

# 1 John 3:23 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			

## STUDY GUIDE 1 JOHN 3

What is this? On the photograph of the Observation Worksheet for this chapter you will find handwritten 5W/H questions (Who?

What? Where? When? Why? How?) on each verse to help you either personally study or lead a discussion on this chapter. The questions are generally very simple and are stated in such a way as to stimulate you to observe the text to discern the answer. As a reminder, given the truth that your ultimate Teacher is the Holy Spirit, begin your time with God with prayer such as Psalm 119:12+ "Blessed are You, O LORD; Teach me Your statutes." (you can vary it with similar prayers - Ps 119:18, 26, 33, 64, 66, 68, 108, 124, 135, 171, etc) The questions are generally highlighted in yellow and the answers in green. Some questions have no answers and are left to your observations and the illuminating/teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. Some qualifying thoughts - (1) Use "As is" - these are handwritten and will include mistakes I made, etc. (2) They may not be the best question for a given verse and my guess is that on some verses you will think of a far superior 5W/H question and/or many other questions.

Dr Howard Hendricks once gave an assignment to his seminary students to list as many observations as they could from Acts 1:8. He said "So far they've come up with more than 600 different ones! Imagine what fun you could have with 600 observations on this passage. Would you like to see Scripture with eyes like that?" (P. 63 [Living by the Book](#) - borrow) With practice you can! And needless to say, you will likely make many more observations and related questions than I recorded on the pages below and in fact I pray that the Spirit would indeed lead you to discover a veritable treasure chest of observations and questions! In Jesus' Name. Amen

Why am I doing this? **Mortimer Adler** among others helped me develop a questioning mindset as I read, seeking to read actively rather than passively. Over the years I have discovered that as I have practiced reading with a 5W/H questioning mindset, it has yielded more accurate interpretation and the good fruit of meditation. In other words, consciously interacting with the inspired Holy Word of God and the illuminating Holy Spirit has honed my ability to meditate on the Scripture, and my prayer is that this tool will have the same impact in your spiritual life. The benefits of meditation are literally priceless in regard to their value in this life and in the life to come (cf discipline yourself for godliness in 1Ti 4:8+.) For some of the benefits - see Joshua 1:8+ and Psalm 1:2-3+. It will take diligence and mental effort to develop an "inductive" ([especially an "observational"](#)), interrogative mindset as you read God's Word, but it bears repeating that the benefits in this life and the rewards in the next will make it more than worth the effort you invest! Dear Christian reader let me encourage you to strongly consider learning the skills of [inductive Bible study](#) and spending the rest of your life practicing them on the Scriptures and living them out in your daily walk with Christ.

Although Mortimer Adler's advice is from a secular perspective, his words are worth pondering...

*Strictly, all reading is active. What we call passive is simply less active. Reading is better or worse according as it is more or less active. And one reader is better than another in proportion as he is capable of a greater range of activity in reading.* (Adler's classic book [How to Read a Book is free online](#))

[John Piper](#) adds that "Insight or understanding is the product of intensive, headache-producing meditation on two or three verses and how they fit together. This kind of reflection and rumination is provoked by asking questions of the text. And you cannot do it if you hurry. Therefore, we must resist the deceptive urge to carve notches in our bibliographic gun. Take two hours to ask ten questions of Galatians 2:20+ and you will gain one hundred times the insight you would have attained by reading thirty pages of the New Testament or any other book. Slow down. Query. Ponder. Chew.... (John Dewey rightly said) "People only truly think when they are confronted with a problem. Without some kind of dilemma to stimulate thought, behavior becomes habitual rather than thoughtful."

*"Asking questions is the key to understanding."*

--Jonathan Edwards

That said, below are the [5W/H questions](#) for each verse in this chapter (click page to enlarge). This is not neatly typed but is handwritten and was used for leading a class discussion on this chapter, so you are welcome to use it in this "as is" condition...



**1 John 3:23 This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us:**

**Greek** - kai aute estin (3SPAI) e entole autou hina pisteusomen (1PAAS) to onomati tou huiou autou Iesou Christou kai agapomen (1SPAS) allelous kathos edoken (3SAAI) entolen hemin.

