

# Clarifying the Truth

First John



## INTRODUCTION

The overall focus of this epistle is to clarify the Truth. Many false teachers and “anti-christs” had arisen and were beginning to have sway in the churches. There were three main points addressed:

1. That Jesus Christ had “come in the flesh”
2. The significance of LOVE in the life of the true follower of the Lord
3. The true MARKS of Godliness in the believer

He addresses, right at the start, this issue that Jesus did not truly come in a physical body. He even, later, identified this as a distinguishing characteristic of those who were either of Christ or against Him. Why was this so significant?

1. If He did not come physically, we do not have a “high priest” acquainted with life
2. If He did not come physically, He did not truly humble Himself and empty Himself
3. If He did not come physically, the sacrifice for sins was strictly figurative, not genuine
  - It was then not real. We are then “of all men most miserable” - I Cor. 15
4. Many believed all that was physical was strictly evil with no possible good in purpose
  - This lent to religion being “PROVEN” only by physical denial and disciplines
  - The physical bodies and real items around us are to be viewed as possible “tools of the trade” in the work for the Lord. As in Romans 6, they are surrendered to the Lord. To simply declare them evil, will lead to excusing sin simply as “my body made me do it” Today they are excused as genetic deficiencies which predetermine evil and cannot be avoided.
  - The Lord proved opposite in the conquering of the physical and spiritual! There is no realm where He is not Master and Conqueror!

*We are to be living contradictions to these beliefs*

Assurance of what is right is the focus of John. The ability to spot false teaching and false teachers is essential in keeping “on-track” in the fellowship of light with the Lord!

### I. The Genuine Christ - 1:1-4

#### A. John speaks first-hand in his knowledge of the Savior

1. He establishes genuine credentials for the rest of what he will state
2. This is in contrast to many of the popular teachers and teachings of the day
  - a. There were many competing for new ideas and approaches
  - b. The lure of clever and “new” ideas lead them away from the fundamental truths of their faith’s foundation
  - c. We also must beware of faddish teachings slightly founded on the Truth
    - Slightly founding teaching on the Truth was a method of Satan - Gen 3
3. John spoke from the authority of having been taught by the Lord Himself
  - We must beware of placing our experience or someone else’s above the unarguable FACTS of the Scripture
4. He heard with his ears, saw with his eyes, gazed upon thoroughly and handles the Lord before and after the resurrection. He was absolutely real!
5. He is the source of all words which truly “pertain to life” - one need not focus their life gaze elsewhere or on another.

*False teaching can often be disguised under the cloak of a “principle” casually associated with truth with slight variances*

## B. Genuine Fellowship with Christ

1. First, understand the process of the revelation of the true “Truth” - vs. 2
  - a. The life (of Christ) was manifested - “made apparent” by the work of God
  - b. It was STUDIED (seen - stared at; examined) - time proved it more
  - c. The impact was so strong, it led the apostles to act openly as witnesses
  - d. The truth is then “declared” - announced openly, without reservation this life that so changed their lives (this then leads to the cycle beginning again - we manifest it, it is studied and converts are created!)
2. Second, understand the purpose of this revelation of Truth - vs. 3-4
  - a. Truth is taught and emphasized (CLARIFIED) for fellowship
    - (1). Fellowship is partnership - fellow laborers (work and progress are hindered by disagreement on the Truth)
      - It sets the priorities for a group (what will be most important)
      - It defines the purposes and GOALS of the group
      - Without unity on Truth, labor is either strained or lacking
    - (2). Fellowship is agreement - harmony (blending others in accord)
      - Clarifying the Truth is to be a unifier in purpose (if Truth is compromised, there may be a pseudo fellowship with shallow roots - thus, little “winds” and “storms” will topple them)
  - b. Truth is clarified to enable fellowship with God and Christ
    - (1). The goal is not to lead others to agreement with me
    - (2). Others are edified when drawn (correctly) into agreement with God
      - The danger of false counsel or teaching is not just the ignorance it brings, but that it causes disagreement with the ways and will of God (thus the warning of James 3:1)
  - c. Truth is taught and clarified to satisfy and maintain one’s “calm delight” - joy
    - (1). Without it, there is that sense that “something just isn’t right”
    - (2). Daily dwelling (meditating) on the truth keeps us “STEADY”

It standardizes the “setting” for fellowship; with a code of conduct clearly defined, there is harmony

*We must not be in pursuit of a “truth” that agrees with “me”, but the Truth in agreement with God... what actually is the right!*

## II. The Genuine Fellowship of Light - 1:5-10

- A. Understand the fundamental nature of God - vs. 5 (this is the summation of the message)
  1. God is “light” - He is flawless in purity and righteousness
    - a. “He is perfectly pure, without any admixture of sin. He has all knowledge, with no admixture of ignorance on any subject. He is infinitely happy, with nothing to make him miserable. He is infinitely true, never stating or countenancing error; he is blessed in all his ways, never knowing the darkness of disappointment and adversity.” Barnes
    - b. In Him is NO darkness at all - no impurity, no ignorance, no error
  2. He is not to be associated with any “speck” of darkness (sin, no VARIANCE)

### B. The five “if’s” in clarifying those in “fellowship” (harmony) with God - vs. 6-10

1. If we say... that we are in partnership (agreement) with Him but walk differently
  - a. Profession does not equal progression! (walking is moving ahead)
  - b. Our walk will be changed (altered) by our fellowship (as the goal) with God
  - c. We are not at liberty to keep on walking wrongly! - we would then be not doing the Truth - we are hypocritical, not practicing what DEFINES us
2. If we walk... in the light as demonstrates His character

*As we are changed with our fellowshiping with those of this earth*

*I Cor. 15:33 - what corrupts good manners?*

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- a. We THEN can have true fellowship with each other
  - So, harmony is found in Christlikeness, not in the flaunting of our individuality!

b. To walk (περιπατεω) is to “deport one’s self” and “to live at large” - vs. 7

- It is our GENERAL walk of life (what characterizes us)
- It is where we are focused to head

c. It is our character (what we are even when ALONE)

- It is that indelible mark upon the life which prohibits forsaking
- It is the antagonizing frustration with personal inconsistency

d. Our walk (at large) in the “light” is best identified with our communion with the Lord (our daily conversing with Him)

- Measuring our “walk” with His revealed walk in the Scripture (others become dependent upon others to dictate their walk and are easily misled)
- Paul instructed Timothy to be “up to his ears” in staying focused  
(1). I Tim. 4:13-15 - focus on reading, exhortation and doctrine  
(2). What is done in private then is seen by others (profiting)

e. We then can have “fellowship” seeing as how Christ’s blood cleanses us

- I am not condemning of a brother, seeing his sin as covered
- I am not condemning SELF seeing my sin is covered
- Without His blood, we would not know genuine fellowship (based in an everlasting contentment found in the one we are uniformly indebted)

3. If we say... we have no sin - vs. 8

a. If there is a belief that one does not sin...

- That they do no wrong
- That what others see as sin they can EXPLAIN away as not being sin

b. They are self-deceived (they do not really know themselves) or are not honest

- “...he who maintains that he is wholly sanctified, and lives without any sin, shows that he is deceived in regard to himself, and that the truth, in this respect, is not in him.” Barnes

c. “...the truth is not in us.”

