part of us, they would have definitely remained with us
4. They left ...because they have never been part of us since the beginning

Anointed by the Holy One

But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you will have knowledge. I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth

(1 John 2:20-21)

The Holy One

1. The term refers to the Holy Spirit
 - a. He was promised to be given to us (John 14-16)
 - b. The promise of the Holy One has been fulfilled through the Lord Jesus (Acts 2: 33)
2. He is the anointing (1 John 2:27)
 - a. We are anointed with the Holy Spirit
 - b. We are anointed by the Holy Spirit

And you will have knowledge...

1. Some relevant expressions of being “anointed by the Holy One” are
 - a. Being taught by the Spirit of God
 - b. Being marked out by the Holy Spirit
2. The Holy Spirit teaches us is
 - a. That which is of God (1 Cor.2)
 - b. That which is of Jesus Christ (John 14-16)
 - c. That which is of the truth (1 John 2:27)
3. The knowledge we shall surely have is
 - a. Of the deep things of God

- b. Of the Lord Jesus Christ
- c. Of all the truth we need to know

Not because you do not know the truth...

1. John is not teaching his readers what is true or what the truth is in this immediate context
2. John is merely affirming that what they know as truth from within their own conscience in accordance with who the Lord Jesus is
 - a. Is the truth taught by the Holy One
 - b. Is the truth revealed by the Holy Spirit
3. In such truth illuminated by the Spirit of God contains no lie at all

The anointing of the Spirit of God in the life of a person results in the person's being taught by the Spirit! Let us seek to be taught by the Spirit of God Himself. He alone is the Teacher we need. Let us emulate the example of the prophet Isaiah, ultimately, of the Lord Jesus (Isaiah 50:4ff).

Jesus as the Christ

*Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ?
This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.
No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses
the Son has the Father also
(1John 2:22-23)*

Who is the liar...

1. A liar is a false brother in this context
2. A liar thus is not a true Christian
3. Such a liar denies Jesus as the Christ

How is one accused of denying Jesus as the Christ?

1. This one must have heard that Jesus is the Christ
2. Nevertheless, he chooses to accept Jesus as the Christ of the living God
3. For this reason, this liar is not merely an unbeliever, but a false brother

This is antichrist...

1. An antichrist denies
 - a. The Father
 - b. The Son
2. What is being implied by such a denial of the Father and the Son?
 - a. A rejection of the doctrine of Incarnation
 - b. A refusal of the doctrine of Trinity

- c. A refutation of the offer of Salvation in Christ

No one who denies the Son has the Father

1. The doctrine of Trinity teaches us that God is three in one, and as such, only distinction, not division, among the three persons of the Godhead, is possible.
2. One denying the Son ends up rejecting the Father, and vice versa
3. Such a person will definitely reap the fruit of his own choice

Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also

1. A person believes with the heart will also have to confess with her mouth (Romans 10:10)
2. Confessing the Son of course
 - a. Is motivated from within
 - b. Is personal
 - c. Is public
3. Such a confessor will have God the Father as one's Father in heaven
 - a. He will be privileged to address God as Abba... (Rom.8:15ff)
 - b. He will be taught to call God our Father

Let us seek to grow in our knowledge of Jesus the Christ (Matt.16). Let us never lose sight of the place of the Lord Jesus in our Christian confession.

The Truth abides

*Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that he made to us – eternal life
(1 John 2:24-25)*

Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you

1. What the audience of John heard from the beginning
 - a. Is the gospel preached
 - b. Is the truth proclaimed
 - c. Is the sum of things about Jesus the Son of God
2. The truth of the gospel should not be
 - a. Compromised
 - b. Altered
 - c. Changed
3. The truth they embraced must remain the same
4. This is something which we all must seek to cultivate in our own life

If what you heard...then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father

1. This “if...then” approach
 - a. Is natural
 - b. Is critical
2. It is entirely up to us to abide in the truth
3. It is natural to reap what is sowed

- a. Staying faithful to the gospel is the same as abiding in the Son and the Father
- b. Choosing to be true to the Word is precisely how we must abide in the Lord of the Word

And this is the promise that he made to us – eternal life

1. The Lord Jesus gave us the promise of eternal life
 - a. We will be raised up even though we actually die (John 11:25-26)
 - b. The life we are given in Christ will be safe and secure forever (John 10:28-29)
2. The promise of eternal life too is contingent upon us
 - a. As to the question of whether we will be faithful to the end
 - b. As to how we seek to fulfil the Word given (Cf. Matt. 15:6-7)

Let us seek to stay true to the truth of the Gospel, regardless of its scandal of irrelevance. In doing so, we actually abide in Jesus the Son of God. In Christ we have no condemnation, but eternal life (Romans 8:1, 6:23).

The Anointing

*These things I have written to you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which you have received from Him abide in you, and you do not need that anyone to teach you; but the same anointing teaches you all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it teaches you, you shall abide in Him
(1 John 2:26-27)*

These things...

1. The phrase “these things” refers to false teachings
2. These false teachings are meant to seduce people
3. The readers of John must put every effort to ensure that they are seduced by false teachers or their teachings

But the anointing...

1. A sharp contrast between the anointing and the Pseudo-brethren must be stated
2. The anointing is a reference to the Holy Spirit
 - a. The Holy Spirit is the one anointing us
 - b. The Holy Spirit is the anointing each of us receives
3. The Holy Spirit as the anointing will
 - a. Abide in us
 - b. Teach us all things (John 14-16)

And is truth, and is no lie

1. The anointing is of the Lord Jesus
2. The anointing thus is the truth (Cf. John 14:6)
3. He has no relationship with lie, regardless of the colours of the lie

Even as it teaches you, you shall abide in him

1. Even as
 - a. According to
 - b. In accordance with
2. The Holy Spirit teaches us
 - a. In a system
 - b. In a pattern
 - c. In an order of
3. We are to walk as we are taught (See also, Col.2:6)
4. We are to remain true and faithful to the pattern set up

Let us cultivate the sound teaching of the Scriptures. This is a way to ensuring that we live in the order of the Spirit of God. May the Spirit teach us His ways!

Born of Him

*And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his appearing. If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does righteousness is born of him
(1 John 2:28-29)*

And now little children

1. This is an endearing approach
2. John lovingly address his readers
3. John being one whom Jesus loved knows how to love others well and deep

Abide in him

1. This is the idea of remaining in Jesus
2. A Christian is to remain faithful to the Lord Jesus to the very end

That when he shall appear...

1. The conjunction “that” is purpose clause
2. The purpose of abiding in Jesus is
 - a. Anchored on the hope of the return of the Lord Jesus
 - b. Aimed at meeting the Lord in confidence
3. Only those who are faithful to the Lord will have this confidence
 - a. The apostles will surely have confidence (the use of “we”)
 - b. The faithful ones will too have confidence

4. This confidence is the opposite of shame
 - a. Shame arises out of sins
 - b. Confidence is built up by one's faithful abiding in Jesus

Before him at his appearing

1. This appearing is a reference to the return of the Lord Jesus
2. This is what the Lord Jesus promises to us
3. This is that which must motivate us to cultivate a faithful life for the Lord

If you know that he is righteous...

1. The readers know for sure that Jesus is righteous
2. They thus must be able to conclude that ones who work out righteousness is born of Christ Jesus
3. Those born of God are like God in character

May we seek to abide in the Lord Jesus Christ. The only way to do so is to abide by the words of the Lord Jesus.

Chapter Three

The Manner of Love

*Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world does not know us because it did not know Him
(1 John 3:1)*

Behold

1. Attention must be paid
2. Focus must not be divided
3. Both heart and mind must be widely open to perceive

What manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us

1. The source of love is none other than the Father
 - a. The Father of the Lord Jesus
 - b. The Father of us all who are in Christ
2. The receipts of this love of God the Father
 - a. The Lord Jesus
 - b. All believers
3. How does this come about?
 - a. The Father has given this love to us
 - b. The Father has bestowed this love upon us through Jesus His beloved Son
4. The manner of love
 - a. On the Father's side:
 - i. By giving us His only begotten Son (John 3:16)
 - ii. By allowing His beloved Son (the Lamb of God) to die on behalf of us (Cf. Romans 5:8)

- b. On the beloved Son's side:
 - i. By giving up Himself for us (Mark 10:45)
 - ii. By dying the death of the curse (Galatians 3:13)

That we should be called the sons of God

1. The whole underlying purpose is that we become children of God
2. God the Father has given us the right to become His children in Christ (John 1;12)
3. God the Father has adopted us as His children in and through the Holy Spirit (Rom .8:15-17)

Therefore the world does not know us...

