

1 John 3:19 Commentary

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FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND HIS CHILDREN
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Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
Another Overview Chart - [1 John](#) - Charles Swindoll

BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP		BEHAVIOR OF FELLOWSHIP	
Conditions of Fellowship	Cautions of Fellowship	Fellowship Characteristics	Fellowship Consequences
Meaning of Fellowship 1 Jn 1:1-2:27		Manifestations of Fellowship 1 Jn 2:28-5:21	
Abiding in God's Light		Abiding in God's Love	
Written in Ephesus			
circa 90 AD			

From Talk Thru the Bible

1 John 3:19 We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him:

Greek - Kai en touto gnosometha (1PFMI) hoti ek tes aletheias esmen (1PPAI) kai emprosthen autou peisomen (1PFAI) ten kardian hemon .

ESV on 1Jn 3:19-20 - By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; for

whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.

NET - 19 And by this we will know that we are of the truth and will convince our conscience in his presence, 20 that if our conscience condemns us, that God is greater than our conscience and knows all things.

Wuest on 1Jn 3:19-20 - The sense of the whole passage is therefore, "In this we shall know experientially that out of the truth we are, and in His presence shall tranquilize our heart in whatever our heart condemns us, because God is greater than our hearts and knows all things."

- **By this** - 1Jn 3:14 1:8 John 13:35 18:37
- **Will:** 1Jn 3:21 Isa 32:17 Heb 6:10,11 10:22
- **assure:** Gr. persuade, Ro 4:21 8:38 2Ti 1:12 Heb 11:13
- [1 John 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries.

BLESSED ASSURANCE

Allen - The topic of this paragraph is confidence. Notice John's use of words like "know," "reassure," and "confidence." Confidence is based on the fact that we have believed in Jesus and are thus in the family of God and that, as obedient children in the family, we love others in the family. Since we are in the family and since we love others in the family, we can come to our Father with our prayer requests with confident assurance that he will hear us.

There are some difficulties in interpretation of 1Jn 3:19-20, some of which are grammatical (which will not be discussed in detail) and more importantly others which are major interpretative issues. To summarize, some excellent expositors (John Calvin, Charles Simeon, Martyn Lloyd-Jones) "interpret these verses as a warning to those who do not conscientiously apply John's admonition about love. They understand these verses to be aimed at those who love only with word or tongue, not in deed and truth (1Jn 3:18). So they say that if anyone is condemned by his conscience, how much more will he be condemned by God, Who knows all things. They do not see these as verses of *comfort to disturbed hearts*, but rather as verses to *disturb comfortable hearts*." ([Steven Cole](#)) Most conservative expositors see these passages as intended by John to give his readers **assurance** that they were genuinely saved and that is the interpretative approach my comments will take.

I like **Hiebert's** introductory comments on 1Jn 3:19-24 - The practice of Christian love also has a beneficial impact on the one who loves. In these verses John sets forth different aspects of the assurance that will arise in the heart of the believer from his practice of love; it is the fruit of the Spirit. The practice of love will produce inner assurance of being in the truth (1Jn 3:19-20), give confidence that prayer will be answered (1Jn 3:21-22), and assure the believer of his intimate union with Christ (1Jn 3:23-24).

John MacArthur introduces this section - In contrast to the erroneous views of **Arminianism** and **Free Grace**, which either make assurance impossible to keep or provide the wrong criteria for sustaining it, John wrote this epistle so that those "who believe in the name of the Son of God, ... may know that [they] have eternal life" (1Jn 5:13). He wanted his readers to be certain of their salvation, possessing an assurance that was both legitimate and lasting. With that in mind, John concisely offers five familiar attitudes in 1Jn 3:19-24 that true believers will consistently manifest in their lives. By examining themselves (cf. 2Cor. 13:5), they can know for certain that they are saved, because their lives will be characterized by: gratitude for God's grace, boldness in prayer, submission to God's commands, faith in Jesus Christ, and appreciation for the indwelling Holy Spirit. (Read his longer discussion dealing with the erroneous views in his sermon entitled [Holy Affections](#))