- They do not speak the truth of themselves on this matter
- If they are so blindly arrogant concerning themselves, how can they be TRUSTED on other matters?

4. If we confess... He is faithful... - vs. 9

a. We need not fear the admission of guilt!

- “confess” - ομολογεω - assent, agree with God concerning
- Call it what God calls it (boldly stating the truth) - this is only practical seeing as how it lends to the ongoing fellowship with God (as with earthly relationships, when we have done wrong and deny it, communication is avoided, knowing the problem is on both minds)

b. Because, we are confident in the continual forgiveness and cleansing

- He is trustworthy to have sent it away (let it go) (faithful)
- In His rightness he forsakes it because of Christ (just)
- We are assured we are clean from our wrongness (we need not fear it or be given to defeatism because of it)

c. The emphasis is to be honest with ourselves and about ourselves

5. If we say... we have not sinned - vs. 10

a. There were those who denied ever having “sinned”

b. These must call God a “liar” to hold to such a claim

c. His word is not in them (they are wrong!)

*We are not “truly”  
defined by how people  
perceive us*

*Practically, it can be seen in the  
multitude of battles of the mind  
and soul stemming from the  
unending onslaught of the enemy...  
in that there is the battle!*

*Proverbs 20:9 “Who  
can say, I have made  
my heart clean, I am  
pure from my sin?”*

*Beware emanating the air  
of perfection! - James 5:16  
(idea is to acknowledge  
“side-slips”)*

*Do not “risk” Christian  
fellowship or fellowship  
with the Lord trying to  
cover wrong (pride)*

### III. The Love of God “Perfected” - 2:1-17

#### A. The desire of the true believer - vs. 1

1. The emphasis is not the forgiveness of God as much as the love of God
  - Focus solely on the release from sin will lead to over emphasis of love
2. The forgiveness is clarified to motivate to obedience (loyalty!)
  - Again, a Christian can sin, but the objective is to focus on responsibility
3. If we sin...

*The “if” idea is important to note: it communicates the possibility more than the probability!*

- a. If we “miss the mark” - the idea is to not share the “prize” or “portion”
    - The idea being the planned goal was not reached, thus something (opportunity, responsibility, reward) is lost
  - b. “... we have an advocate with the Father”
    - (1). One called along side at a “hearing”
    - (2). One who speaks for the defendant (on their behalf)
    - (3). Though, this advocate does not seek to prove innocence
      - We are openly declared guilty (worthy of sentence)
      - The merits of the “case” rest solely on the merits of Christ
      - The defendant has no merits which lend to covering guilt!
  - c. “... Jesus Christ the righteous.” (the innocent) - flawless
4. So, does the Christian desire to live in sin?
    - a. II Cor. 5:14-15 - We are “constrained” by His love for us
    - b. Literally, the believer is “pressed” (held together)
      - The focus of what was done overwhelms the believer
    - c. This naturally leads (as the text indicates) to not live for or to self

#### B. The confidence of the erred believer - vs. 2

1. This righteous Jesus is the “propitiation” for our sins
  - a. He is the supreme satisfier of the debt charged against us
  - b. He is the appeasement of the rightfully deserved wrath and judgment of God
2. This does not lend to a desire (freedom) to sin more
  - a. As believers we are motivated to please (reward of fulfilled duty at all costs)
  - b. Though promised covering of future failures (before GOD) we do not want to surrender to sin (as a life characterized by defiance)
3. The satisfaction was accomplished for the “world”
  - a. This cannot be for the world as “every person” else all would be saved
  - b. The idea is of all inclusive (gentiles (the world) and the Jews)
    - This was only done through Christ (He told to go to teach all nations)

#### C. The first “evidence” of truly knowing God - vs. 3

1. To know if we really know Him (if we understand His way versus our perception)
  - a. Am I self-deceived (God is “managed” by boxing Him into my ideas and terms)
  - b. The enemies of the day were the Gnostics
    - That salvation was knowing God (intellect)
    - Others came (later) in reaction, stressing that salvation was more the experience than the knowledge
    - Both led to an unavoidable emptiness
  - c. We know that we know Him if we “keep” His commands
    - “Not faultless conformity, but hearty acceptance of, and willing subjection to, God's whole revealed will...” JFB
    - The idea of keep is to guard and hold dear (idea of loyalty)
    - The grief of sin, to the believer, is not to be the “punishment, but the personal awareness of their disloyalty!

2. A clear picture of those who profess and do not possess - vs. 4

a. A person who outwardly states his knowledge of God

- There seems to be an emphasis on wanting to inform others of what is otherwise UNAPPARENT in their lives

b. But if they do not “keep” his commands...

(1). If they do not guard (cherish) and hold to his instruction

(2). These are outright liars (knowingly trying to deceive)

(3). The Truth is not in them - “It means that truth should be sought, not from the man who has intellectual qualifications alone, but rather from the man whose claim to know spiritual things is backed up by godlike conduct. Unless there is observable godliness, such a man’s teaching about God should be distrusted.” - J.M. Boice

*Beware those who tell what to do while avoiding the “doing of it” themselves!*

3. Those “keeping” His word have the love of God “perfected” in them! - vs. 5

*This is why believers do not turn on God in hardship... their love debt realized welcomes opportunity of reciprication*

a. That is their love for God is “COMPLETED” (proven evidence) in obedience

- This was the stressed point of our Lord - John 14:15 “If ye love me..”
- Spoken love carries no real weight without active evidence (love professed must be proven - love actively seeks opportunity to be proven!)

b. Also, their love for God is matured (it grows in strength and knowledge)

- The results of obedience solidify future commitment (proof) as an adult has more confidence in life having experienced more

c. Obedience to His word settles our assurance of being in Him (those faltering in their obedience to the Lord tend to STRUGGLE with assurance of salvation)

4. It is our obligation to “walk” as our namesake walked - vs. 6

a. The walk must match the talk to be genuine

b. The goal is to “walk” (conduct one’s life) as He was characterized

(1). His priorities become my priorities (the “reputation” of God before man, the physical and spiritual needs of the truly needy and humble, etc..)

(2). His submission to the Father in all things, even the cross - Php. 2:8

(3). The goal becomes to MIMIC His daily life conduct and speech

c. “But unless the experience includes a setting of the affections and will in the direction of the moral principles of the Gospel, it is no true experience of God, in any Christian sense.” C.H. Dodd

D. The second “evidence” of truly knowing God - vs. 7-11 - love of brethren

1. In general, what he states is not new (love was to be expected) - vs. 7

*“Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law” - Rom 13:10*

- It has been around since the “beginning” so we are without excuse to neglect it

2. The newness of the instruction to love was in Christ - vs. 8

- How He demonstrated, taught and lived it (He lived for others, not self!)