1. There is a world of distinction between the sons of God and others
2. The world representing the not-sons of God will not recognise us nor will they reconcile themselves to us
3. The obvious reason is that they do not know the Lord Jesus as they should

Seeing the Lord

*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does 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
(1 John 3:2)*

Beloved, now are we the sons of God

1. This “beloved” is indicative of how John regards his readers
2. “We” refers to both the author and the audience
3. They are the children of God in and through Jesus the Christ
 - a. This is the position granted to us all
 - b. There is yet a practical expression of living it out

And it does not yet appear what we shall be

1. We are not yet what we shall be
2. What we shall be is yet to be realised
3. What we are imperfectly here on earth is a sure indication that we are on the move to what we shall ultimately be

But we know that, when He shall appear

1. One thing we know for sure is that Jesus Christ will return one day
2. This is what we look forward
3. This is what we are certain of
4. This hope of holding the return of the Lord keeps us alive and alert

We shall be like Him

1. We will be completely transformed to the image of the Son
2. We shall surely be like Him
 - a. Like Him in character
 - b. Like Him in moral standing before God the Father

For we shall see Him as He is

1. There is a time we do not see Him as He is
 - a. In this present age
 - b. With this mortal body of ours
2. There will come a time when we will see Him as He is
 - a. In the future
 - b. When He returns to us
 - c. With the transformed body of ours
3. Seeing Him as He is means
 - a. Understanding Him in all confidence
 - b. Knowing Him in all intimacy

This hope in the return of the Lord

*And every man that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure. Whoever commits sin transgresses also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law
(1 John 3:3-4)*

And every man that has this hope in him purifies himself...

1. The hope being referred to here has everything to do with the return of the Lord Jesus
 - a. The Lord Jesus promises us His return
 - b. This promise now becomes our hope
2. Included in this hope are (1 John 3:2)
 - a. We shall be transformed
 - b. We shall be like Him
 - c. We shall see Him as He is
3. Who is entitled to having this hope?
 - a. Believers of Jesus (John 1:12)
 - b. Recipients of God's love (1John 3:1)
 - c. Adopted children of God (Romans 8:15ff)
 - d. True and authentic Christians
4. A person having this hope purifies himself
 - a. He cleanses himself from all unrighteousness
 - b. He keeps the law of love commanded
5. A criterion of purification
 - a. Just as the Lord Jesus is pure
 - b. Like the Lord Jesus Himself

Whoever commits sin transgresses also the law

1. This is a true and general statement
2. The law brings us the knowledge of sin (Romans 7:7)
3. All who commit sins, therefore, have now come to know (realise) that they have actually transgressed also the law
 - a. This is true of all the laws in general
 - b. This is true of the Decalogue in particular

For sin is the transgression of the law

1. This is the logic of the reasoning behind
2. This is also the reason why one must keep the new commandment of love
3. In other words, this is why we all must keep the command of love John 'the one whom Jesus loved' constantly seeks to implant in us

This hope for the return of the Lord Jesus must motivate us to do all we can on our parts to look like Him in every way possible at this present age!

Manifested to take away our sins

And you know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abides in him does not sin: whoever sins does not see Him, nor know Him
(1John 3:5-6)

And you know that he was manifested to take away our sins

1. That the Son of God became a human being is a concrete fact of knowledge, historical and theological
 - a. Christ was born of the Virgin Mary
 - b. Many were involved in the birth of the baby Christ (Matthew 1)
 - i. Angels
 - ii. Shepherds
 - iii. Wisemen
 - iv. Mary and Joseph
2. The purpose of the incarnation of Christ Jesus is to take away our sins
 - a. He came as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29)
 - b. He paid in full the whole wages of sin on the cross (John 19:30; Romans 6:23)

And in Him is no sin

1. The Lord Jesus came for the salvation of sinners
2. But He was not a sinner
 - a. He was not guilty of any sins (John 19)
 - b. He spoke no lie (1Peter 2:22)

3. He was the truth personified (John 14:6)

Whoever abides in Him does not sin...

1. The idea of abiding in Christ means
 - a. Remaining true to Him
 - b. Keeping all His commandments
2. Those who abide in Jesus are the ones
 - a. Abiding by the words of Jesus,
 - b. Avoiding sins (actual sins)
3. The principle thus is clear: the one who abides in Jesus will not live in sin

Whoever sins does not see Him or know Him

1. The question is 'what if someone keeps sinning as a way of life?'
2. Such a one does not know Jesus as he claims
3. Such a person does not understand Jesus as he should
4. Such a brother is not a true believer as he thinks of himself to be

Practise the doctrine of righteousness

Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil .

(1John 3:7-8)

Little children, let no one deceive you

1. Lovingly John addresses his readers
2. Lovingly John urges them that they must not be deceived by anyone
3. Deception by the way is a grave danger
4. We must take every preventive measure against any kind of deception

He who practices righteousness is righteous

1. Positionally believers are regarded as the righteous
2. Practically believers are to live out this gift of righteousness
 - a. We practise righteousness simply because we are declared righteous
 - b. We are actually righteous because we do what is right and righteous before God
3. We become actually righteous by doing what is righteous, just as the Lord Himself is righteous
 - a. Jesus Christ is righteous in every sense of the word
 - b. We too must be righteous practically since we are positionally righteous

He who sins is of the devil ...

1. Sin is the character of the devil
2. He has sinned from the beginning
 - a. Since the beginning of the existence of all
 - b. Since the beginning of our knowledge of him (the devil)
3. Anyone who keeps sinning is from the devil (John 8)
 - a. No repentance is ever pursued
 - b. Only rebellion against God is undertaken

For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested ...

1. The purpose of the incarnation of Christ is stated
 - a. To destroy the works of the devil
 - b. To defeat the devil himself
2. We Christians must identify ourselves with this purpose of the incarnation of Christ, the Son of God
 - a. By putting to death all of our actual sins
 - b. By practicing the doctrine of righteousness

A saint cannot sin

***Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother
(1John 3:9-10)***

Whosoever has been born of God does not sin...

1. He who was born of God means
 - a. One being born of the Spirit (John 3)
 - b. One being authorised as a child of God (John 1:12)
2. Such a person has welcomed the Lord Jesus into his life
3. More importantly, the seed of God remains in such true believers
4. The seed of God in this context may refer to
 - a. The Word implanted
 - b. The new nature imputed
5. For this reason, such saints cannot sin

And he cannot sin, because he has been born of God

1. The sentence 'he cannot sin' means
 - a. To sin is not his second nature
 - b. He is not accustomed to sinning as a way of life
2. The reason is because he has been born of God
 - a. With a new nature
 - b. With a new inclination toward God's will

In this the children of God and the children of the devil...

1. The sharp distinction between those of God and those of the devil is made
2. Those practicing righteousness is of God, whereas those denying righteousness is of the devil
3. Those loving their brethren is of God, whereas those hating their brethren is of the devil
4. In other words, the distinction zeros in on how we relate to one another as members of the family of God

Judah and Israel were warned of the judgement of God to be meted out on the basis of how they treated their fellow brethren:

Woe to you who put far off the day of doom, Who cause the seat of violence to come near...but are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph (Amos 6:3-6)

Let us seek to live distinctively from those non-believers. One way to do so is to stop sinning a way of life as well as starting loving our brethren in Christ, as Christ Himself loves us to the very end.

Love one another

*For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous
(1 John 3:11-12)*

For this is the message ...

1. A specific message is being pinpointed
2. What is this message?
 - a. A message they have heard from the beginning
 - b. A message they have been taught
 - c. A message they have been passed on to
3. This is the message John and the other apostles have proclaimed
4. This message must be heard and heeded well

That we should love one another

1. The particular message handed down from the apostles is none other than the message of love
2. We are to love one another
3. How should we love one another?
 - a. We should love one another as Christ loved us
 - b. We should love one another as God in Christ loved us

Not as Cain who was of the wicked one...

1. We must not love one another as Cain did
2. Cain ended up killing his brother Abel on account of their worship of the Lord (Genesis 4)
3. This pattern of Cain is that which we must not follow
4. The manner of love we must seek to cultivate is that of Christ Jesus
 - a. He loved us and lay down His life for us
 - b. He loved us and showed us how much He loved us by His death on the Cross (Romans 8)

And why did he murder...because his works were evil...

1. The conjunction “because” says more than enough
 - a. Not only Cain was wicked
 - b. But his works also were evil
2. Cain killed Abel because the former had always been the wicked one, and all his works were evil
3. The wicked (Cain) ended up doing what was evil
4. Whereas the righteous (Abel) remains righteous

Evidence of death-overcomers

*Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him
(1 John 3;13-15)*

Do not marvel, my brethren...

1. There will always be people who hate us simply because we are Christians
 - a. The family members
 - b. The relatives and friends
2. The world definitely will hate us because we follow the system of Christ, rather than its own system
3. Let us take heed to the word of John the Apostle
 - a. Let us not marvel
 - b. Let us not be taken aback

We know that we have passed from death to life...

