



1, 2, 3 JOHN

Genuine Salvation Always Results in Love and Obedience

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

1 John 3:23-24

STUDY

For many who walk in its daily experience, doubt is a menacing evil that pervades the minds of those unsure and unsettled in their faith—stealing their joy, peace, and contentment. Doubt floods the individual with questions and uncertainties, that if left unchecked, can render a life useless and unproductive in growth and maturity. And to listen and entertain the doctrine from those who push doubt and confusion, intentionally or otherwise, is to make yourself vulnerable to be deceived and stumble from walking in the truth. Settling in doubt is destructive, making it of paramount importance for the believer to cling to truth and separate himself from all that is false.

“These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.” The Apostle John had sure intention for his writings to first century Christians—purposing to reassure believers of their faith amid the influx of deceivers who told of a false gospel. John, now an elderly man, wanted his readers to be complete in their understanding—having the whole picture and full understanding of truth. He was one who was personally chosen by Jesus to walk with Him as one of His disciples, witnessed and took part in His life and ministry, and

beholding Him after His death and resurrection. For John, to see others walk in the truth of Jesus would bring joy.

In the works of 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John, known as the *Johannine epistles* he writes so that believers may know what is right fellowship, walk in it, have full joy, may not sin, won’t be deceived by those who peddle false doctrine, and be sure of eternal life. This is only attainable when we abide in Him—listening to and following the One who is Truth.

For those who follow Christ, true fellowship is centralized on the Person of Jesus Christ.

John the beloved, as he is commonly referred to, addresses his audience of believers as his little children. Using powerful symbols of light and darkness, truth and error, life and death, and love and hate, he paints vivid pictures of how to walk right with God—reminding his children of the truth so that there might be no room for doubt. For those who walk in true salvation, love and obedience will always follow for our fellowship with God directly impacts our fellowship with others.

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Part 1: Genuine Fellowship

John proclaims Jesus is the Light and having no darkness at all. This is no new reality, but truth from the beginning and one that John has before declared. For anyone who claims fellowship with Jesus, they must know who He is, submit to this reality, and have a lifestyle that reflects His authority—walking not in darkness, but in the light of truth—maturing in faith and growing in holiness.

Read 1 John 1:1-10

As in his gospel account (John 1), what similar way does the opening of this letter begin?

What truths does John revisit?

Who is the *Word of Life*?

What is John's desire for the audience in this letter concerning fellowship?

To walk in darkness is to live outside of God's truth and holiness to instead live in error and sin. Is it possible to have genuine fellowship with Jesus while continuing in darkness?

What truth does John reveal concerning our actual fellowship with Jesus if we walk in darkness?

What happens when our confession of sin meets God's faithfulness and justice?

Reflection:

Take a moment to really think about the life you live. Would your daily life reflect one who is walking in genuine right relationship and reflecting the light of Christ or a lifestyle of darkness? In what area(s) might you need to mature?

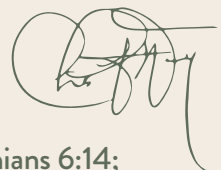
Fellowship with God the Father begins with salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ, the Word of Life. There is no other way. A marker of knowing if you are genuinely saved and walking in right fellowship with Jesus is a life characterized by holy living as opposed to having a life of habitual, unrepentant sinning.

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us—what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

1 John 1:1–3

Walking in Darkness

There's a difference between walking through the darkness, as all of us must do at times, and walking in darkness. What we mean by "walking in darkness" is letting down our guard and doing things that are displeasing to God. We read in 1 John 1:6 that when we walk in darkness (not through it), we are out of fellowship with God.



See also 2 Corinthians 6:14;
Ephesians 5:8; Colossians 1:12-13.

Part 2:

Love and Obedience

A believer's love for God exists not apart from his actions, namely his obedience to God's commands. A true life of faith should be distinguished by love for God, others, and continuance in what is true. For one to have fellowship with God, he must believe who He is, walk in His ways, and love as He commands.