- It was not convenience based (love is best seen in the inconvenient)

- We, through His example have light (purpose, plan geared to love of others)

3. He who claims enlightenment and yet hates his “brother” is still in darkness - vs. 9

- Hate is seen in detesting (despising, belittling and NEGLECT)

- The opposite to love is not just angered hatred but also is apathy (not caring)

- There is a blindness (to the needs of others and their own sorry state in life)

*Satisfying love is found in the giving of ones’s self without focus on personal interests or gain!*

4. Those loving their brothers are in the light, thus no stumbling! - vs. 10

- They see upcoming pitfalls (of bitterness or deep seated anger) and avoid it

- Their love for others removes potential pitfalls in their relationships

- Strict self-focus is the source of most breaks in friendships or potential ones

*Gifts and talents are have no purpose without others in which to invest! - I Cor. 13:1*

5. Those who remain as “haters” are in darkness - vs. 11
  - a. Seeing they are “in darkness” we know they never left
  - b. They walk in darkness (they do not see things as they really are)
  - c. Thus, they do not know where they are going now and eternally
    - This blindness, practically, can be seen in their self centeredness

E. All believers are included in these instructions - vs. 12-14

Children, don't be discouraged with growth and, as they are forgiven, so they forgive

1. “Little children” are motivated knowing their sins are forgiven - vs. 12
  - a. There is some debate as to whether this is figurative (though, it seems reasonable to take it literally seeing other age groups are addressed)
  - b. They are to be encouraged to OBEDY, knowing this fact
    - “...there is nothing which will tend more to make a child obedient hereafter, than the fact that a parent freely forgives the past.” Barnes
    - They are not to have a defeatist attitude in light of these passages

Fathers, maintain and endorse confidence in the “cause”

2. “fathers” are motivated knowing the “proof” of the rightness of the Lord Jesus - vs. 13
  - a. These had seen the work of God in Christ as genuine
  - b. They know it is wrong (and futile) to dispute clear responsibility to follow

Young me, answer the call to duty!

3. “young men” are motivated by victory (success in the cause for which they live)
  - a. They have “overcome the wicked one”
    - The Word of God lives in them (exists, grows and controls)
  - b. They were “strong” - in the prime of life (natural energy and zeal)
  - c. It's like saying, “Be TOUGH; act like a man and take it!”

F. Do not be distracted by what the world offers - vs. 15-17

“world” in this case is defined as the antigod philosophy and the agenda to pull all into it

1. Love not the world - that which the godless system loves
  - a. What is it that makes up this use of the word “world”?
    - (1). The lust of the flesh - catering to indulgences (the pursuit of a life of ease and convenience, seeking FREEDOM from responsibility)
    - (2). The lust of the eyes - covetous, wanting what I see (the life focus of searching out what pleases me and obtaining it at highest cost)
    - (3). The pride of life - living for the exaltation of “me” - (the life purpose of self-glory and self-service each “seeking his own” most often at the cost of others)
  - b. The love of the Father cannot be in him - there is no ROOM with self love
    - To love the Father is to love what He loves (or, at least, be headed there)
  - c. Love of the world is seen in being driven by its dictates (love what it loves)
2. All of it is temporary - vs. 17
  - a. What society claims as essential, “passes away” as what was truly needless
    - An the “craving” for it passes also (the lust thereof)
  - b. It is important to beware what we admire
    - (1). It is usually what draws our attention
    - (2). It will be what claims our TIME in the pursuit of it
    - (3). It will control much (if not most) of our conversation
    - (4). We will eventually bring “CONVERTS” to the cause (is it worthy?)
3. He who does the will of God (submits in cooperation with it) has a lasting labor!
4. All of this braces the Christian for the onslaught of “antichrists” to come
  - a. It is not feasible to try to sway the fulfilled soul from its place
  - b. Those seeking their own will be easy prey (needing fulfillment)
  - c. Those unaware of the will of God are easy prey (untaught)

IV. "The Antichrists are Coming!" - vs. 18-27 (Truth, as the third evidence of salvation)

A. It is the "last time" - the final age of the earth - vs. 18-19

1. It is characterized by antichrists culminating in the "Antichrist" of Revelation

a. Antichrist is one opposed to Christ (they are openly against Who He is and all He teaches and stands for)

b. Antichrist is one who stands in the STEAD of Christ - as replacement

Two "earmarks" of  
heresy!

(1). Carries the idea of improvement over the Lord

(2). Carries the idea of the INCOMPLETENESS of the Lord

2. There is an expectation of many (infiltrating, of all places, the church)

3. What they do - identifying them by their actions

a. They "went out from us" - they were considered part of the body of Christ

b. They "were not of us" - they did not believe as we do

- Our faith in Christ and His work is the bond of unity (not our "alike-nesses" or our personalities, class, families, etc...)

c. Perseverance in the faith is the ultimate evidence of salvation

(1). A Christian is chiefly marked by his/her faith in Christ

Including to self — (2). The "falling away" is the redirecting of this "faith" to another

(3). If they were of us (the body) they would have remained

d. As the Gnostics, they emphasize intellect over faith (through reasonings)

Revivalists redirect and  
remind to restore!

• True teachers continually redirect to Christ (this is our calling)

e. But, "... they went out..." - to be "exposed" - (made apparent)

(1). If they cannot take over they will leave (need to be resisted)

(2). They seek out CONVERTS to join "the cause"

- They are doubt causers and faith robbers

B. Do not fear being led to apostasy - vs. 20-26

1. We are "anointed" with the Holy Spirit (indwelt and directed)

a. It is unreasonable to fear MISSING the Truth

b. John wrote with confidence that they knew these things

(1). The enemy, will induce a lack of confidence (faith) in the truth

(2). Be assured, there will be that underlying insight to alert when something is wrong (in teaching, EMPHASIS, or direction)

2. "No lie is of the truth"

a. "No form of error, however plausible it may appear, however ingeniously it may be defended, and however much it may seem to be favourable to human virtue and happiness, can be founded in truth." Barnes

b. It is that sense in us that contradicts the seeming logic of a lie

(1). As with any passing fad it will pass away

Sin acts as its own "punisher"

(2). The acting out of it in life will prove its deficiency

c. Do not fear to stand against a popular trend when you know it is wrong!

3. The heart of the lie was in the denial (lessening) of Christ

a. To deny Christ is to deny the Father altogether

- Thus, they key to staying in tune with truth is the emphasis of Christ

b. The idea of "deny" is to contradict (oppose in belief, word or deed)

4. The key is to "remain" with the truth taught at the beginning (fundamentals)

a. Established foundations are cross COMAPRED to all else that comes after

b. Truth does not change but we (our perspectives/circumstances) do

- The truth that all our dependence is on the perfect work of Christ in our stead is foundational to keeping us on track and properly dependent!

