

# 1 John 2:1-6 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 2

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...

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**1 John 2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;**

**Greek:** Teknia mou, tauta grapho (1SPA1) humin hina me hamartete. (2PAAS) kai ean tis hamarte, (3SAAS) parakleton echomen (1PPAI) pros ton patera, lesoun Christon dikaion;

**Amplified:** MY LITTLE children, I write you these things so that you may not violate God's law and sin. But if anyone should sin, we have an Advocate (One Who will intercede for us) with the Father—[it is] Jesus Christ [the all] righteous [upright, just, Who conforms to the Father's will in every purpose, thought, and action]. ([Lockman](#))

**ESV:** My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

**KJV:** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

**NIV:** My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.

**NLT:** My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if you do sin, there is someone to plead for you before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who pleases God completely.

**Phillips:** I write these things to you (may I call you "my children" - for that's how I think of you), to help you to avoid sin. But if a man should sin, remember that our advocate before the Father is Jesus Christ the righteous,

**Wuest:** My little children [born-ones, bairns], these things I am writing to you in order that you may not commit an act of sin. And if anyone commits an act of sin, One who pleads our cause we constantly have facing the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous One. ([Wuest](#))

**Young's Literal:** My little children, these things I write to you, that ye may not sin: and if any one may sin, an advocate we have with the Father, Jesus Christ, a righteous one

- **Little children:** 1Jn 2:12,13 1Jn 3:7,18,4:4, 1Jn 5:21 Jn 13:33, 21:5 1Co 4:14,15 Ga 4:19
- **These things:** 1Jn 1:3,4 1Ti 3:14
- **So that:** Ps 4:4 Eze 3:21 Jn 5:14, 8:11 Ro 6:1,2,15 1Co 15:34 Eph 4:26 Tit 2:11-13 1Pe 1:15-19, 4:1-3
- **And if:** 1Jn 1:8-10
- **We have:** Ro 8:34 1Ti 2:5 Heb 7:24,25, 9:24
- **Father:** Lk 10:22 Jn 5:19-26,36 6:27, 10:15, 14:6 Eph 2:18 Jas 1:27, 3:9
- **Righteous:** 1Jn 2:29, 3:5 Zec 9:9 2Co 5:21 Heb 7:26 1Pe 2:22, 3:18
- [1 John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

John 13:33+ "**Little children** ([teknion](#)), I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' (**NOTE THAT IT IS NO ACCIDENT THAT JESUS DID NOT USE Little children UNTIL AFTER JUDAS WENT OUT INTO THE NIGHT IN Jn 13:30+.** CLEARLY JUDAS WAS NO BORN AGAIN.)

## JOHN'S PURPOSE FOR WRITING SIN PREVENTATIVE & SIN PARACLETE

**David Jackman** introduces this chapter - John continues to test the claims of those who affirm that they know God and live in his light. After all, if a person claims to be living in fellowship with God, that should be verifiable by the sort of life he or she lives in the world. Inconsistency here explains why so many have written off Christian belief as an irrelevant fiction. How can these 'Christians', who claim to know God, be so unlike him? Nothing is a greater stumbling-block to the agnostic. The biggest hindrance to the spread of the Christian message has often been within the Christian church itself. (Borrow [The message of John's letters](#))

*It is possible to be either too lenient  
or too severe towards sin.*

**John Stott** observes that "The symmetrical construction of this paragraph now changes, **lest it should be thought that the frank admission and full forgiveness of our sins** (1Jn 1:9–10) **allowed us to think lightly of them.** On the contrary, the author's purpose is 'to prevent sin, not to condone it' (Brooke). So instead of adding 'if', as on the two previous occasions, John begins a new sentence in order to enlarge on the subject of sin in the Christian. He does this first negatively (so that you will not sin) and then positively (But if anybody does sin). It is important to hold these two statements in balance. It is possible to be either too lenient or too severe towards sin. Too great a lenience almost encourages sin in the Christian by stressing God's provision for the sinner. An

exaggerated severity, on the other hand, either denies the possibility of a Christian sinning or refuses him forgiveness and restoration if he falls. Both extreme positions are contradicted by John. (Borrow [The Letters of John](#) or [see here](#))

**My little children** ([teknion](#)), **I am writing** ([grapho](#) - present tense) **these things to you so that** ([hina](#) - purpose clause) **you may not sin** ([hamartano](#) - aorist tense, subjunctive mood of probability) - NLT = "My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin." First a simple question - from this verse, what would you say is one of John's purposes for writing his epistle? Just let the text speak for itself. The designation **My little children** indicates John is addressing them as the born again children of God (cf Jn 1:12+, 1Jn 3:1+). In 1Jn 2:12 he clearly affirms that they are believers "I am writing to you, **little children**, because your sins have been forgiven you for His Name's sake." What is John's purpose? His purpose is clearly to keep them from sinning. He would rather that they not commit sin, but he knows that is not possible until we are glorified. So he is not expecting them to be **sinless**, (like 1Jn 1:10+), but does desire for them to **sin less!**

**John Stott** notes that John's "references to the cleansing blood of Jesus (1Jn 1:7) and to the forgiveness of God (1Jn 1:9) are not intended to give them a light view of the gravity of sin. Far from it. '*Horror, hatred, fear, repudiation of sin pervade the whole Epistle*' (Law). (Borrow [The Letters of John](#) or [see here](#))

**Bob Utley** on **My little children** John uses two different diminutive terms for "children" in 1 John. [teknion](#) (cf. 1 John 2:1,12,28; 3:7,18; 4:4; 5:21; John 13:33) and [paidion](#) (cf. 1 John 2:14,18) They are synonymous with no intended theological distinctives. These affectionate terms probably come from John's advanced age at the time of the writing. Jesus used the term "children" to refer to disciples in John 13:33+.

*My little children...words  
which are used, as it were, with a caress.*

**William Barclay** on **My little children** ([teknion](#)) - The first thing to note in this passage is the sheer affection in it. John begins with the address, "**My little children.**" Both in Latin and in Greek diminutives carry a special affection. They are words which are used, as it were, with a caress. John is a very old man; he must be, in fact, the last survivor of his generation, maybe the last man alive who had walked and talked with Jesus in the days of his flesh. So often age gets out of sympathy with youth and acquires even an impatient irritableness with the new and laxer ways of the younger generation. But not John, in his old age he has nothing but tenderness for those who are his little children in the faith. He is writing to tell them that they must not sin but he does not scold. There is no cutting edge in his voice; he seeks to love them into goodness. In this opening address there is the yearning, affectionate tenderness of a pastor for people whom he has known for long in all their wayward foolishness and still loves. ([Daily Study Bible](#))

**Danny Akin** writes that one of John's goals with 1 Jn 2:1 is that it "will give them fresh power to overcome sin. And part of his method in helping them overcome sin is to assure them that failures do not have to prove fatal to your eternal life." (See [Exalting Jesus in 1,2,3 John - Page 140](#))

**NET Note** on John's change of terms to describe his readers as **My little children** ([teknion](#)) - The direct address by the author to his readers at the beginning of 1Jn 2:1 **marks a break in the pattern of the opponents' claims** (indicated by the phrase **if we say** followed by a negative statement in the apodosis, the "**then**" clause) and the author's counterclaims (represented by **if** with a positive statement in the apodosis) made so far in 1Jn 1:6-10. The seriousness of this last claim (in 1Jn 1:10+) causes the author to interrupt himself to address the readers as **his faithful children** and to explain to them that while he wants them not to sin, they may be assured that if they do, they can look to Jesus Christ, as their advocate with the Father, to intercede for them. After this, the last of the author's three counter-claims in 1John 1:5-2:2 is found in the **if** clause in 1Jn 2:1b.

**I am writing** ([grapho](#) - present tense) **these things** - Note that in 1Jn 1:4+ it was "**we**" write, but now John is more paternal and personal saying "I am writing." This begs the question "What **things**?" Some answer this refers to the entire letter. Others like [Hiebert](#) feel "**These things** apparently looks back to 1Jn 1:5-10+, which portrays the tragic effects of sin." [Steven Cole](#) feels "**These things** refers to the message that God is holy (1Jn 1:5) and to the importance of walking in the light, not in the darkness (1Jn 1:6-10). It also refers to what he writes in 1Jn 2:1-2."

*John has no patience  
with professional perfectionists*

**May not sin** ([hamartano](#) - aorist tense, subjunctive mood of probability) - So what should be a benefit we might derive from reading, receiving and heeding First John?

**A T Robertson** says **so that** ([hina](#)) is a "Purpose (negative) clause with [hina](#) mē and the second [aorist](#) ([ingressive](#), commit sin) [active subjunctive](#) of [hamartanō](#), to **sin**. John has no patience with professional perfectionists (1 John 1:8-10+), but he has still less with loose-livers (**ED: LOVE THIS PUN!**) like some of the [Gnostics](#) who went to all sorts of excesses without shame. ([1 John 2 Word](#))

[Pictures](#))

*Christians are not sinless,  
but they should sin less.*

**Hiebert** - "That you may not sin" does not imply that his readers were living in sin; the aorist tense indicates that they must not condone even a single act of sin. John wanted them to realize that "sin is so heinous in the sight of God that it may not be indulged in even once." "And if anyone sins" recognizes the awful possibility of sin. The conjunction "and" implies that John also wanted to make them aware of this sad fact. He was fully aware of human frailty and the seductive power of sin and Satan. ([1 John 1:5-2:6](#))

**William MacDonald** has a comforting comment - John gives us God's perfect standard for His people, and His gracious provision in the event of failure. The little children refers to all the members of the family of God. God's perfect standard is then set forth in the words these things I write to you, that you may not sin. Because God is perfect, His standard for His people is absolute perfection. He would not be God if He said: "These things I write to you so that you sin just as little as you can." God cannot condone sin in the least degree, and so He sets perfection before us as the goal. The Lord Jesus did this with the woman who was caught in the act of adultery; He said, "Neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more." At the same time, the Lord knows our frame. He remembers that we are dust, and so He has graciously made provision for us in the event of failure. This is expressed in the words, "if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." An advocate is one who comes to the side of another person in time of need in order to help. This is exactly what the Lord Jesus does for us when we sin. He immediately comes to us in order to restore us to fellowship with Himself. Notice that it does not say, "If any man confesses his sins ..." As our Advocate, the Lord seeks to bring us to the place where we do confess and forsake our sin. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#) - borrow one hour)

**MacArthur** - Although a Christian must continually acknowledge and confess sin (1Jn 1:9 **Ed**: Where "confess" is present tense), he is not powerless against it. Fulfilling the duty of confession does not give license to sin. Sin can and should be conquered through the power of the Holy Spirit (see Ro 6:12-14; Ro 8:13; 1Co 15:34; Titus 2:11, 12; 1Pe 1:13-16). ([MacArthur study Bible](#) - borrow for 1 hour)

**Glenn Barker** - Lest any conclude from his previous statements that sin must be considered inevitable in the life of the believer and not a matter of urgent concern since forgiveness is present by confession and the blood of Christ, John hastens to add, "I write this to you so that you will not sin." There is no question at all in his mind that sin and obedience to God are irreconcilable. Sin is the enemy. It removes the believer from the light. It prevents fellowship with God and it destroys fellowship with the children of light. The principle of sin as the power of darkness must be excluded from the believer's life, and individual acts of sin must be resisted. Where failure occurs, the sin must be confessed before the body and the Lord and then abandoned. And always the intent of the believer remains the same—not to commit sin! If any of his children should fail and commit sin, the author is anxious that they neither deceive themselves about it nor lie about their action nor give up walking in the light. The answer to lapsing into sin is not self-deceit but the forgiveness of God made available through Jesus Christ. He has been designated the believer's advocate, the counsel who speaks in our defense. His worthiness to perform this function rests on the fact that even as God is righteous (1:9), so Jesus Christ also merits the title "The Righteous One." ([The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

**Steven Cole** - Every time I see the bumper sticker, "Christians are forgiven, not perfect;" I want to add another line, "But, they're striving for holiness." As it stands, the bumper sticker seems to say, "God accepts me, faults and all, so you need to accept me, too!" Okay, but please give me some assurance that you're working on things! As the author of Hebrews states (Heb 12:14ESV+), we are to "**strive for**...the holiness without which no one will see the Lord." Holiness is not an optional accessory that you may add to your Christian life at some point, if you so choose. Holiness is essential. If you are not striving to grow in holiness in the sight of God, you need to examine whether you know Christ as Savior at all. Every blood-bought child of God desires to please the Lord Jesus who gave Himself on the cross to save us from our sins. ([1 John 2:1-2 The Key to Holiness](#))

**THOUGHT**: As an aside, "**strive for**" is not a suggestion but is a command in the present imperative which calls for this "striving" to be one's general lifestyle (AND ANOTHER 'AS AN ASIDE' - see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)). What is the "general direction" of your life beloved? Is it moving toward holiness and heaven or toward the unholy and hell? This question calls for an honest, thoughtful assessment of our life! Mine included!

John does not want Christ followers to become blasé about sin, as if it is no "big deal." After all, we can just confess to God (1Jn 1:9+) and we're "good to go." We have too low a view of sin, because we have too low a view of holiness of God and the effect of sin on the Father's heart (and the grieving of His Spirit - cf Ezek 6:9). The **Puritans** wrote a great deal about sin because they grasped the depths of their depravity and the destructiveness of sin to our souls (cp 1Pe 2:11+ regarding the ongoing war against our souls).

**THOUGHT** - Pause a moment and ponder what these cross references teach about sin - Ps 4:4, Ezekiel 3:21, Jn 5:14+, Jn 8:11+ Ro 6:1,2+, Ro 6:15+ 1Co 15:34+, Eph 4:26+ Titus 2:11-12+, Titus 2:13+, 1Pe 1:15-17+,

**Hamartano** means to **err** (**err** is from Latin *errare* = to wander or to stray. Interesting!) which in turn means to wander from the right way, to deviate from the true course or purpose and so to violate an accepted standard of conduct. To err is to miss the right way, to deviate from the path or line of duty, to stray by design or mistake, to stray from God and/or His commandments, to swerve from the truth, to turn aside from the straight course charted by the Word of Truth. In short hamartano means to miss the mark of God's perfect standard of righteousness (right attitude, right living, vertically and horizontally, before God and man!).

**Spurgeon** - He is anxious that they should not sin, he knows they do, and that if they say they do not, they lie. Still the Christian's object is sinless perfection, and though he will never have it till he gets to heaven, that is all the better because he will always then be pressing forward, and never reckoning that he has attained.

*Knowledge involves obedience*

*Union involves imitation*

**Barclay** - His object in writing is that they may not sin. There is a two-fold connection of thought here--with what has gone before and with what comes afterwards. There is a two-fold danger that they may indeed think lightly of sin. John says two things about sin. First, he has just said that sin is universal; anyone who says that he has not sinned is a liar. Second, there is forgiveness of sins through what Jesus Christ has done, and still does, for men. Now it would be possible to use both these statements as an excuse to think lightly of sin. If all have sinned, why make a fuss about it and what is the use of struggling against something which is in any event an inevitable part of the human situation? Again, if there is forgiveness of sins, why worry about it? In face of that, John, as Westcott points out, has two things to say. **First**, the Christian is one who has come to know God; and the inevitable accompaniment of knowledge must be obedience. We shall return to this more fully; but at the moment we note that to know God and to obey God must, as John sees it, be twin parts of the same experience. **Second**, the man who claims that he abides in God (1 John 2:6) and in Jesus Christ must live the same kind of life as Jesus lived. That is to say, union with Christ necessarily involves imitation of Christ. So John lays down his two great ethical principles; **knowledge involves obedience, and union involves imitation**. Therefore, in the Christian life there can never be any inducement to think lightly of sin. ([1 John 2 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

## THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE WHEN HE/SHE SINS

Hope in the Biblical sense is not "hope so" but "hope sure." John clearly delineates our hope, one which we can stake on in time and eternity. And so John now describes God's provision for restoration of the believer who commits sin.

**And if anyone** (cf 1Jn 2:1,15+, 1Jn 5:16+) **sins** ([hamartano](#) - aorist), **we** (present tense - continually) **have an Advocate** ([parakletos](#)) **with** (pros - face to face with) **the Father** ([pater](#)), **Jesus** ([lesous](#)) **Christ** ([Christos](#)) **the righteous** ([dikaios](#)) - **IF** (ean) introduces a third class condition which speak of something that potentially could occur (possible/probable) because believers, although new creatures in Christ (2Co 5:17+), still possess the fallen sin nature (cf [flesh in believers](#)), even though [Sin](#) is no longer our "Master" (see Ro 6:11-13+, Ro 6:14+). By using the aorist tense, John pictures the act of sin as an isolated one (albeit with the subjunctive mood one that is possible), but not as one's state, lifestyle or habitual practice, which would have been the case **if sins** was in the present tense.

**John MacArthur** - The verb is an aorist subjunctive third class conditional that conveys the strong probability of actual occurrence. John's expression could be translated "if anyone sins, and it will happen." Immediately following his emphasis in the first part of verse 1 that believers do not have to sin, the apostle acknowledges that they definitely will (cf. 1Jn 1:8+, 1Jn 1:10+). (The pronoun **we** encompasses the apostle with the "**little children**," showing that the apostle has to be referring to the sins of true believers.) (See [1 John Commentary - Page 45](#))

*Our "Triple A" policy, our always*

*Available Appointed Advocate*

**We** (present tense - continually) **have an Advocate** ([parakletos](#)) **with** ([pros](#) ~ face to face with) **the Father** ([pater](#)), **Jesus** ([lesous](#)) **Christ** ([Christos](#)) **the righteous** ([dikaios](#)) - The **Advocate** ([parakletos](#)) is literally one who is called to our side and in this context is one who speaks to the Father in defence of the believer who commits sin. **We have** is in the [present tense](#), indicating that Jesus is our continual "possession," our AAA, our "triple A policy," our ever **Available Appointed Advocate**, so to speak. Because we retain the [residual rebellious flesh](#), we daily fight against God's will for our life and are in need of an Advocate to to plead our case and defend us from the judgment our sins would otherwise warrant.

*The sinless Son stands in*

*for sinning sons!*

In ancient Greece [parakletos](#) was often used of a defense attorney called in to defend someone under accusation and personally urge the judge to decide in favor of the accused. Today we are accused of a crime against the God and warrants the death penalty! (Ro 3:23+) Therefore we need an attorney (an Advocate) to come to our aid and plead our case before the judge's bench (God the Father). The sinless Son stands in for sinning sons! Glory! Thank You Jesus!

*The Holy Spirit is God's Advocate on earth with men,  
while Christ is man's Advocate with the Father.*

-- A T Robertson

Jesus our **Advocate** ([parakletos](#)) approaches the Father for us, defending us from Satan our Accuser (kategoro). In the Revelation, John describes that great day when the **Accuser** is cast out of the divine courtroom (so to speak) writing "And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the **accuser** of our brethren has been thrown down, who **accuses** them before our God day and night. (Rev 12:10+) Our Advocate stands against the Accuser day and night, pleading our innocence (because we are under His blood) before the Father. "When Satan brings some accusation against a believer, the Lord Jesus can point to His finished work on Calvary and say, "Charge that to My account." ([William MacDonald](#))

*"What better Advocate could we have for us,  
than He Who is appointed to be our Judge."*

-- Taylor

**We** (present tense - continually) **have an Advocate** ([parakletos](#)) - Only believers can make this statement, one they should never forget. Our **Advocate** is our Brother, our Bridegroom, our Lord, our King, our Friend, Who sits right at this very moment at the right hand of His Father in heaven. And there Jesus our "substitutionary" **Advocate** pleads our cause with the Father. We are saved but we still sin and grieve the Father's heart and outside of Christ would deserve to die at that very moment. But praise God that in His great mercy and wisdom, He ordained that the Perfect Son would be our Great Defender.

**THOUGHT** - O, how we need to thank our Father for this gracious, undeserved provision and thank Jesus for His willingness to plead our cause with His Father. I don't think we fully grasp the gravity and the preciousness of this grand truth (I certainly do not)! May the Spirit open the eyes of our heart to see the riches of the glory of this aspect of our priceless inheritance in Christ. Amen.

And not only is Jesus our **Advocate** ([parakletos](#)) who defends us but He is also our **Intercessor**! Who intercedes continually for us. Paul asks "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.**" (Ro 8:34+) The writer of Hebrews adds "Hence also (This should cause us to Pause and Ponder the context - Heb 7:24+) He (JESUS) is able (See brief study on the phrase "God is Able") to save (**Ed**: Remember that there are Three Tenses of Salvation in a sense believers will forever be dependent on Him for "salvation") forever those who draw near to God through Him, since **He always lives to make intercession** (present tense - [entugchano](#)) **for** ([huper](#) = on their behalf) **them**. (Heb 7:25+)

**Cleon Rogers** - In rabbinical literature the word ([parakletos](#)) could indicate one who offers **legal aid** or who **intercedes on behalf of** someone else. ([Linguistic Key](#) borrow)

**Hiebert** - Having fallen into some sin, the believer is not left to his own poor efforts to effect restoration. God has made effective provision in Christ....In writing "**we** have an Advocate" instead of the expected "**he** has an Advocate," John made clear his own need for this Advocate. ([1 John 1:5-2:6](#)) Christ is our Helper before the Father and the Spirit is our Helper in the world (cf Ro 8:13)(and against the devil and our flesh = **F.L.E.S.H.** ~ Following Long Established Sinful Habits!).

**Gotquestions** ([see full note](#)) explains that - **Another aspect that makes Jesus a compassionate Advocate is the fact that He has experienced life in this world, too.** He has been tempted, rejected, overlooked, misunderstood, and abused. He does not represent us theoretically; He represents us experientially. He lived the life we live, yet He did so without succumbing to the evils that befall us. He successfully refused to give in to temptation and can be our High Priest because He perfectly fulfilled God's law (Hebrews 4:15; 9:28; John 8:29). Our Advocate can plead our case from personal experience, something like this: "*Father, this young woman has violated our righteous command, but she loves you and wants to serve you. I remember what it was like to be tempted like that, and my heart goes out to her. She has confessed this sin and desires to turn away from it. Because of my sacrifice, you can forgive this sin and purify her heart once more. Let's teach her how to let the Holy Spirit comfort her and strengthen her to resist the next time.*" **An earthly advocate can only plead our case from external evidence or witness testimony.** Our heavenly Advocate knows our hearts and pleads our case on the basis of what is there (Luke 5:22; Mark 2:8). He also knows the intricacies of God's legal system. He has already satisfied the demands of justice, so His advocacy is from a position of strength and righteousness. God accepts His Son's advocacy on our behalf as part of their divine agreement, established before

the world began (1 Peter 1:20; John 17:24; Revelation 13:8). Our position as "the [righteousness of Christ](#)" is secure because the One who purchased our position with His own blood is also our Advocate (Romans 4:25; 8:3; 1 Corinthians 1:30).

*The One who died as our Substitute  
now lives as our Advocate.*

**I Howard Marshall** - Jesus is both the advocate and the atoning sacrifice. What he pleads on behalf of sinners is what he himself has done on their behalf. (See [The Epistles of John - Page 119](#))

**With (pros) the Father** - The Greek for "with" is **pros** which more literally is "facing" the Father! John used "pros" in Jn 1:1+ declaring that "the Word was **with (pros)** God" indicating that Jesus our Advocate was and is always before ("facing") the Father. **Father (pater)** refers to God of course and John's use of this specific word speaks of his acknowledgment of their (and our) sonship. Remember that the phrase "we are all God's children (implying He is our Father)" is not Biblical. The only one who can rightfully call God "**Father**" is one who has received His Son (Jn 1:12,13+, cf 1Jn 3:1+) and been born again by the Spirit of God. In other words, while God is the Creator of all men, not all men have the family privilege of addressing Him as "[Abba! Dear Father!](#)" (Ro 8:15+, Gal 4:6+) even as did His beloved Son (Mk 14:36+), just before He paid the price to make it possible for believers to have confident, eternal and "familial" access to God the Father. And even though we are often errant sons and daughters who sin against Him (and we will daily!), we never lose the privilege of being able to address God as our Father.

[David Guzik](#) sees the possible scenario in heaven when we commit sin - It is as if we stand as the accused in the heavenly court, before our righteous Judge, God the Father. Our Advocate stands up to answer the charges: "He is completely guilty your honor. In fact, he has even done worse than what he is accused of, and now makes full and complete confession before You." The gavel slams, and the Judge asks, "What should his sentence be?" Our Advocate answers, "His sentence shall be death; he deserves the full wrath of this righteous court." All along, our accuser Satan, is having great fun at all this. We are guilty! We admit our guilt! We see our punishment! But then, our Advocate asks to approach the bench. As he draws close to the Judge, he simply says: "Dad, this one belongs to Me. I paid his price. I took the wrath and punishment from this court that he deserves." The gavel sounds again, and the Judge cries out, "Guilty as charged! Penalty satisfied!" Our accuser starts going crazy. "Aren't you even going to put him on probation?" "No!" the Judge shouts. "The penalty has been completely paid by My Son. There is nothing to put him on probation for." Then the Judge turns to our Advocate, and says, "Son, you said this one belongs to You. I release him into Your care. Case closed!"...(Guzik adds) A human defense lawyer argues for the innocence of his client. But our Advocate, Jesus Christ, admits our guilt – and then enters His plea on our behalf, as the one who has made an atoning sacrifice for our sinful guilt.

**Steven Cole** - Whenever we need Him (which is always!), He is there, coming to our aid. When we sin, Satan, the accuser of the brethren (Rev 12:10+; Zech 3:1-5), charges us as guilty before God. Jesus Christ, our Defense Attorney, steps to the bench, but He does not enter a plea of "*not guilty*." That would not be true. We have sinned. Rather, He enters a plea of *guilty*, but then He argues for pardon because He paid the penalty for that sin by His substitutionary death. Therefore, His client is not liable for punishment. And, although we should confess our sins (1Jn 1:9+), John does not say, "*If we confess our sins, we have an Advocate*." Rather, he says, "*If anyone sins, we have an Advocate*" Our forgiveness and our standing with God do not depend on anything **we** do, but rather on the finished work of Christ. **If** we are His children through the new birth (Jn 3:3, 7-8), He is there before the Father on our behalf, pleading His blood, even **before** we confess our sins!... Because Jesus Christ is perpetually in heaven presenting His shed blood, every person that draws near to God through Christ can know that the accuser has no grounds for conviction. We are guilty as charged, but the penalty has already been paid by our Substitute, who pleads our case for us! (Ed: Thank You Lord Jesus!) ([1 John 2:1-2 The Key to Holiness](#))

**Calvin** comments that "The intercession of Christ is a continual application of his death for our salvation."

**Wuest** sees the truth in this verse as a strong deterrent to saints to soberly remember when in the midst of strong temptation to commit sin, writing that "Our Advocate is always in fellowship with the Father in order that if the saint loses fellowship with Him through cherished and unconfessed sin, He might plead our cause on the basis of His precious blood, and bring us back into fellowship again. The word "**facing**" (with - [pros](#)) brings us to this solemn thought, that when we saints sin, the Lord Jesus must **face** the Father with us (OR FOR US) and our sin. The saint has been saved in His precious blood so that he may be able to keep from sinning, and when he does sin, he wounds the tender heart of the Saviour, and forces Him to face God the Father with that saint whom He has saved in His precious blood. **How that should deter us from committing acts of sin!** ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

**Steven Cole** has a similar comment - John's thought here (in line with Paul) is that you need to realize that God graciously has forgiven you completely in Jesus Christ. He is at the right hand of the Father, pleading your case, even when you sin. Your standing before God does not depend on your performance, but rather on Jesus' blood and righteousness. **Properly understanding that truth will not lead you to sin more, but rather, to sin less.** The key to holiness is to understand God's grace that was lavished upon you when Jesus



Christ died for your sins. ([1 John 2:1-2 The Key to Holiness](#))

**Jesus (Iesous) Christ (Christos) the righteous (dikaios) - Amplified** = "Jesus Christ [the all] righteous [upright, just, Who conforms to the Father's will in every purpose, thought, and action]." More literally this is "Jesus Christ a Righteous (One)". John had just used the same term **righteous (dikaios)** of the Father (1Jn 1:9+) which affirms the Deity of Jesus. **Jesus Christ** is qualified to be our **Advocate** because He is **righteous** and His righteousness allowed Him to be the perfect sacrifice for our sins and then to clothe us with His righteousness (1Co 1:30+). In other words, Jesus is our **righteous (dikaios) Advocate (parakletos)** is truth that forms the grounds for unrighteous men (all men and women ever born = Ro 3:10+) to be declared righteous (justified Ro 3:22+, 2Cor 5:21+) when they repent and believe (Mk 1:15+) in the Righteous One's substitutionary sacrifice for them. The **NLT** picks up on the importance of the righteousness of Christ describing Jesus as "the One Who pleases God completely." Said of God, it designates the perfect agreement between His nature and His acts (in which He is the standard for all men).