1. One evidence that we have passed from death to life is
 - a. Our love for brethren
 - b. Our affection for the saints
2. Our knowledge that we have passed from death to life
 - a. Is anchored on our love for the brethren
 - b. Is thus concrete

He who does not love his brother abides in death

1. To not love the brethren is a sin
2. Hating the brethren is the evidence that the hater abides in death
 - a. He has no eternal life abiding in him
 - b. He has only death abiding in him

Whoever hates his brother is a murderer ...

1. The example of Cain
 - a. Hatred results in killing one another
 - b. Hatred leads to murder
2. No murderer has eternal life abiding in him
 - a. This is a fact to be reckoned with
 - b. This is that which we know for sure as in the case of Cain and Abel

Let us seek to love one another as we should. Let us stay assured that we are capable of loving one another as Christians who have passed from death to life. May our true status in Christ affect how we relate to one another in love!

Love begets love

*By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?
(1 John 3:16-17)*

By this we know love

1. There is a way to know what love is
2. This is how we know what love is

Because He laid down His life for us

1. Love is demonstrated in action
 - a. Through the action of the Lord Jesus
 - b. Through the laying down of His own life for us
2. The self-sacrifice of the Lord Jesus for our own sake
 - a. Has love as its cause
 - b. Is the concrete expression of love

And we ought to lay down our lives of the brethren

1. This is our responsibility to lay down our lives for the brethren
2. Why responsibility?
 - a. As followers of Christ Jesus who set the example
 - b. As a natural outcome of our love for the brethren

3. There may come a time when we will need to give up all our rights, including our right to life, for the sake of our brethren

But whosoever has this world's goods...and shuts up his heart from him

1. Someone is rich and has the opportunity to help his brother in need
2. And yet he has no sympathy for his brother in need
3. He therefore ends up not helping his needy brother
4. This scenario is not foreign to us

How does the love of God abide in him?

1. That rich man with a cold-heart does not have love for the brethren
2. Love for God and love for one's brethren are the two sides of the same coin (Luke 23?)
3. Impossible is to have only love for God or vice versa
4. To claim one without the other is an empty truth
5. The simplest conclusion: the love of God does not reside in that person

A clear way of letting the love of God reside within us is to love our brethren in action!

Truthfulness

*My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him
(1 John 3:18-19)*

My little children, let us not love in word...

1. There are people who love their brethren in word only
 - a. They are rich enough to help the brethren
 - b. They have the opportunity to help the brethren
 - c. But they shut up their hearts from the brethren
2. These people do not have the love of God abiding in themselves
3. John the Apostle encourages his readers, saying, “let us not love in word...”
 - a. Let us not love as the cold-hearted people do
 - b. Let us not love one another in word only
4. How should we love then?
 - a. Let us love in deed and in truth
 - b. Let us love one another in actions that are consistent with what we claim to be

And by this we know that we are of the truth

1. The phrase “by this” indicates
 - a. A pattern of knowing
 - b. A way of ascertaining
2. Loving one another in actions
 - a. Is how we prove that we are of the truth
 - b. Is how we come to know that we are of the truth

- c. Is how we ascertain that we are Christians truthfully
3. This is the way to love as well as making sure that we have the love of God abiding in us

And shall assure our hearts before Him

1. If we are not careful, we could end up shutting up our hearts from the brethren in need
2. But if we are truthful, we would be able to love the brethren as we are meant
3. In loving them in deed and in truth, we assure our hearts before God
 - a. We are not guilty
 - b. We are not worried
 - c. But we are peaceful, and restful
4. In other words, as we love the brethren truthfully, our hearts will not condemn us before God.

This is our act of faith that will always assure us of our truthfulness before God. This is how we cultivate a good and clean conscience!

Asking and receiving

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

Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us...

1. The word “beloved” is used for a number of things
 - a. To show affection toward the readers
 - b. To show the relationship between John and his readers
2. Our “heart” that can condemn us
 - a. Is our inner testimony
 - b. Is our good conscience
3. Once our heart does not hold us guilty before God,
 - a. We are safe and secure internally
 - b. We are confident that we are on God’s side or God is on our side
4. This is ‘having confidences toward God’

And whatever we ask we receive from Him...

1. There are things to make an inquiry of as we pray to God
2. There are also things we ask for as we pray to God
 - a. We may ask for wisdom (James 1)
 - b. We may ask for His paths (Ps.25)
 - c. We may ask for strength needed (Isaiah 48?)
3. We will receive them as we ask of God

Because we keep His commandments

1. The simple reason is that we keep His commandments
2. Keeping the commandments will help us
 - a. What to ask
 - b. How to ask

(Because) we do those things that are pleasing in His sight

1. The obvious reason is that we do those things that are pleasing in His sight
2. Seeking the things that are pleasing in God's sight is one thing
3. Doing those things that are pleasant to God is entirely another thing
4. How can a person do such things that are pleasing in God's sight?
 - a. Only by keeping the written commandments of God
 - b. Only by being led by the Spirit of God to fulfil the teaching of the Scriptures

First of all, let us seek to be doers of the Word! Let us also attempt to do things that are pleasing to the Lord as a way of fulfilling the Word given.

Mutual abiding

*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 commandments. Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us
(1 John 3:23-24)*

And this is His commandment...

1. The commandment being referred to is a specific one
2. This specific commandment is two-fold:
 - a. To believe on the name of Jesus the Son of God
 - b. To love one another

Believing on the name of Jesus

1. Jesus as the Christ (Anointed One)
2. Jesus as the Son of God

Love for one another

1. To love one another as recipients of God's love
2. To love one another as Christ Jesus has loved us

Belief in Jesus and love for one another

1. This is the commandment we have been given

2. This is the commandment we must seek to abide by
3. This in fact is the work of God we all must do (John 6?)

Now he who keeps His commandments abides ...

1. This is a promise and condition given
2. Only by keeping His commandments, there will come a mutual abiding between us and Jesus the Christ

And by this we know...by the Spirit whom He has given us

1. This mutual abiding is made possible by the person of the Spirit
 - a. Jesus abides in us by the Spirit of God
 - b. Jesus' abiding in us is by the person of the Spirit
2. This 'Spirit' of God is given to those of us who obey God in full compliance (Acts 5:32?) one way to ensure that the Spirit of God abides in us
 - a. Is by keeping the commandments given
 - b. Is by letting the Spirit take control of our life
(Cf. Eph. 5:18?)
3. Our keeping of the commandments of God also ascertain that we are truly indwelt by the Spirit of God, not any other spirits in the world

Chapter Four

Marking what one believes

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that a Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world
(1 John 4:1-3)

Beloved, do not believe every spirit...

1. The readers of John are not obliged to believe
 - a. Because someone says he is a prophet
 - b. Because someone claims he has the Spirit of God
2. The audience of John must test the spirits
 - a. Whether what they teach are consistent with the teaching of the Scriptures
 - b. Whether they are born of God
 - i. Do they love the Lord
 - ii. Do they love the brethren
 - iii. Do they seek to fulfil the Scriptures

Because many false prophets have gone out into the world

1. There are many prophets in the world
2. They must have gone out of the Church into the world

By this you know the Spirit of God...

1. This is a definite way to know whether they are of the Spirit of God
2. One who confesses the incarnation of Christ Jesus is from the Spirit of God
3. But anyone who does not confess the incarnation of the Christ Jesus is not of the Spirit of God

And this is the spirit of AntiChrist...

1. A person who does not confess the incarnation of Christ Jesus
 - a. Is the manifestation of the spirit of AntiChrist
 - b. Is carried away by the spirit of AntiChrist
2. That AntiChrist would one day would come was taught before
3. That AntiChrist is ow already in the world is a present reality
4. What they have been taught and warned is now the reality

It is only by the Spirit of God that one confesses that Jesus is the Christ (See also, 2 Cor. 12:3). A rejection of the incarnation of Christ Jesus is none other than a refusal of the love of God for us!

A world of difference

*You are of God, little children, and have overcome them
because he who is in you is greater than he who is
in the world. They are of the world. Therefore, they speak
as of the world, and the world hears them
(1 John 4:4-5)*

You are of God, little children...

1. This is a statement of truth and encouragement
2. John seeks to encourage his beloved audience
 - a. To walk in courage
 - b. To walk in confidence

And have overcome them

1. Whom do the readers of John overcome?
 - a. The false prophets (1 John 4:1)
 - b. The spirits that are not of God (1 John 4:1-2)
 - c. People who are carried away by the spirit of AntiChrist (1 John 4:3)
2. How do they overcome them?
 - a. They must have tested them
 - b. They must also have rejected them and their doctrines
 - c. They must surely have confessed that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (1 John 4:2-3)

Because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world

1. The Spirit of God is in believers, whereas the spirit of AntiChrist is in the world
2. How should we understand the word “greater” in this context?
3. The word “greater” may mean
 - a. More powerful
 - b. More awesome

They are of the world

1. They belong to the world
2. They are part of the world

They speak as of the world

1. They speak about the world
2. They speak according to the world and its system
3. They speak as they are from the world

And the world hears them

1. The world understands them and rally behind them
2. The world takes sides with them

Whose spirit are you of?

