

1 John 3:21 Commentary

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FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND HIS CHILDREN
Click chart to enlarge
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 3:21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God:

Greek Agapetoi ean e kardia hemon me kataginoske (3SPAS) parrhesian echomen (1PPAI) pros ton theon

NET - Dear friends, if our conscience does not condemn us, we have confidence in the presence of God,

Wuest - Divinely loved ones, if our hearts are not condemning us, a fearless confidence we constantly have

facing God the Father

- 1Jn 2:28 4:17 Job 22:26 27:6 Ps 7:3-5 101:2 1Co 4:4 2Co 1:12 1Ti 2:8 Heb 4:16 10:22
- [1 John 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries.

AMAZING GRACE: WE CAN HAVE CONFIDENCE BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD!

Sam Storms - the assurance of salvation (1Jn 3:19-20-note) issues in a confident and fruitful prayer life for those who are obedient - 1Jn 3:21-23... Simply put, as long as doubt or misgiving reigns in our hearts, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to boldly approach God in prayer. However, if we will but set our hearts at rest in the ways John has prescribed (1Jn 3:19-20), then we shall be able to approach the Lord with boldness, a boldness that is expressed in making requests of him (1Jn 3:21). ([First John 3:10b-24](#))

Allen - 1John 3:19, 20 functions as the reason for 1Jn 3:21, 22. There are two reasons that assure us we are truly believers. The first is our awareness of the love God has placed in us (1Jn 3:19a). The second is our awareness of the grace of God that accepts our humanness because Christ knows our motives (1Jn 3:20b). On this basis, God is greater than our conscience, and there is no need for fear and trepidation when we approach God. (Preaching the Word – 1-3 John: Fellowship in God's Family)

Beloved ([27](#))(**agapetos** from **agapao** = to love, **agape** = unconditional love borne by Spirit - Gal 5:22) means dear, much loved and is John's tender way of addressing the readers, reminding them of his love for them, especially those who may have been struggling with an accusing conscience (see 1Jn 3:19, 20) **Agapetos** describes the love of another, this love being called out of the "giver's" heart by preciousness of the recipient of the love (the "beloved"). Agapetos is used only of Christians as united with God and with each other in love.

Vincent reasons that given the fact that John refers to them as beloved would suggest that this is addressed directly to those who are of the truth (1Jn 3:19), who are loving in deed not word (1Jn 3:18).

MacArthur - Doubt ceases when believers are walking in faithfulness and obedience, because the heart does not condemn so that insecurity and fear give way to confidence before God. Such assurance causes believers to enter God's presence with certainty (Eph. 3:12-note; Heb. 10:19-note; cf. 2Cor. 3:4-note; 1Ti 3:13), so that whatever they ask in prayer they will receive from Him. ([1-3 John- MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

If our heart does not condemn (kataginosko) us - John includes himself ("our"). The condition (technically a 3rd class conditional statement with the present active subjunctive).

Adrian Rogers - 1 John 3:21 says "Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence (boldness) before God." Let's give an example. You and your wife are having a horrendous argument and you're both filled with bitterness and hostility and you're saying all kinds of horrid things and then you discover your baby is sick and has a high fever. You say, Well, we need to pray, and you and your husband get down on your knees to pray. Don't you feel silly? I mean, don't you feel silly? You know exactly what you've got to do first. What? Honey, I'm sorry, forgive me, God have mercy on us. Why? You can't pray ("have confidence" or boldness before God) with that hostility in your heart? Why? Because your heart condemns you and you have no confidence toward God. ([Sermon](#))

Condemn ([2607](#))(**kataginosko** from **kata** = against + **ginosko** = know) literally means to know against (to know something against one) and then to find fault with, to blame, to condemn (to determine or judge to be utterly wrong or guilty).

A T Robertson says this **heart** statement is "The converse of the preceding (1Jn 3:20-note), but not a claim to sinlessness, but the consciousness of fellowship in God's presence."

Hiebert - Although the negative (mē) with the present subjunctive could mean "does not condemn us as an ongoing condition" because the heart has had no misgiving about our moral state, John seems clearly to mean that it "**ceases to condemn us**" because the charge of conscience against us has been resolved before God. Although every believer experiences occasions when his conscience for some reason condemns him, the present tense implies that such need not be the characteristic experience of the believer. Concerning such a life free from an accusing conscience Westcott remarks, "It does not imply a claim to sinlessness, nor yet an insensibility to the heinousness of sin, but the action of a living faith which retains a real sense of fellowship with God, and this carries with it confidence and peace."