John Stott - It is within the general context of the letter's teaching on assurance that this paragraph (1Jn 3:19-20) about the condemning heart must be read. However firmly grounded the Christian's assurance is, his heart may sometimes need reassurance. ([The Letters of John by John R. W. Stott](#))

Sam Storms - Although this is a digression of sorts, it is vitally connected with the preceding argument. Till now John has not only sought to expose the false "professor" of faith but also to confirm and assure the genuine "*possessor*" of life. However, Christians, being human and thus prone to sin, experience doubt regarding their relationship with God. John here addresses this reality and how it affects our prayer lives. **Boice explains:** "To be sure, John has developed his argument concerning the basis for Christian assurance in a masterly way. But as a pastor he knows that in spite of all he has said there will still be some who feel condemned in their own eyes and who are therefore depressed by this and lack assurance. This self-condemnation can be due to a number of factors. It can be a matter of disposition; some people are just more introspective and melancholy than others. It may be a question of health; how a person feels inevitably affects how he thinks. It may be due to specific sin. It may be due to circumstances. But whatever the cause, the problem is a real one and is quite widespread. How is a believer to deal with such doubt? How can he overcome depression? John apparently recognized this problem as a real one in his time and therefore wisely interrupts his argument at this point to deal with it. How does a Christian deal with doubt? Although there are many causes for it, there is only one answer. It is: by knowledge. The Christian must simply take himself in hand and confront himself with what he knows to be true

concerning God and God's work in his life. In other words, faith (which is the opposite of doubt), being based on knowledge, must be fed by it. This is the point that John develops at the close of this third chapter" (quoted from [The Epistles of John Expository Commentary](#)) ([Sam Storms- First John 3:10b-24](#))

By this (this is the first phrase in the Greek text) - **Whenever you encounter a phrase like this, pause and ponder asking at least "By what?"** There are always basically two choices, that the author is referring to forward or backward. There are commentaries which favor **by this** as referring to the preceding text (the approach I favor) while others favor reference to the text that follows. What is interesting is that those in the latter camp like [Kruise](#) make the statement that although **by this** points forward "*it does so in a way that carries forward the preceding discussion.*" So even this second interpretation is not ready to completely discount the preceding section. Now are you really confused?

I like the simple explanation of the **Pulpit Commentary** which writes that **by this** "refers to what precedes; and the thought is similar to that in 1John 3:14. By sincere and active love we shall come to know that we are children of the truth."

W Hall Harris in his exegetical commentary on First John writes that "it seems better to understand the phrase **by this** (en toutō) in 1Jn 3:19 as referring to the preceding context, and this makes perfectly good sense, because we have understood 1Jn 3:18 to conclude with a reference to the righteous deeds with which believers are to love one another, deeds which are produced by the truth. It is by doing these deeds, these expressions of love, that believers can assure themselves that they belong to the truth, because the outward action reflects the inward reality of their relationship with God. Put another way (once again), conduct is the clue to paternity." ([Exegetical Commentary on 1 John 3:11-24](#))

"Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth. By this we shall know that we are of the truth." In short, it is by loving one another in deed and in truth that we can reassure our hearts before God.

John MacArthur - When believers **know** they have sincere love for one another, they can be certain that they are of the truth (the phrase literally reads, "out of the truth we exist").

John Stott sees **by this** as referring to the preceding section - Love is the final objective test of our Christian profession, for true love, in the sense of self-sacrifice, is not natural to human beings in their fallen state. Its existence in anyone is evidence of new birth and of the indwelling Spirit (1Jn 3:24; 1Jn 4:12-13), and it shows itself 'with actions'. '*There are actual things we can point to—not things we have professed or felt or imagined or intended, but things that we have done*' (Law). If we thus love **in truth** (1Jn 3:18), we may indeed have full assurance in our hearts. '*The fruit of love is confidence*' (Westcott). ([The Letters of John by John R. W. Stott](#))