KJV 1 John 3:23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

BGT 1 John 3:23 Κα ατη σιν ντολ ατο, να πιστε σωμεν τ νμαπι το υο ατο ησο Χριστο κα γαπ μεν λλ λους, καθ ς δωκεν ντολ ν μ ν.

NET 1 John 3:23 Now this is his commandment: that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he gave us the commandment.

CSB 1 John 3:23 Now this is His command: that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as He commanded us.

ESV 1 John 3:23 And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

NIV 1 John 3:23 And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.

NLT 1 John 3:23 And this is his commandment: We must believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he commanded us.

NRS 1 John 3:23 And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

NJB 1 John 3:23 His commandment is this, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and that we should love one another as he commanded us.

NAB 1 John 3:23 And his commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us.

YLT 1 John 3:23 and this is His command, that we may believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and may love one another, even as He did give command to us,

MIT 1 John 3:23 This is his command: We must believe in the name of his son, Jesus Christ, and love one another the way he commanded us.

GWN 1 John 3:23 This is his commandment: to believe in his Son, the one named Jesus Christ, and to love each other as he commanded us.

BBE 1 John 3:23 And this is his law, that we have faith in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love for one another, even as he said to us.

RSV 1 John 3:23 And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

NKJ 1 John 3:23 And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

ASV 1 John 3:23 And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, even as he gave us commandment.

**Wuest** - And this is His commandment, namely, We should believe the Name of His Son Jesus Christ, and be habitually loving one another even as He gave a commandment to us

- **commandment:** Dt 18:15-19 Ps 2:12 Mk 9:7 John 6:29 Jn 14:1 Jn 17:3 Acts 16:31 1Ti 1:15
- **love:** 1Jn 3:11 2:8-10 4:21 Mt 22:39 John 13:34 15:12 Eph 5:2 1Th 4:9 1Pe 1:22 4:8
- [1 John 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

John 6:28-29+ Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the **works** (PLURAL) of God?" (They wanted to know what works God required of them that they might qualify for the gift of the food that lasts forever.) Jesus answered and said to them, "**This is the work** (SINGULAR) **of God**, that you **BELIEVE** in Him Whom He has sent." (**COMMENT** - And this is a "work" [SINGULAR] they were not ready to perform as suggested by John 6:41-42+. As a result of Jesus' "hard sayings" they walked away and if they never repented the walked away into eternal punishment! - John 6:66+)

John 20:31+ but these have been written that you may **believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His Name. (**COMMENT** - Notice there are five words that occur in 1Jn 3:23: believe, name, Son, Jesus, and Christ)

### GOD'S TWOFOLD COMMAND:

## BELIEVE AND LOVE

**This is His commandment** ([entole](#) - [singular not plural-note](#)), **that we believe** ([pisteuo](#) aorist tense) **in the name** ([onoma](#)) **of His Son Jesus** ([lesous](#)) **Christ** ([Christos](#)), **and love** ([agapao](#) present tense) **one another** ([allelon](#)), **just as He commanded** (literally - gave command) **us** - God the Father's commandment is to **believe** in Jesus and **love** like Jesus. **Believe** in the aorist tense generally calls for one to begin to believe, but since the readers were believers the idea is that they should continue in their faith (And some manuscripts have present tense). Creed is shown by conduct. What we believe will affect how we behave. How we behave shows what we believe. If we believe, we will love. If you believe in Jesus, you will love fellow believers, because every command God gives comes pre-packaged with God's enabling power [vis-a-vis](#) His indwelling Spirit. Are you loving the "one another's" God has sovereignly placed in your life?

Belief in the **Name** is obviously tantamount to belief in Jesus and stands for all that He is. The **Name Jesus** ([lesous](#)) emphasizes His humanity, His earthly ministry, and **Christ** ([Christos](#)) His divinity. The double designation represents the earliest Christian confession of faith, "Jesus is the Christ" (Acts 2:36; 3:20; 5:42; cf. John 20:30–31). In 1Jn 5:13 John writes "These things I have written to you who **believe in the Name of the Son of God**, in order that you may know that you have eternal life." To believe in Jesus' Name is to receive Him as Savior. John wrote "as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, [even] to **those who believe in His Name**." (Jn 1:12) Those who do not believe in His Name are judged, John writing "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because **he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God**." (Jn 3:18) **The Name** is a [metonymy](#), which means using the part (Name) as a reference for the whole. Here Jesus' "**Name**" is a reference to His whole person.

