

1 John 3:20 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 3:20 in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things: .

Greek hoti ean kataginoske (3SPAS) hemon e kardia hoti meizon estin (3SPAI) o theos tes kardias hemon kai ginoskei (3SPAI) panta

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 1 John 3:20 that if our conscience condemns us, that God is greater than our conscience and knows all things.

NEB 1Jn 3:19-20 - This is how we may know that we belong to the realm of truth, and convince ourselves in his sight that even if our conscience condemns us, God is greater than our conscience and knows all

Wuest on 1Jn 3:19-20 - "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."

- **if:** Job 27:6 John 8:9 Ac 5:33 Ro 2:14,15 1Co 4:4 14:24,25 Tit 3:11
- **God:** 1Jn 4:4 Job 33:12 John 10:29,30 Heb 6:13
- **and:** Ps 44:20,21 90:8 139:1-4 Jer 17:10 Jer 23:24 John 2:24,25 John 21:17 Heb 4:13 Rev 2:23
- [1 John 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries.

BELIEVERS ARE NO LONGER UNDER CONDEMNATION!

In whatever our heart condemns us - Converse stated in 1Jn 3:21 "if your heart does not condemn us."

Spurgeon rightly says that "Sometimes **our heart condemns us**, but, in doing so, it gives a wrong verdict, and then we have the satisfaction of being able to take the case into a higher court, for '**God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.**'"

Heart ([2588](#))(*kardia*) is our "control center" and in this context probably refers to "our *conscience*, not the affections." (Pulpit Commentary)

See Articles Under Topic - Heart

Condemns ([2607](#))(*kataginosko*) is in the **present tense** which pictures continual condemnation. Perhaps you are one who has a sensitive conscience and like all of us have fallen short of God's standard, especially His high standard of demonstrating love to your brethren, and so you find your conscience continually condemns you, calling you guilty of breaking God's command to love one another. If that is you (and even as I wrote the notes on 1Jn 3:11-18 I truly had to question the reality of demonstration of my agape love for my brethren), then these verses are for you dearly beloved of the Most High God. Memorize them so the **Spirit** might be able to bring them to your mind the next time the evil one accuses your heart! Remember that Jesus fought off the temptations of the devil by being filled with the Spirit (Lk 4:1 "full of the Holy Spirit", cp Lk 4:14, Acts 10:38) and filled with the Word ("It is written" - Mt 4:4, 7, 10; Lk 4:4, 8, 10 - And Jesus did not have an Ipod to look up the passages! They were hidden in His heart - Ps 119:9-11 And remember the devil knows the word and tried to trip him up by quoting it out of context - Mt 4:6. We must know the Word - Eph 6:17!), and He is our pattern for the victorious Christian life (cp 1Cor 11:1, 1Jn 2:6, 1Pe 2:21). To fail to memorize (no legalism intended) is to fail in part to follow our Master's example and walk in His steps! See **Memorizing His Word and Memory Verses by Topic**.

Cornerstone - Even if we feel guilty, God is greater than our feelings, and he knows everything... this statement has two possible interpretations—one positive and one negative, each depending on how the expression "God is greater than our feelings [lit., hearts]" is understood. The positive interpretation is that the believer can take consolation in God's beneficent greatness (cf. Brooke 1912:100; Stott 2000:150–152). The negative interpretation is that the believer should recognize that God, who is greater than us, would echo any condemnation and do so in greater fashion (cf. Alford 1976:4.479–481). The context would seem to support the positive interpretation inasmuch as John was trying to encourage the believers, not discourage them. Certain scholars would repunctuate 1Jn 3:19–20 to make it even clearer that John intended a positive interpretation. Burge (1996:164), following [Marshall](#) (1978:198), suggests this format:

1 Jn 3:19a: "In this [the love and obedience we exhibit, 1Jn 3:11–18] we will know that we are of the truth."

1 Jn 3:19b-20: "We will reassure our hearts in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us, because (1) God is greater than our hearts, and (2) God knows all things."