Guzik gives an **illustration** - When we see this love at work in our lives, we can know that we are of the truth - and this brings assurance to our hearts before God, that we are standing in Him. **Gayle Erwin** tells a wonderful story about a man he knew when he was a boy. The man's name was Jake, and he was the meanest, drunkest, man in town. He would come to church from time to time, but that was only to beat up the elders. One Wednesday night, Jake came to church - but not to beat anybody up. Remarkably, Jake gave his life to Jesus. He walked down the aisle of the little church and knelt down at the altar. The next night there was another meeting at the church, and the pastor asked if anyone wanted to share what God was doing in their lives. Jake stood up, and said: "I have something to say. Last night when I came here, I hated you people." Heads nodded in agreement. "But something happened to me and I don't understand this, but tonight I love you." And even though he only had one tooth, he smiled really big. This is a wonderful assurance that we are born again. Assurance is essential - who wants to wait until it is too late to know if they are really saved or not? ([1 John 3 Commentary](#))

Steven Cole - John's point is that self-sacrificing love (**Ed**: Discussed in the entire preceding section - 1Jn 3:11-18) is the mark of the Christian, whereas self-centered hatred is the mark of the world. Thus in 1Jn 3:19 John is saying, "When you are troubled by doubts and self-condemnation, don't focus on your failures. (After all, what Christian hasn't failed at times?) Rather, focus on the many times that God's love has flowed through you since you became a believer. Let these acts of self-sacrifice be your evidence that you are **of the truth**, and cease doubting. ([1 John 3:19-24 Blessed Assurance](#))

That **blessed assurance** would seem to be John's intent in 1Jn 3:19-20 is supported by his clear statement of purpose for writing this letter...

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that **purpose clause** you may know that you have eternal life. (1Jn 5:13)

Warren Wiersbe observes that in 1John 3:19-24 "John names three wonderful blessings that will come to a believer who practices Christian love... **Assurance** (1Jn 3:19-20)... **Answered Prayer** (1Jn 3:21-22)... **Abiding** (1Jn 3:23-24). ([Wiersbe Bible Commentary](#))

David Smith has some helpful comments - The foregoing exhortation (**Ed**: 1Jn 3:11-18, especially 1Jn 3:17-18) may have

awakened a misgiving in our minds: “**Am I loving as I ought?**” Our failures in duty and service rise up before us, and “our heart condemns us”. So the Apostle furnishes a **grand reassurance**: The reassurance is two-fold: **(1)** The worst that is in us is known to God and still He cares for us and desires us. Our discovery has been an open secret to Him all along. **(2)** He “knows all things”—sees the deepest things, and these are the real things. This is the true test of a man: Is the deepest that is in him the best? Is he better than he seems? His failures lie on the surface: is there a desire for goodness deep down in his soul? Is he glad to escape from superficial judgments and be judged by God who “knows everything,” Who sees “with larger other eyes than ours, to make allowance for us all”? ([1 John 3 Commentary - Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

Wuest adds that "David was a man after God's own heart because the general tenor of his life was habitually Godward. The Psalms give the real David."

Spurgeon on we will know - You notice how the apostle constantly writes about knowing. Take your pencil, and underline the word “**know**” in John’s Epistles, and you will be surprised to find how frequently he uses it. He is not one of those who suppose, or fancy, or imagine, or have formed a certain hypothesis; but he knows, and he tells us what he knows, in order that we also may know. Love hath a knowledge which is peculiarly her own, — a full assurance which none can take from her.