**Spurgeon on Jesus** -We must accept this Son of God as "Jesus," the Savior. We must believe that Jesus Christ the Son of God became man out of infinite love to man, that He might save his people from their sins, according to that worthy saying, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim 1:15).

**Spurgeon on Christ** - We must look upon Jesus as "Christ," the anointed of the Father, sent into this world on salvation's errand, not that sinners might save themselves, but that He, being mighty to save, might bring many sons to glory. We must believe that Jesus Christ, coming into the world to save sinners, did really accomplish His mission; that the precious blood that is shed on Calvary is mighty to atone for sin, and therefore, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven, since the blood of Jesus Christ, God's dear Son, cleanses us from all sin.

**John MacArthur** adds "His **Name** denotes all that He is (including the fact that He is both Savior and Lord, cf. Phil. 2:9–11). Believing in the **Name** of Christ is an important, oft-repeated New Testament theme (Jn 3:15–16; 20:31; Acts 16:31; cf. Mk 1:15; Luke 24:47), especially in this letter (1Jn 2:12; 4:2, 15). It was the reason John wrote both his gospel (Jn 20:31) and his first epistle (1Jn 5:13). (See [MacArthur Commentary](#))

*You cannot believe without loving  
nor love without believing.*

-- R C H Lenski

**Hiebert** introduces 1Jn 3:23-24 noting that "Basic to the believer's assurance is the reality of his spiritual union with Christ. This assurance is grounded in the two-sided command to believers (1Jn 3:23), resulting in a two-sided fellowship which is given experiential confirmation through the indwelling Holy Spirit (1Jn 3:24)."

*The Gospel is a message to be believed,  
a Person to be received, and a lifestyle to lived!*

**Marvin Vincent** notes that **commandment** is singular not plural as singular emphasizes "**faith and love** are not separate commandments, but are indissolubly united. We cannot truly love one another without faith in Christ, nor can we truly believe in Him without love." (Stated another way The singular form sums up all the individual commands and treats them as a unity.)

**Reformation Study Bible** adds that "The two parts of this commandment parallel the two parts of the Ten Commandments, reminding us that our relationship with God takes precedence over our relationship with our neighbor. Faith in Christ relates us rightly to God, and His renewing grace enables us to love one another."

**Alfred Plummer on believe** - This verse is the answer to those who would argue from the preceding verses that all that is required of us is to do what is right; it does not much matter what we believe.

**David Allen** sums up that "The gospel is not only something to be believed but something to be obeyed, and all people are commanded to repent and believe the gospel (**ED: THE VERY COMMANDS JESUS GAVE IN Mk 1:15+**)." (Preaching the Word - 1-3 John: Fellowship in God's Family)

"Faith toward God and love toward man sum up a Christian's obligations.

Christianity is 'faith which worketh by love' (Gal 5:6)"

-- Warren Wiersbe

## LOVE ONE ANOTHER

**And love** ([agapao](#) present tense) **one another** ([allelon](#) - see [note](#)), **just as** (calls for conformity to what) **He commanded** (literally "has given command") **us - Love** in present tense calls for the habitual practice of selfless, sacrificial, God-like love. This quality of love is not a feeling, but is the result of will and choice (enabled by desire and power from the Holy Spirit - Php 2:13NLT+) **One another** calls for this **love** to be [reciprocal](#), reflecting mutual expression of love in the Body of Christ. "Christian love is not a one way street; it must flow in both directions. John has mentioned the need for mutual love before (1Jn 2:10–11; 3:11, 14), but now for the first time he specifically unites faith and love. Both are essential as a test for a true Christian." ([Hiebert](#)) **Stott** points out that "there is a significant difference in the tense of the two verbs, **believe** (aorist) and **love** (present tense) , faith in Christ being here regarded as a decisive act..., and **love** for the brethren as a continuous attitude. Both are tests of a true Christian."