**Hiebert** - "**Righteous**", used without the article, is descriptive of His character. "The efficacy of His ministry is guaranteed by the righteousness of His Person." Being personally conformed to all the righteous demands of God's law, He pleads the believers' case in keeping with the requirements of a holy law. ([1 John 1:5-2:6](#))

**A T Robertson** - As **dikaiois** (righteous) Jesus is qualified to plead our case and to enter the Father's presence."

"For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted." (Heb. 2:18+).

**Steven Cole** dissects the names of **Jesus** as they relate to salvation "Each name points to an essential part of our forgiveness. In the first place, we needed a human Savior, **Jesus**. Only man could atone for the sins of people. Jesus was completely human, not just in appearance, as some of the heretics maintained, but in His nature. But, we also needed a divine Savior. Jesus is the **Christ**, God's anointed one, sent to bear our sins (Isaiah 53:3-6). A mere man's death would only pay for his own sins. But as God in human flesh, Jesus' death had infinite merit to atone for the sins of all that the Father had given to Him. But, also, He is Jesus Christ the righteous. Jesus had to be "a lamb unblemished and spotless" (1 Pet. 1:19). If He had sinned, He would have had to die for His own sins. But He fully kept God's law, in dependence on the Father. His righteousness is freely imputed to the one who trusts in Him. As Paul wrote (2 Cor. 5:21), "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." This means that Jesus Christ alone is an adequate Savior. He is all that we need to stand before the holy God, not in a righteousness of our own, "derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith" (Phil. 3:9). We can add nothing to what Christ has done. ([1 John 2:1-2 The Key to Holiness](#))

**David Smith** quotes Rothe - "Only the righteous One, the guiltless, the One that is separate from sin, can be the Advocate with God for sinners, in general, the Mediator of salvation, and makes His friendship for us prevalent with God, because only such a one has access to God and fellowship with God (Heb. 7:26; 1 Peter 3:18+; John 16:8, 10+)," and Taylor, "What better advocate could we have for us, than He that is appointed to be our Judge." ([Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

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**My little children (5040) (teknion** diminutive of **teknon**) is literally My "born ones", the diminutive expresses affection accounting for some of the translations as "**my dear children**."

**Teknion** designates a little child and is used by John to address those who are true followers of Jesus. From John's repetitive use of **teknion** in this epistle, one might say it is an epistle for little children! But the subjects with which John deals are not "child's play," but have serious implications regarding one's spiritual life, now and in eternity future! The Apostle John used **teknion** in warning his readers of spiritual dangers. Clearly the 8 NT uses of **teknion** strongly infer that the recipients of this title are genuine born again ones.

**TDNTA** says **teknion** "is a nursery term for a "small child." It is a term of affection used by a teacher to His disciples under circumstances requiring a tender appeal, as when Jesus addressed His Twelve disciples just before His death.

In the Textus Receptus (but not in the Nestle Aland) Paul, used **teknion** Paul in Gal 4:19 to warn of the deadly errors of Judaism which were infiltrating the Galatian churches and blunting the Gospel of Grace.

Most of the uses of **teknion** by the apostle John. Jesus used this word when he spoke to His disciples at the Last Supper (Jn 13:33, cf Jesus' manner of addressing them after His resurrection Jn 21:4 [paidion]). John used it to address that generation of disciples to which he ministered when he was approximately ninety years old (1Jn 2:1, 12, 28 3:7, 18; 4:4 5:21).

Here are the 8 uses of **teknion** in the NT (NASB):

John 13:33+ "**Little children**, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews,

now I also say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.'

1 John 2:1+ My **little children**, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;

1 John 2:12+ I am writing to you, **little children**, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake.

1 John 2:28+ Now, **little children**, **abide** (present imperative - calls for the little children to be continually in Christ, their very life! see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

1 John 3:7+ **Little children**, **make sure no one deceives** (present imperative - calls for them to be continually on guard for error, and by implication on the "flip side" hold fast to the Word of Truth by which subtle error is detected! see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous;

1 John 3:18+ **Little children**, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

1 John 4:4+ You are from God, **little children**, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

1 John 5:21+ **Little children**, **guard** (aorist imperative see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) yourselves from idols.

**Writing** (1125) **grapho** from root **graph-** = primarily means to scratch on or engrave as on an ornament, reports, letters, etc, as deduced from uses in the Septuagint where **grapho** occurs some 300 times usually for the Hebrew [kathab 03789](#); **English** = graph, graphic, etc) means to engrave or inscribe with a pen or stylus characters or letters on a surface which can be wood, wax, metal, leather, stone, parchment, dirt (John ), paper, etc. ([Click to review all 191 uses of grapho in the NAS](#))

**GRAPHO IN JOHN'S WRITINGS** - Jn. 2:17; Jn. 5:46; Jn. 6:31; Jn. 6:45; Jn. 8:8; Jn. 8:17; Jn. 10:34; Jn. 12:14; Jn. 12:16; Jn. 15:25; Jn. 19:19; Jn. 19:20; Jn. 19:21; Jn. 19:22; Jn. 20:30; Jn. 20:31; Jn. 21:24; Jn. 21:25; 1 Jn. 1:4; 1 Jn. 2:1; 1 Jn. 2:7; 1 Jn. 2:8; 1 Jn. 2:12; 1 Jn. 2:13; 1 Jn. 2:14; 1 Jn. 2:21; 1 Jn. 2:26; 1 Jn. 5:13; 2 Jn. 1:5; 2 Jn. 1:12; 3 Jn. 1:9; 3 Jn. 1:13; Rev. 1:3; Rev. 1:11; Rev. 1:19; Rev. 2:1; Rev. 2:8; Rev. 2:12; Rev. 2:17; Rev. 2:18; Rev. 3:1; Rev. 3:7; Rev. 3:12; Rev. 3:14; Rev. 5:1; Rev. 10:4; Rev. 13:8; Rev. 14:1; Rev. 14:13; Rev. 17:5; Rev. 17:8; Rev. 19:9; Rev. 19:12; Rev. 19:16; Rev. 20:12; Rev. 20:15; Rev. 21:5; Rev. 21:27; Rev. 22:18; Rev. 22:19

**NIDNTT** has a historical note writing that "**grapho** is found in its original sense in Homer, Il. 17, 599. In Herodotus, 4, 36 the word is used meaning to draw, of lines on maps; and scholars of the 3rd cent. B.C. used it of drawing of mathematical figures. In Homer grapho is already used in the sense of scratching signs on a tablet as a kind of letter (Il. 6, 169). From the time of Herodotus. it is used generally in the normal sense of to write, and from the time of Pindar in the derived sense of to prescribe, to order. From the practice of handing in a written accusation, grapho came in judicial language to mean to accuse (Plato, Euthyphro 2b). ([Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology](#) and [online version](#))

**Spiros Zodhiates** gives a good background discussion of **grapho** - The ancient Greeks equated **gráphō** with **xéō**, to carve. They carved figures with meaning on wooden tablets and later replaced these when letters were developed. The engraved tablet was covered with another, and being tied together and sealed, constituted the form of an ancient letter. The Sept. several times applies the word in this sense of engraving, carving, or cutting out (1 Kings 6:29; Isa. 22:16 [cf. Job 19:23, 24]). From Ex. 31:18; 32:16; 2 Cor. 3:7 we deduce that the first literal writing was of this kind. Thus originally the word meant to cut in, make an incision. Later, with the invention of the parchment and paper, it came to mean to write, to delineate literal characters on a tablet, parchment, or paper (Luke 1:63; 16:6, 7; John 8:6; 19:19; Acts 23:25; 3 John 1:13). It also came to mean to describe in writing (John 1:45; Rom. 10:5); to write a law, command in writing, as would a legislator (Mark 12:19). The writing of names in heaven emphasizes that God remembers and will not forget, since by writing, the name of a person is fixed. The use of the word **gégraptai**, it is written, in the perf. tense refers authoritatively to what is found written in Holy Scripture and denotes legislative act or enactment. In the sphere of revelation, the written records hold this authoritative position, and **gégraptai** always implies an appeal to the indisputable and legal authority of the passage quoted (Matt. 4:4, 6, 7, 10; 11:10). It is completed by additions such as "in the law" (Luke 2:23; 10:26); "in the book of the words of Isaiah" (Luke 3:4); "in the prophets" (John 6:45). (The Complete Word Study Dictionary – New Testament - [borrow](#))

**I AM WRITING** (grapho) is used in 10 verses in 1 John

1 John 1:4+ These things we **write**, so that ([hina](#)) our joy may be made complete.

1 John 2:1+ My little children, I am **writing** these things to you so that ([hina](#)) you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;

1 John 2:7+ Beloved, I am not **writing** a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard.

1 John 2:8+ On the other hand, I am **writing** a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining.

1 John 2:12+ I am **writing** to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake.

1 John 2:13+ I am **writing** to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father.

1 John 2:14+ I have **written** to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

1 John 2:21+ I have not **written** to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth.

1 John 2:26+ These things I have **written** to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.

1 John 5:13+ These things I have **written** to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that ([hina](#)) you may know that you have eternal life.

**So that** (in order that)([2443](#)) [hina](#) is a conjunction which is used as a marker of purpose, definition or result and is rendered in order that, that, so that. With the result or consequence that. With the particular aim or purpose of; in order that. See also [Dana-Mantey Greek Grammar page 248](#).

"So that" means "in order to" which answers the question "Why?" We use it to begin adverb clauses of purpose. Let's hear an example: It helps to lower blood sugar so that you feel less hungry. The adverb clause is "so that you feel less hungry." It shows the purpose for the action in the main clause. Why does it help to lower blood sugar? To feel less hungry. ([LearnEnglish](#))

**HINA IN JOHN'S WRITINGS** - 1Jn. 1:3; 1Jn. 1:4; 1Jn. 1:9; 1Jn. 2:1; 1Jn. 2:19; 1Jn. 2:27; 1Jn. 2:28; 1Jn. 3:1; 1Jn. 3:5; 1Jn. 3:8; 1Jn. 3:11; 1Jn. 3:23; 1Jn. 4:9; 1Jn. 4:17; 1Jn. 4:21; 1Jn. 5:3; 1Jn. 5:13; 1Jn. 5:16; 1Jn. 5:20; 2Jn. 1:5; 2Jn. 1:6; 2Jn. 1:8; 2Jn. 1:12; 3Jn. 1:4; 3Jn. 1:8; Rev. 2:10; Rev. 2:21; Rev. 3:9; Rev. 3:11; Rev. 3:18; Rev. 6:2; Rev. 6:4; Rev. 6:11; Rev. 7:1; Rev. 8:3; Rev. 8:6; Rev. 8:12; Rev. 9:4; Rev. 9:5; Rev. 9:15; Rev. 9:20; Rev. 11:6; Rev. 12:4; Rev. 12:6; Rev. 12:14; Rev. 12:15; Rev. 13:12; Rev. 13:13; Rev. 13:15; Rev. 13:16; Rev. 13:17; Rev. 14:13; Rev. 16:12; Rev. 16:15; Rev. 18:4; Rev. 19:8; Rev. 19:15; Rev. 19:18; Rev. 20:3; Rev. 21:15; Rev. 21:23; Rev. 22:14

**THOUGHT** - **So that** ([hina](#)) is a conjunction (sometimes rendered "in order that") which denotes purpose, aim or goal ([BDAG](#)). You may be saying "That's great, but *so what* about **so that**?" The answer is that "so that" and similar phrases beg the call for the reader to interact with the text and ask "*What is the purpose, goal or aim of this verse?*" (See 5W/H questions) Interrogating the text will always "force" you to Pause and Ponder God's Words. And as you do this you are in effect performing inductive Bible study and practicing Biblical Meditation, a blessed discipline that is not often practiced when we read our [One Minute Bible](#)! When you interrogate the text, you will be led by the Spirit your Teacher to investigate and reread the **context**. Since there are 979 "**so that**" phrases in the NAS (612 in the ESV), you will have many wonderful "opportunities" to pause and ponder the text and allow the Spirit to illuminate the Word and renew your mind!

**Sin** ([264](#)) (**hamartano**) means to literally miss the mark (and so not share in the prize). Hamartano as used in our present passage means to act contrary to the will and law of God.

**Hamartano** means to **err** (err is from Latin *errare* = to wander or to stray!) which means to wander from the right way, to deviate from the true course or purpose and so to violate an accepted standard of conduct. To err is to miss the right way. To **err** means to deviate from the path or line of duty. To stray by design or mistake. To **err** is to stray from God and/or His commandments.

**Hamartano** means to swerve from the truth, to turn aside from the straight course charted by the Word of Truth. **Tosswerve** means to wander from any line prescribed, or from a rule of duty; to depart from what is established by law, duty or custom.

In short **hamartano** means to miss the mark of God's perfect standard of righteousness, a mark which in the final analysis was "hit" every time by only one Person in all of human history, the God-Man Christ Jesus, the sinless Son of God and personification of righteousness. (cf Jer 23:5,6, 1 Cor 1:30)

[Webster's 1828 Dictionary](#) has a "bibliocentric" definition of **sin** as "*The voluntary departure of a moral agent from a known rule of rectitude or duty, prescribed by God; any voluntary transgression of the divine law, or violation of a divine command; a wicked act; iniquity. Sin is either a positive act in which a known divine law is violated, or it is the voluntary neglect to obey a positive divine command, or a rule of duty clearly implied in such command. Sin comprehends not actions only, but neglect of known duty, all evil thoughts, purposes, words and desires, whatever is contrary to God's commands or law.*"

Now compare with the [2024 Webster's definition](#) of sin - "1a: an offense against religious or moral law (b) an action that is or is felt to be highly reprehensible it's a sin to waste food (c) an often serious shortcoming : FAULT 2a : transgression of the law of God b : a vitiated state of human nature in which the self is estranged from God."

**F W Danker** writes that "The very common word **μαρτάνω (hamartano)** and its cognates provide another instructive study. In the Iliad 5.287 it is used of a spear missing its mark. In general it is used of failure to achieve one's purpose. Thus Odysseus in the underworld assures Achilles that Neoptolemus did not **err** (hamartano) in his words, and only Nestor and Odysseus were a match for him (Odyssey 11.511). Religious significance is attached to the word already as early as Homer. In the Iliad 24.68 Zeus alerts Hera to the fact that Hector **never failed** to offer pleasing gifts to the gods. The concept of actual wrongdoing and indiscretions committed against the gods appears in the Iliad 9.501. In biblical documents the implications of "sin" are more clearly denoted in direct ratio to the increased understanding of God's moral nature and humanity's created responsibility, but **the original idea of failure to achieve one's purpose** sharpens the contrast between moral expectations and actual achievements. Ancient Hellenes had other ways of dealing with matters of behavior. In the Sacred Scriptures prophets unanimously proclaim that apart from an understanding of God's redemptive activity life is bound to end in disappointment and failure. Human endeavor without atonement is one long ramble. It lacks direction and orientation. Unless all of life is steered toward God and conditioned by God's designs, it goes off course, no matter how swift the speed or determined the direction. Again, μαρτάνω (hamartano) by itself does not "mean" all these things, and there is nothing specifically "theological" about the term, but when a given context indicates awareness of divine interests, the student searches for resources in the receptor language that will express the meaning in a specific passage. Moved into the contemporary scene, strong are some of the warnings to humans who hurtle off along their own trajectory, swearing companionship to the wind." (Multi-Purpose Tools for Bible Study, page 135-136).

**HAMARTANO - 43X/37V - commit sin(1), committed...offense(1), committing(1), sin(11), sinned(17), sinning(4), sins(8).** Matt. 18:15; Matt. 18:21; Matt. 27:4; Lk. 15:18; Lk. 15:21; Lk. 17:3; Lk. 17:4; Jn. 5:14; Jn. 8:11; Jn. 9:2; Jn. 9:3; Acts 25:8; Rom. 2:12; Rom. 3:23; Rom. 5:12; Rom. 5:14; Rom. 5:16; Rom. 6:15; 1 Co. 6:18; 1 Co. 7:28; 1 Co. 7:36; 1 Co. 8:12; 1 Co. 15:34; Eph. 4:26; 1 Tim. 5:20; Tit. 3:11; Heb. 3:17; Heb. 10:26; 1 Pet. 2:20; 2 Pet. 2:4; 1 Jn. 1:10; 1 Jn. 2:1; 1 Jn. 3:6; 1 Jn. 3:8; 1 Jn. 3:9; 1 Jn. 5:16; 1 Jn. 5:18

**Advocate (3875)** (**parakletos** from **para** = side of, alongside, beside + **kaleo** = to call) is the noun cognate of the verb **parakaleo** (**see study**) (cf also **paraklesis**) and literally means one called alongside. Synonyms for **parakletos** include - consoler, comforter, helper, legal assistant, defense, defender, pleader, advocate, one who pleads another's cause. **Parakletos** describes one who stands by to help or render aid (especially in a court of law) or one who is summoned to the side of another to help, comfort, encourage, counsel, or intercede for, depending on the need.

**W Hall Harris** - Goodspeed concludes that the word meant a person called to someone else's aid in court, a helper, intercessor, pleader, or character witness. 'Defender' comes very close to being equivalent, but more than just a defense witness is in view. Jesus' statements about the coming Paraclete teaching and reminding the disciples go beyond this meaning and call for a broader translation. Goodspeed suggests 'Helper' for a translation in the Fourth Gospel and 'one who will intercede for us' in 1 John 2:1. ([Exegetical Commentary on 1 John 2:3-11](#))

**Vine** says that **parakletos** is "primarily a verbal adjective, and suggests the capability or adaptability for giving aid. It was used in a court of justice to denote a legal assistant, counsel for the defense, an advocate; then, generally, one who pleads another's cause, an intercessor, advocate, as in 1John 2:1, of the Lord Jesus. In the widest sense, it signifies a succorer, comforter. Christ was this to His disciples, by the implication of His word **another** (allos, = another of the same sort, not heteros = different) Comforter, when speaking of the Holy Spirit." ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

When the **KJV** uses **parakletos** to refer to the Holy Spirit, it is translated as **‘Comforter’**, but most modern translators agree that this is not the primary idea of this Greek word in John 14-16. Keep in mind however that **parakletos** is derived from **parakaleo**, a verb used in the Septuagint clearly to convey the picture of comfort (see Ge 37:35, Isa 61:2), not to mention Jesus' use in Mt 5:4-note.

**Oswald Chambers** - Call the **Comforter** by the term you think best—**Advocate, Helper, Paraclete**, the word conveys the indefinable blessedness of His sympathy; an inward invisible kingdom that causes the saint to sing through every night of sorrow. (Quoted in [Guide to What Christians Believe](#))

The KJV, YLT translate **parakletos** as **Comforter**, the RV retains the word **Comforter**, but the margin gives **Advocate** and **Helper** and notes that the Greek is paraclete. The HCSB and RSV translate it **Counselor**. J. B. Phillips translates it someone to stand by you. Knox translates it he who is to befriend you. NAS, ESV, Moffatt, Torrey and 20th Century NT all translate it **Helper**. NET, NLT and NAB translate it as **Advocate** (even Jn 14:16). As the [NET Note](#) below amplifies, none of these Names are perfect. I would suggest that the Spirit might also be called our **Enabler**, that is, the One Who supernaturally energizes (enables) us for Christ-like life and ministry. The point is that we don't just need a little "help" (cp Name "Helper") or a little *push*, but we need Him to give us both **"the desire and the power"** (NLT paraphrase of Php 2:13-note) to work out our salvation (Phil 2:12-note), whether in everyday Christian living or in specific ministries to which He has assigned **each** and every believer. I personally believe there are **no "bench players"** on God's team, but that every believer is called to be on the field so to speak, activity involved in the great game of redeeming men's souls from hell to heaven!

[See 3 page discussion of parakletos in the Dictionary of NT Theology, page 88, volume 1-](#) Excerpt - paraklētōs is a cognate of the vb. parakaleō, the meanings of which in cl. Gk. range from call in, send for, summon, to exhort, encourage, comfort, console. The noun paraklētōs is derived from the verbal adj. and means called [to one's aid]. It is first found in a legal context in the court of justice, meaning legal assistant, advocate (Demosthenes, 19, 1; cf. Lycurgus, Frag. 102). "There is no instance of paraklētōs, like its Lat. equivalent advocatus, being used as a tt. for the professional legal advisor or defender of an accused person in the same sense as syndikos or synēgoros. But the use of paraklētōs for representative is to be understood in the light of legal assistance in court, the pleading of another's case, Dion. Hal. Ant. Rom., XI, 37, 1" (J. Behm, TDNT V 801). The existence of the Lat. legal term advocatus may have led early Christian writers to use it to translate paraklētōs (cf. Tert., Adv. Prax., 9; Cyprian, Ep. 55, 18; Novatian, De trinitate, 28, 29; Augustine, Tract. in Ioan., 94; cf. Arndt, 623). In the history of religions numerous helpers are known. In the Mandaean writings dating from the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D. there are several helpers, including Yawar (means helper) which has some features in common with the Johannine paraklētōs (TDNT V 808).

**NET Note** says **Advocate** "or **Helper**" or **Counselor**"; Grk **Paraclete**," from the Greek word parakletos. Finding an appropriate English translation for parakletos is a very difficult task. No single English word has exactly the same range of meaning as the Greek word. **Comforter**," used by some of the older English versions, appears to be as old as Wycliffe. But today it suggests a quilt or a sympathetic mourner at a funeral. **Counselor**" is adequate, but too broad, in contexts like "marriage counselor" or "camp counselor." **Helper**" or **Assistant**" could also be used, but could suggest a subordinate rank. **Advocate**," the word chosen for the NET translation, has more forensic overtones than the Greek word does, although in John 16:5-11 a forensic context is certainly present. Because an "advocate" is someone who "advocates" or supports a position or viewpoint and since this is what the **Paraclete** will do for the preaching of the disciples, it was selected in spite of the drawbacks.

**Louw-Nida** gives us a very interesting word picture of **parakletos**- The traditional rendering of Comforter is especially misleading because it suggests only one very limited aspect of what the Holy Spirit does. A term such as Helper is highly generic and can be particularly useful in some languages. In certain instances, for example, the concept of Helper is expressed idiomatically, for example, "the one who mothers us" or, as in one language in Central Africa, **"the one who falls down beside us,"** that is to say, **an individual who upon finding a person collapsed along the road, kneels down beside the victim, cares for his needs, and carries him to safety.** A rendering based upon the concept of legal advocate seems in most instances to be too restrictive. Furthermore, there may be quite unsatisfactory connotations associated with any word which suggests a lawyer, especially since in so many societies, a lawyer is thought of primarily as one who bribes the judges or can speak two truths or, as in one language, is a professional liar. ([Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament- Based on Semantic Domains](#))

**Barclay - Parakletos** itself is a word which is passive in form and literally means someone who is called to one's side; but since it is always the reason for the calling in that is uppermost in the mind, the word, although passive in form, has an active sense, and comes to mean a helper, a supporter and, above all, a witness in someone's favour, an advocate in someone's defence. It too is a common word in ordinary Greek. Demosthenes (De Fals. Leg. 1) speaks of the importunities and the party spirit of advocates (**parakletoi**) serving the ends of private ambition instead of public good. Diogenes Laertius (4: 50) tells of a caustic saying of the philosopher Bion. A very talkative person sought his help in some matter. Bion said, "I will do what you want, if you

will only send someone to me to plead your case (i.e., send a **parakletos**), and stay away yourself." When Philo is telling the story of Joseph and his brethren, he says that, when Joseph forgave them for the wrong that they had done him, he said, "I offer you an amnesty for all that you did to me; you need no other **parakletos**" (Life of Joseph 40). Philo tells how the Jews of Alexandria were being oppressed by a certain governor and determined to take their case to the emperor. "We must find," they said, "a more powerful **parakletos** by whom the Emperor Gaius will be brought to a favorable disposition towards us" (Leg. in Flacc. 968 B). So common was this word that it came into other languages just as it stood. In the New Testament itself the Syriac, Egyptian, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions all keep the word **parakletos** just as it stands. The Jews especially adopted the word and used it in this sense of advocate, someone to plead one's cause. They used it as the opposite of the word accuser and the Rabbis had this saying about what would happen in the day of God's judgment. "The man who keeps one commandment of the Law has gotten to himself one **parakletos**; the man who breaks one commandment of the Law has gotten to himself one accuser." They said, "If a man is summoned to court on a capital charge, he needs powerful **parakletoi** (the plural of the word) to save him; repentance and good works are his **parakletoi** in the judgment of God." "All the righteousness and mercy which an Israelite does in this world are great peace and great **parakletoi** between him and his father in heaven." They said that the sin-offering is a man's **parakletos** before God. **So the word came into the Christian vocabulary.** In the days of the persecutions and the martyrs, a Christian pleader called Vettius Epagathos ably pled the case of those who were accused of being Christians. "He was an advocate (**parakletos**) for the Christians, for he had the Advocate within himself, even the Spirit" (Eusebius: The Ecclesiastical History, 5: 1). The Letter of Barnabas (20) speaks of evil men who are the advocates of the wealthy and the unjust judges of the poor. The writer of Second Clement asks: "Who shall be your **parakletos** if it be not clear that your works are righteous and holy?" (2 Clement 6: 9). **A parakletos has been defined as "one who lends his presence to his friends."** More than once in the New Testament there is this great conception of Jesus as the friend and the defender of man. In a military court-martial the officer who defends the soldier under accusation is called the prisoner's friend. Jesus is our friend. Paul writes of that Christ who is at the right hand of God and "who intercedes for us" (Romans 8:34). The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews speaks of Jesus Christ as the one who "ever lives to make intercession" for men (Hebrews 7:25); and he also speaks of him as "appearing in the presence of God for us" (Hebrews 9:24). The tremendous thing about Jesus is that he has never lost his interest in, or his love for, men. We are not to think of him as having gone through his life upon the earth and his death upon the Cross, and then being finished with men. He still bears his concern for us upon his heart; he still pleads for us; Jesus Christ is the prisoner's friend for all. ([1 John 2 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

**William Barclay** remarks that **parakletos** "is really untranslatable (*So common was this word that it came into other languages just as it stood. In the New Testament itself, the Syriac, Egyptian, Arabic and Ethiopic versions all keep the word parakletos just as it stands*). The AV renders it Comforter, which, although hallowed by time and usage, is not a good translation. Moffatt translates it as Helper. It is only when we examine this word **parakletos** in detail that we catch something of the riches of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. It really means someone who is called in; but it is the reason why the person is called in which gives the word its distinctive associations. The Greeks used the word in a wide variety of ways. A parakletos might be a person called in to give witness in a law court in someone's favor, or an advocate called in to plead the cause of someone under a charge which would issue in a serious penalty; an expert called in to give advice in some difficult situation, or a person called in when, for example, a company of soldiers were depressed and dispirited to put new courage into their minds and hearts. **Always a parakletos is someone called in to help in time of trouble or need.** Comforter was once a perfectly good translation. It actually goes back to John Wycliffe, the first person to use it in his translation made in the fourteenth century. But in his day it meant much more than it means now. The word comes from the Latin *fortis*, which means brave; and a comforter was someone who enabled some dispirited creature to be brave. Nowadays *comfort* has to do almost solely with sorrow; and a comforter is someone who sympathizes with us when we are sad. Beyond a doubt the Holy Spirit does that, but to limit His work to that function is sadly to belittle Him. We often talk of being able to cope with things. That is precisely the work of the Holy Spirit. He takes away our inadequacies and enables us to cope with life. The Holy Spirit substitutes **victorious** for **defeated** living. So what Jesus is saying (in Jn 14:16) is: 'I am setting you a hard task, and I am sending you out on a very difficult engagement. But I am going to send you someone, the Parakletos, Who will **guide** you as to what to do and **enable** you to do it.' ([John 14 Commentary - Online](#))

**Barclay adds** "Xenophon, the Greek historian (Anabasis, 1:6:5), tells how the Persian emperor Cyrus the Younger summoned (parakalein) Clearchos into his tent to be his counsellor, for Clearchos was a man held in the highest honour by Cyrus and by the Greeks. Aeschines, the Greek orator, protests against his opponents calling in Demosthenes, his great rival, and says: 'Why need you call Demosthenes to your support? To do so is to call in a rascally rhetorician to cheat the ears of the jury' (Against Ctesiphon, 200)."...Philo tells how the Jews of Alexandria were being oppressed by a certain governor and were determined to take their case to the emperor. 'We must find', they said, 'a more powerful paraklētōs by whom the Emperor Gaius will be brought to a favourable disposition towards us' (In Flaccum, 968 B)....