Paul addressed "no condemnation" and "no separation"

Ro 8:1 There is therefore now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Ro 8:31-39 What then shall we say to these things? If God [is] for us, who [is] against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? 33

Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; 34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 Just as it is written, "FOR THY SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED." 37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, **shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Chuck Smith - As a Christian we should not live in condemnation. Jesus said that He did not come into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. The woman taken in the act of adultery. The woman at the well. The prostitute that washed His feet with her tears. If a person has come to Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, those sins are forgiven, and there is no condemnation. This is a difficult truth for many people to grasp. Before receiving forgiveness there was such great conviction, as David said, "My sin was ever before me." ([If Our Heart Condemns Us](#))

Stedman: the problem of an accusing heart, i.e., a condemning conscience. What do you do as a Christian when your heart condemns you? As we saw, the usual result of a condemning conscience is a tendency to ignore God, to keep in the shadows and to distrust his love, to criticize his people and in many ways to manifest the fact that we have lost contact with the God who indwells us. The answer, as we saw in First John 3:19, was to reassure our hearts by a deed of self-giving love: 'Little children, let us not love in word or speech,' says John, 'but in deed and in truth. By this we shall know that we are of the truth, and reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us,' {1 Jn 3:18-19RSV}. We are to give ourselves to someone who is in need or help another in his problem, repay good for evil, or give back kind words instead of caustic, sharp ones. The result, John says, will be a sense of reassurance. If we are really in Christ, rivers of love and peace will begin to flow out from our hearts again, and it will be impossible to remain condemned"

David Legge on doubting our salvation - It may be that we are His, we are child of God, but we have failed Him. Whilst it may not be a lifestyle of constant failure and habitual sin, there has been a blip and a blot on our testimony. Because of that, whether we consider it to be a small hiccup or a large fall, we have a bad conscience toward God - and it causes us from time to time, or maybe constantly, to doubt our salvation. I would have to say after our study last week in verses 10 to 18, reading and studying in depth that portion, it would be easy to come away and say: 'Am I saved at all? How guilty I have been of being an unloving Christian, an uncaring Christian! I have not laid my life down for the brethren the way that John is exhorting us to do. I have shut up my emotions when I have been faced with the needs of others, my brothers and sisters in Christ and those outside the church. I have been guilty of loving in word, loving in language, but not loving in deed and in truth'. Now, let's be honest with one another, and honest with God: all of us, at some time or another, have been guilty of these things. Whilst we agree that these ought to be exceptions rather than the rule in the Christian life, we are all guilty of being unloving towards our brethren in Christ. But here's where the problem arises: if you have an oversensitive conscience, you can read passages of Scripture like this and listen to preaching that we've been hearing week after week, biblically based, and you can begin to say to yourself, 'I'm not truly saved', or 'There's a cause for doubt' - when there is no cause for doubt because you're a child of God. Your sensitive conscience can actually begin to do the devil's work for him. Some of you, perhaps, are having self-incriminating doubts, and it makes you feel condemned in your heart. It's wrong, because God has not condemned you if you're one of His children! Maybe even that bad conscience, that condemning heart is preventing you from approaching God. You feel unworthy to such an extent that you feel that you can't come into God's presence, even though it is not God who has condemned you, God has not barred you from approaching Him, but it's your own heart that makes you feel that way. Whilst there are those, as we've said, who have well-grounded doubts, and their heart condemns them for good reason, I believe that John here now in these verses - 1Jn 3:19-24 - is speaking to those who have ill-founded doubts. This is the problem he's addressing... John has not only been exposing false teachers whose salvation should be doubted, but he's seeking to bring assurance to the true sheep of God in these churches who have been influenced by the false teaching of the false teachers and are beginning to doubt their salvation because of what they have been saying... Now John is wanting to guard against this (those who profess Christ but don't truly know Him): yes, he wants to uncover, in the hearts of men, false assurance; the false assurance that these false teachers had, spreading their lies; the false assurance that some of these believers may have, if they believed their lies - but what he does not want to do is create a bad conscience in a true child of God. ([Confident Christianity](#))