*Belief comes first because it is the basis for love (cf. 1Jn 3:16),*

*but love is the only expression of true faith.*

--Glenn Barker

**Just as He commanded us** (literally as He has given command) - This command presumably refers to Jesus' words in the Upper Room before He was crucified - "A **new commandment** I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another." (Jn 13:34+) and "This is My **commandment**, that you love one another, just as I have loved you... This I command you, that you love one another." (Jn 15:12, 17+, cp 1Jn 2:7-8+ - "**new commandment**")

**Love one another** (13x in 12v in NT - Jn 13:34; 15:12, 17; Ro 13:8; 1Th 4:9; 1Pe 1:22; 1Jn 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11-12; 2Jn 1:5). This section (1Jn 3:11-24) began with **love one another** (1Jn 3:11+).

*The practice of Christian love is to be  
a daily, continual expression*

**Simon Kistemaker** - John moves from **faith** to **love**, for these two concepts are closely linked together. In his Gospel John reveals that Jesus repeatedly gave the command love one another (John 13:34; 15:12, 17). Believing in Jesus Christ, then, means to obey his command to love each other. John repeats this command. By using the present tense of the verb to love, he exhorts the readers to continue to love one another. ([Epistles of John](#))

### Related Resource: (Name)

- Name of the LORD is a Strong Tower: Summary
- Christ The Breaker
- Christ Our Rock
- Christ The Rock of Ages
- Christ The Rock of Our Salvation
- Christ The Smitten Rock
- Christ Our Rock of Refuge-Pt 1
- Christ Our Rock of Refuge-Pt 2
- Christ the Stone
- Christ Mighty God - El Gibbor
- Jesus Name Above All Names
- Jesus Mighty to Save
- Jehovah = Jesus

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**Believe** (4100)(**pisteuo**) is John's first use in this letter (9x - 1Jn 3:23; 4:1, 16; 5:1, 5, 10 [3x], 1Jn 5:13). In 1Jn 3:23 **pisteuo** means that we consider all the Bible says about the **Name** of Jesus to be true and worthy of our once and for all decisive act of trusting Him (aorist tense) (Mk 9:7 Jn 6:29 Jn 14:1 Jn 17:3). We accept Him as the true God and have a firm conviction as to His efficacy to save us forever. As Paul said to the Philippian jailer "**Believe** (aorist imperative) in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household." (Acts 16:31+) As Luke records ""And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12+) (**Related:** Spurgeon's sermon on John 8:30-32 [Believing on](#)

## [Jesus, and its Counterfeits](#))

**Charles Haddon Spurgeon** on belief in 1Jn 3:23 - This text suggests the necessity of childlike trust. Everywhere in Scripture faith in God is spoken of as necessary to successful prayer. We “must believe that he exists and is a rewarder of those who seek him” (Heb 11:6) or else we have not prayed at all; but the success of our prayer will be in proportion to our faith. It is a standing rule of the kingdom, “According to your faith let it be done for you” (Matt 9:29). Remember how the Holy Spirit speaks by the mouth of the apostle James: “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask for it from God, who gives to all without reservation and not reproaching, and it will be given to him. But let him ask for it in faith, without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed about. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord” (Jas 1:5–7).

The respected Greek lexicon author **W E Vine** defines authentic, saving **belief** as consisting of

(1) a firm conviction which produces full acknowledgment of God's revelation of Truth - (2Thes 2:11 -"in order that they all may be judged who did not believe [pisteuo] the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.")

(2) a personal surrender to the Truth (Jn 1:12 "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe [pisteuo] in His name") and

(3) a conduct inspired by and consistent with that surrender.

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### **QUESTION - [What does it mean to love one another?](#)**

**ANSWER** - In John 13:34 Jesus taught, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” Then He added, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (verse 35). How do we do this? What does it mean to love one another?

The “one another” in these verses is a reference to fellow believers. A distinguishing mark of being a follower of Christ is a deep, sincere love for brothers and sisters in Christ. The apostle John reminds us of this fact elsewhere: “He has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister” (1 John 4:21).