5. The Gnostics sought to lure them away from dependence on the work of Christ - vs. 24-26
  - a. Beware the teachings which place the main focus on man (his strength)
  - b. Beware the teachings which de-emphasize the “promise” of eternal life
    - (1). Believers do not live for “\_\_\_**NOW**\_\_\_”
    - (2). Our view of daily decisions and happenings is to be “with eternities’ values in view” (distractions from the guarantee of eternal life will redirect us)
  - c. John wrote to reiterate the expectation of false teachers to come - their purpose, whether conscious or not, is to literally cause us to “\_\_\_**ROAM**\_\_\_”
    - Beware lest you be “spoiled” - Col. 2:8 - through philosophies...
    - II Pet. 2:1-3 - ... “make merchandise of you” literally through “moulded words” - containing an artificial message resembling the truth

C. They are to be taught of God not by man (concerning these things)- vs. 27-29

1. The Gnostics were teaching from a humanistic perspective (humanistic reliance)
  - These were to “popular” traveling teachers of the day
2. With the Spirit (and now His word), we are properly led ( we stray off course when we follow newfangled ideas not supported or \_\_\_**LOOSELY**\_\_\_ supported on Scripture)
3. So, we follow the Spirit’s leading as taught in His inspired Word
  - a. Proper teaching is associated with \_\_\_**PERSEVERING**\_\_\_ (in the Lord)
    - Even in the midst of trouble, one cannot fathom fully forsaking
  - b. Proper teaching leads on to a confident anticipation of the Lord’s coming
    - Not as those who will “cower back” (ashamed) at His coming
    - It builds confidence of the work of God at work and a mode of thinking that leads to heaven’s citizens acting like while still on the earth!
4. God’s truth will bring the proper pride at His coming (that it is now proven “to the eyes” that it was always right) - faith is made sight
5. Seek the “righteous” to be your teachers - vs. 29
  - Great teachers are often far from the best teachers; those who evidence Godly fruit (evidence of His working) are to be sought out knowing that righteousness is solid evidence of being a child of God (they must practice what they preach!)

*Proper learning (of truth) is evidenced in a heavenly philosophy of life infiltrating all that we do. False learning is evidenced in a temporal outlook on life causing one to seek the praise and comforts of this world more than God’s praise and comforts!*

*The glories of the earth are few and temporal... why then do we spend so much of our lives in the pursuit of them?*

V. Living Like a Child of God - 3:1-10

A. Stay focused on the privileged position - vs. 1

1. “... what manner of love...” - literally, from what \_\_\_**COUNTRY**\_\_\_ ?
  - a. Where else would you see such a benevolent bestowment?
  - b. We, who rebelled, became enemies in thought and act, could be received
    - No other act could nobility demonstrate than the taking of a peasant beggar, and not just give him his needs, but to take him into the family with all the wealth an privilege it provides!
2. We still cannot fully fathom what is yet to come (what we will be like) - perfect - vs. 2
  - a. We will be like Him (as we strive to be now) - this is a comforting promise, that we will, one day, reach the goal of Christlikeness
  - b. Till then, we strive for this - it is inspired by “seeing Him as He is”
    - Thus, the more we study and observe the Lord, we become more alike
3. Everyone who truly anticipates this, responds with a purifying preparation
  - a. It is not normal to expect company and leave the house messy
  - b. It is not Christian to be led with the thought to just \_\_\_**PUT IT OFF**\_\_\_

B. Stay focused on who you really are - vs. 4-10

1. What sin really is - vs. 4

a. Literally those who are “missing the mark” are those acting lawless

- (1). Those falling short of the standard (not measuring up to expectation)
- (2). Those missing the “prize” (opportunity) do so when they “leave off” the set standard (the moral guide)

- This is the ultimate “chastening” of sin for the believer - a yielding to disobedience leads away from OPPORTUNITY

b. The believer obeys to be apart of the “action” - the highest prize of any believer is the participation in the fulfillment of God’s working!

- Sin carries with it the dread (shame) of MISSING OUT (Moses missed the entry in the promised land; Saul missed the monarchy)

2. What it really means to “abide” in Christ - vs. 5-6

a. Christ came to “bear away” all our sins (He was made flesh for this purpose)

- In Him was absolutely no sin (what defined Him as Holy of Himself)

b. Those who “abide” in Christ literally, “are not sinning”

- (1). Sin is not what I am (it does not “FIT” who I now am)

- I am no longer the person I was before Christ

- (2). It (sinning) does not define the believer - “If a man deliberately and intentionally does wrong, he shows that he is not actuated by the spirit of religion. It is true that when one does wrong, or commits sin, there is a momentary assent of the will; but it is under the influence of passion, or excitement, or temptation, or provocation, and not as the result of a deliberate plan or purpose of the soul.”

- (3). It would contradict who and what they are (as each sin does)

- (4). It is the presence of the BATTLE that lends to “proof” of sonship

3. There is no such thing as an “evil Christian!” - vs. 7-8

a. Don’t be tricked by those using salvation as license to sin (act however)

- (1). Liberty is freedom from having to fulfill the law for acceptance
- (2). Liberty is not a “free-for-all” to live contrary to our namesake!

b. It will be seen in the “life basics”

- (1). In my speech (its content, tone, and intent)
- (2). In my will (what I am after - my will or God’s; do they harmonize?)
- (3). In my “LOVES” (what consumes the heart)

c. He/she DOES righteousness - they are active (versus, simply defensive!)

- (1). We are more to be defined by what we do than by what we don’t do.
  - What are we actively pursuing now? Is it more the removal of something or the engrafting of what is better?
- (2). It is easy to develop a life of “do nots”

In a determined fashion – d. A person “contentedly” living a life of sin is of the Devil - vs. 8

- As the Devil was characterized from our first encounter with him

4. Whoever is “born of God” is not a “sinner” - vs. 9

a. Because His seed remains in them (they cannot “fall away”)

- “The idea is clearly that the germ or principle of piety so permanently abides in the soul, that he who is renewed never can become again characteristically a sinner.” Barnes

b. We take comfort in the work of the Spirit “pricking” our hearts not having to fret over the “probability” of our abandoning “the faith”

*Paul in Romans 7:14-24 -  
“... it is no more I that do it,  
but sin that dwelleth in me.”*

*Barnes*

*Heb. 6 shows  
the hopelessness  
if it were  
possible that a  
true believer  
could fall away*

## VI. Seeing the “Divinely-Infused” Love - vs. 11-18

### A. The foundational command (message) - be loving each other (present tense) - vs. 11-12

1. It is an active obedience on our part (not just an “air”) - I Cor. 13
2. The “2-8-5” plan (Rick Lambert)

#### a. 2 Actions - our active “stance” with the “brethren”

- (1). Be patient and enduring towards people and CIRCUMSTANCES
  - “A serious follower of Christ cannot afford the luxury of being easily irritated. Frustrations and irritations are from the Lord, and serve as special guides to lead you toward being an IMITATOR of God.”
- (2). Be kind and constructive - “Stop trying to withhold the punishment other people deserve (in your eyes), and instead, give them something useful”

#### b. 8 Inward Evidences - if we are really loving on the inside

- (1). You will not be jealous (envious of others) - this was the contrast offered by John in vs. 12. Cain hated (out of envy) his brother and literally “sacrificed him.” Others are often sacrificed to “self-love”
- (2). Enjoying helping other improve (vaunts not itself) versus insistence of others ASSISTING me
- (3). You won’t feel the need to BRAG about yourself (puffed up)
- (4). A drive to be an example, not the exception
  - “Divinely-infused love takes ordinary men and women, and causes them to become an example”
- (5). An inner drive to GIVE (seeks not its own) - not get!
- (6). You’ll be surprisingly patient with the weaknesses of others
  - Driven not to “write people off”

*Love of self figures on being the exception and can do whatever it likes*

*It brings into reality the Golden Rule, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”*

*Rejoice not in iniquity but in truth*

- (7). You’ll see a life as God sees it - thinketh no evil
  - “God’s love is that it replaces negative thinking and evil desires with positive, potential-bent thinking, and righteous desires.
- (8). You’ll see the positive possibilities as reality in the MAKING