**Parakletos** - 5x in 5v - translated in **NAS** as **Advocate**(1), **Helper**(4).

John 14:16+ "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another **Helper** ([parakletos](#)), that ([hina](#) - term of

purpose/result) He may be with you forever;

**Comment:** Note the Holy Spirit's permanent (forever) presence! This means eternally! So even in the Millennium and the following New Heaven and New Earth, the Spirit will be our "Helper." Hallelujah! Notice also that "another" is not the Greek word [heteros](#) (another of a different kind or quality) but is [allos](#), signifying that Jesus is saying the Spirit will be just like Himself in His divinity. The Holy Spirit is a Paraclete because He in a real sense acts as Christ's substitute on earth while Christ is not in the world as the God-Man in bodily form. This is what the fearful disciples needed -- an assurance that Jesus' Crucifixion and subsequent Ascension would not leave them as "spiritual orphans." (Jn 14:18+) The sending of the Spirit was Jesus' **antidote** for their **anxiety** and He (the Spirit) is still the **antidote** for our **anxiety** in a world that is becoming increasingly opposed to Jesus and His followers. (cp John 14:27+, John 16:33+, Php 4:6+, Php 4:7+)

Think of the Holy Spirit as "Jesus in the Spirit" (cf Ro 8:9+, Acts 16:7+, Php 1:19+, Gal 4:6+, 1Pe 1:11+) or as Jesus with us in and through His Spirit which forever indwells believers. Beloved, in the day of trouble or affliction or trial (we are all in them, just coming out of one or getting ready to enter one!) there need be no fear, for no less of a Person than the omnipotent, omniscient Spirit of Christ stands ready to enable us to walk through the troubling times! Do you, like a trusting little child (yea, even a teknon), lean hard on His everlasting arms, pressing in to Him, when you are in the spiritual storm?

John 14:26+ "But the **Helper** ([parakletos](#)), the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

**Comment:** While Helper is a good name for the Spirit, this name can be a bit misleading in regard to His role in our daily spiritual walk (process of sanctification). In other words, if I think that all I need is a little help, a little "push" so to speak, to live the supernatural Christian life, I am missing the truth that left to my own natural strength, I can do nothing (cf Jn 15:5+, 2Cor 3:5,6+). It follows that I do not just need a little "help" to live a victorious Christian life, I need enablement. In short, I need the Enabler Who indwells me to continually empower me to live righteously (not self-righteously)! Does this subtle distinction make sense?

**Vance Havner:** They (Peter, et al, in Acts compared to the Gospels) were not the same men and never were again. What happened? The Lord JESUS CHRIST had come from the grave with a new body, had promised them His Presence, had returned to the Father, had sent them the Paraclete. **No other explanation can account for the early church**, a fact second only to the life of our Lord. **Ed:** And frankly no other provision has been made for the modern church! Have we missed Him? I'm not even talking about "charismatic," but about His necessary enabling power that is absolutely mandatory for any church to function supernaturally, be they Bible church, Baptist church, Charismatic church, modern "Gospel centered" church, etc. Same power Source is necessary as fueled the "First Church at Jerusalem"!)

John 15:26+ "When the Helper ([parakletos](#)) comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me,

**Comment:** Note the Spirit's purpose as He relates to Jesus - to testify about Jesus and to glorify Jesus in Jn 16:14. While He is clearly God, we must always be careful not to glorify the Spirit at the expense of the Son! The Spirit of truth would "guide" the disciples into all truth, as to what to do and enable them to do it!

John 16:7+ "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the **Helper** ([parakletos](#)) will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you (cp the emphasis on need for Jesus to ascend so Spirit might descend = John 14:12, Jn 7:37-39+).

**Illustration:** On a particularly rough airplane flight, a lady became very airsick. Her shoulders drooped, and her head slumped forward—she was totally wiped out. The stewardess came by to help her. "Come, come now," she said, "buck up and get control of yourself. Sit up and take courage." She put her arm under the lady's arm and helped her sit upright in her seat, gave her gum to chew, and then went to get her some water. With the help of the stewardess, the lady finished the trip in far better condition than she began it in. This is like the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives. He comes alongside to help us when we are in hopeless defeat. He admonishes us, encourages us, and restores hope and faith in our lives. (**Ed comment:** As mentioned earlier, we don't just need "help" though -- help implies we can do something supernatural in our own power, which we can't. We need an "**Enabler**"! He initiates and He empowers

supernaturally charged "[Good Deeds!](#)")

**J I Packer's illustration of Spirit's role to glorify Jesus**- The Holy Spirit's distinctive role is to fulfill what we may call a floodlight ministry in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ. So far as this role was concerned, the Spirit "was not yet" (John 7:29, literal Greek) while Jesus was on earth; only when the Father had glorified him (John 17:1, 5) could the Spirit's work of making men aware of Jesus' glory begin. I remember walking to church one winter evening to preach on the words, "He will glorify me" (John 16:14), seeing the building floodlit as I turned a corner, and realizing that this was exactly the illustration my message needed. When floodlighting is well done, the floodlights are placed so that you do not see them; in fact, you are not supposed to see where the light is coming from; what you are meant to see is just the building on which the floodlights are trained. The intended effect is to make it visible when otherwise it would not be seen for the darkness, and to maximize its dignity by throwing all its details into relief so that you can see it properly. This perfectly illustrated the Spirit's new covenant role. He is, so to speak, the hidden floodlight shining on the Savior. Or think of it this way. It is as if the Spirit stands behind us, throwing light over our shoulder on to Jesus who stands facing us. The Spirit's message to us is never, "Look at me; listen to me; come to me; get to know me", but always, "Look at him, and see his glory; listen to him and hear his word; go to him and have life; get to know him and taste his gift of joy and peace." The Spirit, we might say, is the matchmaker, the celestial marriage broker, whose role it is to bring us and Christ together and ensure that we stay together. (Borrow [Your Father loves you](#))

The Jews especially adopted the word and used it in this sense of **advocate**, someone to plead one's cause. They used it as the opposite of the word **accuser**, and the Rabbis had this saying about what would happen in the day of God's judgment. 'The man who keeps one commandment of the law has got to himself one paraklētōs; the man who breaks one commandment of the law has got to himself one accuser.' They said: 'If a man is summoned to court on a capital charge, he needs powerful paraklētoi [the plural of the word] to save him; repentance and good works are his paraklētōs in the judgment of God.' 'All the righteousness and mercy which an Israelite does in this world are great peace and great paraklētōs between him and his father in heaven.' They said that the sin offering is a person's paraklētōs before God. ([The Letters of John and Jude](#))

#### Related Resources:

- [Interesting article from Wikipedia on Paraclete](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia - [Paraclete](#)
- [What does it mean that the Holy Spirit is our Paraclete?](#)

**Father** ([3962](#)) (**pater**) is the genitor (a begetter), by whom another is begotten. Stated more simply this is a man who has begotten a child. Father is the progenitor, the ancestor in the direct line (a forefather -- thus Adam was the "progenitor" of the Human Race). He is one who imparts life and is committed to it. The Greeks defined the **just** (dikaios) man as he who gives both to men and to the gods what is due to them.

**Vine** writes that **pater** is "from a root signifying "a nourisher, protector, upholder" (Lat., pater, Eng., "father," are akin)." **Note:** Not all lexicons agree with this origin)...Whereas the everlasting power and divinity of God are manifest in creation, His "Fatherhood" in spiritual relationship through faith is the subject of NT revelation, and waited for the presence on earth of the Son, Matt. 11:27; John 17:25. The spiritual relationship is not universal, John 8:42, 44 (cf. John 8:12 and Gal. 3:26).

**PATER IN JOHN'S EPISTLES** - 1 Jn. 1:2; 1 Jn. 1:3; 1 Jn. 2:1; 1 Jn. 2:13; 1 Jn. 2:14; 1 Jn. 2:15; 1 Jn. 2:16; 1 Jn. 2:22; 1 Jn. 2:23; 1 Jn. 2:24; 1 Jn. 3:1; 1 Jn. 4:14; 2 Jn. 1:3; 2 Jn. 1:4; 2 Jn. 1:9;

#### Related Resources:

- Abba
- [What does it mean that God is our Abba Father? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- Adoption
- [What does the Bible say about adoption? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Righteous** ([1342](#)) (**dikaios** from **dike** = right, just) defines that which is in accordance with high standards of rectitude. It is that which is in right relation to another and so in reference to persons defines the one who is morally and ethically righteous, upright or just. Dikaios defines that which is in accordance with high standards of **rectitude**. It is that which is in right relation to another and so in reference to persons defines the one who is morally and ethically righteous, upright or just. The meaning of the root word **dike** is based on the assumption that men expect a certain standard of behavior and if this is not attained judgment may result. It follows



that the basic meaning of the adjective **dikaios** describes that which is proper, right, fitting, fair, righteous, just (acting or being in conformity with what is morally upright or good). From a forensic or legal viewpoint **dikaios** refers to one who is law-abiding (doing all that law or justice requires), honest and good in behavior and from a religious viewpoint one who is rightly related to God.

**THOUGHT ON RIGHTEOUS** - The one who habitually (not perfectly) does what is **right** is **righteous** (*dikaios*). A righteous **character** expresses itself in righteous **conduct**. If a man knows God, he will obey God. A man cannot claim genuine salvation if he is habitually living in sin. On the other hand, a man can only practice genuine righteousness because he possesses the nature of the One Who is righteous, "the Spirit of Christ" (Ro 8:9+), the only way a man can "put to death the deeds of the body" (Ro 8:13+). Notice carefully that the practice of righteousness is not what makes the individual "righteous" (that would be a "works based" righteousness, which Jesus alluded to in Mt 5:20+), but reveals the inner nature of the one who is practicing righteousness. One practices righteousness because of His righteous character and the indwelling Spirit of the Righteous One! While works do not earn righteousness, good (supernatural) works are clear evidence of salvation. As Jesus reminded His audience "You will know them by their fruits" (Mt 7:16+). An individual's **conduct** is certain evidence of his **nature**. The one who practices righteousness does so because he has been granted the righteousness of God and the Spirit of God.

**DIKAIOS IN JOHN'S WRITINGS** - Jn. 5:30; Jn. 7:24; Jn. 17:25; 1 Jn. 1:9; 1 Jn. 2:1; 1 Jn. 2:29; 1 Jn. 3:7; 1 Jn. 3:12; Rev. 15:3; Rev. 16:5; Rev. 16:7; Rev. 19:2; Rev. 22:11

John alludes to importance of **righteousness** several times in this pithy epistle...

1 John 1:9+ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous (*dikaios*) to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (*dikaios*);

1 John 2:29+ If you know that He is **righteous** (*dikaios*), you know that everyone also who practices **righteousness** (*dikaiousune*) is born of Him.

1 John 3:7+ Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices **righteousness** (*dikaiousune*) is **righteous** (*dikaios*), just as He is **righteous** (*dikaios*)

1 John 3:10+ By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice **righteousness** (*dikaiousune*) is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

1 John 3:12+ (1Jn 3:11) not as Cain, who was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were **righteous** (*dikaios*).

#### Related Resources:

- [What is righteousness? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the difference between righteousness and holiness? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What are some Bible verses about righteousness? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why does Christ's righteousness need to be imputed to us? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### QUESTION - [What does it mean that Jesus is our Advocate? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**ANSWER** - An advocate is a person who comes to our aid or pleads our case to a judge. Advocates offer support, strength, and counsel and intercede for us when necessary. The Bible says that Jesus is an Advocate for those who've put their trust in Him: "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). In other verses, Jesus calls the Holy Spirit our Advocate (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7). The English word *advocate* has been translated from the Greek word *parakleton*, which means "helper, adviser, or counselor."

**In a human court system, an advocate speaks for the rights of his or her client.** We call them lawyers because they have studied the intricacies of the law and can navigate through those often complicated statutes with accuracy and precision. That is the picture John paints when he refers to Jesus as our "advocate with the Father." God's righteous law pronounces us guilty on all counts. We have violated God's standards, rejected His right to rule our lives, and continued to sin even after coming to a knowledge of the truth (Hebrews 10:26; Romans 1:21–23; 1 Timothy 2:4). The only just punishment for such wickedness is an eternity in hell (Revelation 14:10; 21:8; 1 Corinthians 6:9).

**But Jesus stands as the Advocate between our repentant hearts and the law.** If His blood has been applied to our lives through

faith and confession of Him as Lord (Romans 10:9–10; 2 Corinthians 5:21), He pleads our case with the Righteous Judge. We may imagine the conversation going something like this: “Father, I know this one has sinned and violated our commands. He is guilty as charged. However, you have said that my sacrifice is sufficient payment for the debt he owes. My righteousness was applied to his account when he trusted in me for salvation and forgiveness. I have paid the price, so he can be pronounced ‘Not guilty.’ There is no debt left for him to pay” (Romans 8:1; Colossians 2:14).

**Jesus is our Advocate when God first accepts us into His family as His children (John 1:12). And He remains our Advocate forever.** First John 1:9 says that, when we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive our sin and to cleanse us from it. As His followers, we will still sin. But, when we do, we are commanded to confess that sin to God. Confession is an agreement with God about how bad sin is. We stand guilty before Him with no argument and no justification of our own. Our Advocate steps before the Judge, and together they agree that, because we are [“in Christ,”](#) no further punishment is necessary. Jesus has already made sufficient payment to [redeem](#) us.

**Another aspect that makes Jesus a compassionate Advocate is the fact that He has experienced life in this world, too.** He has been tempted, rejected, overlooked, misunderstood, and abused. He does not represent us theoretically; He represents us experientially. He lived the life we live, yet He did so without succumbing to the evils that befall us. He successfully refused to give in to temptation and can be our High Priest because He perfectly fulfilled God’s law (Hebrews 4:15; 9:28; John 8:29). Our Advocate can plead our case from personal experience, something like this:

“Father, this young woman has violated our righteous command, but she loves you and wants to serve you. I remember what it was like to be tempted like that, and my heart goes out to her. She has confessed this sin and desires to turn away from it. Because of my sacrifice, you can forgive this sin and purify her heart once more. Let’s teach her how to let the Holy Spirit comfort her and strengthen her to resist the next time.”

**An earthly advocate can only plead our case from external evidence or witness testimony.** Our heavenly Advocate knows our hearts and pleads our case on the basis of what is there (Luke 5:22; Mark 2:8). He also knows the intricacies of God’s legal system. He has already satisfied the demands of justice, so His advocacy is from a position of strength and righteousness. God accepts His Son’s advocacy on our behalf as part of their divine agreement, established before the world began (1 Peter 1:20; John 17:24; Revelation 13:8). Our position as [“the righteousness of Christ”](#) is secure because the One who purchased our position with His own blood is also our Advocate (Romans 4:25; 8:3; 1 Corinthians 1:30).

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**David Smith** entitles 1Jn 2:1-2 **“The Remedy for the Sins of Believers”** adding

“Observe the sudden change in the apostle’s manner. His heart is very tender toward his people, and he adopts an affectionate and personal tone: (1) he passes from the formal ‘we’ to ‘I.’ (2) He styles them **‘my little children’**... his favorite appellation (compare 1Jn 2:12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21). Not only was it very suitable on the lips of the aged teacher, but it was a phrase of Jesus (John 13:33). St. John had caught the phrase and its spirit. He remembered how the Master had dealt with His disciples, and he would deal with his people after the same fashion and be to them what Jesus had been to himself—as gentle and patient.

“He assumes this tone because he is about to address a warning to them, and he would fain take the sting out of it and disarm opposition. He foresees the possibility of a two-fold perversion of his teaching: (1) ‘If we can never in this life be done with sin, why strive after holiness? It is useless; sin is an abiding necessity.’ (2) ‘If escape be so easy, why dread falling into sin? We may sin with light hearts, since we have the blood of Jesus to cleanse us.’ ‘No,’ he answers, ‘I am not writing these things to you either to discourage you in the pursuit of holiness or to embolden you in sinning, but, on the contrary, in order that (hina ( να)) ye may not sin.’ Compare Augustine: ‘Lest perchance he should seem to have given impunity to sins, and men should now say to themselves,’ ‘Let us sin, let us do securely what we will, Christ cleanses us: He is faithful and righteous, He cleanses us from all iniquity’; ‘he takes from thee evil security and implants useful fear. It is an evil wish of thine to be secure; be anxious. For He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, if thou art always displeasing to thyself and being changed until thou be perfected.’ As a physician might say to his patient: ‘Your trouble is obstinate: the poison is in your blood, and it will take a long time to eradicate it. But I do not tell you this to discourage you or make you careless; no, on the contrary, to make you watchful and diligent in the use of the remedy’; so the apostle says: ‘My little children, these things I am writing to you in order that ye may not sin.’ ([Expositor’s Greek Testament](#))

**THOUGHT** - BELOVED THERE ARE MANY OF US (US INCLUDES ME!) WHO NEED TO READ DAVID SMITH’S COMFORTING COMMENT! -- “If, however, we fall into sin, let us not lose heart, for we have an Advocate with the Father one called to your side,” so, in a forensic sense, “one who undertakes and champions your cause,” “an advocate”... Our Advocate does not plead that we are innocent or adduce extenuating circumstances. He acknowledges our guilt and presents His vicarious work as the ground of our acquittal. He stands in the Court of Heaven a Lamb as it had been slain (Rev 5:6-[note](#)), and the (Ed: His scars, His covenant marks - see Covenant- The Oneness of Covenant - Scar and Covenant) marks of His

sore Passion are a mute but eloquent appeal: 'I suffered all this for sinners, and shall it go for naught?' ([The Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

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**James Smith** - "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye may not sin."

1. This is a message to "My dear children," to those who had become so through Christ Jesus.
  2. Being God's children through faith in Christ Jesus, the victorious life should be their own possession and enjoyment. "I write. . . because ye have overcome the wicked one" (1Jn 2:13).
  3. Alas, we do sin. For sinners there is an Advocate.
  4. "Advocacy is that work of Jesus Christ for sinning saints which He carries on with the Father whereby, because of the eternal efficacy of His Own Sacrifice, He restores them to fellowship" (Scofield).
  5. The late Dr. Griffith Thomas has a nice and helpful word on this subject: "There is a perfect propitiation provided: 'If any man sin, we have an Advocate.' There is no allowance for sin, but a perfect provision in case we do sin: no need to sin, no right to sin, no compromise with sin, no license, but a provision in case we, do. On board ship the provision of life-belts is not associated with any intention to have a shipwreck, but they are there in case of need. When it is said, 'If any man sin, we have an Advocate,' it is the provision in case of need. As you know, there are two Advocates. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Advocate with the Father; and the same word is used of the Holy Spirit in John's Gospel—He is the Advocate within. There is Christ's perfect provision for us, and there is the Holy Spirit's perfect provision in us." (Handfuls on Purpose)
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**C H Spurgeon - The sinner's advocate** (See full sermon [The Sinner's Advocate](#))

'My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' 1 John 2:1

*The happiest way of living is to live as a poor sinner  
and as nothing at all,  
having Jesus Christ as your all in all.*

This truth, so evangelical and so divine, should be practically remembered. It should be practically remembered, dear friends, at all times. Every day I find it most healthy to my own soul to try and walk as a saint, but in order to do so I must continually come to Christ as a sinner. I would seek to be perfect; I would strain after every virtue, and forsake every false way; but still, as to my standing before God, I find it happiest to sit where I sat when I first looked to Jesus, on the rock of his works, having nothing to do with my own righteousness, but only with his. Depend on it, dear friends, the happiest way of living is to live as a poor sinner and as nothing at all, having Jesus Christ as your all in all. You may have all your growths in sanctification, all your progress in graces, all the development of your virtues that you will; but still I do earnestly pray you never to put any of these where Christ should be. If you have begun in Christ then finish in Christ. If you have begun in the flesh and then go on in the flesh, we know what the sure result will be. But if you have begun with Jesus Christ as your Alpha, let him be your Omega. I pray you never think you are rising when you get above this, for it is not rising, but slipping downwards to your ruin. Stand still to this—

'Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to thy cross I cling.'

Still a sinner, but still having an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous—let this be the spirit of your everyday life.

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**Grant Richison** has some interesting thoughts for believers to consider when they do commit sin...

John does not write so that his readers have justification for their sin (1Jn 1:6, 8, 10) but that they might conquer sin. Although Christians sin (1Jn 1:10), they can conquer sin - "so that you may not sin." John writes with the purpose that his readers will have a safeguard against sinning. If we practice sin, we will become more proficient in it. That is how we were before we received Jesus as our Savior. Now, it is altogether different; we have Someone to live for. John's desire is that his readers will not sin at the point of temptation. Although believers are not free from sin they can overcome sin.

Temptation never becomes a sin until we allow our negative volition to yield to sin. There is no sin in being tempted but it is a sin to yield to temptation. Once the temptation becomes a sin, there is a danger of entering into carnality and dominance of sin unless we confess the sin.

Although we are not in a state of carnality when we commit an act of sin, we do step out of fellowship with the Lord. If we go on without confessing, we make ourselves vulnerable to domination of our sin capacity. Because God is absolute, spirituality must be absolute (1Jn 1:5). We cannot be 50% spiritual and 50% carnal. At any point of time, either the Spirit controls us or our sin

capacity controls us.

Before we came to Christ sin was the rule rather than the exception. Now when the child of God falls into sin, he grieves the Father, the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus. He even grieves himself. That is why we do not remain in sin with a clean conscience. The believer who wants to stay in tune with God confesses his sin immediately (1John 1:9-note). He restores fellowship as soon as possible. He keeps short accounts with God.

Many believers get into a zigzag orientation in their daily walk with God. All of us have had this experience. It is one thing to commit individual acts of sin and immediately confess them but another thing to cave into the power of our sin capacity. The cross gives victory over the power of sin. By confession, we appeal to the cross and have the right to fellowship with God. Jesus broke the back of our sin capacity on the cross. ([1John 2 Commentary](#))

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## **The Circle Of Fear**

If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. — 1 John 2:1

Today's Scripture : 1 John 2:1-11

When the popular band The Eagles prepares a new song for concert, they sit in a circle with acoustic guitars and unamplified voices and rehearse their intricate vocals. They call this exercise "The Circle of Fear" because there is no place to hide and no way to conceal any errors they might make in the harmonies. That sense of absolute exposure for their mistakes is what makes this drill so frightening to them.

Apart from Christ, we would suffer a far worse kind of exposure before the God of all justice. If we had no advocate and no escape, we would also have no hope. But in Christ, the believer has a Defender who stands before the Father on our behalf. First John 2:1 says, "My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." With our failings exposed, He takes our defense. Our Defender carries our relationship with God beyond a "circle of fear" to a fellowship of grace and truth.

Our challenge is to live lives of purity and integrity that honor our heavenly Father. Yet, when we do fail, we do not need to fear abandonment or ridicule from our Father. We have an Advocate who will carry us through. By: Bill Crowder (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,  
In Thee do we trust, nor find Thee to fail.  
Thy mercies how tender! How firm to the end!  
Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend.  
—Grant

The One who died as our Substitute now lives as our Advocate.

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**Spurgeon - Morning and Evening** - "If any man sin, we have an advocate." Yes, though we sin, we have him still. John does not say, "If any man sin he has forfeited his advocate," but "we have an advocate," sinners though we are. All the sin that a believer ever did, or can be allowed to commit, cannot destroy his interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, as his advocate. The name here given to our Lord is suggestive. "Jesus." Ah! then he is an advocate such as we need, for Jesus is the name of one whose business and delight it is to save. "They shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." His sweetest name implies his success. Next, it is "Jesus Christ"—Christos, the anointed. This shows his authority to plead. The Christ has a right to plead, for he is the Father's own appointed advocate and elected priest. If he were of our choosing he might fail, but if God hath laid help upon one that is mighty, we may safely lay our trouble where God has laid his help. He is Christ, and therefore authorized; he is Christ, and therefore qualified, for the anointing has fully fitted him for his work. He can plead so as to move the heart of God and prevail. What words of tenderness, what sentences of persuasion will the anointed use when he stands up to plead for me! One more letter of his name remains, "Jesus Christ the righteous." This is not only his character BUT his plea. It is his character, and if the Righteous One be my advocate, then my cause is good, or he would not have espoused it. It is his plea, for he meets the charge of unrighteousness against me by the plea that he is righteous. He declares himself my substitute and puts his obedience to my account. My soul, thou hast a friend well fitted to be thine advocate, he cannot but succeed; leave thyself entirely in his hands.

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**J.C. Philpot, Ears from Harvested Sheaves** - 1 John 2:1

This advocate is here called, as elsewhere, "pleading the cause" of the believer, and is connected with deliverance, for such an advocate can never fail: "O Lord, thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul; thou hast redeemed my life" (Lam. 3:58). The figure is

taken from a lawyer pleading the cause of a criminal, and using his best endeavours to bring him off uninjured. But such advocacy may fail for two reasons: 1. the incompetency of the advocate; or 2. the badness of the cause. But there are no such hindrances to the success of the advocacy of Christ. How He can plead His own sufferings, blood, and obedience. His very Person as the Son of God, and yet son of man, gives unspeakable value and validity to every plea of the great Intercessor. What validity, then, has His intercession in the court of heaven! It is true that He cannot deny the truth of the charge brought by the accuser of the brethren against His client; but He can present His own meritorious sufferings, and the sorrows He endured for the culprit. On this ground He can stand up as His surety and representative, and plead with the Father that He has suffered in his place and stead. On the firm, solid ground, then, of justice and equity, He can plead on his behalf, "let him go, for I endured the penalty due to him."

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## **Our Great Assurance: 1 John 2:1**

**INTRODUCTION:** Ever have trouble forgiving yourself of past regrets? This verse gives us a great assurance.

1. Our Great Adversary: Sin—"if anyone sins."
2. Our Great Adventure: Victory—"that you may not sin." It's possible to have consistent victory over known sin. Sin should not have dominion over us. While we can't be perfect in this life, we can have steadfast victory.
3. Our Great Advantage: Scripture—"These things I have written to you that you may not sin."
4. Our Great Advocate: "And in anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father."

**CONCLUSION:** The reason we can forgive ourselves of past mistakes and regrets is simply this—His forgiveness is all encompassing, total, eternal, and final. The blood of Christ so thoroughly expunges our sins that it's a sin to keep bringing them up. They're gone. As Eliza Hewitt put it, "I need no other argument, I need no other plea; / It is enough that Jesus died, and that He died for me."

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## **The Truth About Sin**

We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. — 1 John 2:1

Today's Scripture : 1 John 1:1-10

A man rebuked me for admitting that I still sin and often need forgiveness. He quoted verses 6 and 9 of 1 John 3 and said that a Christian does not sin, implying that I was not a Christian. I assured him that I don't want to sin, but that I can't say I'm Christlike in everything I think, say, and do. I suggested that the verses in 1 John 3 refer to a sinful lifestyle, and I pointed him to other verses in 1 John which teach that Christians still need forgiveness (1:8-10; 2:1).

Becoming like Christ is a lifelong process. Only in heaven will we be without sin. I believe that's why John warned us to beware of three lies about sin: First, saying "we have fellowship with [Christ]" while we "walk in darkness" (1 Jn. 1:6). Second, saying "we have no sin" (v.8). And third, saying "we have not sinned" (v.10). Following each lie he gave us the truth. First, if we walk in the light, Jesus' blood cleanses us from all sin (v.7). Second, if we confess our sins, He forgives and cleanses us (v.9). And third, if we sin, Jesus speaks in our defense before the Father (2:1).

In our struggle with temptation and sin, let's pray as David did, "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins" (Ps. 19:12-13). By: Dennis J. DeHaan

Please help me, Lord, in all I do  
To act and think with motives true;  
And by Your love reveal to me  
Those sins that only You can see.  
—DJD

Christians are not sinless, but they should sin less.

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## **The Devil In Court**

I have removed your iniquity from you. — Zechariah 3:4

Today's Scripture : Zechariah 3:1-5

"The Devil and Daniel Webster" is a short story by Stephen Vincent Benet. In it, Jabez Stone, a New England farmer, has such "bad luck" that he sells his soul to the devil to become prosperous. Eventually, the devil comes to collect Jabez's debt. But the eminent lawyer Daniel Webster is called in to defend him. Through a skillful series of arguments, Webster wins the case against the devil,

and Jabez is saved from perdition.