Steven Cole introduces this section - Every child has a basic need to feel assured of his parents’ love. It should be obvious that if parents verbally or physically abuse a child, that child will not feel loved by his parents. Eventually, he will distance himself from them through withdrawal or rebellion. So even when a child disobeys and must be disciplined, it is important for parents to affirm their love for him. Assurance of love is essential for close relationships. **The same is true spiritually.** Even though the heavenly Father disciplines us for our good, that we might share His holiness, He does it out of love (Heb. 12:6, 10). He wants us, as His children, to be assured of His great love for us. John begins chapter 3 by exclaiming (1Jn 3:1), “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are.” God wants His children to feel His arms of love around them, even when they go through difficult trials. The enemy of our souls knows that we will not feel close to God if we doubt our standing before Him as beloved children. So he accuses us in an attempt to drive a wedge between us and God (Rev. 12:10; Zech. 3:1-4). In addition, at times our conscience condemns us as we compare ourselves with the holy standards of God’s Word. We know that we should love others, but in our hearts, we struggle with anger or bitterness or hatred toward those who have wronged us. We know that we should pray for God to bless this difficult person with His salvation, but inwardly, we’d rather see him punished. When we have those thoughts, either our guilty conscience or the enemy comes in and says, “*A true Christian can’t have thoughts like that! You’re not even saved!*” John is in the second cycle of applying the three tests of authentic Christianity: (1) the moral test of obedience; (2) the relational test of love; and, (3) the doctrinal test of faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. During the first application of the tests, John paused after the second test to give a word of assurance about his confidence in his readers’ spiritual condition (1Jn 2:12-14), as well as a warning about the danger of worldliness (1Jn 2:15-17). Here, in the second application of the tests, John follows the same pattern. He has repeated the first test of obedience (1Jn 2:28-3:10) and the second test of love (vying the truth (1Jn 4:1-6), he interjects this word about assurance. ([1 John 3:19-24 Blessed Assurance](#))

Cole goes on to add that “there are two very different approaches to these verses. Some commentators whom I highly respect—**John Calvin, Charles Simeon, and Martyn Lloyd-Jones** (Ed: Henry Alford)—interpret these verses as a warning to those who do not conscientiously apply John’s admonition about love. They understand these verses to be aimed at those who love only with word or tongue, not in deed and truth (1Jn 3:18). So they say that if anyone is condemned by his conscience, how much more will he be condemned by God, who knows all things. They do not see these as verses of comfort to disturbed hearts, but rather as verses to disturb comfortable hearts. While I agree that we should never shrug off our shortcomings or ignore a guilty conscience, I think that to view these verses primarily as a warning is to misinterpret them. John begins this chapter with those wonderful words of assurance of the Father’s great love for us as His children. In the section about love, he addresses his readers as “brethren” (3:13) and “little children” (3:18). In our text, he calls them “beloved” (3:21) to remind them that they are loved both by God and by the apostle. Also, in parallel with the first cycle of the tests, the interruption was for the purpose of encouraging those who may feel like they’re falling short. So here, I believe that John’s main purpose is to assure his little children of their standing before God, as well as to urge them to go on in faith, obedience, and love. On the subject of assurance of salvation, R. C. Sproul (Essential Truths of the Christian Faith [Tyndale], pp. 201-202) points out four possibilities. First, there are those who are unsaved and they know that they are unsaved. They don’t make any claim of salvation. Second, there are people who are saved but do not know they are saved. They doubt their salvation, perhaps due to a troubled conscience. Third, there are people who are saved and know that they are saved. Fourth, there are those who are not saved but confidently believe that they are saved. They have false assurance. As I understand our text, John is mainly addressing the second group—those who are saved, but they’re having doubts because of their awareness of falling short of God’s commandments. John wants them to know the basis and the blessings of true assurance. ([Blessed Assurance 1John 3:19-24](#))

Criswell favors the interpretation that John is giving a message of comfort - Having exhorted the readers to genuine love (1Jn 3:18), the author states that love provides assurance before God. To those who feel inadequate about their Christian commitment, the

author says that God is greater than the condemning heart. The believer's ultimate foundation of assurance is the character of God.