#### c. 5 Outward Results - they come “because of” not to create!

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Bears all things</b>    | (1). Your focus will be so solidly set on God, that you will not be derailed by the abuse or offensive behavior of others.     |
| <b>Believes all things</b> | (2). You will be able to invest and help others without feeling like they took advantage of you.                               |
| <b>Hopes all things</b>    | (3). Positive anticipation will become your drive and passion as it relates to others (expecting the best in and about others) |
| <b>Endures all things</b>  | (4). You’ll become a champion for others because of your God-given strength in helping them achieve spiritual goals            |
| <b>Never Fails</b>         | (5). You will be predictably <u>RELIABLE</u> !   |

3. Beware the attitude of Cain - vs. 12 (others must be sacrificed for my comfort)

### B. Do not harbor the idea of being first loved to love - vs. 13

1. Don’t be surprised by the “hatred” of the world
2. Don’t stand (puzzled and troubled) at not being loved by others
  - If everyone waits for others to love first, there will be no love at all
3. Many become distracted and bitter at the bitterness of the world (but it is the self-sacrifice of our Lord that is to be our focus) - Hated but He loved

C. Divinely infused love: attitude and evidence of life- vs. 14-

1. "Love is a token that we are translated from death to life, for by the effects the \_\_\_\_\_ **CAUSE** \_\_\_\_\_ is known." GBN

- a. We know we are truly "born again" because we truly consider others
  - The heart nature of man is to love himself (at all costs) - Others are loved only inasmuch as they "love" (benefit) me
- b. I know I love when it hurts me more to see others hurt more than myself

2. For this love must give itself for the other - vs. 15-16

*It is one "murdering" not one who has murdered. Emphasis is on what I am now, not what I was*

- a. Whoever "hates" (detests) has the spirit of a "murderer"
- b. A believer will not come to the point they cannot "stomach" another brother
  - (1). Resentment comes when I see how others mistreat me
  - (2). Resentment comes when I see how I am not "\_\_\_\_\_ **RECOGNIZED** \_\_\_\_\_"
  - (3). Resentment comes when I see how comfort is most important
- c. Love is seen in deeming another's life (on this earth) above my own
  - (1). Our Lord died that many would be saved
  - (2). Having been the recipient of such love, we are obligated to love in kind
  - (3). Lay it down (at (for) another's disposal)

3. Thus, the "smaller" needs of others should not "phase" us - vs. 17

- a. Whoever has what is needed for this life and sees one who does not, if they do not assist, how can the love of God "dwell" in them?
- b. "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it." Proverbs 3:27
- c. All we have is from God. How can we justify not sharing it? A believer will not deem an \_\_\_\_\_ **ITEM** \_\_\_\_\_ of greater value than a person!
  - Greed is considered wicked because of this

4. It must be lived, not simply professed - vs. 18

*All relationships must see its "proof" to survive*

- a. Don't consider yourself loving because it is written or spoken - James 2:15-16
  - Wanting or intending to love another is not, of itself, any value
- b. Reality of its existence is seen in its "working out" (εργον)- labor
- c. Reality of its existence is seen in its "inescapability" - truth
  - The \_\_\_**HEART**\_\_\_ will not allow neglect! (because it's what I really am!)

5. This returns us to the 2 initial actions (our submissive obedience to see love infused)

- a. Be patient and enduring with others (lit. far off anger with others)
  - (1). Love allows time to "get the real picture" - Prov. 18:13
  - (2). We will not see them as they are in "need" without time
    - (a). Give others more than a "first impression" chance
    - (b). Allow more \_\_\_**TIME**\_\_\_ to "get to know them" - many are "standoffish" because they fear the obligation to love or be loved
- b. Be kind (constructive) - be pleasant
  - (1). Strive to be approachable - don't communicate "beware of \_\_\_**DON**\_\_\_"
  - (2). Plan on being a servant to others - helpful
- c. Overall, we initially offer time and consideration to others - remember, most will not be inclined to share their heart or heir needs without some "prying"
- d. "He does not condemn kind words which are comforting and cheering, but warm words should be accompanied by warm deeds to make real "in deed and in truth". Here is a case where actions do speak louder than mere words." RWP

## VII. The Need for a Confident (Assured) Believer - vs. 19-24

### A. How do we know where we “stand”?

1. He had just addressed the need to love in action and in the heart (in truth)
  - a. This is partly how we “position” ourselves (if we are “of the truth”)
  - b. So that our hearts are “convinced” before Him (assured) - we are with Him
    - (1). It is our “FOOTING” - implanted to take the blows
    - (2). It is our “traction” - ground grippers to enable progress forward
      - The opposite being like walking on ice - there is no security mixed with the expectancy of falling
  - c. Doubt, STIFLED faith, causes us to stand still (spiritual panic, insecurity)
2. The heart’s need for convincing - its situation affects what we do (effectiveness)
  - a. If our hearts “condemn” us - our “conscience” “makes a note” against us
    - (1). We are “pricked” with a known fault (for instance, our lack of love)
    - (2). We know our actions contradict who we are and what we should do
    - (3). “... it is set and placed in this office by God himself: the spirit of man, thus capacitated and empowered, is the candle of the Lord, a luminary lighted and set up by the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly, taking into scrutiny and viewing the penetralia--the private recesses and secret transactions of the inner man, Pr 20:27. Conscience is God’s vicegerent, calls the court in his name, and acts for him.”
  - b. God is greater than this for He sees all! - there is reason to regret (conviction)
    - (1). The fear of the Lord promotes PURITY - He knows all about me
    - (2). It places our “fellowship” in conflict (as when a wrong attitude towards a friend will do)
3. On the other hand, a clear conscience (heart not condemned) yields confidence
  - a. This “confidence” is an “out-SPOKENNESS” - a boldness
    - It was the cherished right of a citizen to speak freely in a free society
  - b. Again, the issue is our heart, not the Lord who condemns!
    - (1). With a clear conscience, we are more apt to “talk” regularly with Him
    - (2). The disadvantage of a pricked conscience is our hesitancy
      - The shame of a contradictory life before His eyes will tend to make us SHY away from the Lord
  - c. Obedience in the life of a believer carries with it a new found boldness!
    - (1). It’s the “if God be for me...” scenario - Rom. 8:31
    - (2). It will seem “more right” to approach Him as a son - as one “walking worthy of the vocation...” Eph. 4:1 (as does it justice!)