In giving this command, Jesus did something the world had never seen before—He created a group identified by one thing: love. There are many groups in the world, and they identify themselves in any number of ways: by skin color, by uniform, by shared interest, by alma mater, etc. One group has tattoos and piercings; another group abstains from meat; yet another group wears fezzes—the ways people categorize themselves are endless. But the church is unique. For the first and only time in history, Jesus created a group whose identifying factor is love. Skin color doesn't matter. Native language doesn't matter. There are no rules about diet or uniforms or wearing funny hats. Followers of Christ are identified by their love for each other.

The early church demonstrated the type of love Jesus was talking about. There were people in Jerusalem from all over the known world (Acts 2:9–11). Those who were saved got together and immediately began meeting each other's needs: “All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need” (Acts 2:44–45). This was love in action, and you can be sure it made an impression on the people of that city.

Jesus' statements in John 13:34–35 raise a couple of other questions that may be good to answer. First, how does Jesus love? He loves unconditionally (Romans 5:8), sacrificially (2 Corinthians 5:21), with forgiveness (Ephesians 4:32), and eternally (Romans 8:38–39). At the same time, Jesus' love is holy—characterized by transcendent moral purity—because He is holy (Hebrews 7:26). The culmination of Christ's amazing love for us is His death on the cross, burial, and bodily resurrection (1 John 4:9–10). Believers are to love each other like that.

Second, how then can the believer in Christ love as Christ loved? The believer in Christ has the Holy Spirit living within him (1 Corinthians 6:19–20). By obeying the Spirit, through the Word of God, the believer can love like Christ does. He shows that unconditional, sacrificial, forgiving love to fellow believers, but it doesn't stop there. He also shows the love of Christ to friends, to family members, to coworkers, etc. (Ephesians 5:18–6:4; Galatians 5:16, 22–23). Even enemies are the recipients of Christ's love (see Matthew 5:43–48).

Christ's love displayed through the believer is unlike the “love” generated by the flesh, which can be selfish, egotistical, unforgiving, and insincere. First Corinthians 13:4–8 gives a wonderful description of what Christ's love will be like in and through the believer who walks in the Spirit.

People don't naturally love with a 1 Corinthians 13-type love. To love like that, there must be a change of heart. A person must realize that he is a sinner before God and understand that Christ died on the cross and rose again to provide him forgiveness; then he must make the decision to accept Christ as his personal Savior. At that point he is forgiven by Christ and receives God's gift of eternal life—in fact, he becomes a participant in the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). In Christ he knows that he is genuinely loved by



God. The new life the believer receives includes a new capacity to love like Christ loves, for the believer now has living within him the unconditional, sacrificial, forgiving, eternal, and holy love of God (Romans 5:5).

To love one another is to love fellow believers as Christ loves us. Those who love like Christ in the Holy Spirit's power will give evidence that they are disciples, or learners, of Jesus Christ.

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**Spurgeon on believe in the Name of His Son** - When the Moravian missionaries first went to Greenland, they were months and months teaching the poor Greenlander about the Godhead, the doctrine of the Trinity, and the doctrine of sin and the law, and no converts were forthcoming. But one day, by accident, one of the Greenlanders happened to read that passage, "See what sort of love the Father has given to us: that we should be called children of God" (1 John 3:1), and asked the meaning. The missionary, hardly thinking him advanced enough to understand the gospel, nevertheless ventured to explain it to him, and the man became converted, and hundreds of his countrymen received the Word. Naturally enough, they said to the missionaries, "Why did you not tell us this before? We knew all about there being a God, and that did us no good; why did you not come and tell us to believe in Jesus Christ before?" This is God's weapon, God's method. This is the great battering ram that will shake the gates of hell; we must see to it that it be brought into daily use.

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**John Butler - COMMANDMENTS 1 John 3:23 - [Sermon Starters](#)**

"This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment" (1 John 3:23).

Divine commandments are not to be taken lightly. There are more Divine commandments in Scripture than the ten commandments. Our text speaks of some of those commandments which you will not find listed among the ten commandments but nevertheless are commandments men must address in this life.

#### **FIRST—THE STRESS ON THE COMMANDMENTS**

"His commandment ... commandment." Our text begins and ends with the mention of "commandment." This emphasis on Divine commandments will be too much for the carnal. They do not mind having a repeated emphasis on the love of God but having a repeated emphasis on Divine commandments, which is a repeated emphasis on our responsibility, is too much for carnality. But if your life is going to have any kind of success in God's sight, you must give due emphasis to Divine commandments.