*We are of God. He who knows God hears us: he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error
(1 John 4:6)*

We are of God

1. This is a statement, faithful and proven
2. It has been proven that
 - a. We are God's children because we love one another (1 John 3)
 - b. We are of God because we keep His commandments (1 John 3)
 - c. We belong to God because we have the Spirit of God residing in us
3. This thus is a faithful statement

He who knows God hears us

1. The world does not hear us
 - a. Because we are not of the world
 - b. Because the world is contrary to God
2. Only those who know God hear us
 - a. They know God by their keeping of the law of love
 - b. They know God by their having of the eternal life abiding in them (1 John 3:15)
 - c. They know God by their having the Spirit of God indwelling in them (1John 4:4)

3. 'Hearing us' means
 - a. They understand and appreciate Apostles and their teachings
 - b. They seek to follow them

He who is not of God does not hear us

1. A clear differentiation between one who is of God and the other who is not of God is in how each one of us responds to the Apostolic teaching
2. A person who does not belong to God will
 - a. Not understand the message
 - b. Not receive the message (John 8:47)

By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error

1. This is how we distinguish the spirit of truth from that of error
2. Those who are of the spirit of truth will yield to the truth
3. Those who are of the spirit of error will end up choosing that which is of lie

Let us be challenged to live according to the spirit of truth. This will mean that we live by the teaching of the Apostles, of the prophets, and above all, the Lord Jesus Christ. May our lives stand as the proof that we are of God!

Love embodies God

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God: and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God. For God is love
(1 John 4:7-8)*

Beloved, let us love one another

1. There is one thing we all must seek to do
2. Loving one another is that which we must cultivate in life
3. John urges his beloved readers to love one another
 - a. Not only in word
 - b. But also in deed

For love is of God

1. Love has God as its ontological ground
2. It is God who loves us
3. It is God who bestows upon us this love (1 John 3:1)
4. It is God who makes us capable of loving others

And everyone who loves is born of God

1. Humanity in its own (fallen) nature cannot love others
2. A person who loves others is born of God
 - a. He is regenerated
 - b. He is recreated
3. Such a person is initiated into the nature of God, thereby growing in the image (character) of God

And knows God

1. This person who loves the brethren knows God
2. As we love others, we too will grow in our knowledge of God

How who does not love does not know God

1. This is simply the obvious logical conclusion
2. What matters is our claim that we know God, but our love that we share with the brethren

For God is love

1. Mistaken is the view that love is God
2. As the Scriptures say, that “God is love” must stand
3. ‘God is love’ means
 - a. God’s relationship toward us is embodied in love
 - b. Our relationship with God is expressed in love
 - c. Our relationship with the brethren too must be in love

Love well given out embodies God in us!

Living through Jesus Christ

*In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins
(1 John 4:9-10)*

In this the love of God was manifested toward us

1. The love of God is neither passive nor forever latent
2. The love of God is made clear and obvious
 - a. When God sent His Son into the world (John 3:16)
 - b. By sending His only begotten Son into the world
3. This love of God is really for us, in that God makes it possible for us to live through His Son Jesus Christ

That we might live through Him

1. This is the definite purpose for the coming of the Lord Jesus into the world
2. He has come so as to make us alive and live as an olive branch stemming from an olive tree (John 15:1-5)
3. Living through Jesus would also mean
 - a. That we live following His teaching
 - b. That we live imitating His example
 - c. That we live representing Him

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us

1. Love is clearly found in the fact that God loves us
 - a. He loved us while we were not unlovable
 - b. He loved us first (before we did not love Him)
 - c. He loves us concretely in the person of Jesus Christ
 - d. He loves us to the very end
2. Love is not defined by the fact that we loved God
 - a. Human love for God in its perfect state is tainted with sin here on earth
 - b. Our love for God stands needing being sanctified

And sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins

1. God seeks to atone for our sins
2. He did that through the Lord Jesus His Son
3. Jesus was sent to be the sacrifice of atonement
4. In Him are all our sins atoned in full

God's love for us in Christ makes it possible for us to live through Christ Jesus! Living through is not the same as living alone, to state the obvious. God's love for us in His Son makes it possible for us to live through Jesus His Son!

God's love must grow

*Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, Because He has given us of His Spirit
(1 John 4:11-13)*

Beloved, if God so loved us...

1. That God so loved us is an established fact (John 3:16)
2. That we are God's beloved in Christ is a fact to be reckoned with (Romans 5:8)
3. Since God loves us the unloving ones, we too must respond in love
 - a. Toward God and His Word
 - b. Toward one another as His children
4. This is expected of us in every sense of the word

No one has seen God...

1. History tells us that one has actually seen God
2. Scriptures teaches that God is invisible
3. That, however, does not make God unreal
4. The very fact that we love one another as God in Christ loved us
 - a. Is the proof that God is real
 - b. Is the evidence that God indeed abides in us
5. This is how God's love poured out to us grows mature ("has been perfected in us")

By this we know that we abide in Him...

1. Loving one another
 - a. Is how we know for sure that we abide in God
 - b. Is precisely how we end up abiding in God
2. In loving one another, we also know
 - a. That God abides in us
 - b. That His love is mature in us
3. Such a mutual abiding between God and us is not something conceptual alone; it is really something concrete

Because He has given us of His Spirit

1. The Spirit of God is there in us to give us life and strength (Rom.8:11)
2. To love one another is a possibility with the Spirit of God
3. To abide in God as well as having God abide in us is not an impossibility with the Spirit of God

It is critical that we seek to grow in our relationship with God. Practising love toward others is how we can grow. This too is how God's love in us will grow mature.

God's abiding in us

*And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Saviour of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God
(1 John 4:14-15)*

And we have seen

1. "We" refers to John and other apostles
2. They actually saw and touched the Lord Jesus (1 John 1)
3. More importantly, they understood that Jesus was the God walking on earth

And testify that the Father has sent the Son...

1. This is the testimony that John, together with other apostles, bears
2. The testimony is:
 - a. Jesus is the Son of God
 - b. Jesus is the Savior of the world
3. This by the way is part of the Apostolic teaching

Whoever confesses

1. Confession, oral or non-oral, is that which counts
2. Confession is a privilege offered to anyone, regardless of any social standing one may have

That Jesus is the Son of God...

1. Confession is not without content(s)
2. The content herein is the Lord Jesus
 - a. He is the Son of God
 - b. He is the Saviour of the world
3. One will truly confess that Jesus is none other than God in a human form

God abides in him and he in God

1. How does one let God abide in him?
2. A person lets God abide in her when she confesses that Jesus is just God as God the Father is God
3. God's abiding in us will guarantee our abiding in Him

Only by the help of the Spirit of God, can we rightly confess that Jesus is the Christ of God (2 Cor.12:3). Then only, will we be able to have God's abiding in us.

The love that God has for us

*And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world
(1 John 4:16-17)*

And we have known and believed that the love that God has for us

1. God has demonstrated His love toward us in and through Christ (Romans 5:8)
 - a. He did not spare His own Son (Romans 8:32)
 - b. He delivered Him up for us all (Romans 8:32)
2. Christ has shown to us that He loves us as He gave Himself for our sins (Galatians 1:4)
 - a. He died for us (Romans 8:34)
 - b. He is also risen (Romans 8:34)
 - c. He makes intercession for us in heaven (Romans 8:34)
3. Knowing and believing that God loves us is only logical
 - a. This is something we apprehend doctrinally
 - b. This is something we appreciate personally

God is love ...

1. That God is love is not so much the premise as the conclusion
2. God after all is love
 - a. We see God loving us
 - b. We experience God loving us
 - c. We thus conclude that God is love

3. Abiding in love as for us is
 - a. The same as abiding in God
 - b. The same as having God abide in us
 - c. The proof that there is a mutual abiding between God and us

Love has been perfected among us...