Of course, this tale is only fiction. But the Bible records a vision in which Satan accuses a believer before the Divine Judge. Joshua, a high priest, stands before God. As a picture of his personal sin and guilt, the priest is dressed in filthy clothing. Nearby, Satan accuses Joshua. But the Angel of the Lord rebukes him and says to Joshua: "See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes" (Zech. 3:4).

Only God can make a sinner acceptable to Him. And the New Testament tells us how:

*"If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father,  
Jesus Christ the righteous"*

(1 John 2:1).

Do you feel unworthy to enter the presence of God? Remember, as Christians, our Savior's blood has cleansed us, and Christ Himself represents us. By: Dennis Fisher (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

The power of God can turn a heart  
From evil and the power of sin;  
The love of God can change a life  
And make it new and cleansed within.

—Fasick

Justification means our guilt gone,  
Christ's righteousness given.

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## [The Advocate](#)

If anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 1 John 2:1

Today's Scripture & Insight : 1 John 1:8–2:2

From a Florida prison cell in June 1962, Clarence Earl Gideon wrote a note asking the United States Supreme Court to review his conviction for a crime he said he didn't commit. He added that he didn't have the means to hire a lawyer.

One year later, in the historic case of Gideon v. Wainwright, the Supreme Court ruled that people who cannot afford the cost of their own defense must be given a public defender—an advocate—provided by the state. With this decision, and with the help of a court-appointed lawyer, Clarence Gideon was retried and acquitted.

But what if we are not innocent? According to the apostle Paul, we are all guilty. But the court of heaven provides an Advocate who, at God's expense, offers to defend and care for our soul (1 John 2:2). On behalf of His Father, Jesus comes to us offering a freedom that even prison inmates have described as better than anything they've experienced on the outside. It is a freedom of heart and mind.

Whether suffering for wrongs done by us or to us, we all can be represented by Jesus. By the highest of authority He responds to every request for mercy, forgiveness, and comfort.

Jesus, our Advocate, can turn a prison of lost hope, fear, or regret into the place of His presence. By: Mart DeHaan (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Father in heaven, please help us to know what it means to have the freedom of Your love and presence. May we experience this freedom even in places that we have only seen as our confinement!

The one who died as our substitute now lives as our advocate.

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## **HOW TO FAIL SUCCESSFULLY**

Inventor Charles Kettering has suggested that we must learn to fail intelligently. He said, "Once you've failed, analyze the problem and find out why, because each failure is one more step leading up to the cathedral of success. The only time you don't want to fail is the last time you try."

Kettering gave these suggestions for turning failure into success: (1) Honestly face defeat; never fake success. (2) Exploit the failure; don't waste it. Learn all you can from it. (3) Never use failure as an excuse for not trying again.

Kettering's practical wisdom holds a deeper meaning for the Christian. The Holy Spirit is constantly working in us to accomplish "His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13), so we know that failure is never final. We can't reclaim lost time. And we can't always make things right, although we should try. Some consequences of our sins can never be reversed. But we can make a new start, because Jesus died to pay the penalty for all our sins and is our **"Advocate with the Father"** (1 John 2:1).

Knowing how to benefit from failure is the key to continued growth in grace. According to 1 John 1:9, we need to confess our sins—it's the first step in turning our failure into success. - Dennis De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Onward and upward your course plan today,  
Seeking new heights as you walk Jesus' way;  
Heed not past failures, but strive for the prize,  
Aiming for goals fit for His holy eyes.  
—Brandt

Failure is never final for those who begin again with God.

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## James Smith - Sin

I. Its Definition. John gives two of the seven definitions of sin in the Bible, viz:

1. Transgression. Stepping over the Law., i.e., lawlessness. Sin is lawlessness, i.e., the absence of all authority, and the denial of all obligation to God.

2. Unrighteousness. Not coming up to the Law (1 John 3:4; 1 John 5:17).

II. Its Universality (1 John 1:8, 1 John 1:10). What plain language.

III. Its Destruction. Why the Lord Jesus came? To "take away" sin (1 John 2:2; 1 John 3:5; 1 John 4:10). This means more than to cover sin—it is putting it away, taking it away, blotting it out.

IV. Its Confession (1 John 1:9).

V. Its Cleansing (1 John 1:7).

VI. Its Victory (1 John 2:1; 1 John 3:8-9). "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye may not sin" (R.V.) "In order that ye may not sin" (Wey). 1 John 3:8-9 have troubled many of the Lord's dear children. But observe the following rendering: "He who is habitually guilty of sin is a child of the Devil" (W.). "Whosoever is born of God doth not practice sin," i.e., doth not continue sinning. It is God's good will that we be daily more than conquerors over sin, over the world, the flesh, and the Devil.

VII. Its Secret. The secret of constant victory over sin is abiding in Christ (1 John 3:6), and "being kept" (1 John 5:18, R.V.). ([Handfuls On Purpose](#))

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## AN ADVOCATE

If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 1Jn 2:1. When Abraham Lincoln was President, his son Robert had a close friend who entered the army as a private. Robert sent word to his friend, saying, "Write to me, and I will intercede with Father and get you something better." A few years went by before Robert heard from the soldier again. When they got together, Lincoln's friend said, "I never took advantage of your offer, but you do not know what a comfort it was to me. Often after a weary march I would throw myself on the ground and say, 'If it becomes beyond human endurance, I can write to Bob Lincoln and get relief; and I would rather have his intercession than that of the President's cabinet, because he is the President's son.'"

We too know a Son to whom we can go for help Jesus Christ, our Advocate. An advocate is one who can assist us, either by pleading on our behalf or by giving evidence that supports our case. Jesus can do this for us because of His position at God's right hand. Praise God! We have a Friend in the court of heaven. —P R. Van Gorder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

THE ONE WHO DIED AS OUR SUBSTITUTE  
NOW LIVES AS OUR ADVOCATE.

First John 2:1 could be translated: "These things write I unto you that ye do not commit a single act of sin." John was not dealing with habitual sin but with single acts of sin.

This is a high standard, and you may wonder if it is possible for a child of God to successfully live this way. We need to realize what Christ has actually done for us.

In the light of our experience, however, this may well cause us to despair, for we realize that we do commit acts of sin. The next phrase in 1 John 2:1 says, "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

When we do commit an act of sin and Satan would accuse us before the Father, there is no way he can reach us because we stand before God in the righteousness of Christ, "even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference" (Rom. 3:22).

So Jesus has become our righteousness, and He stands in the presence of God on our behalf.

"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Ro 8:34). ([Back to the Bible](#))

### 1 John 2:2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** kai autos hilasmos estin (3SPA1) peri ton hamartion hemon, ou peri ton hemeteron de monon alla kai peri holou tou kosmou.

**Amplified:** And He [that same Jesus Himself] is the propitiation (the atoning sacrifice) for our sins, and not for ours alone but also for [the sins of] the whole world. ([Lockman](#))

**KJV:** And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

**ESV:** He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

**KJV:** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

**NIV:** He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

**NLT:** He is the sacrifice for our sins. He takes away not only our sins but the sins of all the world.

**Phillips:** the one who made personal atonement for our sins (and for those of the rest of the world as well).

**Wuest:** And He himself is an expiatory satisfaction for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the whole world. ([Wuest](#))

**Young's Literal:** and he -- he is a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world

- **He Himself is:** 1Jn 1:7 1Jn 4:10 Ro 3:25-26 Heb 2:17-18 1Pe 2:24 3:18
- **for the:** 1Jn 4:14 5:19 Jn 1:29 4:42 11:51,52 2Co 5:18-21 Rev 12:9
- [1 John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 John 1:7+ but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son (present tense) cleanses us from all sin.

1 John 4:10+ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation ([hilasmos](#)) for our sins.

Romans 3:25-26+ whom God displayed publicly as a **propitiation** ([hilasterion](#)) in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; 26 for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Hebrews 9:5+ and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the **mercy seat** ("the propitiatory place" - [hilasterion](#)); but of these things we cannot now speak in detail.



Exodus 25:17+ "You shall make a **mercy seat** (Hebrew = [kapporet](#) from [kapor](#) - verb meaning to cover; Lxx = [hilasterion](#)) of pure gold, two and a half cubits long and one and a half cubits wide.

Hebrews 2:17-18+ Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, **to make propitiation** ([hilaskomai](#)) for the sins of the people. 18 For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

Luke 18:13+ But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, **be merciful** (be propitious - [hilaskomai](#)) to me, the sinner!'

Hebrews 9:14+ how much more will the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

## **PROPITIATION IS OFFERED BY OUR PRIEST**

**And He Himself is** (present tense) **the propitiation** ([hilasmos](#)) **for our sins** ([hamartia](#)) - **And** (kai) marks continuation of John's thought about Jesus and His vital role in our lives when we do commit sin. Verse one focuses on what He does for us now in God's presence, whereas verse two focuses on what He has done in the past (He Himself was the sacrifice) to make possible His present Advocacy on our behalf when we commit sin. **He** (is emphatic) **Himself** is Jesus Christ, righteous in character, which is why He could be our propitiation. **Is** (**estin**) is in the present tense signifying that Jesus is continually the propitiation which parallels the truth in 1Jn 1:7+ that "the blood of Jesus His Son (present tense - continually) cleanses us from all sin." This is good news for sinners such as myself who are daily in need of an Advocate Who is qualified. Indeed, He sits in His glorified body even now at the right hand of the Father and not only pleads for mercy for us but also intercedes for us. (Ro 8:34+, Heb 7:25+) O, what a Savior, O what a Friend!

It is clear from Exodus 25:17+ that the OT **mercy seat** (Hebrew = [kapporet](#) from [kapor](#) - verb meaning to cover; Lxx = [hilasterion](#)) was a shadow pointing to Christ the true "mercy seat" or **propitiation** ([hilasmos](#)).

*(Propitiation) is an appeasement of the wrath of God  
by the love of God through the gift of God.*

-- John Stott

**The propitiation** ([hilasmos](#)) (NET, NIV - "atoning sacrifice," NLT = "sacrifice that atones") in simple terms refers to that which satisfies the wrath of God and ultimately the payment which He provided was the "precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ." (1Pe 1:19+). The Father was satisfied with the sacrifice of His sinless Son on the Cross. John's use of **our** shows he is including himself as a sinner in need of Jesus' propitiation. **Sins** ([hamartia](#)) is plural and in context speaks of sins we personally commit even believers still retain a [Sin Nature](#) inherited from Adam (Ro 5:12+). John gives us an excellent descriptive definition of sin in 1Jn 3:4+ writing that "Everyone who practices (present tense - lifestyle) sin ([hamartia](#)) also practices (present tense - lifestyle) lawlessness; and sin ([hamartia](#)) is lawlessness. John uses the phrase "**our sins**" thus identifying himself with his readers.

**John MacArthur** on **propitiation** - Christ's sacrificial death on the cross satisfied the demands of God's justice, thus appeasing His holy wrath against believers' sins....God's justice must be satisfied. Every sin ever committed by every person who has ever lived will be punished in one of two ways. Either God's wrath will be satisfied when all unrepentant and unbelieving sinners suffer eternally in hell (Matt. 13:42; 25:41, 46; 2 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 20:15), or for all who, by the convicting and regenerating power of the Spirit, repent and believe savingly in Jesus, God's wrath is satisfied by the punishment of Christ Himself on the cross. (See [1-3 John MacArthur New Testament Commentary - Page 46](#))

**Henry Alford** writes that **propitiation** "implies that Christ has, as our sin-offering, reconciled God (ED: NOTE IT WAS WE WHO NEEDED TO BE RECONCILED - cf Ro 5:10+) and us by nothing else but by His voluntary death as a sacrifice: has by this averted God's wrath from us."

*In the first case He appears as an Advocate in court,  
in the second as a sacrificing Priest in the temple.*

**Colin Kruse** points out "that Jesus Christ is not only our Advocate who speaks in our favor in the presence of God despite our sins, but that He is also the atoning sacrifice for those sins. In the first case He appears as an Advocate in court, in the second as a sacrificing Priest in the temple. And, as the author will explain later in the letter (1Jn 4:10), it was because of the Father's love for us

that he sent his Son to make this atoning sacrifice. (See [The Letters of John](#))

**John Stott** - the Father's provision for the sinning Christian is in his Son, who possesses a threefold qualification: his righteous character, his propitiatory death and his heavenly advocacy. Each depends on the others. He could not be our advocate in heaven today if he had not died to be the propitiation for our sins; and his propitiation would not have been effective if in his life and character he had not been Jesus Christ, the Righteous One (Borrow [The Letters of John](#) or see [The Letters of John: An Introduction and Commentary - Page 88](#))

**And not for ours only but also for those** (the sins) **of the whole** ([holos](#)) **world** ([kosmos](#) - humanity in general) - **Not for ours only** refers to John and the believers he is addressing. He states that **the propitiation** ([hilasmos](#)) is for **the whole world**. This raises two issues. First, the easy issue is to state that John is not teaching [universalism](#), the false teaching that all the world will eventually be saved. The second issue is not so easy. The question centers on the extent of this propitiation. **The whole** ([holos](#)) **world** ([kosmos](#)) refers to the [See the discussion below](#) regarding the extent of the atonement (limited or unlimited).

**Hiebert** notes that John is explaining "the means whereby sins are covered and remitted. Had John written that Jesus is the "Propitiator," half the truth would have been lost. Then His work would have been comparable to that of the high priest on the Day of Atonement when he sprinkled sacrificial blood on the mercy seat to cover the sins of the people so that God could again deal with them in mercy. Unlike the Old Testament high priests, Jesus Christ is Himself "the atoning sacrifice" (NIV) in that He offered Himself as the sacrifice whereby the barrier which sin interposes between God and man is removed. Pagans might think of offering sacrifices to appease their offended gods as a means of regaining their favor, but Scripture presents God Himself as taking the initiative in sending His Son as the propitiation for sins (4:10); the cause of the estrangement between God and man lies with man, not God. In making "Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf" (2 Cor 5:21) God achieved the true and lasting solution to the sin problem; the perfect sacrifice of the incarnate Christ enables God to "be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Rom 3:26). ([1 John 1:5-2:6](#))

**David Guzik** has an interesting explanation regarding why **for those of the whole world** is not saved - Though Jesus made His propitiation for **the whole world**, yet **the whole world** is not saved and in fellowship with God. This is because atonement does not equal forgiveness. The Old Testament [Day of Atonement](#) (Leviticus 16:34) demonstrates this, when the sin of all Israel was atoned for every year at the Day of Atonement, yet not all of Israel was saved.

**ESV Study Bible** adds that the phrase **for those of the whole world** - "does not mean that every person will be saved, for John is clear that forgiveness of sins comes only to those who repent and believe the gospel (see 1Jn 2:4, 23; 3:10; 5:12; cf. John 3:18; 5:24). (Borrow [ESV Study Bible](#))

**Vincent** - "The propitiation is as wide as the sin" (Bengel). If men do not experience its benefit, the fault is not in its efficacy."

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**The propitiation** (NAS marginal note = "Satisfaction") ([2434](#)) (**hilasmos** akin to **hileōs** = merciful, propitious) in the NT (only here and 1Jn 4:10) refers to a sacrifice that turns away the wrath of God and thereby makes God propitious (favorably inclined or disposed, disposed to be gracious and/or merciful, ready to forgive) toward us.

Keep in mind as you read this note on hilasmos that it is very difficult to discern the differences between **propitiation** (satisfaction) and **expiation** in a number of scholarly resources consulted. Kenneth Wuest's paraphrase seems to try to cover both camps so to speak rendering it "He himself is an **expiatory satisfaction** for our sins." ([Wuest](#))

**ESV Study Bible** says Hilasmos "here means 'a sacrifice that bears God's wrath and turns it to favor" which is "also the meaning of the English word propitiation." (Borrow [ESV Study Bible](#))

**Colin Kruse** makes the important distinction regarding propitiation that "There is no hint of the pagan notion of propitiation overcoming the reluctance of an arbitrary deity. For God himself takes the initiative in providing the propitiatory sacrifice which is needed if our sins are to be forgiven. (See [The Letters of John](#))

**Kenneth Wuest** writes **hilasmos** "is from the verb hilaskomai. In pagan usage it meant "to appease, to conciliate to one's self, to make a god propitious to one." Herodotus says, "The Parians, having propitiated Themistocles with gifts, escaped the visits of the army." However, when the word comes over into New Testament usage, its meaning is radically changed. Canon Westcott says: "The scriptural conception of the verb is not that of appeasing one who is angry with a personal feeling against the offender; but of altering the character of that which, from without, occasions a necessary alienation, and interposes an inevitable obstacle to fellowship. Such phrases as 'propitiating God,' and 'God being reconciled' are foreign to the language of the New Testament." That from without which occasioned the alienation between God and man, was sin. It was the guilt of sin that separated man from his creator. Our Lord on the Cross assumed that guilt and paid the penalty in His own blood, and thus removed the cause of alienation. Now a holy and righteous God can bestow mercy upon a believing sinner on the basis of justice satisfied. Our Lord provided a

satisfaction for the demands of the broken law. That satisfaction is the hilasmos. The Greek has it, "He Himself is a satisfaction." The intensive pronoun is used. The point is that the Old Testament priest offered an animal sacrifice, but not himself as the sacrifice. This wonderful New Testament Priest is both the Priest and the Sacrifice. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

**Grudem** - Under the influence of scholars who denied that the idea of **propitiation** was in the New Testament, the **RSV** translated **hilasmos** as "expiation," a word that means "an action that cleanses from sin" but includes no concept of appeasing God's wrath.....This (appeasing of wrath) is the consistent meaning of these words (hilasmos and hilaskomai) outside the Bible where they were well understood in reference to pagan Greek religions. These verses simply mean that Jesus bore the wrath of God against sin. It is important to insist on this fact, because it is the heart of the doctrine of the atonement. It means that there is an eternal, unchangeable requirement in the holiness and justice of God that sin be paid for. Furthermore, before the atonement ever could have an effect on our subjective consciousness, it first had an effect on God and his relation to the sinners he planned to redeem. Apart from this central truth, the death of Christ really cannot be adequately understood. ([Scroll down to page 499](#))

**Martin Manser** writes that **propitiation** is "The satisfaction of the righteous demands of God in relation to human sin and its punishment through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ upon the cross, by which the penalty of sin is cancelled and the anger of God averted." (Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies)

Note that some definitions of **hilasmos** list expiation as a meaning. **Expiation** strictly speaking refers to the removal or cancellation of sin or guilt. While this is a component of the NT idea of atonement, expiation is not a fully adequate translation of hilasmos. **Hilasmos** is the means of satisfying the righteous wrath of a Holy God. God is never presented as changing His mind toward the sinner or the sin that estranged the sinner from Him. Man is never said to be able to *appease* God with any of his offerings, as in the pagan rituals where man offered gifts in an attempt to assuage the anger of the "god".

**John MacArthur** links **hilasmos** with the mercy seat in the Old Covenant - The term propitiation, in definition and application, is most notably a biblical and theological word. It is a translation of hilasmos, which means "appeasement," or "satisfaction." Christ's sacrificial death on the cross satisfied the demands of God's justice, thus appeasing His holy wrath against believers' sins. Several related words provide additional understanding of the nature of propitiation. The verb hilaskomai, "to make satisfaction for," occurs in Luke 18:13 and Hebrews 2:17. Hilasterion refers to the sacrifice of atonement required to placate God's wrath (cf. Rom. 3:25). The translators of the Septuagint (Lxx) used this term (hilasterion) to designate the **mercy seat**, which establishes propitiation's link to the Old Testament sacrificial system (Read Ex 25:10-22, esp Ex 25:17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22) The **mercy seat** was the lid or cover of the ark, situated between the divine Shekinah glory cloud above the ark and law tablets inside the ark. Because the priests sprinkled the seat with blood from the (animal) sacrifices (**Ed**: See the inefficacy of animal blood in Heb 10:4, Heb 10:11), it was the place at which atonement for sin occurred. The sprinkled blood thus stood between God (the **Shekinah**) and His broken law (the tablets). The sacrificial blood of animals never did placate God (cf. Heb. 7:26-28; 9:6-15; 10:1-18), but it pictured the future sacrifice of Christ that would fully satisfy the Father (Heb. 9:23-28; cf. Isa. 53:6, 10; Matt. 20:28; Eph. 5:2). If the Old Testament sacrificial system had appeased God's wrath once and for all, the Jews would not have continued endlessly to bring burnt offerings (Lev. 1:3-17; 6:8-13), sin offerings (Lev. 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30), and trespass offerings (Lev. 5:14-6:7; 7:1-10) over the centuries. ([NT Commentary on 1, 2, 3 John & Jude](#))

**NET Bible** has a lengthy note on the difficulties inherent in the Greek word **hilasmos**...

A suitable English translation for this word hilasmos is a difficult and even controversial problem. **Expiation**," **propitiation**," and **atonement**" have all been suggested.

**Leon Morris**, in a study that has become central to discussions of this topic (The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross, 140), sees as an integral part of the meaning of the word (as in the other words in the hilaskomai group) **the idea of turning away the divine wrath**, suggesting that **propitiation**" is the closest English equivalent. It is certainly possible to see an averting of divine wrath in this context, where the sins of believers are in view and Jesus is said to be acting as Advocate on behalf of believers.

**R. E. Brown's** point (Epistles of John [AB], 220-21), that it is essentially cleansing from sin **Ed**: The idea inherent in the word "expiation") which is in view here and in the other use of the word in 1Jn 4:10, is well taken, but the two connotations (**averting wrath and cleansing**) are not mutually exclusive and it is unlikely that the propitiatory aspect of Jesus' work should be ruled out entirely in the usage in 1Jn 2:2. Nevertheless, the English word **propitiation**" is too technical to communicate to many modern readers, and a term like **atonement sacrifice**" (given by Webster's New International Dictionary as a definition of "propitiation") is more appropriate here. Another term, **satisfaction**," might also convey the idea, but "satisfaction" in Roman Catholic theology is a technical term for the performance of the penance imposed by the priest on a penitent.

(**In Summary NET Bible Note says**) The Greek word hilasmos behind the phrase atoning sacrifice conveys both the idea of "turning aside divine wrath" and the idea of "cleansing from sin." ([1 John 2 NET Bible Notes](#))

**Criswell** feels that although the meaning of **hilasmos** is controversial " the weight of evidence affirms clearly that hilasmos portrays

the placating of God's wrath toward sin; hence, Christ's death (1Jn 1:7) satisfies the just demands of God's holy judgment against sin. Thus, Christ does not simply represent believers before God (Advocate 1Jn 2:1), He also provides the grounds for their forgiveness -- He is both **Advocate and atoning sacrifice**. Jesus' provision of propitiation does not mean that the Father is uninvolved in salvation; in actuality, God's **love** is the ultimate source of Christ's work (1Jn 4:9, 10).

**Vine on Hilasmos** - Noun Masculine akin to hileos ("merciful, propitious"), signifies "an expiation, a means whereby sin is covered and remitted." It is used in the NT of Christ Himself as "the propitiation," in 1 John 2:2; 4:10, signifying that He Himself, through the expiatory sacrifice of His Death, is the Personal means by whom God shows mercy to the sinner who believes on Christ as the One thus provided. In the former passage He is described as "the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." The italicized addition in the AV, "the sins of," gives a wrong interpretation. What is indicated is that provision is made for the whole world, so that no one is, by Divine predetermination, excluded from the scope of God's mercy; the efficacy of the "propitiation," however, is made actual for those who believe. In 1 John 4:10, the fact that God "sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins," is shown to be the great expression of God's love toward man, and the reason why Christians should love one another. In the Sept., Leviticus 25:9; Numbers 5:8; 1 Chronicles 28:20; Psalm 130:4; Ezekiel 44:27; Amos 8:14. ([Propitiation - Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words](#))

**Hilasmos** - 2x in NT and 5x in the non-apocryphal Septuagint -

1 John 2:2 and He Himself is the **propitiation** for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the **propitiation** for our sins.

Leviticus 25:9 'You shall then sound a ram's horn abroad on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the day (**yom**) of **atonement** (Hebrew = **kippur** [Yom Kippur - 10th day of 7th month, Tishri]; Lxx = hilasmos) you shall sound a horn all through your land.

Numbers 5:8 'But if the man has no relative to whom restitution may be made for the wrong, the restitution which is made for the wrong must go to the LORD for the priest, besides the ram of **atonement** (Hebrew = **kippur**; Lxx = hilasmos), by which atonement (Hebrew = kaphar = to cover over, make propitiation; Lxx = exilaskomai = to propitiate) is made for him.

Psalm 130:4 But there is **forgiveness** (Hebrew = selichah = forgiveness - 3x in OT; Lxx = hilasmos) with You, That You may be feared.

Ezekiel 44:27 "On the day that he goes into the sanctuary, into the inner court to minister in the sanctuary, he shall offer **hissin offering** (Hebrew = chattath = sin offering; Lxx = hilasmos)," declares the Lord GOD.

Amos 8:14 "As for those who swear by the **guilt** (Hebrew = ashmah; Lxx = hilasmos) of Samaria, Who say, 'As your god lives, O Dan,' And, 'As the way of Beersheba lives,' They will fall and not rise again."

**Steven Cole** says that **hilasmos** "was used in ancient pagan writings to refer to the appeasing of an angry god, usually by a sacrifice or offering. If you had done something to make one of the gods mad, you had to do something to placate him and get in his good graces. Because of the negative connotations of this idea, some scholars argue that the word does not focus on God's wrath, but rather on man's sins. Thus they translate the word "expiation," which means to blot out the guilt of our sins by making atonement. While we should reject any idea of God being angry in a capricious human sense, we cannot do away with the biblical concept of His wrath, which is His settled hatred of and opposition to all sin. The difference between the pagan and the biblical concepts is that in the Bible, it is never man that takes the initiative to placate God. Rather, God took the initiative to satisfy His own wrath so that His love may now be shown to the guilty sinner. Rather than man piling up good works or sacrifices to placate God's wrath, the Bible says that God did what all our good works or efforts could never do. He sent His own Son as the righteous substitute to bear His wrath on the cross. John Stott (The Epistles of John [Eerdmans], p. 88) aptly defines propitiation as "an appeasement of the wrath of God by the love of God through the gift of God." All that we can do is trust Christ's sacrifice on our behalf. It is all of God's grace. ([1 John 2:1-2 The Key to Holiness](#))

**Barclay** - John goes on to say that Jesus is the propitiation for our sins. The word **ishilasmos**. This is a more difficult picture for us fully to grasp. The picture of the advocate is universal for all men have experience of a friend coming to their aid; but the picture in propitiation is from sacrifice and is more natural to the Jewish mind than to ours. To understand it we must get at the basic ideas behind it. The great aim of all religion is fellowship with God, to know him as friend and to enter with joy, and not fear, into his presence. It therefore follows that the supreme problem of religion is sin, for it is sin that interrupts fellowship with God. It is to meet that problem that all sacrifice arises. By sacrifice fellowship with God is restored. So the Jews offered, night and morning, the sin-offering in the Temple. That was the offering, not for any particular sin but for man as a sinner; and so long as the Temple lasted it was made to God in the morning and in the evening. The Jews also offered their trespass-offerings to God; these were the offerings for particular sins. The Jews had their Day, of Atonement, whose ritual was designed to atone for all sins, known and unknown. It is with that background that we must come at this picture of propitiation. ([Click to read Barclay's lengthy discussion under the title](#)

## ["JESUS CHRIST, THE PROPITIATION"\)](#)

### Related Resources:

- [Why would the aroma of a sacrifice be important to God?](#)
- [Dictionary of Biblical Imagery discussion](#) of imagery associated with Atonement.
- Mercy Seat, Propitiation ([2435](#)) hilasterion
- [What is the mercy seat? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- Make propitiation (be merciful) ([2433](#)) hilaskomai
- [Propitiation - See Atonement - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Propitiation](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Propitiation](#)
- Charles Buck Dictionary [Propitiation](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Propitiation](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Propitiation](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Expiation, Propitiation Propitiation](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Propitiation](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Propitiation \(2\) Propitiation](#)
- Hawker's Poor Man's Dictionary [Propitiation](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Propitiation](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Propitiation](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Propitiation](#)

**Sin** ([266](#)) **hamartia** literally conveys the idea of missing the mark as when hunting with a bow and arrow (in Homer some hundred times of a warrior hurling his spear but missing his foe) and to miss God's mark as an archer misses the "bull's eye" is ultimately to miss the true purpose and end of our lives which is the Triune God Himself. Later **hamartia** came to mean missing or falling short of any goal, standard, or purpose. **Hamartia** is a departure from God's holy, perfect standard of what is right in word or deed (righteous). As **Martin Luther** put it "*Sin is essentially a departure from God.*" Observe that those that "**practice** [[present tense](#) = continually, as their lifestyle, as the general "direction" of their life] **lawlessness**" which 1Jn 3:4 defines as sin!). It is important to distinguish two aspects of sin, one being a description of our sin nature and the other being the sins committed under the domination and direction of our sin nature. In other words, Sin (see [Sin = Principle](#)) is personified as a king, a master or monarch in Paul's writings (eg, Ro 6:12, 13, [14+](#)) and you can mark it down that Sin always ruins where it reigns!