#### **SECOND—THE SPECIFICS OF THE COMMANDMENTS**

The commandments in our text are twofold.

- The belief commandment. "This is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." The first commandment in this text has to do with our faith in Christ. To believe in Jesus Christ is not an option in life, it is a Divine command. "God ... now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30). Therefore, those who reject Christ are being disobedient. Being saved is commanded by God, if one is lost, it is because he had refused to obey the command to be saved.
- The behavior commandment. "Love one another, as he gave us commandment." This commandment is a reference to John 13:34 in which Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you." There are two thoughts here. First, the power to love. This command is for the saints. It says to love all the saints. Some of the saints are not easy to love, but if God has commanded it, it can be done. God will enable you to love them. When God commands, He gives the power to obey. Second, the purpose of the command. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). Obeying this command would identify the disciples and thus honor the Lord.

#### **THIRD—THE SEQUENCE OF THE COMMANDMENTS**

"Believe ... and love one another." Belief comes before behavior. If you cannot love the most loveable (loving Christ is involved in belief), how can you love the less loveable (man). The world puts the emphasis on loving others, but does not address the need to love Christ. But if Christ is not loved then others will not be loved. That is why there is so little love in this vile world.

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**Adrian Rogers - 1 John 3:23**

You'd think after a while, the devil would grow tired and leave us alone when we persist in declaring that our faith is not in ourselves, in others, or in our feelings. But then he'll say the slyest thing of all: "You say you're trusting the Lord, but how do you know that your

faith is strong enough, that it's the real thing?"

If the devil ever pulls this stunt on you, just tell him, "Look, devil, I am not putting my faith in faith; my faith is in Jesus." There's a difference in that. The least amount of faith in the right object is always better than strong faith in the wrong object. We are to believe in Jesus.

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### **Vance Havner - Believing Is Obeying**

And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. I John 3:23

*It is often overlooked that God commands us to believe.*

*He does not merely invite or urge, He commands it.*

It is often overlooked that God commands us to believe. He does not merely invite or urge, He commands it. Living in unbelief or uncertainty is outright disobedience. We do not honor God by indecision and doubt. It is faith that pleases Him. We ought to come to Christ immediately and trust Him and never waver, because He has bidden us come and believe and we can do anything we ought to do. He inclines us to come by His Spirit, for certainly neither the flesh nor the devil ever impelled a man toward Christ. You may be sure that He is working in you to will and do of His good pleasure, and if you will to obey Him by believing as best you know how, you may be certain He will not cast you out.

It is simple obedience to believe. Therefore "repent ye and believe the gospel." "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent." "And this is his commandment, that we should believe."

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### **Don Fortner - 1 John 3:23 'Love one another'**

Read John 13:18–38

Men look upon many things as evidences of divine grace in the heart. Most of those 'evidences' which men look upon and applaud are so many forms of self-righteousness. They are things seen of men, pleasing to men and honored by men, but they are an abomination to God (Luke 16:15).

But our Lord Jesus Christ has plainly told us that there is one distinguishing characteristic by which all true believers may be identified. 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.' If I have in my heart a true love for the people of God, then I am one of God's elect. If love is absent from my heart, grace is also absent from my heart. Just in case any do not know how to measure true love, Paul gives us a clear description in 1 Corinthians 13:4–7.

Love is longsuffering. It is patient with the weaknesses, infirmities and offenses of others. Love is not sharp, bitter, quick-tempered and malicious, but kind. Love is not proud and selfish. It does not envy others, promote itself and behave rashly. Love is not self-seeking. Love is not easily provoked. True love for someone will prevent me from being easily offended by him and will cause me to forgive him quickly. Love thinks no evil. Love always looks for and thinks the best of its object. It looks for reasons to think good and not evil. Love does not harbor suspicion and jealousy and resentment. Love patiently bears all things in its object. If I love someone I will bear, without anger or hurt feelings, almost anything from him, because I trust him and believe the best concerning him.

All anger, wrath, malice, suspicion and gossip are contrary to that love which characterizes God's elect. They spring from the old man, from the heart of sinful flesh. We must repent of such things and turn from them. It is my constant prayer that the Lord God will teach me to love my brethren and teach me to show them true love for Christ's sake.