1. Love is meant to grow
2. Once our love for God and brethren has become mature (perfected), we shall have no fear
 - a. Of being rejected
 - b. Of being persecuted
 - c. Of being tried on the Judgement Day
3. We shall be confident and bold

Because as He is, so are we in the world

1. We are like Christ
2. We bear God's image (Character)
3. How we live here on earth matters eternally

No fear in love

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us

(1 John 4: 18-19)

There is no fear in love

1. This is a re-statement of verse 17
2. This is a reinforcement of verse 17
3. This statement thus must be of great importance
4. Love and fear (the kind of fear we have toward the day of judgment) are mutually exclusive

But perfect love casts out fear

1. There are times when love is immature
2. There are times when love and fear stay together
3. But mature love will drive away fear
4. Both perfect love and fear are diametrically opposite

Because fear involves torment

1. There is a right kind of fear the Lord requires from us (Duet.10:12)
2. There is a wrong kind of fear we must reject outright
3. A kind of fear that involves torment
 - a. Is wrong
 - b. Is to be rejected

c. Is contrary to what mature love stands for

But he who fears has not been made perfect in love

1. He who still fears to face the day of judgment is not yet mature in love
2. Let us not fear but rather love

We love Him because He first loved us

1. We love Him, which is something we confess
2. He first loved us, which is something we experienced
3. God's love for us causes us to love Him
4. This is purely grace, yes, the grace of God working in us

Let us remain grateful to God for His love for us!

The basis of loving our brethren

If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him that he who loves God must love his brother also.

(1 John 4:20-21)

If someone says...

1. What is said must be proven in action
2. If someone says that he loves God and hates his brother,
 - a. He then is a liar
 - b. He lies that he loves God
3. Our love for God is concretized in our love for our brethren
4. Anything less than that is foreign to Christian faith

For he does not love his brother whom he has seen...

1. "For" is indicative of the logical reasoning behind
He who does not love his brother whom he sees cannot love
God whom he does not See.
2. This affirms that how we treat one another as God's children has
our love for God as its theological basis

This commandment we have from Him...

1. "Him" refers to the Lord Jesus
2. He gave us this commandment that he who loves God must love his brother too. (Luke 10:25-37 – the story of a good Samaritan).
 - a. He who loves God must love his neighbour.
 - b. A good Samaritan is neighbourly to the traveller.

Challenges Considered

1. Let us express our love for God horizontally.
2. Our love for God must be neighbour-oriented.
3. Let us not love one another as children of God.
 - a. Not because we are blood related.
 - b. But because we truly love God.

Chapter Five

A Cluster of Faith, Love and Obedience

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments

(1 John 5:1-2)

Whoever believes that ...

1. Faith/belief matters more ways than one
2. One of the criteria as to who would be given life eternal is this thing called “belief” (John 3:16).

Jesus is the Christ is born of God

1. How should one believe Jesus?
2. We must believe Jesus as the Christ of God (Matt.16:16)
 - a. As the Messiah of God
 - b. As the Saviour of the world
3. One who believes Jesus as such is born of God
 - a. Born from above (John 3:3ff)
 - b. Born of the Spirit

And everyone who loves Him who begot also loves...

1. “Everyone who loves Him who begot} refers to
 - a. Anyone who loves God who begot
 - b. Everyone who loves God

2. This one, who loves God who begot also loves him
 - a. Who is begotten of Him/God (a believer)
 - b. Who is born of God

By this we know...

1. "By this" speaks of a concrete way of knowing
2. There is a concrete way of knowing whether we love the children of God
 - a. To love God is expressed in keeping His commandments (John 15:10).
 - b. Obeying God (and His Word) sees us loving our brethren

Where there is faith in Christ Jesus, there is also love for God and for brethren

Where there is obedience to God and His Word, our love for God lies underneath as well

Let us take heed to this cluster of faith, love and obedience!

The victory over the world through faith

*For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.
And His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is
born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has
overcome the world – our faith.*

(1 John 5:3-4)

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments

1. The love of God
 - a. Comes as we keep His commandments
 - b. Is expressed in our keeping of His commandments
2. Only those who abide by His commandments love God and vice versa

And His commandments are not burdensome

1. For everybody,
The yoke of the Lord Jesus is easy and the burden light(Matt.11:30)
2. For those of us who love the Lord, The commandments of the
Lord Jesus are not burdensome
3. Our love for the Lord will compel us to obey Him by all means.

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world

1. The Lord Jesus has overcome the world (John 16:33)
2. Those of us who are born of God will also overcome the world
 - a. On account of what Christ has done

- b. In and through Christ Jesus
- 3. Those of us who are born of God (5:1-2)
 - a. Believe in Jesus as the Christ of God
 - b. Love God and their brethren
 - c. Obey God and His commandments

And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith

- 1. We will gain victory over the world through faith
- 2. Our faith then will be victorious
- 3. Those of us who hold onto the faith till the very end will be overcomers in every sense of the word

Let us hold onto faith in God and His Word, as we keep following Christ with affection!

Taking heed to the Spirit who testifies of Jesus

*Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that
Jesus is the Son of God? This is He who came by water and
blood – Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood.
And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth*

(1 John 5:5-6)

Who is he who overcomes the world...

1. This is the question to reinforce the point made
2. The answer is straightforward: he who believes Jesus as the Son of God overcomes the world
 - a. Knowledge of Jesus as the Son of God is crucial
 - b. Faith in the Lord Jesus as the Son of God is vital
3. True knowledge is essential to right faith

This is He who came by water and blood...

1. “He” refers to the Lord Jesus, to state the obvious
2. John, by the phrase “by water,” refers to the baptism of Jesus by John the baptizer
 - a. John the baptizer declared that Jesus was the lamb of God (John 1:29, 36)
 - b. John, together with Andrew came to believe that Jesus was the Messiah (John 1:37ff)
3. John, by the phrase “and blood” refers to the death of the Lord Jesus on the cross

4. He was one of the eye-witnesses of the death of Jesus (John 19:26-27)
5. The point is that Jesus came as the Messiah as witnessed by
 - a. The baptism of Jesus by John the baptizer
 - b. His own works, including His death on the cross
 - c. God the Father
 - d. The Scriptures (John 5:31-39)

And it is the Spirit who bears witness

1. The central role- player in bearing witness to the Lord Jesus is none other than the Holy Spirit
2. He is the Spirit of truth (Cf. John 14-16)
 - a. His testimony is true and truthful
 - b. The Lord Jesus of whom He (the Spirit) testifies is the truth
3. Let us take heed to the voice of the Spirit who bears witness as to the Lord Jesus
 - a. As we read the Scriptures
 - b. As we mediate the works of the Lord Jesus Christ
 - c. As we ponder the witness of God the Father
 - d. As we study the testimonies of the servants of God like John the baptizer

The testimony of the three witnesses

For there are three that bear witness in heaven: Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.

(1 John 5:7-8)

For there are three that bear witness in heaven...

1. Jesus Himself spoke of the three witnesses
 - a. God His Father (John 5:37)
 - b. The Word/Scripture (John 5:39, Cf. Psalm 119:89)
 - c. The Holy Spirit (John 15:26-27)
2. These three are one
 - a. They do not contradict one another
 - b. They are in absolute agreement as to who Jesus is

And there are three that bear witness on earth...

1. There are three witnesses on earth as to who Jesus is
 - a. The Spirit
 - b. The water
 - c. The blood
2. The witness of the Spirit
 - a. When He was baptized by John the baptizer (Matt.3:13-17)
 - b. When He was led by the Spirit to the wilderness (Matt.4:1-11)

3. The witness of the water
This refers to the water baptism of Jesus by John the baptizer
4. The witness of the blood
This refers to the death of the Lord Jesus on the cross
(Cf. Luke 23:47, Mark 15:39)
5. These three agree as one in testifying of Jesus as the Messiah of God

The significance of three witnesses (Deut.17:6-7)

1. A testimony of one witness, let alone hearsay, does not establish a case
2. There have to be at least two witnesses to establish a truthful testimony
3. That Jesus is the Son of God and as such, the Messiah is well established
 - a. By the three witnesses in heaven
 - b. And the three witnesses on earth

Let us confidently confess that Jesus is the Son of God in every sense of the word.

May we ever seek to grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus as witnessed by the witnesses in heaven and on earth

The testimony of God

If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son

(1 John 5:9-10)

If we receive the witness of men....

1. The witness of two men or so establishes the truth of a matter (Deut.17:6ff)
2. The witness of God in establishing who the Lord Jesus must carry a much greater weight
 - a. We can be so certain that the witness of God is true
 - b. We thus must believe that Jesus is the Son of God

For this is the witness of God...

1. The content of the witness of God regarding the Lord Jesus
 - a. That Jesus is His beloved in whom He is so pleased (Matt.3:17)
 - b. That Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29)
2. God testified of Jesus by
 - a. Miracles
 - b. Wonders
 - c. Signs (Acts 2:22)

He who believes in the Son of God...

1. A true believer of Jesus has the witness in himself
 - a. An inner testimony
 - b. The Spirit of God bears witness with the spirit of the believer (Rom. 8:15-16)
2. There is another one who does not believe
 - a. God and His testimony about Jesus
 - b. Jesus as the Son of God in consequence
 - c. This one has made God a liar
 - i. He may not be aware of this blasphemy
 - ii. But he has effectively rejected God's testimony about Jesus by disbelieving Jesus as attested to by God Himself

Let us bring ourselves to believe Jesus as

1. God's beloved Son (Matt.3:17)
2. The Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36)
3. The Lamb of God (John 1:29)

The life is in the Son

And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

(1 John 5:11-13)

And this is the testimony: that God...