*The grip of  
“gripping fear!”*

*Matthew Henry on  
the “Conscience”*

*The goal is to not get  
used to a “nagging”  
conscience*

*Believe Him  
Obey Him*

### B. And, in obedience, we ask and receive - vs. 22-23

1. We receive what we ask because we “watch, guard” his commands
  - With idea of not allowing any to “escape” (they are respected; cherished)
2. His instructions are viewed as non-optional as a means to “get the job” on earth done
  - As with any commanding officer, the “underlings” are driven to PLEASE
3. Obedience is condensed into two concepts...
  - a. Believe “on the name of his son...” (ultimate confidence in His authority)
    - I have this privilege because of Who He is and what He did for me
  - b. Love one another - as He instructed
4. A purpose “BENT” towards obedience asks for the right things (He will surely give what is required in the acting in harmony with His plan)

C. The work of the Spirit in us is the foundation to our confidence - vs. 24

1. Those who “dwell” (abide) in Him Keep His commands (cherish, protect)
2. We know this (as a matter of objective evidence) because of the effects of the Spirit
 

Selfishness	a. Love - Selflessness consumed with the desire for the <u>BEST</u> for others
Despair	b. Joy - Calm delight, a steadily contented spirit
Fear / Frustration	c. Peace - Moderation, calmness (confidence in God)
Proudly Critical	d. Longsuffering - Forebearance, with people and circumstances (far off anger)
Inconsiderate	e. Gentleness - Kindness ( <u>USEFUL</u> as an encourager)
Envy / Resentment	f. Goodness - Actively pursuing the “good” for others (an “active improver”)
Inconsistent	g. Faith - Faithful to others and the Truth (motivated and sustained by faith)
Explosive	h. Meekness - “Gentleness of strength” - controlled responses to wrong / injury
Self-indulgent	i. Temperance - Self-control over evil <u>INCLINATIONS</u>
3. We know we are in Him by these “RESULTS” of the indwelling of the Spirit
  - These will “contrast” false prophets led by false “spirits”

VII. “Put to the Test” Every “Spirit” - 4:1-6

A. Do not be too trusting of seemingly good intentions and good teaching - vs. 1

1. Literally, do not trust everyone who claims to be led by the Holy Spirit
  - a. It will not be by number nor by miracle that authenticity is discovered
    - In Deut. 13:1-5 if a prophet come with miracles yet his message diverts from the Lord, he is to not be followed!
  - b. Even an ANGEL is to to be “checked out” - Gal 1:8
2. The “spirits” (origins of belief and actions) are to be tried!
  - a. This is to be our general approach to life - I Thes. 5:21 (prove all things)
    - Grasp tightly was is right (as to secure it from personal loss)
  - b. Critique all that comes (esp. in the name of the Lord) to influence thought and life - with full expectation of false teachers (influencers)all around
    - “Truth is the foundation of simulation and counterfeits; there had been real communications from the divine Spirit, and therefore others pretended thereto.” MH
  - c. Beware when ATTENTION is sought more for the “man” than the Lord
    - The truest essence of the Holy Spirit is the magnification of Christ; thus any other emphasis is to be considered suspect

*Does it lead to the edifying of simply self or of the Lord and His church?*

B. Discriminate with the truth - vs. 2-4

1. The “spirit” of the belief (teaching) must be two-fold:
  - a. That Jesus is the “Christ” - the Messiah, Redeemer, God Himself
    - Acknowledging the perfect redemption and love for us
  - b. That He came physically (in the flesh) not as it were, a semblence
    - (1). That even the flesh could be “redeemed” (in contradiction to popular teaching that all flesh was evil)
    - (2). This led to an excusing of immorality (it was just the body)
  - c. It is not simply spoken, it is believed (dictates life)
2. Those not “confessing” (agreeing with this) are against Christ
  - a. It is essential we check to see where a teaching intends to lead
    - Is it “faddish” (passing) or is it eternal?
    - Does it build awe for the Lord and dependence on Him or awe of self with greater self-reliance?
  - b. Do not be intimidated by their numbers - vs. 4

*The “flesh” can be conquered and used for the eternal purposes of God*

*Popularity is a difficult lure with which to deal  
Clarifying the Truth - I John*

3. Their “intimidation” will be strictly “of this world” - vs. 4
  - a. We have “CALM confidence of final victory” - RWP
  - b. We are “of God” - out from God, on the “side” of God
    - It is to be understood that there will be distinctions - we will not “blend” in with the surroundings; we must expect to be challenged
  - c. The distinction, though, is found in the difference of BELIEF (systems)

C. The world “applauds” its own and persecutes dissenters - vs. 4-6

1. Being on the side of God, we have the “unfair” advantage - we cannot lose
  - Yet the clear distinction is made; we will not win of our own will and power, but through the power of Him Who is in us (these “fruits” (results) of the Spirit working in us to produce that which contradicts the world)
2. They (those anitchristis and their followers) are on the side of the world
  - a. One of the popular term for this would be “humanists”
  - b. They are united in their goal for the “good of man” above all else
    - This contrasts the seeking of the will of God in all things (not what is necessarily the best for me or others, but what is best in the working out of God’s ways and will in the matter.)
  - c. They speak the message the world wants to hear (they endorse (commend themselves among themselves) what supports the popular trends)
    - II Cor. 10:12 - “For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.”
  - d. The world will hear them because it is what they want (it will be popular)

Romans 1:32- they glory and endorse what in truth contradicts God, even using a “front” of religion

*We are not to be of those who seek out only endorsers of what they want, but those who endorse as stictly as possible what God wants!*

3. It must be remembered, that this is describing professing Christians
4. Those of God hear (accept) the teaching of the APOSTLES (we) - vs. 6
  - a. This is not the “we” as in all of us, but the “we” of John and the other apostles
  - b. Those popular teachers were adding and taking away from the revealed revelation - they put their “spin” on it (they seek to improve, not clarify)
    - Much will be done to make Scripture fit the times, not make the times fit the Scripture

5. This is one of the clearest ways to spot Truth and error - vs. 6

To “try” them is to “put them up to the light” to spot flaws - δοκιμαζω

- a. Hereby we know - by this we can figure it out (standard of comparison)
- b. Their “reverence” or lack of it will be a factor - there is no NT example of the truth becoming “world popular” - if a teaching does, it should be suspect
  - “error” means fraudulent (as it is an imposter, posing as the truth)

D. Recognize the importance of maintaining the Truth - Judges 1:27-2:10

1. Israel was incomplete in their work (obedience) in claiming the land
  - a. They did not drive out the “wicked” inhabitants of the land (as instructed)
    - The Canaanites had what was popularly considered a legitimate religious system (espousing the greatness of Baal and his causes)
    - They had REPLACEMENTS for God and godliness (as will the modern)
  - b. They became content with partial progress - “Neither did...”
    - They became tolerant of dangerous influences

*Consensual by groups*

2. They did not pass on godly teachers - Judges 2:6-10

- a. When they died off the next generation arose without firsthand knowledge of the greatness of God’s working

(b). They did not know the Lord - they had not been taught

3. Recognize the danger of second generation apathy

- a. Each church or family is one generation away from \_\_\_\_\_ APOSTASY \_\_\_\_\_!
- b. Apathy is lacking concern for what is right (just don't care) - evidenced in lack of time given investing the "best" into others
- c. People will do what is right in their own eyes (this is why "right" needs to be defined! (taught and demonstrated till proven real)
- d. What is needed?