**Hamartia** is a deviation from God's truth or His moral rectitude (righteousness). It is a deviation from the straight line, marked off by the "plumb line" of God's perfect, pure Word. As someone has well said ultimately sin is man's (foolish) declaration of independence of God, of the "apostasy" of the creature from his Creator! Woe!

**Hamartia** is what happens when we **err** (err is from Latin **errare** = to wander!) which means to wander from the right way, to deviate from the true course or purpose and so to violate an accepted standard of conduct.

**HAMARTIA IN JOHN'S WRITINGS** - Jn. 1:29; Jn. 8:21; Jn. 8:24; Jn. 8:34; Jn. 8:46; Jn. 9:34; Jn. 9:41; Jn. 15:22; Jn. 15:24; Jn. 16:8; Jn. 16:9; Jn. 19:11; Jn. 20:23; 1 Jn. 1:7; 1 Jn. 1:8; 1 Jn. 1:9; 1 Jn. 2:2; 1 Jn. 2:12; 1 Jn. 3:4; 1 Jn. 3:5; 1 Jn. 3:8; 1 Jn. 3:9; 1 Jn. 4:10; 1 Jn. 5:16; 1 Jn. 5:17; Rev. 1:5; Rev. 18:4; Rev. 18:5

**John Blanchard** aptly describes sin as that which "defiles man and defies God" or as he states in another way "Sin is moral mutiny by man".

The **Puritan John Bunyan** minced no words when he defined sin as "the dare of God's justice, the rape of His mercy, the jeer of His patience, the slight of His power and the contempt of His love."

**Calvin** echoed Bunyan declaring that "All wickedness flows from a disregard of God.

**Tozer** stated that "The essence of sin is rebellion against divine authority.

**F F Bruce** described **sin** when he wrote that "There is something in man—even regenerate man—which objects to God and seeks to be independent of Him.

**Spurgeon** on **sin**...

- **Sin** drives men mad. Against their reason, against their best interests, they follow after that which they know will destroy them.

- It is not the nature of **sin** to remain in a fixed state. Like decaying fruit, it grows more rotten. The man who is bad today will be worse tomorrow.
- **Sin is a thief.** It will rob your soul of its life. It will rob God of his glory.
- **Sin is a murderer.** It stabbed our father Adam. It slew our purity.
- **Sin is a traitor.** It rebels against the king of heaven and earth.

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#### QUESTION - [What is propitiation?](#)

**ANSWER** - The word *propitiation* carries the basic idea of appeasement or satisfaction, specifically toward God. Propitiation is a two-part act that involves appeasing the wrath of an offended person and being reconciled to him.

The necessity of appeasing God is something many religions have in common. In ancient pagan religions, as well as in many religions today, the idea is taught that man appeases God by offering various gifts or sacrifices. However, the Bible teaches that God Himself has provided the only means through which His wrath can be appeased and sinful man can be reconciled to Him. In the New Testament, the act of propitiation always refers to the work of God and not the sacrifices or gifts offered by man. The reason for this is that man is totally incapable of satisfying God's justice except by spending eternity in hell. There is no service, sacrifice, or gift that man can offer that will appease the holy wrath of God or satisfy His perfect justice. The only satisfaction, or propitiation, that could be acceptable to God and that could reconcile man to Him had to be made by God. For this reason God the Son, Jesus Christ, came into the world in human flesh to be the perfect sacrifice for sin and make atonement or "propitiation for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2:17).

The word *propitiation* is used in several verses to explain what Jesus accomplished through His death on the cross. For example, in Romans 3:24-25 believers in Christ have been "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed." These verses are a key point in Paul's argument in the book of Romans and are really at the heart of the gospel message.

In the first three chapters of Romans, Paul makes the argument that everyone, Jew and Gentile alike, is under the condemnation of God and deserving of His wrath (Romans 1:18). Everyone has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). All of us deserve His wrath and punishment. God in His infinite grace and mercy has provided a way that His wrath can be appeased and we can be reconciled to Him. That way is through the sacrificial death of His Son, Jesus Christ, as the payment for sins. It is through faith in Jesus Christ as God's perfect sacrifice that we can be reconciled to God. It is only because of Christ's death on the cross and His resurrection on the third day that a lost sinner deserving of hell can be reconciled to a holy God. The wonderful truth of the gospel is that Christians are saved from God's wrath and reconciled to God not because "we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). The only way for God's wrath against sinful man to be appeased and for us to be reconciled to God is through Jesus Christ. There is no other way. This truth is also communicated in 1 John 2:2, "And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world." An important part of Christ's saving work is deliverance from God's wrath; Jesus' propitiation on the cross is the only thing that can turn away God's divine condemnation of sin. Those who reject Christ as their Savior and refuse to believe in Him have no hope of salvation. They can only look forward to facing the wrath of God that they have stored up for the coming day of judgment (Romans 2:5). There is no other propitiation or sacrifice that can be made for their sins. [GotQuestions.org](#)

## COMMENTS ON EXTENT OF ATONEMENT

[Gotquestions](#) on extent of atonement - Unless one is a universalist and believes that everyone will ultimately be saved, a Christian must hold to some form of a limited atonement. The key area of disagreement is over who limits that atonement—God or man? Those wishing to hold to a God-limited atonement must answer the biblical arguments put forth by those holding to a human-limited atonement and also explain how God can be described in Scripture as being all-loving and yet not have His Son die for everyone.

**Henry Morris** holds to the following view on the atonement "The value of Christ's blood was infinite, sufficient to cover all the sins of all the men and women of every age of history. The fact that it is efficacious unto eternal salvation only for the elect (a term that includes all and only those who believe on Him) is no argument that its value was thereby limited. ([Defender's Study Bible Notes](#))

**W A Criswell** who holds to unlimited atonement writes that "The universal extent of the atonement of Christ is nowhere clearer than

here (1Jn 2:2, cf. John 1:29), but this does not guarantee that everyone's sin is automatically forgiven. Christ's work applies only to those who believe in Him (cf. 1Jn 4:15; John 5:24).

**ESV Study Bible** - For the sins of the whole world does not mean that every person will be saved, for John is clear that forgiveness of sins comes only to those who repent and believe the gospel (see 2:4, 23; 3:10; 5:12; cf. John 3:18; 5:24). But Jesus' sacrifice is offered and made available to everyone in "the whole world," not just to John and his current readers.

**Bob Utley** on "for our sins; and not ours only, but also for those of the whole world" This refers to unlimited atonement (cf. 4:14; John 1:29; 3:16, 17; Rom. 5:18; Titus 2:11; Heb. 2:9; 7:25). Jesus died for the sin and sins of the whole world (cf. Gen. 3:15). However, humans must respond and continue to respond by faith, repentance, obedience and perseverance!

**I Howard Marshall** - (see [The Epistles of John - Page 119](#)) John rules out the thought that the death of Jesus is of limited efficacy; the possibility of forgiveness is cosmic and universal. As usual, Charles Wesley has caught the thought admirably:

The world He suffered to redeem;  
For all He hath the atonement made;  
For those that will not come to Him  
The ransom of His life was paid.

**Middletown Bible Church** has an article in support of unlimited atonement. ([Reformed Theology, Limited Atonement](#)) writing that "Other notable conservative evangelicals (**John MacArthur** [[Doctrine of Actual Atonement](#); [The Atonement-Real or Potential](#)], **John Piper** [[Limited Atonement he refers to as "Definite Atonement](#)"], **Wayne Grudem** [[Limited Atonement he refers to as "Particular Redemption" go to page 517](#)]) hold to what is called **limited atonement**. Clearly this is a controversial, potentially divisive doctrine. I have studied this topic and must confess that I have previously favored the unlimited atonement view, but I can see the logic of the arguments posited to support the limited atonement view. With that said, I am still uncertain but further discussion is beyond the scope of this short note.

**Dr Wayne Grudem** (who favors limited atonement) gives us a balanced summary of the two views of the extent of atonement (consult his book for the pros and cons of both views)

One of the differences between Reformed theologians and other Catholic and Protestant theologians has been the question of the extent of the atonement. The question may be put this way: when Christ died on the cross, did he pay for the sins of the entire human race or only for the sins of those who he knew would ultimately be saved? Non-Reformed people argue that the gospel offer in Scripture is repeatedly made to all people, and for this offer to be genuine, the payment for sins must have already been made and must be actually available for all people. They also say that if the people whose sins Christ paid for are limited, then the free offer of the gospel also is limited, and the offer of the gospel cannot be made to all mankind without exception. On the other hand, Reformed people argue that if Christ's death actually paid for the sins of every person who ever lived, then there is no penalty left for anyone to pay, and it necessarily follows that all people will be saved, without exception ([Systematic Theology- An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine- online](#) - scroll down to page 517)

While the **Doctrine of the Atonement (limited or unlimited)** will likely continue to be disputed among Biblically sound believers (and especially theologians) on both sides until Jesus returns, Grudem does us a service by emphasizing the points regarding the Atonement on which we can all agree...

1. Not all will be saved.
2. A free offer of the Gospel can rightly be made to every person ever born. It is completely true that "whoever will" may come to Christ for salvation, and no one who comes to Him will be turned away. This free offer of the Gospel is extended in good faith to every person.
3. All agree that Christ's death in itself, because He is the infinite Son of God, has infinite merit and is in itself sufficient to pay the penalty of the sins of as many or as few as the Father and the Son decreed. The question is not about the intrinsic merits of Christ's sufferings and death, but about the number of people for whom the Father and the Son thought Christ's death to be sufficient payment at the time Christ died. ([Scroll down to page 520](#))

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**QUESTION - [Is the atonement of Christ unlimited? | GotQuestions.org](#)**

**ANSWER** - The Bible has much to say on the atonement of Christ. The question is whether His sacrifice provided [limited](#) or unlimited atonement. The word *atonement* means "satisfaction or reparation for a wrong or injury; amends." The doctrine of unlimited atonement states that Christ died for all people, whether or not they would ever believe in Him. When applied to Jesus' finished work on the cross, atonement concerns the reconciliation of God and humankind, as accomplished through the suffering

and death of Christ. Paul highlights the atoning work of Jesus when he says, “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!” (Romans 5:8–10).

How this reparation of wrongs or reconciliation was accomplished and what was involved in the act, has been debated by theologians for centuries. There are at least nine different [positions on the atonement](#) of Christ, ranging anywhere from the atonement being merely a positive example for us (the Moral Example theory) to its being a judicial, substitutionary act (the Penal Substitution theory).

But perhaps the most controversial debate concerning the atonement of Jesus centers on what is referred to as “limited” or “definite” atonement. One theological camp (comprised primarily of those holding to Arminianism and Wesleyanism) believes that Christ died on the cross for everyone who will ever live. The other theological camp—made up of Reformed thinkers, who are often called “Calvinists” after the Reformer John Calvin—say that Jesus only died for those whom the Father chose from the foundation of the world to be saved. This group of redeemed individuals is often referred to as the “elect” or the “chosen” of God. Which position is correct? Did Jesus die for everyone in the world or only a select group of individuals?

### Is Everyone Going to be Saved?

In examining this issue, the first question to ask is this: is everyone going to be saved through the atoning work of Christ? Those holding to a position called [universalism](#) say “yes.” The universalists argue that, because Christ died for everyone and all the sins of humanity were laid on/punished in Christ, everyone will spend eternity with God.

Scripture, however, stands in opposition to such teaching (which can be traced back to a teacher named Laelius Socinus in the 16th century). The Bible makes it abundantly clear that many people will be lost, with just a few verses highlighting this fact following:

- “Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2)
- “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:13–14)
- “Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness’” (Matthew 7:22–23)
- “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life” (Matthew 25:46)
- “They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might” (2 Thessalonians 1:9)
- “Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15)

Since not everyone will be saved, there is one inescapable fact to understand: ***the atonement of Christ is limited*** If it isn’t, then universalism must be true, and yet Scripture clearly teaches that not everyone is going to be saved. So, unless one is a universalist and can defeat the biblical evidence above, then one must hold to some form of limited atonement.

### How, Then, Is the Atonement Limited?

The next important question to examine is this: if the atonement is limited (and it is), how is it limited? Jesus’ famous statement in [John 3:16](#) provides the answer: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” In this passage, the necessary condition that limits the atonement is found: “whosoever believes” (literally in the Greek: “all the believing ones”). In other words, the atonement is limited to those who believe and only those who believe.

### Who Limits the Atonement?

Both theological camps previously mentioned will not argue this point – the atonement of Christ is limited to those who believe. The disagreement occurs over the next question that arises: who limits the atonement—God or man? Calvinists/Reformed thinkers maintain that God limits the atonement by choosing those whom He will save, and thus God only placed on Christ the sins of those He had chosen for salvation. The Arminian/Wesleyan position states that God does not limit the reparation of Christ, but instead it is humanity that limits the atonement by freely choosing to accept or reject the offer that God makes to them for salvation.

A common way for the Arminian/Wesleyan theologians to state their position is that the atonement is unlimited in its *invitation* but limited in its *application*. God offers the invitation to all; however, only those who respond in faith to the gospel message have the work of the atonement applied to their spiritual condition.



To support the position that humanity, and not God, limits the atonement, the Arminian/Wesleyan lists a number of Scripture verses, including the following:

- “He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for *thesins of the whole world*” (1 John 2:2, emphasis added)
- “The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God who *takes away the sin of the world!*’” (John 1:29, emphasis added)
- “I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which *I will give for the life of the world* is My flesh” (John 6:51, emphasis added)
- “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw *all men* to Myself” (John 12:32, emphasis added)
- “For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, *who gave Himself as a ransom for all*, the testimony given at the proper time” (1 Timothy 2:5–6, emphasis added)
- “But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God *He might taste death for everyone*” (Hebrews 2:9, emphasis added)
- “But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, *even denying the Master who bought them*, bringing swift destruction upon themselves” (2 Peter 2:1, emphasis added)

In addition to the biblical references above, the Arminian/Wesleyan theologian also provides a number of logical arguments to support their case. The most common is that, if God is all-loving, how could Christ not die for everyone? Doesn’t God love each and every person (cf. John 3:16)? They see an atonement limited by God as a denial of the [omnibenevolence](#) of God.

Furthermore, the Arminian/Wesleyan believes that an atonement limited by God is devastating to the gospel message. How can an evangelist preach that “Christ died for you” if Christ did not indeed die for all? There is a complete lack of confidence, they say, in making the statement to any one person that Christ died for them because the evangelist has no real idea (given an atonement limited by God) if that is really the case.

#### **Unlimited Atonement—the Conclusion**

Unless one is a universalist and believes that everyone will ultimately be saved, a Christian must hold to some form of a limited atonement. The key area of disagreement is over who limits that atonement—God or man? Those wishing to hold to a God-limited atonement must answer the biblical arguments put forth by those holding to a human-limited atonement and also explain how God can be described in Scripture as being all-loving and yet not have His Son die for everyone.

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#### **QUESTION - [Limited atonement-is it biblical? | GotQuestions.org](#)**

**ANSWER** - Please note - since this article is in our “What is Calvinism?” series, it presents a full or 5-point view of Calvinism. We believe 5-point or 4-point Calvinism is an issue on which Christians can “agree to disagree.” So, while this article may strongly argue for 5-point Calvinism, we are in no sense disparaging the faith or integrity of those who hold to 4-point Calvinism. In fact, many of our writers are 4-point Calvinists. Please also read our article on [arguments against limited atonement](#). And, for a balanced perspective on the entire issue, please see our article on [unlimited atonement](#).

“**Limited atonement**” is a term that is used to summarize what the Bible teaches about the purpose for Christ’s death on the cross and what His life, death and resurrection accomplished. It is the third letter of the acronym TULIP, which is commonly used to explain what are known as the five points of Calvinism, also known as the doctrines of grace. The doctrine of limited atonement is clearly the most controversial and maybe even the most misunderstood of all the doctrines of grace. Because the name can confuse people and cause them to have wrong ideas about what is meant, some people prefer to use terms like “particular redemption,” “definite redemption,” “actual atonement,” or “intentional atonement.” These terms correctly focus on the fact that the Bible reveals Jesus’ death on the cross was intentional and had a definite purpose that it succeeded in accomplishing. Yet, like all of the doctrines of grace, what is important is not the name that is assigned to the doctrine but how accurately the doctrine summarizes what the Bible teaches about the nature and purpose of Jesus’ sacrificial death on the cross.

The doctrine of limited atonement affirms that the Bible teaches Christ’s atoning work on the cross was done with a definite purpose in mind—to redeem for God people from every tribe, tongue and nation (Revelation 5:9). Jesus died, according to Matthew 1:21, to “save His people from their sins.” This truth is seen in many passages throughout Scripture. In John 10:15, we see that He lays “down His life for the sheep.” Who are the sheep? They are the people chosen by God from before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4). These are the same ones Jesus said were given to Him by the Father in order that He would fulfill the Father’s will by losing none of them and by raising all of them up in the last day (John 6:37-40). The truth that Jesus came for this specific reason is seen in both the Old and New Testaments. One of the greatest passages on the atonement in the Old Testament is Isaiah 53. In

this passage alone, we see that He was “stricken for the transgression of God’s people” (Isaiah 53:8); that He would “justify many” because “He shall bear their iniquities” (Isaiah 53:11); and that He indeed “bore the sin of many” (Isaiah 53:12). These verses and many others talk about an atonement that was specific in whom it covered (God’s people), was substitutionary in nature (He actually bore their sins on the cross), and actually accomplished what God intended it to do (justify many). Clearly, here is a picture of an intentional, definite atonement. Christ died not simply to make justification a possibility but to actually justify those He died for. He died to save them, not to make them savable.

The doctrine of limited atonement also recognizes that the Bible teaches Jesus’ death on the cross was a substitutionary atonement for sins. Many theologians use the word “vicarious” to describe Christ’s atonement. This word means “acting on behalf of” or “representing another” and is used to describe “something performed or suffered by one person with the results accruing to the benefit or advantage of another.” The vicarious atonement of Christ means He was acting as a representative for a specific group of people (the elect) who would receive a direct benefit (salvation) as the result of His death. This concept is clearly seen in 2 Corinthians 5:21: “He (God the Father) made Him (Christ) who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” If Jesus actually stood in my place and bore my sin on the cross as the Bible teaches, then I can never be punished for that sin. In order for Christ’s atonement to truly be a substitutionary or vicarious atonement, then it must actually secure a real salvation for all for whom Christ died. If the atonement only makes salvation a possibility, then it cannot be a vicarious atonement. If Christ acted as a real and true substitute for those for whom He died, then all for whom He died will be saved. To say that Christ died a vicarious death in the place of all sinners but that not all sinners will be saved is a contradiction.

Four different words or aspects of the atonement are clearly seen in Scripture, and each one helps us understand the nature and extent of the atonement. These four words are ransom, reconciliation, propitiation and substitute. These four aspects of Christ’s atonement all speak of Christ as having actually accomplished something in His death. A study of these four terms in their biblical contexts leads to the obvious conclusion that one cannot hold to a true universal atonement without also requiring universal salvation. If one holds to an unlimited atonement while denying universal salvation, one ends up with a redemption that leaves men not totally free or actually redeemed, a reconciliation that leaves men still estranged from God, a propitiation that leaves men still under the wrath of God, and a substitutionary death that still makes the sinner himself help pay the debt of his sin. All of these aspects of the atoning work of Christ then become nothing more than a possibility that relies upon man to make them a reality.

But that is not what the Bible teaches. It teaches that those who are redeemed by Christ are truly free and their debt has been fully paid. It teaches that those who are reconciled to God are actually reconciled and the wall of separation that existed between them and God has been torn down (Colossians 2:14). It teaches that Christ’s death on the cross was a sacrifice that fully satisfied the wrath of God. It also teaches that Christ was indeed a substitute, a kinsmen redeemer, who acted in place of and on behalf of His people. When Jesus died on the cross, He said, “It is finished” (John 19:30), and the Greek word translated “finished” is *teleō*, which was used to indicate that a debt had been paid in full. And that is exactly what Jesus accomplished on the cross. “When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross” (Colossians 2:13-14).

One common misunderstanding about the doctrine of limited atonement is that this view somehow lessens or limits the value of the atonement of Christ. Yet exactly the opposite is true. Limited atonement correctly recognizes that Christ’s death was of infinite value and lacking in nothing. In fact, it is of such value that, had God so willed, Christ’s death could have saved every member of the human race. Christ would not have had to suffer any more or do anything different to save every human who ever lived than He did in securing the salvation of the elect. But that was not God’s purpose in sending Christ to the cross. God’s purpose in the atonement was that Jesus would secure forever the salvation of those the Father had given to Him (Hebrews 7:25). Therefore, while Christ’s atonement was limited in its intent or purpose, it was unlimited in its power.

Another common misunderstanding about the doctrine of limited atonement is that it somehow lessens or diminishes the love of God for humanity. Yet, again, exactly the opposite is true. Of all of the doctrines of grace, the doctrine of limited atonement, when correctly understood, magnifies the love of God; it does not diminish it. Limited atonement reinforces the intensive love of God that is revealed in the Bible. God loves His people with a love that saves them from their sin, as opposed to the love of the unlimited atonement view that sees God’s love as being more general in nature. In the unlimited atonement view, He loves everyone in general but saves no one in particular and, in fact, leaves the matter of their salvation up to them. Which is more loving, a love that actually saves people or a love that makes salvation “possible” to those who are dead in trespasses and sins and unable to choose God?

One of the main arguments used against limited atonement is that, if Christ did not atone for the sins of everybody in the world and if God only intended to save the elect, how do you explain the numerous biblical passages that indicate the free offer of the gospel to “whosoever will come?” How can God offer salvation to all, including those whom He has not elected or foreordained to be saved? How can we understand the paradox that occurs because the Bible teaches God intends that only the elect will be saved, yet, on the

other hand, the Bible also unequivocally declares that God freely and sincerely offers salvation to everyone who will believe? (Ezekiel 33:11; Isaiah 45:22; 55:1; Matthew 11:28; 23:37; 2 Peter 3:9; Revelation 22:17) The solution to this paradox is simply an acknowledgment of all that the Bible teaches. 1) The call of the gospel is universal in the sense that anybody that hears it and believes in it will be saved. 2) Because everyone is dead in trespasses and sin, no one will believe the gospel and respond in faith unless God first makes those who are dead in their trespasses and sins alive (Ephesians 2:1-5). The Bible teaches that "whosoever believes" will have eternal life and then explains why some believe and some don't.

Another argument against limited atonement points to the passages in the Bible that speak of Christ's atonement in a more general or unlimited sense. For example, in 1 John 2:2 John says that Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the "whole world." Likewise, in John 4:42 Jesus is called the "Savior of the world" and in John 1:29 is said to "take away the sin of the world." Other verses that seem to indicate an unlimited view of the atonement include 2 Corinthians 5:14-15: "He died for all" and 1 Timothy 2:6: "He gave Himself a ransom for all" (although Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45 say Christ came to "give His life a ransom for many"). Those who believe in unlimited atonement use such verses to make the point that, if Christ died for all and takes away the sins of the world, then His atonement cannot be limited to only the elect. However, these verses are easily reconciled with the many other verses that support the doctrine of limited atonement simply by recognizing that often the Bible uses the words "world" or "all" in a limited sense. They do not automatically mean "every individual in the entire world." This is evident when just a few verses are considered. In Luke 2:1 it is recorded that a "decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered," and Luke 2:3 says, "So all went to be registered everyone to his own city." But, clearly, it is not talking about every individual in the whole world. Caesar's decree did not apply to the Japanese, Chinese or countless other people throughout the world.

Similarly, the Pharisees, being dismayed at Jesus' growing popularity said, "Look how the whole world has gone after Him!" Did every single person in the world follow Jesus? Or was the "world" limited to a small area of Israel in which Jesus preached?

So, it should be readily apparent that the phrase "all" or "all the world" does not necessarily mean every individual. Understanding that basic fact allows one to consider each of these seemingly universal passages in their contexts, and, when that is done, it becomes apparent that they do not present any conflict with the doctrine of limited atonement.

Yet another argument against limited atonement is that it is a hindrance to the preaching of the gospel and to evangelism. Those that use this argument will say that if an evangelist cannot say, "Christ died for you," then his effectiveness in presenting the gospel will be limited. Or they will say that, if only the elect will be saved, why should the gospel be preached at all? Once again, these objections are easily dealt with. The gospel is to be preached to everyone because it is the power of God to salvation for all who believe (Romans 1:16), and it is the means that God has ordained by which the elect will be saved (Romans 10:14-17). Also, the evangelist does not need to tell the unbeliever that "Christ died for your sins," specifically. All he needs to proclaim is that Christ died to pay the penalty for sin and provide a way for sinners to be reconciled to a holy God. Believe in Him, and you will be saved.

The doctrines of grace, and specifically the doctrine of limited atonement, empower evangelism rather than hinder it. Embracing these wonderful biblical truths allows one to boldly and clearly declare the good news of the gospel, knowing that the power is not in our presentation of it or in the audience's ability to understand it or desire to believe it, but, instead, rests solely upon an all-powerful God who has determined to save people from every tribe, tongue and nation. Belief in an unlimited atonement, on the other hand, presents many logical and biblical problems. First of all, if the atonement was truly unlimited, then every person would be saved as all of their sins, including the sin of unbelief, would have been paid for by Christ on the cross. However, such universalism is clearly unbiblical, as the Bible is very clear that not all people are saved or will be saved. Therefore, both the Arminian and Calvinist believe in some sort of limited atonement. The Arminian limits the effectiveness of the atonement in saying Christ died for all people but not all people will be saved. His view of the atonement limits its power as it only makes salvation a possibility and does not actually save anyone. On the other hand, the Calvinist limits the intent of the atonement by stating that Christ's atonement was for specific people (the elect) and that it completely secured the salvation of those whom He died for. So, all Christians believe in some sort of limited atonement. The question, then, is not whether the Bible teaches a limited atonement but how or in what sense the atonement is limited. Is the power of the atonement limited in that it only makes salvation a possibility, or is its power to save unlimited and it actually results in the salvation of those whom God intended to save (the elect, His sheep)? Does God do the limiting, or does man? Does God's sovereign grace and purpose dictate the ultimate success or failure of the redemptive work of Christ, or does the will of man decide whether God's intentions and purposes will be realized?

A major problem with unlimited atonement is that it makes redemption merely a potential or hypothetical act. An unlimited atonement means that Christ's sacrifice is not effectual until the sinner does his part in believing. In this view, the sinner's faith is the determining factor as to whether Christ's atonement actually accomplishes anything. If the doctrine of unlimited atonement is true, then it has Christ dying for people the Father knew would not be saved and has Christ paying the penalty for the sins of people who would also have to pay the penalty for the same sin. In effect, it makes God unjust. Either God punishes people for the sins that Christ atoned for, or Christ's atonement was somehow lacking in that it does not sufficiently cover all the sins of those for whom He died. The problem with this view becomes even clearer when one considers that at the time Christ died on the cross there were

already sinners that had died who will face the wrath of God in hell for their sin. Logically, it makes no sense for God the Father to have Christ atone for the sins of people who were already suffering the wrath of God for their sin. Where is the justice in punishing Christ for the sins of those that were already being punished for their sins? Again, this also shows that an unlimited atonement cannot be a vicarious, substitutionary atonement.

Still another problem with an unlimited view of the atonement is that it demeans the righteousness of God and destroys the grounds of a believer's assurance. An important aspect of a believer's assurance is that God is righteous and that He will not nor cannot punish sin twice. Therefore, the sin that is covered by Christ's blood can never be charged to the sinner's account. Yet that is what a universal atonement leads to. Christ is punished for the sins of those that are not saved, and then they are also punished in hell for the same sins.