Guzik - Condemnation can well up inside us that has nothing to do with our standing before God. It may be the work of the enemy of our souls (who, according to Revelation 12:10 accuses the brethren), or the work of an over-active conscience. At those times, we trust in what God's Word says about our standing, not how we feel about it. ([1 John 3 Commentary](#))

Marvin Vincent on **God is greater than our heart** - Is this superior greatness to be regarded as related to God's *judgment* (Ed: As favored by Calvin, Martyn Lloyd-Jones) or to His *compassion* (Ed: As favored by most modern commentators)? If to His *judgment*, the sense is: God who is greater than our heart and knows all things, must not only endorse but emphasize our self-accusation. If

our heart condemns us, how much more God, Who is greater than our heart. If greater refers to His **compassion**, the sense is: when our heart condemns us we shall quiet our hearts with the assurance that we are in the hands of a God who is greater than our heart—Who surpasses man in love and compassion no less than in knowledge. **This latter sense better suits the whole drift of the discussion.**

Spurgeon in this quote (see another Spurgeon quote above) seems to see the judgment side of God's greater knowledge (I seldom argue with him, and so it may be that John's passage conveys both senses - **warning to professors, comfort to possessors!**) - If you, with your narrow knowledge of right and wrong, — your imperfect understanding of your own motives, — if you find reason to **condemn** yourself, what must be your position before the bar of the all-seeing, heart-reading God? That little flutter in thy bosom, my friend, that trembling, that uneasiness, what means it? Is not this a forewarning of the sounding of the trumpet of the great assize, when thou wilt have to stand before the Judge of all the earth, and answer for thyself to Him? It is easy to deceive thy fellow-man, but it is impossible to deceive thy God.

Luther well said "**Conscience** is one drop; the reconciled God is a sea of comfort."

Allen writes that "sometimes our conscience may condemn us when we are not guilty of overt sin. We sometimes become keenly aware of our unworthiness before God, especially at times of prayer. Sometimes this unworthiness is satanic in nature. As Luther said, "Sometimes the devil interprets the best things badly and the bad things well, weakens the good things and makes much of the things that are bad. From a little laughter he can make eternal damnation." Yet God is greater than our conscience and knows everything concerning us, including our deepest motives... When we are living and loving as we ought, even if our oversensitive conscience condemns us, we take comfort in knowing that God is greater than our conscience. Our conscience is not the Supreme Court! There is a higher court: God!" (Preaching the Word - 1-3 John: Fellowship in God's Family)

Greater (3187)(**meizon**) is the comparative of **mégas** which means great, more in magnitude, degree or effectiveness, beyond what is usual.

Greater than our heart - While God in no way winks at or minimizes our failures, He knows us better than we know ourselves. Our heart or consciences "knows" us to a degree, but God's knowing is perfect and infallible. Ultimately believers are clothed in the righteousness of His Son and when God looks at us, He knows we are still positionally in His Son, regardless of our failures. While we as believers tend to be either too severe or too lenient in our own consciences, God's omniscience trumps our conscience, and is a firm ground for our continued assurance in spite of our failures and foibles.

God... knows (ginosko) all things - **All** means all without exception, all things, all the time! In a word He is **omniscient**.

Hiebert - The added words "and knows all things" seem to be a note of encouragement; it is better to have the all-knowing God as our judge than our own conscience. "It is the difference between conscience and Omniscience." While He knows our failures and shortcomings, He also understands our true motives and desires, the innermost yearnings of our heart. His omniscience is also linked to His unchanging love and sympathy; He remembers His saving intentions and purposes for each of us. It is to that perfect knowledge that the conscience-stricken believer, like Peter in John 21:17, can appeal: "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." The fact that He has implanted His love in our hearts assures us that He will not reject or disown us.

In his Gospel John explains that the God-Man Jesus (in context of those who professed belief in Him - Jn 2:23) "on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men and did not need anyone to bear witness concerning man for He Himself **knew** (ginosko) **what was in man.**" (Jn 2:24-25).