Versus distractions (1). Continuous reminders of God's \_\_\_\_\_ SPECIFIC \_\_\_\_\_ works

Versus giving up or in (2). Patience to wait for God's direction and purposes (counsel) - Psa. 106

Versus passing worldly infatuations (3). Building an awe for God versus man or things

Versus worldly intimidation (4). Reminders of God's \_\_\_\_\_ POTENTIAL \_\_\_\_\_ strength in any situation (faith)

Versus "backbiting" (5). Submission and respect of God-give authority

VIII. The Underlying Reason Why True Christians Love - vs. 7-21

A. Love comes from God - vs. 7-8

1. He is the originator of Love - it is His design and purpose

a. The popular ideas of love were two-fold:

- (1). ερος - sensual (getting, lusting) - focus is on receiving
- (2). φιλια - Mutual love (friends) it gives as long as it receives

b. The obscure form of love was brought to attention by the Lord

- (1). αγαπη - Selfless - focused on giving without proper return
- (2). It is finding value in the investment in others (as I have received)

2. This distinct love defines our "works" \_\_\_\_\_ VALUE \_\_\_\_\_ - I Cor. 13:1-3

a. If one could talk in all languages (even angels) it is valueless without love

b. If one has special spiritual discernment and powerful faith to do miracles, it is literally "nothing" if not done for love of God and others

- Literally, an "absolute \_\_\_\_\_ ZERO \_\_\_\_\_" - RWP

c. If one does great works of "charity" and self-sacrifice, the personal profit is none at all (it has no lasting value to one's self)

d. This is why there should almost be a "pleading" for love for each other

e. This involves a few key actions on our part...

- (1). Time is spent on others I should love (we invest in what we love: if we need to develop a loving heart, we must invest!)
- (2). Learning the needs of those I am to love and participate in the meeting of them (always an alert investigator)
- (3). A reordering of personal priorities so as to not hinder this love

B. Love defined in action by the originator - God Himself - vs. 9-10

1. The essence of love is giving - (manifested - made apparent by God giving)

a. He gave the very best - His only son

b. Love gives the best (being "cheap" while giving is not love)

- It is not necessarily the giving of things, but of giving one's heart

c. This is all illustrated in John 3:16 - God love, God gave (for our best)

2. He loved us, not because we loved Him

a. Love is the initiator, not the responder (not focused on the recipient's response)

b. It is driven by the need not the \_\_\_\_\_ WORTHINESS \_\_\_\_\_

- These are to characterize us! (This separates φιλια from αγαπη)

*Love of God motivating love for others has to be the key criteria in the "gold, silver and precious stones" of I Corinthians 3*

3. God's love provided the means to "pay the due" of our sins
  - a. This is the heart idea of "propitiation" - appeasement; paying off the debt
  - b. Love is evidenced best when we are given the opportunity to forgive the "debts" of others to us, constantly keeping clear any offenses others may "steer into" against us!

C. Seeing God at work in ourselves (proof of God)- vs. 11-13

1. If God loved us in such a manner, in such a manner we are indebted to love
  - a. He loved - so purposed in Himself
  - b. He gave (sent)- of what was most PRECIOUS
  - c. He "stooped" - when we were most unlovely!
2. How better to demonstrate (prove) the Spirit of God? - vs. 12
  - a. No "man" has ever truly seen God (as no one will this side of eternity)
    - There is a better way to PROVE God than the miraculous!
  - b. God's Spirit in us works its way to completion in our love for others
    - (1). Here is how His love is "perfected" (brought to the goal (intention))
    - (2). His love of us and in us will work its way out to the expression to others
  - c. Think of it like in a family - how can brothers and sisters say they love their parents if they do not love each other?
    - (1). If I love God, I love what He loves (He loves the "brethren")
    - (2). So how can I say I love God when I cannot "stand" one of His?
3. Again, it is this outworking of His Spirit that gives us confidence - vs. 13
  - a. An unloving or "hateful" believer will struggle with DOUBTS
  - b. God gives us insights into the flaws and error of others to be an active participant in the solution to the problem. The solution does not lie in condemnation or in giving-up on the "brethren" but in the longsuffering with them for their best! (This defines God, this defines those in whom He dwells)

*His qualities in us prove to others the existence and working of God, and in turn prove to self the existence of God within.*

D. A firsthand account - vs. 14-16

1. Again, John was an actual witness to the coming of the Lord
2. The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world (offered, but not all receive)
  - In love, God's offering was not based upon the world's response, but on His plan for what was best and needed (as love always acts)
3. Those confessing that Christ is God, God dwells in them (flesh and blood could not reveal this to us - Mt. 16:17) - so knowing and believing this to be fact, we love - this is the source of being able to continually love without expectation of return
4. He who remains loving, remains assured he/she is in the God - so it is coming to grips, firsthand also, with knowing I am a loving person
  - Submitting to the opportunities to express God's love to others THROUGH me!

E. Perfected love versus fear - vs. 17-23

1. "There is not fear in love" - no dread
  - As others may fear a great man of authority, wielding power over life and death for a person, his children, confident in his love, do not dread him
2. "Matured" love makes fear "go away"
  - a. Just as we do not shy back from eternity (we come with boldness), the love we demonstrate should not carry with it a "price"
  - b. Just as we do not fear God's love being subject to "take-backs" neither should our love be "subject to change"
3. If we doubt the love of God for us, we will be unloving with others (vacuum like)
  - "CONDEMNED" people are not likely to be loving!

*God's love does not carry with it a weight, neither should our love carry with it a "maintenance fee"*

4. This is the type of love we ought to EMULATE
- (1). If one knows truly they are loved, they have no dread in the relationship
- (2). We are to seek opportunities to “prove” our love to cause others no reason whatsoever to dread a relationship with us
5. We do this because we were responders to God’s love, not initiators - vs. 19
- (1). We would not love God at all except that He loved us first
- (2). I, then, must expect to initiate love (when proven this way, it matures the process and casts out fear based in the doubt of - “what can possibly go wrong?”)
6. How can we say (believe) we love God when we do not love those we can see?
- (1). It is a farce to say one loves God and “hates” his brother
- (a). To hate is to “detest” or despise - usually based upon a DIFFERENCE
- (b). The natural source of detesting is disassociation - it is not what I like
- *Either I will expect others to conform to me or I will expect me to conform to God*
- (c). The heart of love is based on a voluntary submission of the will to treat another as I want to be treated in spite of differences
- (d). It is the cherishing of another (giving to them “weight”) - the two initial evidences of love are “longsuffering” and “kind” (sensitive to others’ hearts) - not failing to consider their perspective or condition
- (e). This “hate” is to not “bear with” the “oddities” of others and to then act or speak (originating in the thoughts) ungraciously
- (2). We see our “brothers” but not God
- (a). To “see” here is to STUDY or observe over time (they are obvious)
- (2). It is human nature to base love on the observable (loving what is admirable and loving, with PITY, what is not)
- (3). So, if we cannot submit to love what is observable, how can we submit to love what is not?
- (3). We, then, are commanded: if we would love God, we will love our brothers
- Again, love is predispositioning my will to see the need for loving in all

*The living example of what love entails is our Lord in Philippians 2 where he “emptied Himself of Himself”... love is “full of others and God rather than full of self!*

IX. Final Exams for Our Love of God - 5:1-3

A. The initial test of our purity in the Truth is our love of God

1. Our love of God is first seen in fully believing that Jesus is the promised Messiah
2. Belief and love go hand-in-hand
  - One will not love what they do not believe in or of (that it is worth it in my obedience to God and in the need of the brother, and in the enhancing of my own life) - actually, loving my fellow Christian fits my best interests