Unlimited atonement says that, while Christ does a great deal to bring salvation to His people, His death on the cross did not actually secure that salvation for anyone. Christ's death is not sufficient in and of itself to save lost people, and, in order for His atoning work to be effective, there is a requirement that sinners themselves must meet. That requirement is faith. For man to be saved, he must add his faith to Christ's atoning work on the cross. Therefore, the effectiveness of the atonement is limited by man's faith or lack thereof. On the other hand, limited atonement believes that Christ's death and resurrection actually secures the salvation of His people. While God does require faith of His people, Christ's death even paid for the sin of our unbelief, and, therefore, His death meets all requirements for our salvation and provides everything necessary to secure the salvation of God's people including the faith to believe. That is true unconditional love, a salvation that is by grace alone in Christ alone. Christ plus nothing equals salvation—an atonement so sufficient that it secures everything necessary for salvation, including the faith that God gives us to believe (Ephesians 2:8).

Limited atonement, like all of the doctrines of grace, upholds and glorifies the unity of the triune Godhead as Father, Son and Holy Spirit all work in unison for the purpose of salvation. These doctrines build upon one another. The doctrine of total depravity establishes what the Bible teaches about the spiritual condition of unregenerate man and leaves one with the question "Who can be saved?" The doctrine of unconditional election then answers the question by declaring God's sovereign choice in choosing to save people despite their depravity and based solely on God's sovereign choice to redeem for Himself people from every tribe, tongue and nation. Next, the doctrine of limited atonement explains how God can be perfectly just and yet redeem those sinful people and reconcile them to Himself. The only solution to the depravity of man was for God to provide a Redeemer who would act as their substitute and suffer the wrath of God for their sins. He did this in the death of Christ, who, having been crucified, completely and totally "canceled out the certificate of debt...having nailed it to the cross" (Colossians 2:13-14). That leads to another question: how can a spiritually dead sinner who is hostile to God have faith in the atoning work of Christ on the cross? That question is answered by the doctrine of grace that is known as irresistible grace, the "I" in the acronym TULIP.

#### 1 John 2:3 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. [NASB: Lockman](#)

**Greek:** Kai en touto ginokomen (1PPAI) hoti egnokamen (1PRAI) auton, ean tas entolas autou teromen. (1PPAS)

**Amplified:** And this is how we may discern [daily, by experience] that we are coming to know Him [to perceive, recognize, understand, and become better acquainted with Him]: if we keep (bear in mind, observe, practice) His teachings (precepts, commandments). ([Lockman](#))

**ESV:** And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.

**KJV:** And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

**NIV:** We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands.

**NLT:** And how can we be sure that we belong to him? By obeying his commandments.

**Phillips:** It is only when we obey God's laws that we can be quite sure that we really know him.

**Wuest:** And in this we know experientially that we have come to know Him experientially and are in that state at present, if we are continually having a solicitous, watchful care in safeguarding His precepts by obeying them. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

**Young's Literal:** and in this we know that we have known him, if his commands we may keep;

- **By this we:** 1Jn 2:4-6 3:14,19 1Jn 4:13 5:19
- **We know:** Isa 53:11 Jn 17:3 2Co 4:6

- **If we:** 1Jn 3:22-23 1Jn 5:3 Ps 119:6,32 Lk 6:46 Jn 14:15, Jn 14:21-24 Jn 15:10,14 1Th 4:1,2 Heb 5:9 Rev 22:14
- [1 John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

John 17:3+ "This is eternal life, that they **may know** ([ginosko](#)) You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

1 John 5:3+ For this is the love of God, that we **keep** ([tereo](#)) **His commandments** ([entole](#)); and His commandments are not burdensome.

Luke 6:46+ "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"

John 14:15+ "If you love Me, you will **keep** ([tereo](#)) **My commandments** ([entole](#))

John 14:21+ "He who has **My commandments** ([entole](#)) and **keeps** ([tereo](#) - present tense) them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."

John 14:23+ Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will **keep** ([tereo](#)) My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. 24 "He who does not love Me does not **keep** ([tereo](#)) My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.

John 15:10+ "If you **keep** ([tereo](#)) **My commandments** ([entole](#)), you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

Titus 1:16+ (DESCRIPTION OF A "LIAR") They (present tense - continually) **profess to know God (THEIR LIPS)**, but by their deeds (**THEIR LIFE**) they (present tense - continually) deny Him (SEE Mt 10:33+), being detestable ([bdekluktos](#)) and disobedient and worthless ([adokimos](#)) for any good deed.

## HOW TO KNOW YOU KNOW HIM

John is writing this verse to believers to reassure them that their experience with God was genuine, that they are as we often say the "real deal!" But in giving them assurance, he first will give them a "test" that they must pass. He presents the test as a conditional statement, because it may or may not be true of individual readers and each one will be required to examine themselves to determine if they pass the test.

**I Howard Marshall** gives some helpful background on why John uses the verb **know** (both [ginosko](#) and oida/eido) 40 times in this short letter - Knowledge of God was a favorite theme of ancient religion. It was particularly common in a group of religions which have come to be known as "[Gnostic](#)" (from Gk. [gnosis](#), "knowledge"). Although they flourished in the second century, some of their basic motifs were already current earlier and their roots stretched a long way back. For some religions of this kind "knowledge" of God meant some kind of mystical experience or direct vision of the divine. For others it meant knowledge of esoteric myths, sometimes given in visions, which conveyed salvation to those who were initiated in them. In both cases knowledge was a purely religious attainment and had little, if any, connection with moral behavior (ED: SEE [mystery religions](#)). The evidence which we have already gathered from this Epistle suggests that John's opponents were not too concerned about sin and evil, and did not think that sin was a barrier to fellowship with God. (See [The Epistles of John - Page 121](#))

**And (kai)** - For some reason the NAS 1995 omitted translation of this Greek word kai (which the old NAS 1977 retained!). Hiebert observes that by using this "**and**" John "connects this paragraph (1Jn 2:3-6) with the preceding discussion concerning fellowship. John presented two closely related signs that show that fellowship is being maintained." ([1 John 1:5-2:6](#)) **NET Note** adds "The translation of **kai** at the beginning of 1Jn 2:3 is important for understanding the argument, because a similar kai, occurs at the beginning of 1Jn 1:5. The use here is not just a simple continuative or connective use, but has more of a resumptive force, pointing back to the previous use in 1Jn 1:5." I think the old Amplified translation is helpful (note it translates the "and" to link it with previous passages) - "And this is how we may discern [daily, by experience] that we are coming to know Him [to perceive, recognize, understand, and become better acquainted with Him]" The phrase "daily" picks up the sense of [ginosko](#) in the present tense.

(And) **By this we know** ([ginosko](#) - present tense) **that we have come to know** ([ginosko](#) - perfect tense) **Him** - **By this** should always prompt us to pause and ponder interrogating with questions like "What is '**this**'?" This genre of question will force us to examine the context, going either backwards or forwards. After examining the context, it becomes obvious that this specific use of "**by this**" is pointing forward, to what follows. (For more on "**by this**" see Harris' [1 John 2:3-11](#)).

**BY THIS** - 12 of 41 uses of the phrase "**by this**" in the entire Bible (NAS) are by **John** in this epistle - 1 John

2:3, 5; 3:10, 16, 19, 24; 4:2, 6, 9, 13, 17; 5:2.

**Know** here means not just know about Him, i.e., not just intellectual knowledge. Almost everyone in America knows something about Christ, but a much smaller number truly **know** Him personally and intimately as their Lord and Savior (cf those He did not know in Mt 7:21-23+). Mt 1:25KJV+ helps us understand the intimacy inherent in **know** ([ginosko](#)) for Matthew says of Joseph that he "**knew** ([ginosko](#)) her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS." In other words Joseph did not have sexual relations with Mary. The first **know** ([ginosko](#)) in our passage is in the present tense which describes continuous action, pointing "to inner progressive knowledge or assurance that believers have entered into a state of knowing Him." ([Hiebert](#)) The second **know** in the perfect tense, which describes a past completed action with ongoing results or effects. In other words they are experientially knowing that they truly know Jesus. The idea is we "Know we that we have come to know and still know Him." ([A T Robertson](#)) Or to say it another way, the perfect tense speaks of permanence of their experiential knowledge. Once we have truly come to know Jesus and be known by Him, we are eternally safe and sure! (See [assurance](#) and [verses about assurance](#)).

[Kenneth Wuest](#) paraphrases 1Jn 2:3 as "And in this we **know** experientially that we have come to **know** Him experientially and are in that state at present, if we are continually having a solicitous, watchful care in safeguarding His precepts by obeying them." **Wuest** adds that the perfect tense conveys the thought that "if we are keeping His commandments ([see next note](#)), we know that we have in time past come to know Him with the present result that that state of knowing Him is true of us in the present time." ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

**Philip Comfort** - This could also be rendered "By this we come to experientially know that we have experientially known him." The focus is on actual, experiential knowledge of God, contra the theoretical knowledge espoused by various [gnostics](#). ([The Gospel of John, 1-3 John - Page 337](#))

**Vine** brings out this distinction of the two uses of **know** ([ginosko](#)) by paraphrasing it as "hereby we constantly have the experience of knowing that we have come to know Him." (Collected writings)

**Colin Kruse** adds this comment on **by this we know** - "Knowing Him is not knowing facts about Him, nor simply being able to recognise Him operating in circumstances or in other people; it is knowing Him personally for oneself. For the author of 1 John knowing God involves fellowship with Him (1Jn 1:4+), walking in His light (1Jn 1:7+), and being 'in Him' (1Jn 2:5-6)." (See [The Letters of John - Page 78](#))

**Steven Cole** - "There is a vast difference between knowing about a person and knowing that person. I may know many things about President Bush, by reading the news or watching TV. But I do not know him personally. I've never met him or spent any time with him. In the same way, you may know a lot about God, but if you have not entered into a personal relationship with Him through faith in Jesus Christ, you do not know God personally." ([1 John 2:1-2 The Key to Holiness](#))

**W Hall Harris** adds that **know** in the perfect tense is "resultative perfect, which involves both past completed action and existing results, but emphasizes the existing results. It is clear in any case that the author is interested in reassuring those whom he considers to be believers already: they came to know God at some time in the past, and now the author is writing to reassure them of the reality of that (resulting) relationship." ([1 John 2:3-11](#))

**William Barclay** - This passage (1Jn 2:3-6) deals in phrases and thoughts which were very familiar to the ancient world. It talked much about **knowing God** and about being in God. It is important that we should see wherein the difference lay between the pagan world in all its greatness and Judaism and Christianity. To **know God**, to abide in God, to have fellowship with God has always been the quest of the human spirit, for Augustine was right when he said that God had made men for himself and that they were restless until they found their rest in Him. We may say that in the ancient world there were three lines of thought in regard to knowing God. (See [Barclay's interesting discussion of the importance of knowledge in the Greek culture under the title "THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD"](#))

**Paul** speaks of the wonderful moment when his general (and great) knowledge of God, was superseded by the intimate, personal knowledge of Jesus as His Messiah and Lord...

Phil 3:8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of **knowing** (the noun *gnosis* - more literally it reads "the knowledge" of) Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ

**THOUGHT** - Question: Do you know Jesus like Paul knew Him or do you just know about Him?

In His great prayer in John 17:3 Jesus associated **knowing** God and Himself with eternal life (salvation) "And this is eternal life, that they may **know** ([ginosko](#) in the **present tense**) Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent."

**Comment:** Notice that Jesus is saying in essence that Christianity is not just about knowing orthodox doctrines or following

good moral precepts, but at its very core is knowledge of a Person. It is knowing God personally through Jesus Christ, Who explained (Jn 1:18 where explained = exegeomai = to lead out, to unfold, to provide detailed information in a systematic manner, giving us English "exegesis" = unfolding interpretation through teaching) the Father to us (cf Jn 14:7, 9, 10, 11, 12:45, Col 1:15, Heb 1:3)

**David Smith** "The apostle foresees the question which may be raised: 'How can I be assured that Christ is all this to me—my Propitiation, my Advocate? And how can I be assured that I have an abiding interest in Him?' He answers: (1) We attain to personal and conscious acquaintance with Christ by observance of His commandments (1Jn 2:3-5a); (2) we attain to assurance of abiding union with Him by 'walking even as He walked' (1Jn 2:5-6). The principle is that it is not enough to understand the theory; we must put it into practice. E.g., what makes an artist? Not merely learning the rules of perspective and mixture of colors, but actually putting one's hand to brush and canvas. First attempts may be unsuccessful, but skill comes by patient practice. Compare Rembrandt's advice to his pupil Hoogstraten, 'Try to put well in practice what you already know; and in doing so you will, in good time, discover the hidden things which you inquire about.' To know about Christ, to understand the doctrine of His person and work is mere theory; we get to know Him and to know that we know Him by practice of His precepts." ([Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

## CLAIM TESTED BY OBEDIENCE

**If we keep** ([tereo](#) - present tense) **His commandments** ([entole](#)) - **If** is a third class [Conditional statement](#) which means potential action, implying that this may not be true of some who vociferously claim "I know God!" with their lips yet deny Him with their lives (and lifestyle)! It follows that this is an important "**if!**" We don't want to "**iffy**" about our eternal destination! John is introducing a clear marker by which one can discern whether or not they are genuinely saved, the test of obedience. **Keep** ([tereo](#)) in the present tense speaks of one's lifestyle or as Wuest puts it "if we are continually having a solicitous, watchful care in safeguarding His precepts by obeying them." It describes continuous action - the idea is "keep on keeping on!" "It is the habitual, moment by moment safeguarding of the Word by the saint lest he violate its precepts." ([Wuest](#)) It follows that if we observe His commandments, we can know that we know we belong to Christ. In other words if our what we say with our lips matches how we live our lives, this is good evidence that our salvation is genuine. John is not calling for **perfection**, having already dealt with those who say they are without sin (1Jn 1:8, 10+). However, John is calling for an assessment of our life's **direction!** If our direction is Godward, Heavenward, we can know we are genuinely saved, that we know Christ and He knows us (Mt 7:23+).

*The sign of knowledge of God is obedience to His commands and recognition of the way of life that He expects from His people.*

-- I Howard Marshall

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, this is the ground of assurance. Little wonder then, that when we wander from truth and willfully, rebelliously chose disobedience over obedience, the blessed fruit of assurance of our salvation begins to wither like a vine that is not watered!

**Harris** on "**if**" = The implication of this is that the author by the use of this construction is assuming that the readers as genuine believers **will indeed keep God's commandments**, but he does not state this as an absolute fact. ([1 John 2:3-11](#))

I like the way **J B Phillips** paraphrases this passage "It is only when we obey God's laws that we can be quite sure that we really know Him."

**THOUGHT** - John describes a true believer as one who is not just giving testimony with his/her lips, but with his/her life. The proof of the reality of Christ in you the hope of glory (Col 1:27b+) is not your talk but your walk. It is what you do, not what you say that is going to make an impact on the darkness in this world and give you the assurance that you will go to heaven when you die.

**Warren Wiersbe** - Obedience to God's Word is proof of our love for Him. There are three motives for obedience. We can obey because we have to, because we need to, or because we want to. A slave obeys because he has to. If he doesn't obey he will be punished. An employee obeys because he needs to. He may not enjoy his work, but he does enjoy getting his paycheck! He needs to obey because he has a family to feed and clothe. But a Christian is to obey his Heavenly Father because he wants to—for the relationship between him and God is one of love. "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). This is the way we learned obedience when we were children. First, we obeyed because we had to. If we didn't obey, we were spanked! But as we grew up, we discovered that obedience meant enjoyment and reward; so we started obeying because it met certain needs in our lives. And it was a mark of real maturity when we started obeying because of love. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**C. H. Dodd** wrote that "To know God is to experience His love in Christ, and to return that love in obedience."

**Steven Cole** on **keep** ([tereo](#)) - "To **keep** His commandments implies diligence and effort. The word **keep** was used of a sentry

walking his post. It implies that the enemy is attempting to invade and dominate your life with temptations that will destroy you. To resist him, you must be vigilant so as to obey the commandments that Jesus has given. A faithful sentry is not laid back. He is alert and diligent." ([1 John 2:1-2 The Key to Holiness](#))

**Kenneth Wuest** says that **tereo** "does not merely speak of the act of obeying His commands, but of a solicitous (meticulously careful, concerned) desire that we do not disobey any of them... It is that holy fear of disobeying God ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

**THOUGHT** - Have you lost that "holy fear" of sin (note how this fear impacted Job - Job 1:1)? If you are playing with sin as a believer, don't be surprised if you find that you have lost that holy fear that once burned brightly when you were first saved from the guttermost to the uttermost! You might want to read, memorize, meditate on and pray Rev 2:4-5+! (See Fear of the Lord, Proverbs 1:7 Commentary)

**John MacArthur** points out that in 1Jn 2:3 **His commandments** ([entole](#)) "refers not to the Mosaic law, but to the precepts and directives of Christ (cf. Mt. 28:19-20). But of course the moral and spiritual precepts the Lord taught were consistent with those revealed to Moses (cf. Matt. 5:17-18; John 5:46), all reflective of God's immutable nature. (See [1-3 John MacArthur New Testament Commentary - Page 57](#)).

**ESV Study Bible - Assurance of salvation** is possible (see 2 Pet 1:10+ - ESV Note = [Good Deeds](#) are evidence of and give assurance of salvation, though they are never the basis for it. Peter's wording does not imply that true followers of Christ can ever apostatize; those who do so were never really "called," "elected," or born again). First John gives numerous means of self-diagnosis (cf. 1 John 1:7; 2:5; 3:14; 4:13; 5:2). **Here the test is ethical:** do professing Christians have a changed life and **keep** the Lord's commandments? Obedience to God does not bring about justification (which comes by faith alone), but obedience as a pattern of life does give evidence that one has been born again. To know him involves a personal relationship that transforms practical behavior. (**Ed:** "Amen or O my!") (BORROW [ESV Study Bible](#)) (SEE ALSO - [Obedience of faith](#) - Ro 1:5, Ro 16:26+) (Bolding Added)

Jesus uses **tereo** in his "job description" of a genuine Christ follower (disciple) in Mt 28:20, where **tereo** "does not merely speak of the act of obeying His commands, but of a solicitous desire that we do not disobey any of them but on the other hand, that we obey them perfectly (**Ed:** Enabled by the Spirit this should be our goal, but in this life it will never be our attainment)." [Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

**THOUGHT** - Are you struggling with doubts about your eternal security? It may be time for an obedience "check up!" Spirit enabled obedience will go a long way to restoring your inner assurance that you are eternally secure!

As **Hiebert** says "in contradiction to the [Gnostics](#), (John) maintained that no professed knowledge of God is valid if it does not have moral consequences....The one who has been brought into a saving relationship with God finds within (himself) a growing love for and desire to obey His commandments." ([1 John 1:5-2:6](#))

**Van Gorder** points out: Much is said today about each having his own "lifestyle." A Christian has but one lifestyle: obedience to God's Word. Any profession of faith that fails to be corroborated by a Christlike walk immediately marks that one as living a lie.

Lest you think John's test of genuine salvation is just mentioned in First John, see his almost identical description of believers in the end times in the Revelation...

Revelation 14:12+ Here is the perseverance of the saints (BELIEVERS) who **keep** ([tereo](#) - present tense) **His commandments** ([entole](#)) of God and their faith in Jesus.

**Comment:** Could John be any clearer? Here he links **faith** in Jesus with those who **keep** the commandments of God. Beloved, the only ones who can "keep the commandments of God" are those who possess a supernatural enabling power (the indwelling Spirit)!

**Tony Garland adds** - Their faith is evident by their works—keeping God's commandments (Luke 6:46+; Jas 2:18+). During this time, the woman who flees to the wilderness has offspring which "keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 12:17+). Here, the phrase denotes those who are not just of Israel (her offspring), but also Gentile **believers**: all the saints of the end.

**A T Robertson** comments that "The [Gnostics](#) boasted of their superior knowledge of Christ, and John here challenges their boast by an appeal to experimental knowledge of Christ which is shown by keeping His (Christ's) commandments (a) thoroughly Johannine phrase."

**THOUGHT** - From John's frequent usage of [tereo](#), it is clear that this is a very important word in his "salvation



vocabulary." Are you keeping Jesus' commands? His words? I'm not talking about a legalistic keeping of them, but a Spirit enabled keeping of them, fighting off the temptations of the flesh, killing sin by the Spirit (Ro 8:13+). Sure, you will fall, but that's why John reminds us as **'little children'** that we have an **Advocate** Who is ready to intervene with the Father. To reiterate John is not speaking of **perfection** but of the **direction** of our spiritual walk. Which way are you heading? Don't be deceived that you once prayed a prayer and now have a guaranteed "fire insurance policy!" When you truly receive Jesus, you receive a Person, a new life, a new desire, a new direction (cf 2Cor 5:17+). If this has not been your experience, you need to have a talk with your local pastor.

**William Barclay** has an interesting comment - "Here was John's problem. In the Greek world, he was faced with people who saw God as part of an intellectual exercise and who could say 'I know God' without being conscious of any ethical obligation whatever. In the Greek world, he was faced with people who had had an emotional experience and who could say: 'I am in God and God is in me,' and yet who did not see God in terms of commandments at all. John is determined to lay it down quite unmistakably and without compromise that the only way in which we can show that we know God is by obedience to him, and the only way we can show that we have union with Christ is by imitation of him. Christianity is the religion which offers the greatest privilege and brings with it the greatest obligation. Intellectual effort and emotional experience are not neglected—far from it—but they must combine to produce moral action. ([Barclay](#))

**J Ligon Duncan**, a highly respected expositor, introduces his comments on 1Jn 2:3-6 with these words - "Now, from dealing with sin then, and false teaching about sin, and dealing with the proper view of sin in the Christian life, he moves to another subject. And his subject is "How one can know that one knows God? How can you be assured that you know God? How can you be assured that you are a Christian?" And in this section that begins with 1Jn 2:3, he lays out **three tests for knowing that you are a Christian**: one of them is moral; one of them is relational; and one of them is doctrinal....How is it that a person comes to know that he or she really knows the Living God, really has a saving relationship, really has a fellowship knowledge of the Living God--doesn't just know things about Him but knows Him--is in relationship with Him? That's the question that John is asking here. And the tests that he gives are designed to help you come to a firm and certain answer to that question, to strip away any self-deception that may be in your heart, and to open your eyes to see the truth, to find out whether you don't know God or whether you do know Him.... he's not giving these so that we will begin judging the rest of our congregation as to how they stand with the Living God, but that we might look at ourselves and ask how we stand with the Living God. If we were to outline this passage today, 1Jn 2:3 would be his first expression of the test: **Do you keep God's commands?** There's the first test. 1Jn 2:4 would be a negative example of someone who claims to know God but who doesn't keep His commands. It would be a negative example. It would be an example of how you know that you don't know God: If you claim to know Him and don't keep His commands. The third part of this passage you'll find in 1Jn 2:5. There again is another way in which John says the same thing that he's just said in 1Jn 2:3: that is, that we know we know God when love to God comes to fruition in obeying His word. And so, he's getting at the same truth again in a different way in 1Jn 2:5. And then, the fourth part of this passage you'll find in 1Jn 2:6, and again, it's another negative example. It's an example of someone who says, "Oh, I abide in Christ. I abide in God. I'm resting in Him. I'm united to Him." But this person isn't living the way that Jesus lived. And so again, he says, "If you are abiding in Him, then you will live in the way that Jesus lived," that is, in accordance with God's word..."You know you know God if you obey His word." Secondly, he says, "You know that you know God if you love obeying His word." Thirdly, he says, "You know you know God if you're abiding in Him and your abiding leads you to live a godly life, to live in a way that Christ lived." ([If You Love Me, Keep My Commandments](#))

## **ASSURANCE OF YOUR SALVATION: HEAVEN ON EARTH!**

**John MacArthur** quotes the great Puritan writer **Thomas Brooks** words on assurance as being "a reflex act of a gracious soul, whereby he clearly and evidently sees himself in a gracious, blessed, and happy state; it is a sensible feeling, and an experimental [experiential] discerning of a man's being in a state of grace ([From Brooks' preface "Touching the Nature of Assurance" - Page 316](#)) ...A good conscience hath sure confidence; he that hath it sits, Noah-like (**Ed**: having assurance is a believer's "ark" in the midst the world's ungodliness) in the midst of all combustions and distractions, [in] sincerity and serenity, uprightness and boldness. A good conscience and a good confidence go together, where he sits, Noah-like, quiet and still in the midst of all combustions (destructions, commotions and confusions. ([Page 323 in Brooks' treatise entitled "Heaven on Earth"](#))

**MacArthur** adds that...

Assurance causes believers to rejoice with the hymn writer, "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! O what a foretaste of glory divine!" To possess assurance is, in a sense, to experience heaven on earth. But sadly, as Brooks goes on to lament (**Ed**: I am expanding MacArthur's quote with the original words of Brooks)

Now this assurance is the beauty and top of a Christian's glory in this life. It is usually attended with the strongest joy, with the

sweetest comforts, and with the greatest peace. It is a pearl that most want, a crown that few wear. His state is safe and happy, whose soul is adorned with grace, though he sees it not, though he knows it not. ([Page 316-317](#))

The fourth ground of my presenting this treatise to public view, is, that little well-grounded assurance that is to be found among most Christians. Every unsettled Christian is [Magor-missabil](#) (Ed: "affright from around," or "fear on every side" Jer 20:3), a terror to himself, yea, his life is a very hell; fears and doubts are his chiefest companions, and so he judges himself unfit and unworthy to live, and yet he is afraid to die; and verily this is the sad condition of most Christians. Most Christians living between fears and hopes, and hanging, as it were, between heaven and hell, sometimes they hope that their state is good, at other times they fear that their state is bad: now they hope that all is well, and that it shall go well with them for ever; anon they fear that they shall perish by the hand of such or such a corruption, or by the prevalency of such or such a temptation; and so they are like a ship in a storm, tossed here and there, &c. Now that these weak souls may be strengthened, that these unstable souls may be established, that these disconsolate souls may be comforted, &c., I have presented this tract to the world, not doubting but that if the Lord shall draw out their spirits to a serious perusal of it, they shall find, through the blessing of Jehovah, that it will contribute very much to their attaining of a full assurance of their everlasting happiness and blessedness, as also to the keeping and maintaining of that full and blessed assurance; which that it may, I shall follow it with my prayers. ([Page 314](#))

(Ed: Beloved if you are wrestling with assurance of your eternal destiny, this old work by Brooks can bring new vitality to your walk with Christ. The English is archaic, but overall you will understand the gist of Brooks' arguments. Take a weekend retreat and go to some quiet inn by yourself, with your Bible, your God and Brooks' book "Heaven on Earth" -- I think you will return to the "real world" on Monday renewed in your mind and spirit and soul!) ([Heaven on Earth by Thomas Brooks](#))

Assurance is not only a privilege; it is also a birthright that Christians possess as members of the body of Christ (Ro 5:1; 8:16; cf. Ps. 4:3; Jn 10:27-29; Phil. 1:6; 1Th. 1:4). Not having it, on the other hand, and thereby doubting one's salvation, produces uncertainty and fear that brings misery and despair. Though the assurance of salvation is part of redemption and vital to joy and comfort, God's Word teaches that it is possible to forfeit it, unless one pursues it. The apostle Peter wrote, "Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you" (2Pe 1:10; cf. Heb 10:22). Peter revealed that this certainty comes to those who pursue all the features of holiness with increasing diligence (2Pe 1:5-8). (Ibid)

#### Related Resource:

- [How can I have assurance of my salvation?](#)
- [What are some of the signs of genuine saving faith?](#)
- [If you doubt your salvation, does that mean you are not truly saved?](#)
- [What if I don't feel saved?](#)
- [Can a person believe in some sense but not be saved?](#)
- [How can I avoid being a doubting Thomas?](#)

**J Ligon Duncan** clarifies what John **IS NOT TEACHING** and what he **IS TEACHING** in this section:

"John is **not** asking the question, "How do we come to know God?" He's **not** saying, "If you want to come to know God, here's how you do it: obey." That's **not** the issue that John is dealing with: **how one is saved**. He's **not** dealing with how one is declared righteous before God; he's **not** dealing with how one receives the grace of God; he's **not** saying, "If you want to receive God's grace, obey." "If you want to be justified, obey." He's **not** saying, "If you want to be saved, obey." He's **not** saying, "If you want to know God, well, then obey." He's saying something different. He's **not** saying, "If you want to know God, then obey." He is saying, "Here's how you **know that you know** God: it's manifested in the way that you live; it's manifested in your obedience." So, it's very important for us to note that John is not saying that **we know God** by keeping His commandments. Rather, he is saying, "**We know that we know God** by keeping His commandments." Those are two, distinct questions, and we need to keep them distinct. That is, **John is not teaching salvation by obedience**, nor is he even teaching assurance by obedience; but John is teaching that salvation is evidenced by obedience, and, in turn, that obedience contributes to our assurance....He's trying to give us a diagnostic to let us know how we know, or to know that we know, the Living God. So, in verse 3, he says that "we know that we know God in our desiring to keep and keeping God's commandments." He's concerned to supply tests that will distinguish those who simply claim to be Christians from those who claim to be Christians and who really are Christians. And test #1 is very simple: Do you obey God's word. Look at this: "We know that we know God by keeping His commandments." Do you keep God's commandments? There's test #1. Is the Bible your final rule for faith and practice? He's saying here that "one way grace is evidenced in the life of a person who claims to be a Christian is in obedience." The Nobel Prize-nominated Christian, Henry Shafer, who is a famous chemist who

teaches at the University of Georgia, tells the story of how he came to reject Christianity. He had been raised in a nominally Christian home, attending a mainline Presbyterian church, and one day in the midst of a discussion in the kitchen, he made a point to his father about an ethical question by saying, "Look, Dad, the Bible says such and such." And His dad responded by saying, "I know what the Bible says; it's wrong." Henry Shafer said, at that moment he decided that Christianity must be bunk, because his dad claimed to be a Christian and yet rejected the teaching of the Bible. In God's mercy, God did a work of grace in Henry Shafer's heart and brought him to saving faith in Christ later on. And then, at that time, he realized that it wasn't that Christianity was bunk; it was that his father's profession of faith was bunk. You see, if you believe the Living God, you will believe His word; you will trust His word; you will acknowledge it as your final rule of faith and practice. And you'll not just do it in the abstract; you'll do it where it hurts; you'll do it where it's hard to obey....John is **not** saying that Christians are able to keep the law perfectly...His point is that fellowship knowledge of God--true knowledge of God, the knowledge of God in which we share a saving relationship with Him--always expresses itself in a transformed life; it never leaves us unchanged. To know Him changes everything; it changes us from the inside out, and one of the way that it changes us is it makes us love to obey His word, to believe His word, to follow His word." ([If You Love Me, Keep My Commandments](#))

**Steven Cole** has some sobering comments on this section...

God wants us to know that we know Him. John writes (1Jn 2:3) , "By this we know that we have come to know Him...." There is a difference between knowing and knowing that you know. It's easy to claim that you know Him, but it's also easy to be mistaken. John mentions (2:4) someone claiming, "I have come to know Him," but John bluntly says that this person "is a liar, and the truth is not in him." Since we're talking about eternal destiny, we don't want to be deceived on this crucial matter!