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### **C H Spurgeon - The warrant of faith** (Full sermon [The Warrant of Faith](#))

'And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.' 1 John 3:23

If we heartily trust our soul with Christ, our sins, through his blood, are forgiven, and his righteousness is imputed to us. The mere knowledge of these facts will not, however, save us, unless we really and truly trust our souls in the Redeemer's hands. Faith must act in this wise: 'I believe that Jesus came to save sinners, and therefore, sinner though I be, I rest myself on him; I know that his righteousness justifies the ungodly; I, therefore, though ungodly, trust in him to be my righteousness; I know that his precious blood in heaven prevails with God on the behalf of them that come unto him; and since I come unto him, I know by faith that I have an interest in his perpetual intercession.' Now, I have enlarged the one thought of believing on God's Son Jesus Christ. 'Believing' is most clearly explained by that simple word 'trust.' Believing is partly the intellectual operation of receiving divine truths, but the essence of it lies in relying upon those truths. I believe that, although I cannot swim, yonder friendly plank will support me in the flood; I grasp it, and am saved: the grasp is faith. I am promised by a generous friend that if I draw upon his banker, he will supply all



my needs; I joyously confide in him, and as often as I am in want I go to the bank, and am enriched: my going to the bank is faith. Thus faith is accepting God's great promise, contained in the person of his Son. It is taking God at his word, and trusting in Jesus Christ as being my salvation, although I am utterly unworthy of his regard. Sinner, if you take Christ to be your Saviour this day, you are justified.

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### **Love follows Christ** [The Love Dare Day by Day: A Year of Devotions for Couples - Page 190](#)

Now this is His command: that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as He commanded us. 1 John 3:23

Once you are established in the love of God, you can now share this same love with your spouse. You can love them even when you're not loved in return. You can see all their flaws and imperfections and still choose to love. And though you can't meet their needs the way God can, you can become His instrument to keep them face-to-face with His care. As a result, he or she can walk in the fullness and blessing of your love. Now and till death.

Commit yourself to loving your wife or husband in this new, unbreakable way. Promise them afresh that your love is not conditional; it is for anything that could possibly happen in life. They are as safe in your love as you are in God's.

True love is found in Christ. And nowhere else. And after you have received His gift of new life by accepting His death in your place and His forgiveness for your sins, you are finally ready to live the dare.

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### **Daily Light on the Daily Path - His commandments are not burdensome.**

"This is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life."—Whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.

"My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."—"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. . . . Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."

Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding. . . . Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.—Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble.—I delight in the law of God, in my inner being.

This is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another.—Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

1 John 5:3; John 6:40; 1 John 3:22; Matt. 11:30; John 14:15, 21; Prov. 3:13, 17; Ps. 119:165; Rom. 7:22; 1 John 3:23; Rom. 13:10

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### **Two Things Dad Taught**

"Let me tell you the two most important things I learned from my dad," says Michael [Tait of the DC Talk music group]. "Number one, love people. That's what he taught, and that's what he did. He cried with people, he laughed with people. Everybody was his friend. He could care less about your race, your nationality, your socio-economic status, whatever. All he cared about was you, your soul.

"Number two, live for God and don't get caught up in the things of this world, because they're just fleeting. The world will get the best of you if you let it, so we need to truly live for God.

"My dad [a preacher] preached those two things his whole life. And those two things have shaped who I am today. I love people; I realize that life is short, God is real and that I need to live for Him."

Michael was visiting his parents in Washington, D.C., during the Christmas holidays in '97 when his dad complained of stomach pains. Michael took him to the hospital, where doctors found the cancer. Michael was there, a few weeks later, when he breathed his last in February '98. "The man was my hero."

See: 2 Timothy 1:13; 1 Peter 5:1-4; 1 John 3:23

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### **Self-Protection** [Every Day with Jesus Daily Bible: With Devotions by Selwyn Hughes](#)

Now this is His command: that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another.—1 JOHN 3:23

An advantage of being willing to feel disappointment is that it enables us to come in touch with another hidden sin of the heart—self-protection.