1. That God has given us eternal life is the testimony
2. How has God effectively given us this eternal life?
 - a. God has given His Son life (John 5)
 - b. The Son then has full authority to give life to anyone He wills
 - c. Only those of us who have the Son have this life that is in Christ Jesus
3. Blessed are those of us who have the Son!

He who does not have the Son of God does not have life

1. One who does not have Son of God has no eternal life
2. The Son of God
 - a. Not only has life in Himself and full authority to give life to others
 - b. But also is life in every sense of the word (1 John 1:1-2, John 14:6)

These things I have written to you who believe ...

1. John has written this epistle to his readers who believe
2. They believe
 - a. Jesus as the Son of God
 - b. Jesus as the Christ of God
3. They commenced their faith journey obviously

That you may know....

1. The purpose of this epistle is to help the readers know that
 - a. They have eternal life by believing in the Son of God
 - b. They may thus continue to believe in the name of the Son of God
2. To commence one's journey of faith is as necessary as continuing it till the very end

Challenges

1. Only in and through Christ Jesus God has given us eternal life
2. Let us waste no time to believe in Jesus
3. Let us do everything we can to keep believing in Jesus

God always hears us

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

(1 John 5:14-15)

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him

1. “Him” refers to the Lord Jesus
2. The word “confidence” carries within itself the idea of
 - a. Plain assurance
 - b. Open boldness
3. We have a simple and plain confidence in the Lord Jesus

That if we ask anything according to His will...

1. The confidence we have in Christ Jesus can be spelled out as below:
 - a. When we ask anything according to His will, He will hear us
 - b. Everything we ask in light of His will surely be granted to us
2. We are reminded of the following texts:
 - a. “If you ask anything in My name, I will do it” (John 14:14)
 - b. “Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (Romans 8:27)

3. May we seek to learn to pray as guided by the Spirit of God!

And if we know that He hears us,

1. God always hears us as His children (Psalm 34:15-17)
2. God will also grant us what we ask, when we ask according to His will
 - a. This is something we must be assured of
 - b. This is definitely something we know for us
3. May we thus learn to pray better through the Spirit of God!

Whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him

1. Whatever we ask
 - a. “Whatever” means anything
 - b. But this ‘whatever’ is defined and confined
 - i. By what God desires for us
 - ii. By what the Spirit prays for us
2. This ‘whatever’ we ask will surely be given!
3. Let us build this confidence in our Lord and His Word!

Discernment regarding sin

If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death.

(1 John 5:16-17)

Sin

1. All unrighteousness is sin
 - a. Anything unrighteous before God is sin
 - b. Anything coming short of God's standard is sin
2. There is sin leading to death
3. There is sin not leading to death

If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death...

1. Anyone who sees his brother sinning a sin that does not lead to death shall pray for him
2. God will surely give him (the sinning brother) life

There is sin leading to death...

1. We should not even pray for a brother committing a sin that leads to death
2. Regardless of whether we pray or not, this person sinning a sin that leads to death will definitely die

- a. God will end his physical life
 - b. And he (the brother who sins a sin that leads to death) will die as part of God's judgment
3. Examples of this kind abound
- a. The two sons of Aaron (Leviticus 10)
 - b. The two sons of Eli (1 Samuel 2-4)
 - c. Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5)

Challenges Considered

1. What is this sin that leads to death?
 - a. It can be any sin
 - b. It is a sin of unbelief
 - c. It is a sin of unrepentance
2. Let us pray for one another as we struggle with sins
3. Let us confess all our sins and turn to God

Sinching is the way of the world

We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.

(1 John 5:18-19)

We know that whoever is born of God does not sin

1. This is the second time John mentions this truth (1 John 3:9)
2. This truth, thus, is important to note
3. The truth to note here is that those of us who are born of God
 - a. Are no longer subject to sin and its power
 - b. Are free to choose what is righteous over what is sin
 - c. Are enabled to overcome sin (Romans 12:21)
4. This is how God enables us to overcome sin in every sense of the word
5. We, therefore, do not HAVE TO sin as a way of life

But he who has been born of God keeps himself...

1. God has done His part in enabling us to overcome sin
2. 'Keeping ourselves' is the part we must do
 - a. We must keep ourselves free from the corruptions of sin
 - b. We must guard our hearts against the influences of sin
3. As a result, the wicked one (Satan) will not touch us
 - a. The Devil cannot harm us
 - b. We are invincible (more than conquerors), so to speak

We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies ...

1. We are of God
 - a. We are God's children (1:3, 3:10)
 - b. We have fellowship with God (1:6)
 - c. We have the anointing of the Spirit (2:20,27 Cf. Isaiah 11:1-2)
 - d. We relate to Jesus as our Advocate (2:1-2)
 - e. We are loved by God (3:1)
2. The world lies under the sway of the wicked one (Cf. Eph.2:1-2)
 - a. The coming of the Antichrist (2:18)
 - b. The presence of false prophets (4:1-3)
 - c. Sinning, after all is said and done, is the way of the world
3. Let us stay assured of this truth that
 - a. We are God's
 - b. God is ours
 - c. Satan influences the world and he influences people through the world

Staying true to the true God alone!

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

(1 John 5:20-21)

And we know that the Son of God has come ...

1. The Son of God has come
 - a. The “Son of God” refers to Jesus Christ
 - b. He has come to us and dwelt among us (John 1:14)
2. The Son of God has given us an understanding as
 - a. He declares to us the Father (John 1:18)
 - b. He opens the Scriptures to us (Luke 24:32)
 - c. He sends the Spirit to us (John 14-16)

That we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true...

1. The end-goal is that
 - a. That we may know God
 - b. That we may know that God is true
 - c. That we may know that we are in Him as well as in Jesus Christ His Son
2. This knowledge of God and Jesus can only be acquired over the years

- a. As the Spirit teaches us
- b. As we follow Him faithfully, like John the writer himself

This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols...

1. This is the true God
 - a. As we know that God is true,
 - b. So we acknowledge that He is the true God
2. This is through the Lord Jesus that we know the true God (Luke 10:21 ff)
3. This is the eternal life
 - a. It refers to the Lord Jesus (1:1 ff)
 - b. It is in and through the Lord Jesus we have life, eternal and abundant (John 1:12, 10:10)
4. Little children of John are his readers
 - a. They are addressed as little children
 - b. This is how John addresses his readers with affection
5. They must be told to keep themselves from idols
 - a. Some of the reason why they must keep themselves from idols: -
 - i. They belong to God as His children
 - ii. They have the Lord Jesus as our Advocate and Propitiation
 - iii. They stand forgiven and washed
 - iv. They cannot be harmed by the wicked One
 - v. They have life, eternal and abundant
 - b. They all must determine to stay true to the true God alone!
Amen!

The Second Espistle of John

Love and truth

The Elder, To the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all those who have known the truth, because of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever:

(2 John 1-2)

The Elder

1. John uses this title to refer to himself
2. The same is true also of Peter (1Peter 5:1)
3. The title “Elder” with reference to John speaks of
 - a. Honor
 - b. Authority
 - c. The advanced age

To the elect lady and her children

1. The phrase “elect lady” of course is
 - a. Not a name of a person
 - b. But a cryptic term used to describe the lady in question
2. The elect lady must then be a notable lady known to all in the society
3. John writes this personal letter to a member of the Church known as the elect lady and her children

Whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all those who have known the truth

1. The elect lady in the church
 - a. Is known to many,
 - b. And above all, is loved by John and others who have known the truth
2. Love, in a theological analysis, is subject to the truth
3. John and all those who have known the truth exemplify this truth

Because of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever

1. Love, John and others who have known the truth, have for the elect lady is
 - a. Not only subject to the truth (“whom I love in truth”)
 - b. But also motivated by the truth (“because of the truth”)
2. This truth John speaks of here is
 - a. That which abides in believers
 - b. That which will be with believers forever
3. This truth therefore is
 - a. The truth of the Word of God (1 Peter 1:23-24)
 - b. Jesus Christ – the truth of God Himself (John 14:6)

Walking in truth

Grace, mercy, and peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. I rejoiced greatly that I have found some of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father.