Peter declared to Jesus "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." (Jn 21:17) A T Robertson says " God's omniscience is linked with his love and sympathy. God knows every secret in our hearts."

The writer of Hebrews says "there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." (Heb 4:13)

In Jeremiah God says "I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds" later asking "Can a man hide himself in hiding places, so I do not see him?" (Answer: No!) declares the LORD. "Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?" declares the LORD." (Answer: Yes!)

Boice: "Whatever our hearts may say, God knows us better than even we ourselves do and, nevertheless, has acquitted us. Therefore, we should reassure ourselves by His judgment, which alone is trustworthy, and refuse to trust our own."

Simon Kistemaker - John writes these reassuring words: "**God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.**" That is, as Christians we can always go to God, who knows us better than we know ourselves. David testifies to this truth. At the conclusion of one of his psalms, he prays this fervent prayer: Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. [Ps. 139:23–24] Because God is greater than our hearts, he

will show us mercy when we come to him; he will comfort us, and reassure us that we are his children. ([Epistles of John- Simon J. Kistemaker](#))

Sam Storms - When our conscience accuses us in this way, to what shall we appeal? John mentions two things.

* The first answer was given in the previous context, vv. 11-18. The fact that we have loved in deed and truth and not merely in word. In other words, "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, and that we know we would never have done but for the love which God has put into our hearts. Of ecstatic emotions, heaven-piercing vision, we may know nothing; but if, in the practice of love in bearing another's burden, in denying ourselves to give to another's need (3:17), we are sure of our ground, hereby we shall tranquilize our self-accusing hearts yea, even in the presence of God" (Law, 282).

* The other way of pacifying the condemning and disquieting doubts of our hearts is by our knowledge of God's knowledge of us. Stott explains: "Our conscience is by no means infallible; its condemnation may often be unjust. We can, therefore, appeal from our conscience to God who is greater and more knowledgeable. Indeed, he knows all things, including our secret motives and deepest resolves, and it is implied, will be more merciful towards us than our own heart. His omniscience should relieve, not terrify, us" (146). See also 1 Cor. 4:3-5.

To sum up, John appeals to two means by which we may pacify our doubting hearts. We may reassure ourselves of salvation, first, by looking back to the love which we have shown to the brethren; love in deed, however, not in word only. The second means of assurance is an appeal to the omniscience of God, regardless of what one's own doubts and misgivings might be. God knows us far better than we know ourselves. We should reassure ourselves by His judgment, which alone is ultimately trustworthy, and refuse to trust our own. ([Sam Storms- First John 3:10b-24](#))

David Legge on God knows all things - Now if you are conscious in your life of a momentary failure, of a partial transgression - at some time in your Christian experience you have let the Lord down, and you're continually reminded of it, and through it you have a condemnation attitude toward yourself, a bad conscience - does that mean that you no longer love the Lord? Does that mean that you have forfeited His grace, you no longer have a claim upon His name, that He's letting you go and maybe you're not even saved at all? Now listen, here's the answer, this is what John is trying to say: first of all, what you need to do is what we studied in chapter 1 and verse 9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness'. Because God is greater than even our condemned heart, He not only understands the way we really are in all of our sin that we can't even see with our eyes, but He is able to undertake for our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness... It's not that God minimises or disregards our failures, He knows them better than we know them. Yet the amazing thing is that this God acquits us, even though He does know them. Here's the big question that John is trying to get to: why then should we listen to our condemning heart? If God is greater than our heart, and God knows all about us and what we've done, yet God still undertakes to forgive us our sins, why should we listen to our condemning heart? He, our God, is the just One and the Justifier of those who believe in Jesus. Am I speaking, tonight, to a Christian, and you got a condemning heart, and you're harder on yourself than God is? You hammer yourself constantly, because you've an oversensitive conscience; and you allow the devil to latch onto, perhaps, sins that were legitimate sins, but that Christ has forgiven you for a long, long time ago - but you still have this condemning heart that you won't let go of, and you're harder on yourself than the Almighty is! Oh, you need to hear this tonight: God is greater than your heart. He knows all things! ([Confident Christianity](#))