B. Another test is our love of those “begotten” of Him Who “begets”

1. “Our love to them appears to be sound and genuine when we love them not merely upon any secular account, as because they are rich, or learned, or kind to us, or of our denomination among religious parties; but because they are God’s children, his regenerating grace appears in them, his image and superscription are upon them, and so in them **God himself** is loved.” MH
2. “All friendship must be tested by loyalty to God; all love to Him must be tested by charity.” Ellicott
3. His commands in such areas are truly not “grievous” - were we “perfect” they would be our natural choice - the love of God prompts keeping His commands which, in turn, benefits all those we come in contact. - vs. 2-3

*I prove my love for God by selfless acts of love for others while proving my love for others with obedience to God (for their sake and my own.)*

4. These commands of God only become burdensome when our desires lie elsewhere
  - This is the crux of the matter - love of self versus love of God - I will obey the one I love the most

X. Called to be Overcomers - vs. 4-10

A. “Whatever” is conceived (planned and purposed) of God is always victorious - vs. 4

1. The enemy pushes the “world” as the dominant force with which to be reckoned
  - a. It represents to us the intimidation of worldly **THINKING** (how to live)
  - b. It represents to us the intimidation of worldly priorities (what’s important)
2. The true “scheme” of things is the seemingly “behind the scenes” workings towards the **IMMINENT** victory of the cause of Christ
3. What is the conqueror of the worldly system? - our faith
  - a. Yet, it must be clear, it is not the strength of our faith but the **OBJECT** of it!
  - b. It is the faith in Jesus as the Son of God that conquers
4. The enemy will strive to represent the cause of Christ as a “loosing” matter
  - a. This is why the claim - “His commands are not grievous”
  - b. The enemy does not reveal the truth - it is far more grueling to maintain (keep up) with the world standard (commands, trends, expectations, loves - all which change with time) than it is the steady, grace-induced obedience to a loving God with truly desired outcomes
  - c. It is the building of confidence that John is driving at

*As David wrestled with the mocking statements of the enemy, “Where is your God?”*

B. The object of our faith, Christ, was proven three-fold (to meet the “legal” requirement of proof)

1. The three-fold witness on the earth: - vs. 6-8
  - a. He came by water - the consecration and endorsement at His baptism
  - b. He came by blood - the sacrificial death on the cross and miraculous resurrection
  - c. The inner witness of His Spirit in us (inner confidence working outward evidence)
2. If we are likely to believe the witnesses of man, we must hold God’s witness higher - vs. 9
  - a. This is why the “**FEAR** of man” is a snare - Pro. 29:25
  - b. This pivots on our “paradigm” - structure of thinking (with a bias)
    - We are prone to seek evidence that supports our paradigm, which if biased towards fear of man, excludes or writes-off evidence from God; yet if biased (in faith) toward God we are prone to exclude or write-off man’s best “evidence”
  - c. We must not feel “guilty” when faced with seemingly contradictory evidence from man against God or His ways (as man constantly down-plays evidence from God)
3. The “witness” of the life and sacrifice of Christ act as credit to our belief or condemnation to our disbelief - vs. 10

As overcomers, we have a conscious “bias” towards trust in God’s “greatness”

We are to hold to a higher accountability to stand firmly against (in the truth of our character) those who disregard the record of God sending His Son (the gospel truth)

- a. We act as support to the fact of this truth - we are not set aside to contradict with our words, thoughts or actions the rightness of God!
- b. Those allowing an actual or mental position against the rightness of God in any matter side with those calling God a liar
  - Those seemingly little negative thoughts or statements take on new meaning in light of these thoughts
4. We stand as the clearest evidence the world will most often see (Rev. 2-3)

*Ephesus  
Smyrna*

- a. We live to overcome the that which **DRAWS** our heart from the love of God
- b. We live to overcome the threats and troubles the world brings for non-conformity

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <i>Pergamos</i>     | c. We live to overcome the godless philosophies of the world (with truth/action)  |
| <i>Thyatira</i>     | d. We live to overcome the lusts of the flesh (good over evil)  |
| <i>Sardis</i>       | e. We live to overcome the “life-drainers” with continual revivals  |
| <i>Philadelphia</i> | f. We live to overcome using the “weak” things over the “strong”  |
| <i>Laodicia</i>     | g. We live to overcome complacency (apathy and mediocrity) - as overcomers<br>life zeal is strengthened with challenge and never knows boredom! |

## XI. That We May Know - 5:11-15

A. It is upon the witness of God in the life, death and resurrection of Christ that we know we have eternal life

1. It is life - more than just living, it is a fulfilled secure existence
2. This fulfilled existence is eternal - unending life, not future, but now!
3. It is to affect our thinking/outlook on all of life (full of hope versus fatigue)
  - a. We know, at present, and always we are overcomers
  - b. The bitter experiences of life cannot overwhelm this hope - II Cor. 4:17

**I**n the human heart, even when converted, there is such a proneness to unbelief; the religious affections so easily become cold; there are so many cares pertaining to the world that are fitted to distract the mind; there are so many allurements of sin to draw the affections away from the Saviour; that there is need of being constantly reminded of the nature of religion, in order that the heart may not be wholly estranged from the Saviour. No small part of preaching, therefore, must consist of the re-statement of arguments with which the mind has been before fully convinced; of motives whose force has been once felt and acknowledged; and of the grounds of hope and peace and joy which have already, on former occasions, diffused comfort through the soul. It is not less important to keep the soul, than it is to convert it; to save it from coldness, and deadness, and formality, than it was to impart to it the elements of spiritual life at first. It may be as important to trim a vine, if one would have grapes, as it is to set it out; to keep a garden from being overrun with weeds in the summer, as it was to plant it in the spring. Barnes

c. It is our confidence! - it is the basis on which we boldly come before God, and in so doing, are not driven by the fear of man - if I need not fear He Who can destroy the both soul and body in hell, why fear those who can only destroy the body? - Mt. 10:28

d. It is our life's purpose - we “number our days” to apply our hearts - Psa. 90:12

B. This life is “in his Son.” - vs. 11-12

1. It is because of Christ (His perfect life culminating in His perfect sacrifice)
  - We are appalled at the thought of God instructing Abraham to sacrifice his son (as the “other gods” so required of their followers) only to see the perfect pictured fulfilled in Christ as God gave totally of Himself to bring us to Himself, leaving off of us this unachievable burden and task.
2. Without Christ there is no life (as it is intended to be) - imitations will be proven as such
3. “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” Galatians 2:20
  - a. Literally, I am “impaled together with” Christ and yet I am alive
    - An yet my living is not mine to live (as one redeemed from death)
  - b. It is now defined as Christ living in me as the result of Christ literally “surrendering” Himself on my behalf (and oddly enough I am now as both slave and fellow heir!)

C. This insight was written that we might know for sure - why is this important? - vs. 13-15

1. It creates in us a boldness - “confidence” - lit. an out-spokenness
  - a. A confidence when asking (assuredly) in the will of God - if it is clearly in the promotion of His “kingdom” we have no need to hesitate - if solely the promotion of us, we need not bring the issue up!
  - b. Unbelief causes us to avoid asking at all - if I firmly see myself as His child, why would I hesitate to present any “case” before him (as a child should feel readily free to approach the parent with any situation)