We will know (1097)(ginosko) means that we (John includes himself in using "we") will come to find out, learn or realize by experience. **What experience?** The experience described in the preceding passages, summed up in their demonstration of authentic love for the brethren ("let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth" = 1Jn 3:18). In fact this love for the brethren has been John's major focus in 1Jn 3:11-18 beginning with the words "**we should love one another**" (1Jn 3:11) We show our love by our actions! Do any of us accomplish this lofty Christ-like ideal to perfection? No answer needed is there? We can be sure we are of the truth if we practice agape love toward others, even if it is imperfect and intermittent. And thankfully God has enabled us to display this Christ-like love (laying down life for others love) because He has poured out the love of God "within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us." (Ro 5:5) We can't! He never said we could! But He can! And He always said He would! This selfless love is not "let go and let God" but "let go" of my self-reliance, my self-effort to produce supernatural love and fling myself in desperate dependence on the Spirit of grace Who indwells me and desire a "greater grace" to be manifest in and through me as He produces supernatural love through me, His willing vessel (and conduit so to speak). As Jesus said in Jn 15:5 "apart from Me, you can do (absolutely) nothing" including displaying My supernatural love to those who are often unlovely! Beloved, it is only when we come to the end of ourselves, that we come to the beginning of God! His ability! Our availability! His will be done! My willingness to do His will! It is a beautiful balance. Remember that God has "granted you everything necessary for life and godliness!" There is no exception clause to that "everything!" "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to the cross I cling!" "Here's my heart Lord, take and seal it, seal it for Thy courts above!"

John MacArthur - John understood that at times true believers can struggle with their assurance. Some of his readers may have been so overwhelmed by the memory of their past sins and awareness of present ones that they found the thought of God's forgiveness nearly impossible to accept. Their overactive consciences, beleaguering them with their own shortcomings, perhaps made it difficult for them to have a settled confidence in their right standing before God. So John wrote to encourage those believers and enable them to accurately evaluate their own spiritual condition. In so doing, he sought to solidify their conviction, rightly inform their conscience, and strengthen their assurance with a true understanding of their transformation and its evidences. ([1-3 John-MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

Dwight L. Moody once demonstrated the principle of How God works these things out in our lives like this: "Tell me," he said to his audience, "how can I get the air out of the glass I have in my hand?" One man said, "Suck it out with a pump." But the evangelist replied, "That would create a vacuum and shatter it." Finally after many suggestions, moody picked up a pitcher and quietly filled the glass with water. "There," he said, "all the air is now removed." He then explained that victory for the child of God does not come by working hard to eliminate sinful habits, but rather by allowing the Holy Spirit to take full possession.

That we are of the truth (aletheia) (literally - out of the truth) - What does John mean by **of the truth**? In simple terms he means that we are truly in heart what we say with our mouths. We are authentic Christians. We are born of God. We possess eternal life in Christ Jesus.

Vincent on of the truth - that we are real disciples of, and belonging to, the truth, as it is in Jesus: begotten of God with the word of truth. Having herein the truth radically, we shall be sure not to love merely in word and tongue. (1 Jn 3:18).

Hiebert on of the truth - The verb "know" points to an acquired knowledge based on our experience. The resultant knowledge is that we are "of the truth" (ek tēs alētheias). The preposition rendered "of" (ek, "out of") clearly marks the source of our spiritual being, namely, "the truth." Used with the definite article, the noun retains its full theological significance as denoting the truth of God as revealed in Christ and His gospel. The phrase "out of the truth" occurs in the Johannine writings only in John 18:37, 1 John 2:21, and here. Stott remarks, "Truth can only characterize the behavior of those whose very character originates in the truth, so that it is by our loving others 'in truth,' that we know that we are 'of the truth.' "

Will assure our heart before Him - The emphasis in the Greek is on **before Him** for the Greek literally reads "**before Him** (in His presence) we shall assure our hearts." **Before Him**, in His very presence, that is where we shall have confident assurance! This is **great news** and reminds me of Jude's great closing words - "Now to Him Who is able (The omnipotent God! He is able!) to keep (guard) you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, [be] glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen." (Jude 1:24-25-note)

Robertson on will assure our heart could be "either we shall persuade our heart or shall assure our heart, because God understands us."

Vincent on will assure - literally, "persuade," namely, so as to cease to condemn us; satisfy the questionings and doubts of our consciences as to whether we be accepted before God or not (compare Mt 28:14; Acts 12:20, "having made Blastus their friend," literally, "persuaded"). The "**heart**," as the seat of the feelings, is our inward judge; the conscience, as the witness, acts either as our

justifying advocate, or our *condemning accuser*, before God even now. (**Ed:** And Satan or his minions can be at work here for in Rev 12:10-**note** he is called "the accuser of our brethren.")