'With my burden I begin,
Lord, remove this load of sin.
Let Thy blood for sinners spilt,
Set my conscience free from guilt'.
--John Newton former slaver trader

Vincent has a lengthy note on the condemning and consoling interpretations (I agree with Luther and Bengel and most modern commentaries which also favor the comforting interpretation) - Luther and Bengel take this verse as consoling the believer whom his heart condemns; and who, therefore, like Peter, appeals from conscience to Him who is greater than conscience. "Lord, You know all things: You know that I love You." (Jn 21:17) **Peter's conscience, though condemning him of his sin in denying the Lord, assured him of his love; but fearing the possibility, owing to his past fall, of deceiving himself, he appeals to the all-knowing God:** so Paul, 1Cor 4:3, 4. So if we be believers, even if our heart condemns us of sin in general, yet having the one sign of sonship, love, we may still assure our hearts (some oldest manuscripts read heart, 1 Jn 3:19, as well as 1 Jn 3:20), as knowing that God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. But thus the same Greek is translated "because" in the beginning, and "(we know) that" in the middle of the verse, and if the verse were consolatory, it probably would have been, "Because EVEN if our heart condemn us," etc. Therefore translate, "Because (rendering the reason why it has been stated in 1 Jn 3:19 to be so important to 'assure our hearts before Him') if our heart condemn (Greek, 'know [aught] against us'; answering by contrast to 'we shall know that

we are of the truth') us (it is) because God is greater than our heart and knows all things." If our heart judges us unfavorably, we may be sure that He, knowing more than our heart knows, judges us more unfavorably still [Henry Alford]. A similar ellipsis ("it is") occurs in 1 Co 14:27; 2 Co 1:6; 8:23. The condemning testimony of our conscience is not alone, but is the echo of the voice of Him who is greater and knows all things. Our hypocrisy in loving by word and tongue, not in deed and truth, does not escape even our conscience, though weak and knowing but little, how much less God who knows all things! **Still the consolatory view may be the right one.** For the Greek for "**we shall assure our hearts**" (see on 1 Jn 3:19), is gain over, persuade so as to be stilled, implying that there was a previous state of self-condemnation by the heart (1 Jn 3:20), which, however, is got over by the consolatory thought, "God is greater than my heart" which condemns me, and "knows all things" (Greek "ginoskei," "*knows*," not "kataginoskei," "*condemns*"), and therefore knows my love and desire to serve Him, and knows my frame so as to pity my weakness of faith. This gaining over the heart to peace is not so advanced a stage as the having CONFIDENCE towards God which flows from a heart condemning us not. The first "because" thus applies to the two alternate cases, 1 Jn 3:20, 21 (giving the ground of saying, that having love we shall gain over, or assure our minds before Him, 1 Jn 3:19); the second "because" applies to the first alternate alone, namely, "if our heart condemn us." When he reaches the second alternate, 1 Jn 3:21, he states it independently of the former "because" which had connected it with 1 Jn 3:19, inasmuch as CONFIDENCE toward God is a farther stage than persuading our hearts, though always preceded by it. (Vincent is a bit confusing [to me] but included for completeness).

Ryrie takes somewhat of a "middle road" on this passage - God is greater than our heart. We may be either too strict or too lenient in examining our lives; therefore, John's word of comfort is, God the all-knowing is also the all-loving.