Read 1 John 2:1-14

Why are those who are in true fellowship with Jesus not powerless against sin in their lives?

What does a person's obedience say about their profession and commitment to Christ?

What is the central theme that comprises both of John's stated commandments—linking the new with the old? See. John 13:34.

What does a person's love for the brethren reveal about their fellowship with Christ?

What specific message does John have for those mature-, advancing in experience-, and young-in-the-faith?

Read 1 John 2:15-29

What prohibition and truth does John give for those who practice worldliness and love the world system?

What does John emphasize by saying, "it is the last hour" and that "many antichrists have appeared?"

As identified by 1 John 2:22, what is of the heretical teaching of antichrists?

How were the teachings of the antichrists exposing the faith of some?

Why is it important to abide in Christ—remaining in fellowship with Him and being obedient to do His work?

Reflection:

In what ways does your life demonstrate a life of love for God and love for others?

Jesus stands as the propitiation (atoning sacrifice) for our sins—the means by which they are forgiven. And through Him is the only way to have a right relationship with God the Father. This right relationship implicates a lifestyle opposite

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.

1 John 2:15

Worldliness:

having the same purpose, perspective, and priority as those who live in this world but do not know God; being shaped by the world instead of Him.

Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

1 John 2:28

of the world and its culture to instead one of genuine love for God and man. And while many antichrists may profess a gospel concerning Jesus, the genuine believer maintains that He is the Son of God and will abide in His love and forgiveness—leading to eternal life. The believer does not have to walk in sin. He has the Holy Spirit to teach and help him walk in truth. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous (1 John 3:7-10).

Part 3: **Love's Greatest Expression**

The distinct pleasure granted by God is that we can be called His very own children. This gift of affectionate possession and personal fellowship is not an achievement of our own doing, but an honor bestowed upon us as a product of His great love. And this bestowal has an implication for the way we live. In like manner to our Savior, showing us the greatest expression of love, we should love one another.

Read 1 John 3:11-24

What is the message that has been *from the beginning*?

According to John, how can one know if he has passed out of death into salvation life?

Hating your brother is tantamount to committing what offense?

What stands as the greatest expression of love for another? In like manner, what must we do in our everyday actions—laying down our lives for the brethren? How should the believer demonstrate his love one to another?

What is said of the one who obeys God to keep His commandments?

Reflection:

How often do you ponder the complete work that Christ accomplished on the cross for you? In what way(s) are you demonstrating that you are a grateful child of His?

For those who have been made righteous, we should seek to live righteous lives. We bear the name of Christ who loves us, and as His children, are to live lives that reflect this reality. The message of love has been from the beginning. In our true faith, united with Him, we abide in Christ and love the brethren just as Christ has loved us (1 John 4:11).

This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.

The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

1 John 3:23-24

Part 4:

Practical Outworkings of Love and Obedience

In personal letters to “the chosen lady and her children” along with the “well-beloved Gaius,” John underscores truths mentioned in his previous letter. In 2 John, he warns of staying alert against false teachers who were making rounds in the local churches—professing falsehood against the Person of Christ, and in 3 John he expresses appreciation for love shown to the brethren traveling as teachers and missionaries.

Read 2 John

From his opening greeting, what virtue does John express for the elect (chosen) lady and her children?

What truths concerning the commandment of love, antichrists in the world, and the truth concerning the Person of Jesus does John repeat in this letter as mentioned in 1 John?

What prohibition does John give for those who do not teach the truth concerning Jesus Christ and His coming in the flesh? The one who accepts those peddling false teaching is in effect guilty of what?

Read 3 John

From his opening greeting, what virtue does John express for Gaius?

Bringing him joy, what does John commend Gaius for doing?

What testimony has Gaius earned from others in his love for others?

How can the brethren be considered a partner with missionaries who work to proclaim the Name of Christ?