MacArthur - Believers enjoy an assurance based not only on what Scripture promises to those who believe (Ps. 4:3; Phil 1:6-**note**; 2Ti 1:12-**note**), but, on a practical level, based on the presence of a serving love for fellow believers (cf. 1Jn 3:13–18) and a desire to live in holiness (cf. 1Jn 3:4–12). These qualities, because they come from God, cannot exist in a person who is still unregenerate.

We... will assure (persuade) ([3982](#))(**peitho**) in the future tense means will persuade, will pacify, will soothe the alarm of our heart. Notice that John includes himself ("**we... will**"). **Thayer** has "to tranquilize." In Mt. 28:14 **peitho** is used to mean "we will win him over." In this verse **peitho** is saying we will win over our heart. **Peitho** means to exhibit confidence and assurance in a situation that might otherwise cause dismay or fear.

Hiebert notes that **peitho** "can also mean "conciliate, pacify, set at rest," hence "assure." This is its meaning in Matthew 28:14 and offers a more natural meaning here. It is in precisely this area of Christian love for others that the sensitive Christian heart often feels its own inadequacy and needs assurance."

Heart ([2588](#))(**kardia**) refers not to our physical heart but figuratively to the "control center" if you will of our being. It is the "center and source of the whole inner life, with its thinking, feeling, and volition." (**BDAG**) The New English Bible renders it "*conscience*" which is a legitimate translation given the context.

Hiebert adds that "Here the emphasis is on the **conscience** (cf. Acts 2:37; 7:54) as the center of man's moral nature. Although John never uses the Greek term *suneidēsis*, meaning "moral consciousness" or "conscience," it is generally agreed that he here implies it under the term "heart," for it is the conscience that assures and condemns us. John noted that Christians deal with their troubled conscience "before Him" (*emprosthen autou*) as the true judge of their inner character. Since this phrase is placed emphatically forward, Burdick observes that "John thereby emphasizes that the assurance is a justified assurance since it is experienced in the very presence of God."... Whatever the cause for our own heart's thus passing judgment upon us, the believer can take the matter before God for His judgment. Our conscience, troubled by the matter that it knows against us, can before God be quieted on the basis of the tests John here indicates."

Allen - Cars have a number of digital warning lights. One warns that the emergency brake has been left on. Another reminds the driver that the engine is running hot. Another warns that the alternator is not charging the battery properly. God has given us a built-in warning signal called conscience. Just as the warning lights in your car have to be properly wired, so to speak, in order to function properly, so your conscience must be properly schooled in the truth of God's Word in order to function as God intended. But this is not at all. Even your conscience in good working order cannot force obedience! The driver may disregard the red lights of warning. If he does so, he may burn out the brakes, ruin the battery, or crack the motor block. Christians who disregard their conscience are headed for trouble. As a Christian, your conscience now functions according to a new standard. You now have a sharper sense of sin, and you now see wrong in what did not seem wrong before. This produces in us a great sense of responsibility. (Preaching the Word – 1-3 John: Fellowship in God's Family)

Vincent on **before Him** - as in the sight of Him, the omniscient Searcher of hearts. Assurance is designed to be the ordinary experience and privilege of the believer.

Hiebert on **before Him** - The adverb rendered "**before**" (*emprosthen* used as an improper preposition with the ablative) conveys the picture of the believer standing "**before Him**," before God, without any necessary distinction between the Father and the glorified Son. The expression was at times used of the individual standing before the judge; although the judgment scene need not be pressed here, the expression does convey the believer's sense of accountability to the one before whom he appears.