(2 John 3-4)

Grace, mercy, and peace

1. Apostles usually sent out greetings
 - a. Paul
 - b. Peter
2. The inclusion of 'mercy' stands out
 - a. God is the God of grace and peace
 - b. He is the God also of mercy/compassion (Exodus 33:20)
3. The source of grace, mercy, and peace
 - a. God the Father
 - b. The Lord Jesus Christ

Grace, mercy, and peace...in truth and love

1. John wishes grace, mercy, and peace for his readers
2. He truly wishes them for all these blessings
 - a. In truth
 - b. In love
3. Wish and prayer encased in this greeting is out of truth and love

I rejoiced greatly that I have found some of your children walking in truth

1. The word “some” is not part of the original sentence
2. John the apostle rejoices because
 - a. Some children of the elect lady walk in truth
 - b. Whereas some other children of the same lady do not walk in truth
3. John expresses his joy over all the children of the elect lady
 - a. As they walk in truth
 - b. As they live out the truth
4. Joy as such is a by-product of ‘walking in truth’

As we received commandment from the Father

1. ‘Walking in truth’ means
 - a. Living out the truth
 - b. Putting into practice the truth
2. This ‘walking in truth’ is commanded by the Lord Jesus (Cf. John 14:15ff)
3. This commandment of the Lord Jesus is actually from God the Father (Cf. John 5:30)

Walking in love

And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another. This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it.

(2 John 5-6)

And now I plead with you, lady...

1. The two words “plead” and “lady” in this epistle
 - a. Implies that this lady of John’s acquaintance is a person of noble birth as well as of old age
 - b. Infers that John has a great respect for this lady
2. John requests his ‘lady’ using the terms of formal respect
 - a. That they (the lady (and all other Christians) and John himself] love one another
 - b. As they have the commandment from the beginning
3. This commandment they have had from the beginning
 - a. Is the old commandment of the Lord Jesus
 - b. Is the command (of the Lord Jesus) to love one another (Cf. John 13:34-35)
 - c. Is to be obeyed by all disciples of Jesus, regardless of who we are
4. The point of time being implied in “the beginning” in this context
 - a. Refers to the beginning of the Lord Jesus’ ministry
 - b. Refers to the time when the Lord Jesus first taught His Disciples to love one another

This is love, that we walk according to His commandments...

1. Our love for the Lord is plainly defined as
 - a. Walking according to His commandments
 - b. Obedience to Him (and His Word)
2. One who truly loves the Lord will surely keep His commandments
3. How should we practice love toward one another?
 - a. We should love
 - i. In truth
 - ii. In response to God's commandments
 - b. Exercising love with no reference to the truths commanded
 - i. Is not a Biblical-theological kind of love
 - ii. Is simply foreign to Christian faith at its best
4. This commandment of love is from the beginning, meaning
 - a. No one just invented it
 - b. Jesus has taught it
5. 'You should walk in it'
Let us walk in love
 - a. As Christ loved us (John 13:34)
 - b. As we are commanded

Watch out for the deceivers!

*For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.
(2 John 7-8)*

For many deceivers have gone out...

1. There are many deceivers of faith in the world today
2. These deceivers are
 - a. False teachers
 - b. False prophets
 - c. False messiahs
3. The Lord Jesus has warned us of the deceivers (Matt.24)
4. Paul the Apostle of Gentiles also has warned us of the coming of the deceivers. (1 Tim.4:3-4)

Who do not confess Jesus as coming in the flesh...

1. John the Apostle specifies the deceivers with reference to their Christology
 - a. They do not confess that Jesus Christ has come in flesh
 - b. In other words, they reject the incarnation of Christ outright
2. The deceivers as far as John the Apostle is concerned
 - a. Have faulty view of Christ
 - b. Hold onto a defective Christology
3. Anyone like this is simply a deceiver and an antichrist!

Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things...

1. The gift of eternal life we will never lose
 - a. The Father will keep us (John 10:25-30)
 - b. The Son will also keep us (John 10:25-30)
 - c. The Spirit of God will also preserve us (Eph.1:13-14)
2. There are things we can lose
 - a. Knowledge of the Scriptures
 - b. Skills for ministry
 - c. Joy of salvation
 - d. Joy of service
 - e. Rewards promised to us
 - f. These are things we work for
 - g. And they are things we can lose adversely if we are deceived
3. Look to yourselves
 - a. Let us look to the Lord Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith (Heb.12:2)
 - b. Let us also to ourselves, meaning,
 - i. We must watch out for the danger of losing what we work for
 - ii. We must take heed to our faith and life (1 Tim.4:16)

The doctrine of Christ as the Criterion

Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

(2 John 9-11)

Whoever transgresses and does not abide ...

1. The word “transgress” carries the idea of going beyond the boundary
2. The phrase “does not abide in” reinforces the same idea of transgression
3. A person who transgresses
 - a. Goes beyond the doctrine of Christ (the teachings of Christ)
 - b. Does not abide in the teachings of Christ
4. This person does not have God. He/she is a person without God in the world (Eph.2:12)

He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son

1. He who “abides in” the doctrine of Christ
 - a. Is true and faithful to the teachings of Christ
 - b. Moves within the boundary of the teachings of Christ
2. This person who remains faithful and loyal to the teachings of Christ has both

- a. The Father
- b. The Son
- 3. There is no separation of the two
 - a. “He who has seen Me has seen My Father” (John 14:9)
 - b. “I am in the Father and the Father in Me” (John 14:11)
 - c. Grace, mercy, and peace come from the Father and the Son (2 John 3)

If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine...

- 1. How do we judge people who teach and preach in the name of Christ Jesus (Cf. Matt.7:7)?
 - a. Do they bring this doctrine – the doctrine of Christ?
 - i. The incarnation of Christ Jesus
 - ii. The eternal sonship of Christ Jesus
 - iii. The inseparability of the Father and the Son
 - iv. The teachings of Jesus Christ (as is recorded in the Gospels)
- 2. “do not receive him into your house nor greet him”
 - a. Those who teach and preach other than this doctrine must not be received nor must they be greeted
 - b. A similar warning is given by Paul the Apostle to his readers in Galatia (Gal.1:8-9)
- 3. Let us be more discerning as to the teachers/preachers we follow on social media, lest we end up sharing their evil deeds

Communicate by all means

*Having many things to write to you, I did not wish to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full. The children of your elect sister greet you. Amen.
(2 John 2:12-13)*

Having many things to write to you...

1. John the Apostle has many things to share with the elect lady his friend
2. He however does not want to put them in paper
3. He rather looks forward to communicating them with the elect lady in person

That our joy may be full

1. There is definitely joy as we communicate through writing or electronic mails
2. There is however a fuller joy as we share what we have, including our faith, with one another in person
3. A similar thing is ascertained by Paul in his letter to Christians in Rome (Rom.1: 11-12)

The children of your elect sister greet you. Amen.

1. John sends the elect lady the greetings of the children of her elect sister
2. John is gracious to include this greeting of the elect sister of the elect lady in his personal letter to her (the elect lady)

Challenges

1. Let us keep in touch with one another by all means
 - a. As a way of loving one another
 - b. As an expression of our being brother-sister to one another in faith
2. Let us communicate by all means
 - a. To warn one another of the danger of being deceived
 - b. To encourage one another to be discerning as to the false teachers/prophets
3. Let us look forward to meeting one another in person
 - a. For the mutual benefit of faith
 - b. For the sake of our fuller joy

The Third Epistle of John

Praying for the beloved

*The Elder, To the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth:
Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and
be in health, just as your soul prospers.
(3 John 1-2)*

The Elder

1. This is the title of honor
2. This title is used by John the Apostle to refer to himself
3. This title John wears speaks of
 - a. His authority
 - b. The honor he has been given
 - c. His old age

To the beloved Gaius...

1. John the Apostle writes this personal letter to a man named Gaius, just as he did to the elect lady as in 2 John
2. John writes this letter with affection, for Gaius is
 - a. The beloved one
 - b. The one whom he (John) loves in truth
3. Love must be exercised within the bound of truth

Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health

1. John earnestly prays for his beloved Gaius
2. John affectionately prays that Gaius
 - a. may prosper in all things
 - b. may be in health

3. Let us pray for one another that
 - a. We may be prosperous (Psalm 1:3, 35:27)
 - b. We may be healthy and strong (physical health)

Just as your soul prospers

1. John the Apostle is fully aware that Gaius is spiritually prosperous (healthy)
2. He is also concerned about the physical health issue of Gaius
3. He prays for the wellbeing of Gaius' physical health, just as his (Gaius') spiritual health

Reflections

1. John the Apostle was fascinated with the teaching of the Lord Jesus on love (John 13:34-35)
2. He put the teaching of the Lord Jesus on love into practice
3. His faith and grasp of truth necessitates him to write and pray
4. His love for God's people like Elect lady and Gaius moves him to write and pray with affection

No greater joy!

*For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in 'truth.
(3 John 3-4)*

For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came ...