In obedience, what should the believer imitate?

Reflection:

What visible and tangible testimony could others write of you concerning your love of God and obedience to walk in His truth?

Love and obedience should define the believer’s lifestyle who claims fellowship with Christ. The tangible outworkings of our lifestyle are demonstrated both by what we do and what we do not do. Our actions can point people toward Jesus—or, if we’re careless, they can open the door for confusion and false ideas.

“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ ‘This is the great and foremost commandment. ‘The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ‘On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”

Matthew 22:36–40

Conclusion:

Amid the false teachers that infiltrated the churches during the time of the first century AD—stirring up doubt and shaking the faith of some, the Apostle John writes to proclaim and assure that those who profess Christ can be sure of eternal life.

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God,
and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of
Him. By this we know that we love the children of God,
when we love God and observe His commandments.

For this is the love of God,
that we keep His commandments;
and His commandments are not burdensome
(1 John 5:1–3).

In his letters to believers and with the experience to back it up, John states unequivocally, salvation comes alone through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The mark of this fellowship is always characterized by love and obedience for God and others. With His death on the cross—laying down His life for our sins so that we might have eternal life, Jesus showed the ultimate expression of love for us. How then ought you to live?

The books of 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John together present foundational truths of great importance for the believer who wrestles with doubt concerning eternal life and assurance in Jesus Christ, necessitating a need for intentional exploration and dedicated study. While this guide primarily focuses on how to walk in right fellowship with Jesus and the markers of genuine faith, readers are encouraged to pursue further study of these books to explore additional theological themes not covered in this guide.

GET IN TOUCH WITH GOD

We encourage you to immerse yourself daily in the living Word of God. As you do, you will find yourself drawn ever closer to the heart of the Father. To aid you in this pursuit, we've provided selections from the Old and New Testaments, Psalms, and Proverbs—an invitation to listen intently as God speaks through His Word each day.

As you read or listen, pause and consider the depths of God's character and His loving relationship with you. Who is He? What do you discover about His holiness, His goodness, and His love for you? Picture each passage as a personal communication from the Lord, a letter meant to deepen your communion with Him and to guide you on the journey of following His will. What truths is He revealing to you? Is there an area of your life that requires change or surrender? Are you being invited to apply a principle that will help you walk more faithfully?

Remember, the purpose is not simply to finish the readings but to come to know God more intimately. Do not rush; the quantity of Scripture you read is far less significant than the quality of your engagement with it. If all you manage is a chapter or a few verses, do not be disheartened. What is most important is that you seek the Lord's presence daily. As you look for Him in the pages of His Word, you will find Him, and your relationship with Him will grow in ways that will transform your life.

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Day 1: Hosea 13:1–14:9, Psalm 140:1–5, Proverbs 29:23, Revelation 1:1–20

Day 2: Joel 1:1–3:21, Psalm 140:6–13, Proverbs 29:24, Revelation 2:1–29

Day 3: Amos 1:1–3:15, Psalm 141:1–4, Proverbs 29:25, Revelation 3:1–22

Day 4: Amos 4:1–5:27, Psalm 141:5–10, Proverbs 29:26, Revelation 4:1–11

Day 5: Amos 6:1–7:17, Psalm 142:1–7, Proverbs 29:27, Revelation 5:1–14

Day 6: Amos 8:1–9:15, Psalm 143:1–6, Proverbs 30:1–4, Revelation 6:1–17

Day 7: Obadiah 1–21, Psalm 143:7–12, Proverbs 30:5, Revelation 7:1–17



To close out this class, spend time in prayer committing yourself to God's service. Set your heart to obey whatever He directs you to do—regardless of whether it scares you, and you feel it is below you, appears too simple to have any real impact, or seems completely outside your wheelhouse. Then, thank Him for showing you what to do step by step, equipping you to serve Him, and producing fruit through you even when you don't see it.



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