MacArthur on **before Him** - Even though believers stand before Him, in the awesome, intimidating presence of the absolutely holy God (Ex 15:11; 1Sa 2:2; Rev 15:4), they can have a calm, tranquil, confident heart and an affirming conscience (Acts 23:1; 24:16; 2Cor 1:12; 1Ti 1:5; 3:9; 2Ti 1:3). Being in the presence of God terrified even the noblest of saints. Moses "hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God" (Ex. 3:6). The prophets Isaiah (Isa. 6:1–5) and Ezekiel (Ezek 1:26–28) also felt great fear as they stood in the presence of holiness. After witnessing one of His miracles, the apostle Peter "fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, 'Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!' " (Lk 5:8). He and fellow apostles James and John were traumatized on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt. 17:1–8), as was John when he saw the glorified Christ (Rev 1:12–18). ([1-3 John- MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

Sam Storms summarizes this last section (1Jn 3:19-24) - John begins by dealing with the "condemning heart," that is, the Christian experience of doubt, and offers two ways to overcome such doubt and find assurance with God (1Jn 3:19-20). In 1Jn 3:21-23 he deals with the result or effect that issues from having conquered the doubting heart, namely, a confident and fruitful prayer life. Finally, in 1Jn 3:24, he closes with a word concerning the mutual abiding between God and Christian and the role of the HS in granting assurance. The assurance of salvation may be obtained and the doubting heart pacified by reflecting on (a) our love for the

brethren and (b) the omniscience of our heavenly Father - 1Jn 3:19-20. Look at these two grounds for assurance together. We often ask: "Am I really of the truth, i.e., saved?" The verdict we often pass on ourselves is, "I don't know!" **Robert Law** explains: "*We believed that we had passed from death into life (3:14); but to ourselves this has become almost or altogether doubtful. When conscience summons us to the tribunal within, it declares us guilty. We have failed in doing the 'righteousness' of the children of God (3:10), or our faith has faltered --- our vision of the Truth has become dim. The evidence of our union with Christ is obscured by the consciousness of inconsistencies which, regarded in themselves, compel us to question whether we are 'of the truth' or have been self-deceived*" ([Tests of Life - Online](#)) . **I. Howard Marshall** writes: "*It may happen that when a person engages in ... self-examination he is alarmed by the result. He considers his life and can only conclude that he falls short of the divine standard. He does not love his brothers as fully as he should. He cannot claim that freedom from sin of which John spoke earlier. How can he possibly belong to the truth when he feels that his actions belie it?*" ([Sam Storms- First John 3:10b-24](#))

See Related Resources on Assurance of Salvation:

- [1 John 3:19-24 Blessed Assurance - sermon by Steven Cole](#)
- [Full Assurance - Sermon by C H Spurgeon](#)
- [Assurance of Salvation... How Can We Have Assurance? from Spurgeongems webstie](#)
- [Heaven On Earth-A Serious Discourse Concerning a Well-Grounded Assurance-Thomas Brooks \(1667\)](#) (See also [Genuine assurance](#))
- [Assurance of Salvation from John Newtons Letters](#)
- [How can I have assurance of my salvation?](#)
- [How can a believer have assurance of salvation?](#)
- [What are some of the signs of genuine saving faith?](#)
- [If you doubt your salvation, does that mean you are not truly saved?](#)
- [What if I don't feel saved?](#)
- [Doubt vs. The Assurance of Salvation](#)
- [The Assurance of Conversion - Octavius Winslow](#)
- [Spurgeon's pastoral wisdom in dealing with a woman lacking assurance](#)
- [A Test of Assurance - How We Know Whether We Love God - Thomas Watson](#)
- [Assurance of Grace and Salvation - What It Is - William S Plumer](#)
- [The Assurance of Hope - John Angell James, 1859 Obedience to Christ Gives Assurance of the Truth of His Doctrines](#)
- [Archibald Alexander A Believer's Assurance- A Practical Guide to Victory over Doubt - John MacArthur](#)
- [Assurance - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)
- [Assurance - Torrey's Topical Textbook](#)
- [Security of the Believer - Holman Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Assurance - Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible](#)
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- [Assurance \(2\) - Hastings' Dictionary of the New Testament](#)
- [Assurance - Puritan Richard Watson's Biblical & Theological Dictionary](#)
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