Whenever we are disappointed, we naturally feel hurt and experience inner pain. Some people are so affected by this that a pool of

pain builds up inside them, and they say to themselves: "People are a source of hurt. Stay away from them, and don't get too closely involved." They see noninvolvement as the best way to avoid the pain of possible disappointment.

But this attitude is a violation of the law of love. Lawrence Crabb, a Christian psychologist, says: "Deficient love is always central to our problems." Behind most of our problems is a failure to love others as we love ourselves. If we refuse to move towards someone in the spirit of love for fear they may disappoint us, then we are more interested in protecting ourselves from pain than we are in loving—and that is sin.

Did you ever think of self-protection as a sin? Well, it is, and in my estimation it is one of the most subtle of all. Many of our relationships are ruined by this—particularly marriage relationships. A man who shouts angrily at his wife early in his marriage is setting up a self-protective system that says: "Disappoint me, and you will have to suffer the consequences." What is he doing? He is protecting himself more than he is loving his wife. And that, no matter how one might attempt to rationalize it, is sin.

Prayer Father, Your challenges are sometimes more than I can bear, yet I see the sense and wisdom that lies behind them. Reveal to me my own self-protective devices, and help me be willing to give them up in favor of loving as I have been loved. Amen.

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### **Charles Stanley - Blessed Assurance**

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 John 3:18–24

KEY VERSE: 1 John 3:23

This is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

It is easy to look across the church sanctuary and see someone whose salvation you would not question. Perhaps you also can identify someone you believe is struggling even more in his walk with Jesus than you are.

One of the enemy's traps is to get us to compare ourselves to others. It is a way that he deceives us into thinking we do not measure up.

At other times he gets us to think we're better than the next person so we become complacent in our faith. The only true measuring stick resting in a church pew is in the book rack. It is the Bible, the inerrant Word of God.

Listen to what God says about assurance of salvation: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16 NASB); "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved" (Acts 16:31 NASB); and "This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 3:23 NASB).

The common thread in these Scriptures is that salvation comes only through belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. There is no other itinerary or requirement, no need for comparisons: "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13 NASB).

Father, thank You for the blessed assurance You have given me. Let me continually use the measuring stick of Your Word to check my spiritual growth.

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Vance Havner - The meaning of the church is that Christians are God's called-out ones. The mission of the church is to preach the Gospel, to make, baptize, and teach disciples. The message of the church is the Gospel that Christ died for our sins and rose for our justification. The ministry of the church is to observe all things He commanded, and the commandments are summed up in believing on Jesus Christ and loving one another (see 1 John 3:23). Loving others covers all Christian social action.

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### **Faith Isn't Just an Attitude**

Faith is something that has to be applied.

—Corrie ten Boom, *Christian Reader*, Vol. 31. See: John 6:28-29; James 2:17; 1 John 3:23.

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### **Astounding Faith**

Our faith is an astounding thing—astounding that I should believe him to be the Son of God who is suspended on the cross, whom I have never seen, with whom I have never become acquainted.

—Martin Luther, "Martin Luther—The Early Years," *Christian History*, no. 34.

See: Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:1; 1 John 3:23.

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**Commanded To Love** - Read: 1 John 3:16-24 | As a result of adult children neglecting their responsibilities, some elderly parents in Singapore are forced to seek financial help from charities and other state agencies. Speaking about this escalating situation, a government official said, “We cannot legislate love.”

In the Bible, however, love is commanded. That is what Moses told the nation of Israel: “I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways” (Deut. 30:16). And Jesus said that the greatest commandment is to “love the Lord your God” (Mark 12:30).

How can God command love? His supreme display of love at Calvary gave Him that right. Jesus’ beloved disciple, John, wrote: “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us... This is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment” (1 John 3:16,23).

What opportunities do you have to obey God’s command to love? Honoring parents by caring and providing for them? Ministering to a sick friend? Offering a gracious and kind word to someone who is difficult to love?

Lord, because You laid down Your life for us, help us to show love to others. By C. P. Hia [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

Love is an attitude, love is a prayer,  
For someone in sorrow, a heart in despair;  
Love is good will for the gain of another,  
Love suffers long with the fault of a brother.  
—Anon.

We show our love for God when we love one another.