We have (continually) **confidence** (boldness = **parrhesia**) **before God** - In 1Jn 2:28-note he had referred to the confidence we could have at the time of Christ's return. Now John is saying we can have free and continual communion with the Most High God! The writer of Hebrews describes this confidence in an exhortation - "Let us therefore (because of Jesus our High Priest - Heb 4:14-15-note) draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need."

(Heb 4:16-note)

Confidence (boldness) (3954)(**parrhesia** from **pás** = all + **rhesis** = speech, act of speaking) is literally all speech or speaking all things and thereby conveys the idea of freedom to say all. The basic idea in the word is freedom of speech, when the word flowed freely. It is that attitude of openness that stems from freedom and lack of fear ("shaking" fear - godly, reverential fear is always appropriate). Greeks used parrhesia of those with the right to speak openly in the assembly. Speaking with plainness, openness and confidence (Acts 2:29). "It describes the privilege of coming before someone of importance, power, and authority and feeling free to express whatever is on one's mind." (MacArthur)

Barker - "The word (**parrhesia**) rendered **confidence** stood in ancient Greece for the most valued right of a citizen of a free state, the right to 'speak his mind' ... unhampered by fear or shame." (citing Dodd)

Hinckley: Re confidence in 1Jn 3:21 -- "This was a high privilege in the Greek world. It originally meant the right of a full citizen of a democracy to speak in the citizens' assembly. Later it came to mean freedom to speak with frankness and courage. Thus, in 1John 2:28-note and 1John 3:21, confidence is the right to speak frankly and boldly to Christ at His second coming and to God even now in prayer."

Earlier John had written "And now, little children, **abide** in Him, so that (**term of purpose**) when He appears, we may have **confidence** (boldness = **parrhesia**) and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming." (1Jn 2:28-note)

Guzik - when we are in fellowship with God, and our heart does not condemn us, we know that we can have confidence toward God and our standing with Him. If someone is in true fellowship with God - not deceiving oneself, as mentioned in 1 John 1:6-note - then the assurance that comes to his heart while fellowshiping with God is a precious thing. It is what Paul spoke about in Romans 8:16 - The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. ([1 John 3 Commentary](#))

Spurgeon - Other people may condemn us, but that does not matter; they may impute to us wrong motives, and misrepresent us, but that is no concern of ours so long as we have confidence toward God.

Before God ("facing Godward") - This phrase speaks of the incredible privilege believers have to experience a "face-to-face" relationship with the invisible God.

Timothy Peck - All of us go through times of doubt in the spiritual journey, seasons where it seems like we don't really know God like we thought we did. It's a normal part of the spiritual journey for us to struggle with doubts about our faith, doubts about whether we're truly following Jesus Christ or not. If you've struggled with those kinds of doubts, that's probably a pretty good indication that you are following Jesus, because people who don't follow Jesus Christ really aren't all that concerned about it.

These seasons of doubt cause our hearts to condemn us, our feelings accuse us of not being Christians, of being failures, of not measuring up, especially when we hear sermons like today's call to walk with each other in love. God's invitation to love so radically impacts us and we realize how far short we fall, and often our hearts become anxious and even condemning, and we wonder if we truly know Christ the way we thought we did. So John wants us to put that struggle in proper perspective, that it's not whether our feelings are at rest or whether our feelings condemn us that determines whether or not we're on this spiritual journey, but it's whether God has received us through our faith in Jesus Christ.

You see, God is greater than our feelings, he is bigger than our emotions of doubt or assurance, and what God thinks carries more weight than what I'm feeling at the moment. So how do we set our hearts at ease? By remembering that our assurance doesn't rely on our emotions but on God and then by pressing forward to obey God's commands. John sums up God's commands in the words 'believe' and 'love.' The order is vitally important, that we first trust our lives to Jesus Christ, we place our faith in him to forgive our sins and to bring us into a relationship with God built on grace. Then once we do that, we launch on a spiritual journey of loving other followers of Christ, to walk together on this journey we're on. Believing comes first, then belonging. We first establish a personal relationship with God through belief in Jesus Christ, and then we find ourselves on this journey the bible calls church, of walking this journey together." ([Walking With Others sermon, by Timothy Peck](#))