Hiebert - Some interpreters (John Calvin, John Owen, Henry Alford, et al) understand this reference to God's greatness and knowledge not as a comfort but as a challenge to the believer. So understood, John is stressing the severity of God's judgment. Thus Alford remarks, "*Our conscience is but the faint echo of His voice who knoweth all things; if it condemn us, how much more He?*" If it were evident that John was seeking to stimulate a consciousness of sin in his readers, this understanding of his words would be obvious. But such an interpretation is quite inappropriate in the present context. Smalley asserts, "John's chief purpose at this point is to reassure his readers that when believers are most aware of their shortcomings, in respect of God's standards, the love and mercy of the Father are present to heal their troubled conscience." Clearly John's aim here is to heal the wounded conscience of the sensitive believer, not to widen the wound unnecessarily. But it is clear that whenever professed believers seek to stifle the demands of conscience by claiming to possess a superior enlightenment, his words do sound a needed warning.

The Telltale Heart - David C. McCasland - If our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. —1 John 3:20

Recently I read about a private investigator in the US who would knock on a door, show his badge to whoever answered, and say, "I guess we don't have to tell you why we're here." Many times, the person would look stunned and say, "How did you find out?" then go on to describe an undiscovered criminal act committed long ago. Writing in Smithsonian magazine, Ron Rosenbaum described the reaction as "an opening for the primal force of conscience, the telltale heart's internal monologue."

We all know things about ourselves that no one else knows—failures, faults, sins—that although confessed to God and forgiven by Him may come back to accuse us again and again. John, one of Jesus' close followers, wrote about God's love for us and the call to follow His commands, saying: "By this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things" (1 John 3:19-20).

Our confidence toward God grows out of His love and forgiveness in Christ, not our performance in life. "We know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us" (1Jn 3:24).

**God, who knows everything about us,
is greater than our self-condemnation.**

No condemnation now I dread,
I am my Lord's and He is mine;
Alive in Him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine.
—Wesley

**The one who receives Christ
will never receive God's condemnation.**

Insight - Today's reading establishes the benchmark for loving others by looking at what Jesus did for us on the cross (1Jn 3:16). We know love because of the willingness of Jesus to die for us, and the necessary response to this love is that we be willing to give of ourselves for others. The context implies that this does not require a physical dying on another's behalf. It does, however,

challenge us to sacrifice our own interests for the welfare of others as evidence that we have received God's love (1Jn 3:17).

Spurgeon - Daily Help - Is my conscience at peace? For, if my heart condemns me, God is greater than my heart and does know all things (1 John 3:20). If my conscience bears witness with me that I am a partaker of the precious grace of salvation, then happy am I! I am one of those to whom God has given the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Phil. 4:7). Now, why is this called "the peace of God"? Because it comes from God, because it was planned by God, because God gave His Son to make the peace, because God gives His Spirit to give the peace in the conscience, and because, indeed, it is God Himself in the soul.

Ever Feel Condemned? Read: 1 John 3:16-20 | God knows us better than we know ourselves. He's aware of our weaknesses, the memories of sins that seem to predispose us to fail again and again. He knows our heredity and upbringing, the past and present influences that push us in the wrong direction. J. I. Packer calls these the "latent forces" of our existence as well as the "patent facts."

At my stage of Christian growth, I struggle with attitudes and actions over which I seem to have little control. I identify with Dostoevsky, who said, "It is nature asserting its rights." Paul called it "sin that dwells in me" (Romans 7:17). It has made me guilty of much, and capable of much more. That's why my heart sometimes condemns me, even though I'm a believer. God knows all about the forces that drive me. He also knows the intent of my heart—that I want to love others and desire to do right. He knows my shame when I fail and is quick to forgive when I confess (1 John 1:9). This wonderful truth sets my heart at rest when I feel condemned, for "God is greater than my heart, and knows all things" (1Jn 3:20). By David H. Roper |

If you have trusted Jesus as your Savior and your heart condemns you at times, remember that He knows all about it and still loves you.

No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!
Alive in Him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine. —Wesley

Guilt is a burden God never intended His children to bear.

The Telltale Heart - Read: 1 John 3:16-24 | Recently I read about a private investigator in the US who would knock on a door, show his badge to whoever answered, and say, "I guess we don't have to tell you why we're here." Many times, the person would look stunned and say, "How did you find out?" then go on to describe an undiscovered criminal act committed long ago. Writing in Smithsonian magazine, Ron Rosenbaum described the reaction as "an opening for the primal force of conscience, the telltale heart's internal monologue."