Because this subject is so important, it's not surprising that the enemy of our souls has created some major confusion about it in our day. There are many evangelicals (including the Greek professor under whom I first studied 1 John) who teach that if a person professes faith in Christ, he is saved eternally and should be assured of his salvation, even if his subsequent life demonstrates no fruit to back up his claim. They argue that if faith must be validated by any evidence, then it is not faith alone that saves.

The popular Four Spiritual Laws booklet also promotes the idea of giving immediate assurance of salvation to a person who prays to receive Christ. It uses 1 John 5:13, "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life." The logic goes, "You just prayed to receive Jesus, indicating that you believe in Him. Therefore, you should know that you have eternal life and that nothing can ever take it away from you." But the booklet ignores that "these things" refers to all that John has written, which includes three tests of genuine faith: obedience, love, and sound doctrine.

That view of instant assurance based on a person's profession of faith is foreign to what most of the godly men in church history have taught. I would argue that it is foreign to First John, Hebrews, James, and many other Scriptures. In the parable of the sower, those represented by the rocky soil that received the word with joy certainly would have claimed to believe. The same would be true of the thorny soil. But only the fourth type, the good soil, brought forth fruit with perseverance (Luke 8:5-15). That parable shows that if a person truly believes, he will endure trials and root out the weeds of the world. But it takes some time to determine this. How can we know if a recent profession of faith is genuine, saving faith? Look at the fruit that comes from it. But fruit takes time to grow.

In 2 Peter 1:10, the apostle exhorts us to **be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; ...** Why would anyone need to be diligent to make certain about this, if assurance is something that accompanies initial faith? Peter indicates that making certain about our calling and election is somewhat tied to our deeds subsequent to initial faith. He adds (2Pet 1:10-11), **"for as long as you practice these things [the qualities that he has just listed], you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you."**

So God wants us not only to know Him through faith in Jesus Christ, but also to know that we know Him. But as many Scriptures indicate, this assurance is linked to how we live subsequent to our profession of faith. ([How to Know that You Know Him 1 John 2:3-6](#))

PARALLELS BETWEEN 1 JOHN 1 AND 1 JOHN 2	
1 JOHN 1	1 JOHN 2

if we say. . . (1 Jn. 1:6-7)	The one who says. . . (1 Jn. 2:4-5)
if we say. . . (1 Jn. 1:8-9)	The one who says. . . (1 Jn. 2:6)
if we say. . . (1 Jn. 1:10)	The one who says. . . (1 Jn. 2:8-11)

**We know** (1097) (**ginosko**; cf **gnosis**; English derivatives - prognosis, **gnostic**, Gnosticism) means to acquire information through some modality, as through sense perception (hearing). However **ginosko** involves experiential knowledge, not merely the accumulation of known facts. **Ginosko** is distinguished from oida/eido we know, expressing absolute, immediate knowledge of a fact once for all. (Compare 1Jn 3:2+ which uses oida/eido in the phrase "we **know** that when He appears"). Knowledge possessed through the intellectual process of learning is one thing. Knowledge gained by experience, by an active relationship between the one who knows and the person or thing known, is far superior to the former. **Ginosko** describes the latter quality of knowledge and is what every Christ follower should desire as their personal, permanent possession regarding the Person of Christ (e.g., see **ginosko** in Jn 8:32, Jn 17:3, Php 3:10).

**Ginosko** is when you experientially learn something, either in a classroom or more often in the "classroom of life". **Ginosko** is that knowledge that comes by obeying the Lord. You may intellectually know some truth but you don't really "know" it experientially until you surrender and obey the truth. In other words **ginosko** speaks of knowledge that goes beyond the merely factual and into the realm of the experiential (Christianity is to be "felt").

**GINOSKO IN THE WRITINGS OF JOHN** Jn. 1:10; Jn. 1:48; Jn. 2:24; Jn. 2:25; Jn. 3:10; Jn. 4:1; Jn. 4:53; Jn. 5:6; Jn. 5:42; Jn. 6:15; Jn. 6:69; Jn. 7:17; Jn. 7:26; Jn. 7:27; Jn. 7:49; Jn. 7:51; Jn. 8:27; Jn. 8:28; Jn. 8:32; Jn. 8:43; Jn. 8:52; Jn. 8:55; Jn. 10:6; Jn. 10:14; Jn. 10:15; Jn. 10:27; Jn. 10:38; Jn. 11:57; Jn. 12:9; Jn. 12:16; Jn. 13:7; Jn. 13:12; Jn. 13:28; Jn. 13:35; Jn. 14:7; Jn. 14:9; Jn. 14:17; Jn. 14:20; Jn. 14:31; Jn. 15:18; Jn. 16:3; Jn. 16:19; Jn. 17:3; Jn. 17:7; Jn. 17:8; Jn. 17:23; Jn. 17:25; Jn. 19:4; Jn. 21:17

**GINOSKO** is used 25 times in THE EPISTLES so it is clearly a **key word** (this would make a good "word study" for 1 John - record what you come to "know" about "know"! You will be blessed! Isa 55:11) 1 Jn. 2:3; 1 Jn. 2:4; 1 Jn. 2:5; 1 Jn. 2:13; 1 Jn. 2:14; 1 Jn. 2:18; 1 Jn. 2:29; 1 Jn. 3:1; 1 Jn. 3:6; 1 Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 3:19; 1 Jn. 3:20; 1 Jn. 3:24; 1 Jn. 4:2; 1 Jn. 4:6; 1 Jn. 4:7; 1 Jn. 4:8; 1 Jn. 4:13; 1 Jn. 4:16; 1 Jn. 5:2; 1 Jn. 5:20; 2 Jn. 1:1

**Keep** (5083) (**tereo** from **teros** = a guard or warden - this should help give you an idea of the sense of the verb tero) means to keep an eye on, to keep something in view, to hold firmly, to attend carefully or to watch over (Jesus' ask His Father for His watchful care for His disciples in Jn 17:11). **Tereo** speaks of guarding something which is in one's possession. It means to watch as one would some precious thing. The idea is to observe attentively, to heed, to keep watch over and to retain in custody.

**Tereo with the meaning of obey** - Mt 19:17, Mt 23:3 (tereo = observe), Mt 28:20, Jn 8:51, 52 (one who keeps Jesus' Word = a believer = one who will never see the second death in hell), Jn 9:16 (keep = observe the Sabbath), Jn 14:15 (description of a genuine disciple - love is not just with one's lips but is validated by one's life lived in loving obedience to God), Jn 14:21, 23, 24 (no love = no obedience = not a believer - Note Jesus is not talking about legalistic obedience but Spirit enabled obedience which is the only obedience that pleases the Father!), Jn 15:10 (used twice), Jn 15:20 (used twice), Jn 17:6 (the 11 disciples), Acts 15:5, 1Ti 6:14, James 2:10, 1Jn 2:3, 4, 5, 3:22, 1Jn 3:24, 1Jn 5:2, 3, Rev 1:3 (heed), Rev 2:26, 3:3, 3:8, 3:10, 12:17, 14:12, Rev 22:7 (heeds), Rev 22:9.

**Tereo with meaning of keep watch or guard** - Mt 27:36, 27:54, Mt 28:4 (guards = tereo), Jn 17:11, 12, Jn 17:15 (with nuance of protection from Satan), Acts 12:5, Acts 12:6 (watching), Acts 16:23, Acts 24:23, 25:4, 25:21 (held in custody), 1Jn 5:18, Jude 1:1, 6,

If you struggle with the doctrine of eternal security, take some time today and study John's uses of **tereo** which frequently are used in the description of a genuine follower of Christ. **TEREO is translated** continue(1), guard(1), guards(1), heed(2), heeds(1), held in custody(1), keep(27), keep watch over(1), keeping(1), keeping guard over(1), keeps(9), kept(12), kept in custody(3), observe(3), preserve(1), preserved(1), reserved(4), watching over(1).

- Jn 8:51,55, Jn 14:15, Jn 14:21, Jn 14:23, 24, Jn 15:10, 20, Jn 17:6],
- 1Jn 2:3, 4, 1Jn 3:22, 24, 1Jn 5:2, 1Jn 5:3, 6 in the Revelation
- Rev 1:3, Rev 2:26, Rev 3:3, Rev 3:8, Rev 3:10, Rev 12:17, Rev 14:12, Rev 22:7

**Commandments** (1785)(**entole** from **en** = in, upon + **télo** = accomplish, charge, command) - **Entole** refers to some type of demand or requirement. A general injunction, charge, precept of moral and religious nature. Of the 67 uses, all but three (Lk 15:29; Col 4:10; Titus 1:14) refer specifically to divine commandments.

**Entole** in the plural usually refers to God's commandments (Mt 5:19 and most of the uses in the Gospels - see below) but, as determined by the context, singular usages can also refer to a divine directive. Keeping God's commandments is the way we show that we love Him (we can say it, but our actions need to authenticate our words. (Jn 14:15, 21, 1Jn 2:3).

**Entole** is found 14x in the same passage as agape, **love**. (e.g., **love one another** is a repeated commandment - Jn 13:34 = described as a "new commandment", Jn 15:12, 1Jn 3:23, 2Jn 1:5). God's commandments "flush out" sin so to speak, showing the heinous, destructive nature of sin (See Ro 7:8, 9, 11, 13) **Entole** sometimes refers to commandments from men (not God) (Titus 1:14) Entole can sometimes mean an order authorizing a specific action (Jn 11:57).

**Wuest** comments that **entole** means "an order, command, charge, precept. The precepts (commandments) are those given by our Lord either personally while on earth or through His apostles in the New Testament Books. Thus, a solicitous (meticulously careful, concerned) guarding of the precepts of Christ, a consuming desire that they be honored, a passionate determination that they always be kept, is a proof gained from experience, that that person has come to an experiential knowledge of the Lord Jesus and is at present in that state of knowing Him. This experiential knowledge is in contrast with and opposed to a mere theoretical knowledge of His Person. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

**Ralph Martin** - The word commandment (**entole**) is featured prominently in both 1 John and 2 John (1 Jn 2:3, 4, 7, 8; 1Jn 3:22, 23, 24; 1Jn 4:21; 1Jn 5:2-3; 2 Jn 4, 5, 6), and in every case it appears that the commandments of God rather than Jesus are intended (see esp. 1 Jn 5:2-3; 2 Jn 4). John teaches that those who truly know God keep his commandments (1 Jn 2:3-4). (Dictionary of the later New Testament and its developments).

**Commandment** (Webster) - a law, edict, or statute; authoritative directive; a mandate; an order or injunction given by authority; charge; precept. a divine command, esp. one of the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament. In the Bible a commandment is a prescription or requirement, usually from God; most often a reference to God's will as revealed in the laws of the Pentateuch. In the Bible commandment (entole) refers to orders or adjurations (solemn charging on oath or under the penalty of a curse) given by authorities. The plural predominantly refers to Mosaic laws.

**Precept** (Webster's 1828) - In a general sense, any commandment or order intended as an authoritative rule of action; but applied particularly to commands respecting moral conduct. The ten commandments are so many precepts for the regulation of our moral conduct.

**Green** - There are sixteen occurrences of entole in the synoptic Gospels: six in Matthew, six in Mark and four in Luke. Eleven are found in just three passages: (1) the debate over ritual defilement (Mk 7:1-23 par. Mt 15:1-20, specifically Mk 7:8-13 and Mt 15:3-6); (2) the question of a rich man to Jesus (Mk 10:17-22 par. Mt 19:16-22 par. Lk 18:18-23; cf. Lk 10:25-28); (3) the question about the "first," or "great," commandment (Mk 12:28-34 par. Mt 22:34-40; cf. Lk 10:25-28)...Of the ten occurrences of the noun **entole** in John's Gospel, four refer to a "command" (Jn 10:18; 12:49-50) or "commands" (Jn 15:10b) given to Jesus by God the Father (cf. the use of the verb entellomai in 14:31). Five occurrences refer to a "command" (Jn 13:34; 15:12) or "commands" (Jn 14:15, 21; 15:10a) given by Jesus to his disciples (cf. the use of the verb in 15:14, 17). One occurrence refers to "orders" given by the Pharisees to inform them of Jesus' whereabouts (Jn 11:57). Nowhere in John is entole used to refer to the "commandments" of the Hebrew Scriptures (the verb entellomai is so used only in John 8:5, a passage not originally a part of John's Gospel). The contrast in the use of "commandment" between the Synoptics and John could hardly be more striking. (Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels).

**Friberg** (Summary) - (1) of the Old Testament law commandment, precept, ordinance (Lk 23.56); (2) of official commands edict, decree, order (Jn 11.57); (3) of authoritative but not official directions order, command (Lk 15.29)

**Vine** - **Entole** denotes, in general, "an injunction, charge, precept, commandment." It is the most frequent term, and is used of moral and religious precepts, e.g., Matt. 5:19;

**TDNT - entole outside the NT. (1). entole** in the General Usage of the Greek and Hellenistic World. The meaning is "command," "commission," a. as the command of a king or official, b. as the instruction of a teacher, c. as a commission, and d. as authorization. **(2).** The Specifically Religious Reference to the entolai of the Law in the LXX and Hellenistic Judaism. The term acquires a solemn religious sense in the LXX (Hebrew mostly miswa, sometimes piqqudim) when used for specific requirements of the law. Josephus and Philo, however, rarely use it in this sense, preferring nomos or nomoi. **(3).** The Stoic Truncation of the entole Concept in Philo. Philo avoids the term because he finds it too official and historical. He is less concerned with the content of the law than with its ethical substance and its agreement with natural or cosmic law. Like the Stoics, he links entole with a lower form of morality. The voluntary act is higher than the commanded act. Commands are given only to the earthly Adam. The true

sage knows and practices virtue without them. Commands may be tolerated only for the immature and uneducated.

- [Commandment - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)
- [Commandment - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)

**Entole** 67x in 61v - 13x in 1John - **NAS Usage:** command(2), commanded\*(1), commandment(38), commandments(23), instructions(1), orders(1), requirement(1). Matt. 5:19; Matt. 15:3; Matt. 19:17; Matt. 22:36; Matt. 22:38; Matt. 22:40; Mk. 7:8; Mk. 7:9; Mk. 10:5; Mk. 10:19; Mk. 12:28; Mk. 12:31; Lk. 1:6; Lk. 15:29; Lk. 18:20; Lk. 23:56; Jn. 10:18; Jn. 11:57; Jn. 12:49; Jn. 12:50; Jn. 13:34; Jn. 14:15; Jn. 14:21; Jn. 15:10; Jn. 15:12; Acts 17:15; Rom. 7:8; Rom. 7:9; Rom. 7:10; Rom. 7:11; Rom. 7:12; Rom. 7:13; Rom. 13:9; 1 Co. 7:19; 1 Co. 14:37; Eph. 2:15; Eph. 6:2; Col. 4:10; 1 Tim. 6:14; Tit. 1:14; Heb. 7:5; Heb. 7:16; Heb. 7:18; Heb. 9:19; 2 Pet. 2:21; 2 Pet. 3:2; 1 Jn. 2:3; 1 Jn. 2:4; 1 Jn. 2:7; 1 Jn. 2:8; 1 Jn. 3:22; 1 Jn. 3:23; 1 Jn. 3:24; 1 Jn. 4:21; 1 Jn. 5:2; 1 Jn. 5:3; 2 Jn. 1:4; 2 Jn. 1:5; 2 Jn. 1:6; Rev. 12:17; Rev. 14:12

Entole - 245 uses in 183v in the non-apocryphal Septuagint - 160x en tole translates Hebrew mitsvah which is usually translated into English as command or commandments - Ge 26:5; Ex 12:17; 15:26; Ex 16:28; 24:12; Lev 4:13, 22, 27; 5:17; 6:2; 22:31; 26:3, 15; 27:34; Nu 15:22,31, 39-40; 36:13; Deut 4:2, 40; Dt 5:29, 31; 6:1-2, 17, 25; 7:9, 11; 8:1-2,6, 11; 10:13; 11:8, 13, 22, 27-28; 13:4, 18; 15:5; 16:12; Dt 17:19-20; 19:9; 26:13, 18; Dt 27:1, 10; 28:1, 13, 15, 45; 30:8, 10-11, 16; Josh 5:6; 22:3,5; Jdg 3:4; 1Sa 13:13; 1Kgs 2:3, 43; 3:14; 1Ki 8:58, 61; 9:4, 6; 11:11, 38; 13:21; 2Ki 17:13, 16, 19, 34, 37; 2Ki 18:6, 2Ki 18:36; 2Ki 21:8; 23:3; 1Chr 28:7-8; 29:19; 2Chr 7:19; 8:13-15; 12:1; 2Chr 14:4; 17:4; 2Chr 19:10; 2Chr 24:20-21; 29:15, 25; 30:16; 34:31; 35:10, 15-16; Ezra 7:11; 9:10, 14; 10:3; Neh 1:5, 7, 9; Neh 9:13-14, 16, 29, 34; 10:29, 32; 11:23; 12:24, 45; 13:5; Ps 19:8; 78:7; 89:31; 103:18; Ps 111:7; Ps 112:1; Ps 119:4, 6, 10, 15, 19, 21, 32, 35, 40, 45, 47-48, 60, 63, 66, 69, 73, 78, 86-87, Ps 119:96, 98, Ps 119:100, 104, 110, 115, 127-128, 131, 134, 143, 151, 159, 166, 168, Ps 119:172-173, 176; Pr 2:1; 4:5; 6:23; 7:1-2; 10:8; 13:13; 15:5; 19:16; Eccl 8:5; 12:13; Isa 48:18; Jer 35:16, 18; Ezek 18:21; Da 3:12; 9:4-5; Mal 2:1, 4

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## ANOTHER EXAMPLE FROM JOHN OF KEEPING GOD'S COMMANDMENTS

Revelation 12:17+ So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who **keep** ([tereo](#) - present tense) **the commandments** ([entole](#)) of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

**Tony Garland:** The phrase (**who keep the commandments**) is further restricted to the offspring who keep the commandments of God. This indicates that during the final half week **unbelieving** Jews are not the primary object of the dragon's warfare—for they, like unbelieving Gentiles, will take his mark and give him due worship (Rev. 13:15-18 cf. John 5:43). It is **believing** Jews elsewhere around the world that are now his target. ( )

**Comment:** Note the descriptive definition of a believer by John - those "who keep the commandments of God." He is not saying they keep them perfectly, for only one Man accomplished that feat! The verb keep ([tereo](#)) is a present participle indicating that the general "direction" of these individuals is toward obedience, so that keeping God's commandments is their lifestyle, their habitual practice. As I like to teach my young disciples, the authentic Christian life is about "direction" not "perfection" (until we are glorified of course!) The sad fact is that there are prominent names in evangelicalism today who teach one is saved by faith alone (which is 100% true) but that the new life in Christ and the new possession of the indwelling Holy Spirit does not necessarily influence one's behavior! In other words (they teach) one can go on sinning as their habitual practice and still claim to be a saint (holy, set apart) in the eyes of the Holy God! This is 100% false! And many of these individuals have doctorates of theology. We do well to remember that none of the apostles had doctorates and yet they were theologically accurate, because they had been with Jesus. For example, **Zane Hodges** even goes so far as to state that the list of sins in 1Co 6:9-10+ and Gal 5:19-21+ actually describe true believers, and that they will just forfeit their reward because of their sin (See "[Those Who Do Not Inherit the Kingdom](#)" See [also here](#) or [here](#)). Hodges even makes the incredible assertion that Paul was describing believers in Titus 1:16+ ([See refutation](#))! "They (present tense - continually) profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed." Do you think that sounds like a description of a genuine born again individual? Great caution is advised when reading [anything written by Zane Hodges](#). Sadly Hodges has authored the commentary sections of Hebrews, and 1-3 John in the otherwise excellent Bible Knowledge Commentary (BKC). [Caveat emptor!](#) I am thankful that in the BKC, Ronald Blue writing on James, sounds the clear warning that "Merely claiming to have faith is not enough. Genuine **faith** is evidenced by **works**...**Workless faith** is **worthless faith**." (See [Bible Knowledge Commentary - Page 825](#))

**John Piper's** Comments are pertinent - I have referred several times to a contemporary movement of evangelicalism that offers assurance of salvation to professing Christians who go on living in sin. Who am I talking about? Here is an example. **Zane Hodges**, who teaches at Dallas Seminary, has written a book entitled "The Gospel Under Siege" (Redencion Viva, 1981) (**ED:** See a [critique](#) of this book. See also J V Miller's review of Hodges' book). His position is the very opposite of mine: (**Ed:** Hodges writes) "An insistence on the necessity or inevitability of works fundamentally undermines assurance" (p.13). That is, "if good works are

really . . . an essential fruit of salvation,” we cannot be sure of our eternal salvation (p. 9). Therefore, “works have nothing to do with determining a Christian's basic relationship to God.” “There is not even a single place in the Pauline letters where he expresses doubt that his audience is composed of true Christians.” (p. 95).” Apart from the fact that 2 Corinthians 13:5-note contradicts his last statement, **1 John remains an insuperable obstacle. His interpretation will not stand.** Consider for yourselves what he says concerning 1 John 3:14+ (“We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brothers.”). Here assurance of passing out of death into life is the product of loving our fellow Christians. How will he escape it? He tries to escape it by saying that the verse has “no reference to conversion as such.” He says that there is a sphere of light and a sphere of darkness within the Christian life. “If anyone does not love his brother he is out of touch with God. He is not living as a true disciple of his Master” (p. 63). But he is still a child of God because eternal security has nothing to do with whether you are a loving person or not.” This will not stand scrutiny. The one other place where John uses the same Greek phrase (“We have passed from death to life”) is John 5:24, where he says, “Truly, truly I say to you that the one who hears my word and believes the one who sent me has eternal life and does not come into judgment but has passed from death into life.” Therefore it is grasping at a straw to say that “passing from death to life” in 1 John 3:14+ refers to two states within Christian life. It plainly means: passing from lostness to eternal life. I appeal to you, judge for yourselves, does John's assurance in 1 John 3:14+ come from loving the brothers or not? Bowing before the Word with you, Pastor John ([Who Am I Talking About- - Desiring God](#))

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**Basis of Assurance** - Rests on the Word of God (John 1:12), the witness of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:16), keeping God's Word (1 John 2:5), walking like Christ (1 John 2:6), not loving the world (1 John 2:15), purification (1 John 3:3), love for the brethren (1 John 3:14), true love (1 John 3:18-19), answered prayer (1 John 3:22), overcoming the world (1 John 5:4). - Source unknown

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#### **ASSURANCE - Westminster Confession of Faith (1648)**

This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of it: yet, being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto. And therefore it is the duty of everyone to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure, that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance; so far is it from inclining men to looseness. (Chapter XVIII, Article III)

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**HOLY FEAR - Ralph Wardlaw** describes the holy fear every follower of Christ should cultivate, a fear that motivates a Spirit enabled “keeping of the commandments”. First note that Wardlaw is commenting on Pr 28:14 which says...

How blessed is the man who **fears** always,  
But he who **hardens** his heart will fall into calamity.

**Wardlaw** then offers us these timeless comments "THERE are, in Scripture, two kinds of fear. In this verse, fear is associated with happiness:—elsewhere we find it associated with torment.\* Such passages are in perfect harmony. The more, indeed, there is of the “love” that “casteth out fear”—the fear that “hath torment,” the more there will be of the fear in the verse before us. The fear of a child, and the fear of a slave, are two very different principles. The former is the product of love, and is ever proportionate to love. It is affectionate fear. We fear to displease one whose love is the spring to us of our purest and sweetest enjoyment. The child loves his father, and delights in his father's love to him. He cannot bear his frown. The very thought of his displeasure brings the tear to his eye.—This is the kind of fear which the child of God feels and cherishes toward his heavenly Father. He loves Him, he venerates Him. He finds his happiness in His smile. He dreads to offend Him. His frown is the death of his joy. This is the fear of God which His word inculcates—the religious principle. It is here contrasted with “hardening the heart.” It is therefore the gracious fear of a subdued and softened spirit,—the fear of love,—reverence for God,—fear of even His fatherly rebukes and corrections. It is self-distrust. It is tenderness of conscience. It is vigilance against temptation. It is the fear which inspiration opposes to high-mindedness, in the admonition—“Be not high-minded, but fear.” It is “taking heed lest we fall.” It is a constant apprehension of the deceitfulness of the heart, and of the insidiousness and power of inward corruption. It is the caution and circumspection that timidly shrinks from whatever would offend and dishonor God and the Saviour. And these the child of God will feel and exercise the more, the more he rises above the enfeebling, disheartening, distressing influence of the “fear which hath torment.” To “harden the heart,” is to put

away the fear of God; to be self-confident and presumptuous—unawed by threatenings—unsoftened by entreaties;—neither breaking under the one nor melting under the other. Of the man who thus “hardens” himself, final and irretrievable “mischief” must be the inevitable portion. On the contrary—“Happy is the man that feareth alway.” Wherein consists his happiness? This fear keeps him from sin; produces simplicity of dependence upon God; imparts the stability of peace,—“a peace that passeth all understanding;” maintains consistency of conduct; and thus gives growing evidence of grace in the heart and of the hope being well-founded—a hope that “maketh not ashamed;”—of “glory and honour and immortality.” ([Lectures on the Book of Proverbs](#))

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**Three Groups** - Regarding salvation and assurance, there are three groups of people:

1. those who are secure but not sure;
2. those who are “sure” but not secure; and
3. those who are secure and sure.