1. John the Apostle was so happy
 - a. When brethren came to him
 - b. When they testified of the truth that is in Gaius
2. How could the brethren know the truth in Gaius?
 - a. The truth believed in becomes observable as one lives it out
 - b. The truth lived out becomes known to others
3. Let us rejoice as people live out the truth taught each week

Just as you walk in the truth

1. The brethren testified of the truth that is in Gaius
 - a. Just as he practices it
 - b. Just as he walks in it
2. The truth thus is meant not only to be believed in but also to be acted on
3. Gaius did just that, which brought great joy to the Apostle John
4. Let us seek to make the truth part of us

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth

1. John does not have a privilege of seeing his children walk in truth
2. John, however, has a privilege of hearing from the brethren that his children walk in truth
3. That his children walk in truth brings much joy to the heart of the Apostle John
4. Let us rejoice in the Lord
 - a. As our children walk in truth
 - b. As our church members obey the Word of God

Challenges

1. Let us cultivate a heart that rejoices when others walk in the truth
2. Let us seek to live out the truth we have been taught
3. May our practice of the truth bring
 - a. much joy to the hearts of our leaders, and
 - b. great honor to the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Hospitability- 1

*Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers, who have borne witness of your love before the church. If you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well,
(2 John 5-6)*

Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do...

1. Gaius is being referred to as 'beloved'
2. Gaius faithfully helps the brethren and strangers alike
 - a. Brethren refers to people he knows
 - b. Strangers are people (itinerant preachers) he does not know
3. Gaius is hospitable to both the brethren and the strangers
4. He is in fact providing some help for them on their evangelistic journey

Who have borne witness of your love before the church

1. 'Who' in this sentence refers to 'the brethren and the strangers' Gaius has aided as he is enabled
2. These people bore witness of Gaius' love before the church/ congregation
 - a. Gaius' love for the Lord
 - b. Gaius' love for the people of the Lord
3. Gaius is known for
 - a. His hospitality
 - b. His obedience (v-3)
4. He is truly worth being recommended

If you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God...

1. John reminds Gaius of kind deeds he can do toward the people – the brethren and the itinerant preachers
2. Gaius is encouraged to look after the itinerant teachers/preachers on their journey
 - a. In a manner worthy of God
 - b. In a way that God would treat
3. Let us learn to treat one another in a way God would treat us

You will do well

1. Gaius does well
 - a. Compared to Diotrephes (v-10)
 - b. Contrary to what Diotrephes does (v-10)
2. John urges Gaius to keep practising hospitality that he has been faithfully doing
3. Gaius must then keep exercising hospitality towards brethren and strangers
4. Let us keep doing faithfully whatever we have done right and well

Hospitability-2

*Because they went forth for His name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we may become fellow workers for the truth.
(3 John 7-8)*

Because they went forth for His name's sake

1. The conjunction 'because' connects verses 7 and 6.
2. Gaius is to aid the itinerant preachers on their journey for a clear reason
 - a. *Because* they (the itinerant preachers) go around for the Name of the Lord Jesus
 - b. *Because* they go preaching for the sake of the Name of the Lord
3. Let us find a reason why we share what we have with other ministers

Taking nothing from the Gentiles

1. Gaius is to support the itinerant preachers on their travel
 - a. *Because* they take nothing from the Gentiles
 - b. *Because* they make no money out of their ministry among the Gentiles
2. The itinerant preachers are not in ministry for money
3. They really are worth supporting

We therefore ought to receive such

1. The conjunction "therefore" speaks of
 - a. Implication
 - b. Result

2. That the itinerant preachers are worth supporting
 - a. Implies that we ought to receive them
 - b. Infers that we should receive them
3. To not receive such ones would be tantamount to rejecting Christ Himself

That we may become fellow workers for the truth

1. The word 'that' in this sentence indicates the purpose
2. What is the purpose behind our receiving of the godly itinerant preachers?
3. The purpose of supporting the godly preachers is none other than this – we may become fellow workers for the truth
4. This is a great way to partake in the course of the truth

Challenges

1. Let us be warned that we can end up in sharing in the evils of the false teachers/preachers (2 John 10-11)
2. Let us cease supporting any false teachers/preachers around
3. It is vital that we keep aiding the godly ministers in their works
 - a. In doing so we become fellow workers for the truth
 - b. In doing so we end up in sharing in their blessings attended

Dealing with the self-serving leader

I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church.

(3 John 9-10)

I wrote to the church

1. It occurred that John had written to the church before
2. That letter of John could be on the subject of hospitality
3. However, that letter of John was never read to the church for certain reasons unknown

But Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them...

1. Diotrephes, who seems to be one of the church leaders,
 - a. Loves to have the preeminence among them
 - b. Loves to be the first among the brethren
 - c. Loves to be most popular among the colleagues
 - d. Diotrephes thus is a self-serving leader to say the least
2. He does not receive us (John and his colleagues)
 - a. As ministers of God
 - b. As ministers with authority over local churches

Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, ...

1. John will call to mind the deeds of Diotrephes, meaning, he will hold Diotrephes accountable for his actions
2. Some of the deeds of Diotrephes
 - a. He prats against them with malicious words
 - b. Moreover, he himself does not receive the brethren in a manner worthy of God (he is not hospitable toward the brethren)
 - c. He forbids those willing to exercise hospitality toward the brethren
 - d. He even abuses his church leadership position to excommunicate them

Challenges

1. Church leaders should not seek to serve themselves
2. They should seek to serve others, practicing the servant leadership
3. Let us learn to call to mind the ministers' actions uncalled for
4. Let us also exercise hospitality toward
 - a. Godly ministers
 - b. Genuine brethren

Imitating what is good

*Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God. Demetrius has a good testimony from all, and from the truth itself. And we also bear witness, and you know that our testimony is true.
(3 John 11-12)*

Beloved, do not imitate what is evil...

1. John affectionally addresses Gaius as “beloved”
2. John seeks to encourage Gaius
 - a. To distinguish what is good from what is evil
 - b. To imitate what is good
3. Gaius must reject the deeds of Diotreph
4. Gaius must follow John the Apostle
 - a. In his love for the Lord and His people
 - b. In his practice of truth
 - c. In his outright rejection of what is evil (Diotrephes and his deeds)

He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God

1. Anyone who does good is of God
 - a. John the Apostle is of God
 - b. The missionaries John mentioned in 3 John 6-8 are of God
 - c. Gaius himself is of God

2. Anyone who does evil has not seen God; Diotrephes has not seen God though he may have been a church leader

Demetrius has a *good* testimony from all, and from the truth itself

1. John singles out Demetrius Gaius must have known well
 - a. As the one who is of God
 - b. As the one who does good
2. Demetrius has a good reputation among all
3. All people have spoken well of him
4. Besides, the truth Demetrius embraces is the clearest evidence that he is of God

And we also bear witness, and you know that our testimony is true

1. We (John and his team) witness to the kind of person Demetrius is
2. Gaius (you being the recipient of this letter) knows that the testimony John and his team bear is true
3. John estimates that Gaius himself would definitely support the fact that Demetrius is of God, unlike Diotrephes.

Communication Matters

I had many things to write, but I do not wish to write to you with pen and ink; but I hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face. Peace to you. Our friends greet you.

Greet the friends by name.

(3 John 13-14)

I had many things to write ...

1. John must have many other things to write to Gaius
 - a. As an Apostle of the Lord Jesus
 - b. As a senior pastor over local churches
 - c. As a spiritual mentor
2. But he does not want to put them all in writings
 - a. He acknowledges the limitation of the writings
 - b. He has other ways of reaching Gaius in honor

But I hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face

1. John hopes to see Gaius very soon
2. When John sees Gaius in person, both of them will speak to each other face to face
3. This form of face-to-face communication
 - a. Is much preferred to than the writing form of communication
 - b. Is something much desired
 - c. Is also something Paul looked forward to (Romans 1:12)

Peace to you. Our friends greet you. Greet the friends by name

1. John winds up his personal letter to his beloved Gaius
2. As he ends the letter,
 - a. he wishes peace for him (Gaius)
 - b. he greets him (Gaius) for their friends (the friends of John and of Gaius)
 - c. he tells him (Gaius) to greet the friends by name for himself (John himself)
3. How nice to greet one another as brethren!

Challenges

1. Let us keep in touch with one another
 - a. Because we love one another in truth
 - b. Because we care for one another
2. Let us seek to encourage one another
 - a. To set a good example for others
 - b. To imitate the good examples of others
3. Let there be a face-to-face communication among us as brethren!

As the Scripture Says...

The Espistles of John the Apostle

Tomas Zatel

The Epistles of John the Apostle
Published by
Bethany Literature, 112/B Upper Myingyi Road,
East Ywama, Insein, Yangon.

First Printing - 2022

All rights reserved. No part of this publication
may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system,
or transmitted in any form or by any means,
electronic, photocopying, recording or otherwise,
without the prior permission in writing of the publisher.

Printed by Baptist Publication, Yangon, Myanmar

Computer layout & design - Lynn Aung