We all know things about ourselves that no one else knows—failures, faults, sins—that although confessed to God and forgiven by Him may come back to accuse us again and again. John, one of Jesus' close followers, wrote about God's love for us and the call to follow His commands, saying: "By this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things" (1 John 3:19-20).

Our confidence toward God grows out of His love and forgiveness in Christ, not our performance in life. "We know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us" (1 John 3:24). God, who knows everything about us, is greater than our self-condemnation. By David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

No condemnation now I dread,
I am my Lord's and He is mine;
Alive in Him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine. —Wesley

The one who receives Christ will never receive God's condemnation.

INSIGHT: Today's reading establishes the benchmark for loving others by looking at what Jesus did for us on the cross (1 John 3:16). We know love because of the willingness of Jesus to die for us, and the necessary response to this love is that we be willing to give of ourselves for others. The context implies that this does not require a physical dying on another's behalf. It does, however, challenge us to sacrifice our own interests for the welfare of others as evidence that we have received God's love (1 John 3:17).

My Heart Condemns Me - Read: If our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. —1 John 3:20

Do you sometimes feel guilty and unworthy because of something you did years ago? You have confessed it and asked God to forgive you, but the memory of it still haunts you.

I empathize with you. Feelings of guilt still sweep over me when I recall how I failed an elderly, childless woman while I was training for the ministry. She was a regular customer in a store where I worked part-time. After a while, I became a friend and spiritual counselor to her and her husband. I even conducted his funeral.

When I moved to a nearby town to become a student pastor, I lost touch with her. I intended to contact her but kept procrastinating. One day I saw her obituary notice. I was overwhelmed with grief and confessed my sin to God.

More than 30 years after Paul's conversion, he referred to the time when he had been "a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man" (1 Tim. 1:13). He even called himself the "chief" of sinners (v.15). Yet he repeatedly exulted in the certainty that he was a forgiven sinner.

God, who is greater than our heart and knows us thoroughly (1 John 3:20), has forgiven us for the sins we've confessed (1Jn 1:9). We can believe Him! By Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Come now to the fountain of cleansing,
Plunge deep in its lifegiving flow.
His mercy and grace are sufficient,
His pardon He longs to bestow. —Robinson

Confession to God always brings His cleansing.

GodAware - Read: Psalm 139:1-10 | On the FlightAware website, Kathy checked the progress of the small plane her husband Chuck was piloting to Chicago. With a few clicks, she could track when he took off, where his flight was at any moment, and exactly when he would land. A few decades earlier when Chuck was a pilot in West Africa, Kathy's only contact had been a high-frequency radio. She recalls one occasion when 3 days had passed before she was able to reach him. She had no way of knowing that he was safe but unable to fly because the airplane had been damaged.

But God was always aware of exactly where Chuck was and what he was doing, just as He is with us (Job 34:21). Nothing is hidden from His sight (Heb. 4:13). He knows our thoughts and our words (1 Chron. 28:9; Ps. 139:4). And He knows what will happen in the future (Isa. 46:10).

God knows everything (1 John 3:20), and He knows you and me intimately (Ps. 139:1-10). He is aware of each temptation, each broken heart, each illness, each worry, each sorrow we face.

What a comfort to experience care from the One of whom it is said, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Rom. 11:33). By Cindy Hess Kasper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Beneath His watchful eye
His saints securely dwell;
That hand which bears all nature up
Shall guard His children well. —Doddridge

We can trust our all-knowing God.

CONDEMN: KATAGINOSKO GREEK WORD STUDY

Condemns (2607) (kataginosko from **katá** = 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).

Kataginosko is used only 3 times in Scripture - 1Jn 3:20-21 and Gal 2:11 "But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his

face, because he stood **condemned**."

Kataginosko is used twice in the Septuagint - Dt 25:1 and Pr 28:11 where "sees through him" is translated in the Septuagint as "will condemn him."