Category one are conscientious believers in Christ who are saved but lack assurance. In category two are professing Christians who say, “Even though I’m living in sin, I’ll make it. After all, ‘once saved, always saved!’” The third group are born-again believers who enjoy a warm, secure relationship with Christ each day. The objective basis of our salvation is the finished work of God’s Son on the cross. The subjective basis for our assurance is our believing the truth about Christ (1 John 2:2, 4; 2:15; 5:1), loving the brethren (1 John 3:14, 18, 19, 4:7-8), and obeying Christ’s commandments (1 John 2:3-5). - Source unknown

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**QUESTION** - [How can I have assurance of my salvation? | GotQuestions.org WATCH VIDEO](#)

**ANSWER** - The assurance of salvation is, simply put, knowing for sure that you are saved. Many Christians throughout history have written about their struggles in being assured of their salvation. The problem is that many followers of Jesus Christ look for the assurance of salvation in the wrong places.

We tend to seek assurance of salvation in the things God is doing in our lives, in our spiritual growth, in the good works and obedience to God’s Word that is evident in our Christian walk. While these things can be [evidence of salvation](#), they are not what we should base the assurance of our salvation on. Rather, we should find the assurance of our salvation in the objective truth of God’s Word. We should have confident trust that we are saved based on the promises God has declared, not because of our subjective experiences.

How can you have assurance of salvation? Consider 1 John 5:11–13: “And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God *so that you may know that you have eternal life*” (emphasis added). Who is it that has the Son? It is those who have believed in Him (John 1:12). If you have Jesus, you have life. Not temporary life, but eternal. And, according to 1 John 5:13, you can *know* that you have this eternal life.

God wants us to have assurance of our salvation. We should not live our Christian lives wondering and worrying each day whether we are truly saved. That is why the Bible makes the plan of salvation so clear. Believe in Jesus Christ (John 3:16; Acts 16:31). Do you believe that Jesus died to pay the penalty for your sins and rose again from the dead (John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21)? Do you trust Him alone for salvation? If your answer to these questions is “yes,” you are saved! Assurance means freedom from doubt. By taking God’s Word to heart, you can have no doubt about the reality of your eternal salvation.

Jesus Himself assures those who believe in Him: “I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand” (John 10:28–29). Eternal life is just that—eternal. There is no one, not even yourself, who can take Christ’s God-given gift of salvation away from you.

Take joy in what God’s Word is saying to you: instead of doubting, we can live with confidence! We can have the assurance from Christ’s own Word that our salvation will never be in question. Our assurance of salvation is based on the perfect and complete salvation God has provided for us through Jesus Christ. Are you trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior? If the answer is “yes,” rest assured, you are saved.

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**QUESTION** - [Eternal security - is it biblical? | GotQuestions.org WATCH VIDEO](#)

**ANSWER** - When people come to know Christ as their Savior, they are brought into a relationship with God that guarantees their



eternal security. Jude 24 declares, "To Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy." God's power is able to keep the believer from falling. It is up to Him, not us, to present us before His glorious presence. Our eternal security is a result of God keeping us, not us maintaining our own salvation.

The Lord Jesus Christ proclaimed, "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:28-29b). Both Jesus and the Father have us firmly grasped in their hand. Who could possibly separate us from the grip of both the Father and the Son?

Ephesians 4:30 tells us that believers are "sealed for the day of redemption." If believers did not have eternal security, the sealing could not truly be unto the day of redemption, but only to the day of sinning, apostasy, or disbelief. John 3:15-16 tells us that whoever believes in Jesus Christ will "have eternal life." If a person were to be promised eternal life, but then have it taken away, it was never "eternal" to begin with. If eternal security is not true, the promises of eternal life in the Bible would be in error.

The most powerful argument for eternal security is Romans 8:38-39, "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Our eternal security is based on God's love for those whom He has redeemed. Our eternal security is purchased by Christ, promised by the Father, and sealed by the Holy Spirit.

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#### Related Resources:

- [What are some Bible verses about assurance? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How can I know if I am saved?](#)
- [If you doubt your salvation, does that mean you are not truly saved?](#)
- [What if I don't feel saved?](#)
- [Can a person believe in some sense but not be saved?](#)
- [Does it matter if I can't remember precisely when I was saved?](#)
- [Eternal security - is it biblical? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Is eternal security a "license" to sin? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Did Old Testament believers have eternal security? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Perseverance of the Saints - is it biblical? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Once saved always saved?](#)
- [Can a Christian lose salvation?](#)
- [Is eternal security a "license" to sin?](#)
- [What is the relationship of faith, works, and security in salvation?](#)

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**ILLUSTRATION** - **REALLY SURE!** Steven Cole gives a great illustration which emphasizes the importance of John's instruction on how to be REALLY SURE you are going to heaven...

Years ago, when I was candidating at my first church, we were staying in a house in a remote area of the Southern California mountains while the owners were away. We were having dinner at another home when we received a call informing us that an escaped convict had ditched his stolen car in the driveway of the house where we were staying and had set out on foot through the property. We decided to spend the night at the home where we had dinner.

The next morning, I called the sheriff to explain our situation and to ask if it was safe to take my pregnant wife back to the house. He assured me that it was **perfectly safe**. I said, "Fine, but I would like a sheriff to escort us into the house and to check some hiding places on the property, just to make **sure**." When we arrived at the property, there were three or four cars of officers wearing their bulletproof vests, loading their shotguns!

We later learned that the convict had made his way to another road, hitchhiked, and killed the driver who picked him up. The sheriff was **sure** that it was safe for us to go back to that house unarmed, but he wasn't **REALLY SURE!** When the safety of his men was on the line, he wanted to be **REALLY SURE!**

There are some things in life that you want to be **REALLY SURE** about, because so much rides on the outcome. Your salvation is such an issue. You don't want to take risks about your eternal destiny. Since the Bible warns that many are deceived about this crucial matter (e.g., Mt 7:21, 22, 23), you especially need to know that you know Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. ([1 John 2:3-6 How to Know That You Know Him](#))

Even though Abraham returned to fellowship with God, irreparable damage had been done. When a believer backslides, he does things he will never be able to undo. Abraham's testimony had been weakened, and damage beyond repair had been done to worldly Lot, Abraham's nephew. Lot had gone with Abraham to Egypt. The backslider never backslides alone; he always takes others with him.

Even though Abraham had backslidden and had brought about much damage, Genesis 13:3,4 tells us that he went back "to Beth-el, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai; unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the Lord."

God has made provision for every backslider. Just as Abraham returned to fellowship with the Lord, you, too, can come back into fellowship with Him if you have backslidden.

1 John 2:1 says,

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

In the first chapter of 1 John, every believer is assured:

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1Jn 1:9).

**Do not stay in the miserable place of disobedience.  
Come back to God and confess your sin.**

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man,  
but the end thereof are the ways of death"  
-- Proverbs 14:12

## JOHN PIPER SUMMARIZES JOHN'S EVIDENCE OF THE NEW BIRTH

I think God wants the totality of this book to have its impact on us. It is dominated by the concern to give **tests of life** or effects and evidences of the new birth. He gives at least eleven evidences that we are born again. We could probably boil them all down to **faith** and **love**. But for now let's let them stand the way he says them. Here they are:

### 1. Those who are born of God keep his commandments.

1 John 2:3-4 **note**: "By this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says 'I know him' but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

1 John 3:24 **note**: "Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him."

### 2. Those who are born of God walk as Christ walked.

1 John 2:5-6 **note**: "By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked."

### 3. Those who are born of God don't hate others but love them.

1 John 2:9 **note**: "Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness."

1 John 3:14 **note**: "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death."

1 John 4:7-8 **note**: "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love."

1 John 4:20 **note**: "If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar."

### 4. Those who are born of God don't love the world.

1 John 2:15-**note**: “If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

#### **5. Those who are born of God confess the Son and receive (have) him.**

1 John 2:23-**note**: “No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.”

1 John 4:15-**note**: “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.”

1 John 5:12-**note**: “Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

#### **6. Those who are born of God practice righteousness.**

1 John 2:29-**note**: “If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.”

#### **7. Those who are born of God don't make a practice of sinning.**

1 John 3:6-**note**: “No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.”

1 John 3:9-10-**note**: “No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.”

1 John 5:18-**note**: “We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.”

#### **8. Those who are born of God possess the Spirit of God.**

1 John 3:24-**note**: “By this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.”

1 John 4:13-**note**: “By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.”

#### **9. Those who are born of God listen submissively to the apostolic Word.**

1 John 4:6-**note**: “We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”

#### **10. Those who are born of God believe that Jesus is the Christ.**

1 John 5:1-**note**: “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God.”

#### **11. Those who are born of God overcome the world.**

1 John 5:4-**note**: “Everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.”

**Two Wrong Conclusions** - One of the effects of all those “tests of life” is to overwhelm us with the sense that John may be saying: “If you're born again, you're perfect. If you're born again you don't sin at all. There is no defeat in the Christian life. There is only victory.”

Another effect that these tests might have in our minds is to make us think we can lose our salvation. That is, we can be born again for a while and then begin to fail in these tests and die and lose the spiritual life that we were given in the new birth.

**Two Key Clarifications** - John is very aware that his words could be taken in these two wrong ways. So he is explicit as any writer in the New Testament that this is not the case: Christians are not sinless, and born-again people cannot lose their spiritual life and be lost.

He says in 1 John 1:8-10-**note**, “If we say we have no sin [present tense], we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins [present tense], he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” So John is at pains to say that “walking in the light” (1Jn 1:7-**note**) does not mean walking flawlessly. It means that, when you stumble, the light of Christ causes you to see it and hate it and confess it and move forward with Christ.

And John is just as jealous to make sure we don't infer from these “tests of life” that we can be born again and then later lose our life and be lost. 1John 2:19-**note** is one of the clearest statements in the Bible that there is another way to understand what happens when a person abandons the church. It says, “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would

have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.”

Notice three things John says to protect us from misunderstanding. 1) Those who seemed to be born again and forsook the faith never were born again—they never were of us. “They went out from us, but they were not of us.” In other words, the explanation is not that they lost their new birth. They never had it. 2) Those who are truly born again (“of us”) will persevere to the end in faith. 1Jn 5:19b-**note**: “For if they had been of us, they would have continued with us.” Endurance is not the cause of the new birth. The new birth is the cause of endurance, and endurance is the evidence of new birth. 3) God often makes plain who the false Christians are in the church by their eventual rejection of the truth and the people of God. Verse 19c: “But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.” It became plain. And it often becomes plain today. ([Everyone Who Has Been Born of God Overcomes the World](#))

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**Bob Utley** - 1 John 2:3-25 lists several tests or evidences which reveal a true believer ( )

1. Willingness to confess sin (initially and continually) (1 John 1:9)
2. Lifestyle obedience (1 John 2:3-6)
3. Lifestyle love (1 John 2:7-11)
4. Victory over the evil (1 John 2:12-14)
5. Forsaking the world (1 John 2:15-17)
6. Perseverance (1 John 2:19)
7. Correct doctrine (1 John 2:20-24; 4:1-3)

**1 John 2:4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; (NASB: Lockman)**

**Greek:** ho legon (PAP) hoti Egnoka (1SRAI) auton, kai tas entolas autou me teron (PAP), pseustes estin, (3SPAI) kai en touto e aletheia ouk estin; (3SPAI)

**Amplified:** Whoever says, I know Him [I perceive, recognize, understand, and am acquainted with Him] but fails to keep and obey His commandments (teachings) is a liar, and the Truth [of the Gospel] is not in him. ([Lockman](#))

**ESV:** Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him,

**KJV:** He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

**NIV:** The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

**NLT:** If someone says, "I belong to God," but doesn't obey God's commandments, that person is a liar and does not live in the truth.

**Phillips:** The man who claims to know God but does not obey his laws is not only a liar but lives in self-delusion. In practice, the more a man learns to obey God's laws the more truly and fully does he express his love for him.

**Wuest:** He who keeps on saying, I have come to know Him experientially and as a present result am in that state, and His precepts is not habitually safeguarding with solicitous care, is a liar, and in this one the truth does not exist. ([Wuest](#))

**Young's Literal:** he who is saying, 'I have known him,' and his command is not keeping, a liar he is, and in him the truth is not;

- **The one who says:** 1Jn 2:9 1:6,8,10 4:20 Jas 2:14-16
- **I know:** Hos 8:2-3 Titus 1:16
- **Is a liar:** 1Jn 1:6,8
- [1 John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

James 2:14-16 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body,

what use is that?

John 14:21+ "He who has **My commandments** ([entole](#)) and **keeps** ([tereo](#) - present tense) them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."

John 14:23+ Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will **keep** ([tereo](#)) My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. 24 "He who does not love Me does not **keep** ([tereo](#)) My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.

John 15:10+ "If you **keep** ([tereo](#)) **My commandments** ([entole](#)), you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

Hosea 8:2-3 They cry out to Me, "My God, we of Israel know You!" 3 Israel has rejected the good; The enemy will pursue him.

Titus 1:16+ (DESCRIPTION OF A "LIAR") They (present tense - continually) **profess to know God (THEIR LIPS)**, but by their deeds (**THEIR LIFE**) they (present tense - continually) deny Him (SEE Mt 10:33+), being detestable ([bdekluktos](#)) and disobedient and worthless ([adokimos](#)) for any good deed.

1 John 1:6; 8+ If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; (1:8) If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

## **LIARS FAIL THE TEST OF ASSURANCE OF SALVATION**

**The one who says "I have come to know** ([ginosko](#) - [perfect tense](#)) **Him" and does not keep** ([tereo](#) - present tense - keep as his habitual practice) **His commandments** ([entole](#)), **is a liar** ([pseustes](#)) **and the truth** ([aletheia](#)) **is** (estin - present tense) (ouk = absolutely) **not in him** - **Know** in the [perfect tense](#) shows how deceived/deceptive these men are, for by using this tense they are claiming/professing that they have come to know Jesus intimately and personally at some point in the past and that knowledge is abiding. This passage is so clear, it does not need much comment. It simply needs to be read and heeded. If you are reading God's Word and refusing (as a general rule of your life) to keep His commandments, then you need to seriously question whether you are in Christ or still in the old Adam nature (see 2Cor 13:5+, cf 1Cor 15:22+). The nature of Christ (and His Spirit Who is holy - Ro 8:9+) in a man or woman to one degree or another brings forth the fruit of holiness (cf Heb 12:14KJV+, Ro 6:22KJV+, 1Th 4:7KJV+, 1Pe 1:14, 15, 16+), because this new nature includes a new source of power, the Holy Spirit (see warning and promise in Ro 8:13).

**John Calvin** said that "The knowledge of God is efficacious" meaning that the Gospel changes one's heart and life (cf 2Co 5:17). But John says your heart has not experienced a true "circumcision" or transformation not if you just say "I know Jesus" and don't "live like Jesus" (1Jn 2:6+).

In the following notes I have included a relatively large number of comments on this passage from old (Puritans) and new commentators, because I want to counter a teaching (especially by men such as Zane Hodges' who writes in the popular, generally excellent Bible Knowledge Commentary - SEE "[Unusual and Troubling Teachings of Zane Hodges](#)") that in my opinion is (1) erroneous, (2) very misleading and (3) dangerous in regard to a soul's eternal destiny in either heaven or hell! There is simply too much at stake to not counter spurious comments on passages that are otherwise very clear if read in plain English! (Here is an example of Hodges concluding sentence in his paragraph on 1Jn 2:4 "*He is seriously out of touch with spiritual reality.*" Hodges assiduously avoids saying that such a man is eternally lost, because Hodges feels this man is saved and just not experiencing fellowship with God. Beloved, such a person is more than just "out of touch with spiritual reality!" He is out of Christ!)

*John's test of obedience in 1Jn 2:3 is underscored by the direct contrast he presents in 1Jn 2:4.*

As **John Stott** says "The positive principle of the previous verse is illustrated by a negative example. A man's words must be tested by his works. If he disobeys God's commandments, his claim to have come to know God is a lie (cf. 1Jn 1:6). His conduct contradicts his profession and proves it to be false....he insists that no religious experience is valid if it does not have moral consequences (cf. Titus 1:16). It is not the person who claims to be a Christian and to know God who is presumptuous, but the person whose claim is contradicted by his conduct. He is a liar....A person's words must be tested by his works. If he disobeys God's commandments, his claim to have come to know God is a lie (cf. 1Jn 1:6). His conduct contradicts his profession and proves it to be false." (Borrow [The Letters of John](#) or see [The Letters of John: An Introduction and Commentary - Page 88](#))

**C H Spurgeon** cautions us - Do distinguish, however, between **knowing about** Christ and **knowing** Christ. We may know very much about many of our great men, though we do not know them. Now, it will never save a soul to know **about** Christ. The only

saving knowledge is to **know** him, his very self, and to trust him, the living Savior, who is now at the right hand of God. (See expanded [excerpt from Spurgeon's sermon](#))

**A T Robertson** has a pithy comment that "This is one of the pious platitudes, cheap claptrap of the [Gnostics](#), who would bob up in meetings with such explosions. John punctures such bubbles with the sharp addition "and keepeth not"."

## **LIPS FAIL TO SYNC WITH LIFE!**

**Says** (lego) is in the present tense which indicates they continually claim or profess "I know Jesus," but what comes out of their **lips** is not authenticated by what is seen in their **life!** Their **conduct** belies their **claim!** What their **life says** invalidates what their **lips say!**

**THOUGHT** - Dear reader, what does your life say? Be honest with yourself! Your life in heaven or hell is in the balance. Make sure your conduct corresponds to your claim!

**Does not keep** ([tereo](#)) - Direct contrast with 1Jn 2:3. To reiterate, John is not speaking of perfection, but direction. These professors are plodding toward perdition! Note again **keep** ([tereo](#)) is in the present tense which [Robertson](#) paraphrases as "keeps on not keeping" adding that when he calls them a liar "There is a **whip-cracker effect** ([Whipcracking in Wikipedia - the sound is a small "sonic boom" - see "Physics"](#)) in John's words!"

While John's language at first reading sounds "harsh" (to call someone **aliar**), we do well to recall that John is the "beloved" disciple of Jesus (Jn 13:23+, Jn 19:26, 20:2, 21:7, 20, 24), and that Jesus Himself called the devil a liar and clearly called those in His audience (who had professed belief in Him - Jn 8:30, 31+) children of the devil, like father like son! (Jn 8:44+). In John 8:55 Jesus added "and you have not come to **know** ([ginosko](#)) Him, but I know (oida/eido) Him; and if I say that I do not know (oida/eido) Him, I will be a **liar** ([pseustes](#)) like you, but I do know (oida/eido) Him and **keep** ([tereo](#) - present tense) His word." In other words, Jesus is confronting those who claimed to know Him (intellectually, but internally, so to speak) in actual fact **DID NOT know Him!** It seems that Jesus could not have been much clearer! Similarly, it seems the warning words of the Apostle John could not be much clearer!

*If you claim to know God but your life is not changed by knowing Him,  
that is a certain sign that you don't know God*

**J Ligon Duncan:** If you claim to know God but your life is not changed by knowing Him, that is a certain sign that you don't know God. He doesn't say, "He has head knowledge, but he doesn't have heart knowledge." He says, "He has no truth," because the truth of God turns your world upside down. Once you have that truth it fills you with a fire of rapture and love for the Living God; it changes everything. That truth always leads to love; it always leads to obedience; it always leads to a transformed life. And so, when that transformed life is not there, then you can be certain that that person has never had the truth; he's never met God; he's never met the Lord Jesus Christ who is "the way and the truth and the life." (Jn 14:6) **There is no knowledge of God that does not also lead to the keeping of His commandments.** "True grace always reigns in righteousness," Paul says in Romans 5. "Grace-salvation always leads to obedience," Paul says in Ephesians 2. "Justification is always accompanied by sanctification," Paul says in Romans 8. "Faith always shows itself in works," James says in James 2. Those are just different biblical ways of stressing the point that John is making here in 1 John 2:3 and 4: Truth always expresses itself in action. Faith, trust, real knowledge of God always are always expressed in action, and especially in the action of obeying God's commandments. And so, we know that we don't know God if we don't want to keep His commandments, and if we don't by grace do just that. ([If You Love Me, Keep My Commandments](#))

Notice that the verb modifying "**liar**" is *estin* which is present tense indicating that lying is their lifestyle! They may even be lying to themselves, which is the ultimate deadly deception! John later (in the Revelation) describes the fate of liars writing that "the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and **ALL LIARS**, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (See Rev 21:8+)

Jesus warned....

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' (**THEIR CLAIM**) will enter the kingdom of heaven, but (**THEIR CONDUCT**) he who does (present tense - habitually, albeit not perfectly! *Direction*, not *perfection!*) the will of My Father Who is in heaven will enter. 22 "Many (THIS IS TRAGIC! PROFESSORS ARE DECEIVED! **WE MUST LOVINGLY, BUT FIRMLY WARN THEM!**) will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; **DEPART FROM ME**, YOU WHO PRACTICE (present tense - habitually) **LAWLESSNESS** (cf 1Jn 3:4+).' (Matthew 7:21-23+)

**W Hall Harris** - The evaluation is harsh and self-explanatory: to say a person is a liar means that the claims he or she is making are

not to be believed (a not-too-subtle polemical statement against the secessionist opponents with their false Christology). To say "the truth" is not in such a person, in light of passages in John's Gospel such as Jn 14:6 (where Jesus says "I am the way, and the truth, and the life") and Jn 17:17 ("Set them apart in the truth; your word is truth" - note "his word" in the following verse, 1 John 2:5) again points to the falsity of the opponents' claims. ([Ibid](#))

*People who do not keep the word of God  
cannot claim to love God or have the love of God in them.*

**John Piper** - So here in 1 John 2:4 John not only says that this disobedient person does not know God. He goes on to say at the end of the verse, "The truth is not in him." This is why his knowledge is not knowledge. It is not in him. He carries it on the surface. It has never sunk in. He has never tasted the truth he mouths so easily. So the knowledge John has in view in 1Jn 2:4 is an experience of Christ and God the Father in which they are taken into the depths of our life and change the way we live. John's whole case hangs on the certainty with which knowing God produces obedience. If a person could know God and still live in disobedience, then John could not say to this disobedient man in verse 4 that he is a liar when he claims to know God. John would not be able to know if he is a liar or not if he might know God and yet live in disobedience....the point is that people who do not keep the word of God cannot claim to love God or have the love of God in them. As 1Jn 4:8 says, "He who does not love does not know God; for God is love." So the first stage of the argument is the foundational truth that there is a necessary connection between knowing Christ and obeying his commandments. Anyone who claims to know him and lives in disobedience is a liar. ([Obedience Confirms Our Standing in God](#))

**Robert Candlish** - The language is more forcible than ever. He not merely "lies" (1Jn 1:6); but "is a liar." Not merely does he "not do the truth," but in that man "the truth is not." To affect any knowledge of God that is not to be itself known and ascertained by the keeping of his commandments,—to dream of knowing God otherwise than in the way of keeping his commandments—is to be false to the heart's core.

*"An unchanged life is the sign of an uncleaned heart."*  
-- C H Spurgeon

**Gary M. Burge** says here John "describes the person who feigns intimacy with God and rejects obedience (the same description is given in 1Jn 2:11). John's words are severe: This person is a liar. In 1Jn 1:8 we learned that the denial of sin is evidence that truth is not in a person. Now we learn that the denial of obedience means the same thing: Truth is absent. We must keep in mind the central place of "truth" in Johannine vocabulary. Truth describes Jesus (John 14:6), the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:17), and the word (Jn 17:17). Truth is the principle of spiritual integrity that should accompany all worship that is empowered by God's Spirit (Jn 4:24). Therefore, John is here not simply saying that someone who fails to obey has missed the point; instead, such people are seriously disconnected from God. (See [The Letters of John - Page 98](#)).

*You can stop these things without being born again,  
but you cannot be born again without stopping them.*

**Ray Stedman** - Have you ever seen a counterfeit bill? I do not know that I have ever had one handed to me. I may have, and, if so, I passed it along without knowing. But I know one thing about counterfeit bills. Contrary to popular expression they never come in \$3.00 or \$7.00 denominations. You hear the phrase, "as phony as a \$3.00 bill," but I have never seen a \$3.00 bill and I never hope to see one. Counterfeiters are smarter than that. At a superficial glance, a counterfeit bill appears to be perfectly normal and in a common denomination. But there is always something bogus about it, there is always something phony. There is a lack of exact correspondence. There is a blur somewhere, or something is omitted from it which marks it as a counterfeit bill. It is the same with a phony Christian, and there are phony Christians, many of them. As John indicates, they say the right things. If you were to judge them by what they say, you would never know they were phonies. They go to the right places, they mingle with the right crowds, and they say the right things. They say "I love him," but, as John indicates, there is something wrong with their lives: They disobey his commandments. They have no apparent desire to do what he says, to keep his word. Their lives are unchanged. Their actions are no different than they were before. As a dairyman once said to me, "They preach cream, but live skim milk." (**Ed:** But in truth, professing believers aren't even "skim milk" for at least it is still milk!) Paul also warns about this in his letter to Titus. He speaks of some who, he says, "profess (present tense - continually) to know God, but they deny him by their deeds; they are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good deed," (Titus 1:16a RSV-Commentary). It was Charles Spurgeon, the prince of English preachers, who once said, "An unchanged life is the sign of an uncleaned heart." The Scripture is very clear about this: If the thief has not stopped his stealing, if the liar has not quit lying, if the alcoholic has not stopped drinking, there is no good in his claiming that he is a Christian. If there has been no basic change in his life, there is nothing that indicates to him or to anyone else, that he has been delivered from bondage to Satan and the power of evil into the kingdom of God (Col 1:13-14, Acts 26:18). Now let me make something clear. You can stop all these things without being born again. There are many reasons why men quit something evil, if for no other reason than that it is bad for their health. You can stop these things without being born again, but you cannot be born again

without stopping them. That is the claim John makes. ([Counterfeits and Reflectors | 1 John 2:3-6](#))

*This is the knowledge which you must possess: and if you will think you have it, whilst your life and conversation (behavior) give the lie to your profession, your doom is fixed*

**Charles Simeon** - It is evidently taken for granted, in my text, that some self-deceivers will be found, who will "say, that they know Christ, whilst yet they keep not his commandments." And what shall I say to them? What can I say more, than what God himself speaks to them in my text, "That they are liars; and that the truth is not in them?" I grant that this sounds harsh; but it is the declaration of our God: and I dare not to soften or conceal what He hath spoken. In many other passages does this loving Apostle use the same language [1John 1:6; 1John 4:20; 1John 5:10.]; and I entreat you, brethren, to lay it to heart. Be assured, that, whilst you continue under this delusion, "the truth is not in you:" the Gospel has not yet wrought effectually on your hearts, nor are you possessed of real integrity in your souls. No, indeed, you are "liars" and hypocrites, and must take your portion with such characters in the eternal world. Tell me, then, whether it does not become you to "examine yourselves," and to try your faith [Job 20:4-7.] by this standard? Do not imagine that the knowledge here spoken of is a speculative acquaintance with divine truth: no; it is such a knowledge as both justifies [Note: Isaiah 53:11.] and sanctifies [John 17:17.] the soul; it is that knowledge in comparison of which St. Paul "accounted all things as dung and dross [Philippians 3:8]." This is the knowledge which you must possess: and if you will think you have it, whilst your life and conversation (behavior) give the lie to your profession, your doom is fixed: for thus saith God, by the Prophet Hosea: "Israel saith, my God, we know thee: Israel hath cast off the thing that is good: the enemy shall pursue him [Hosea 8:2-3.]" yea, "every such person shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the glory of his power, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ [2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.]" I say, then, to every one of you, "Examine whether ye be in the faith, and prove your own selves [2 Corinthians 13:5.]" ([1 John 2:3-5 The True Test of the Love of God](#))

Puritan **Thomas Brooks** - Such walk in darkness, who promise to themselves the future vision of God's face, while they go on in the willful breach of God's royal law. Such who say they know Him—and yet in the course of their lives walk contrary to Him—such are liars: "He who says, I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar," 1 John 2:4. ([A Cabinet of Choice Jewels](#))

*There is nothing worse than self-willed deception!*

*Obedience is evidence of true conversion.*

-- Bob Utley

**Bob Utley** - John calls several religious people (teachers, preachers) liars (cf. 1 John 1:6; 2:4,22; 4:20). They are religious but not right with God (cf. Matt. 7:21-23)!

From a funeral Sermon by **Samuel Davies** (April 22, 1758) - The willful and habitual practice of any known sin—and the willful and habitual neglect of any known duty, are repeatedly mentioned in the Scriptures, as the sure signs of a wicked man. "The man who says, 'I know Him,' but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him." 1 John 2:4. ([The Certainty of Death](#))

*What is internal*

*will eventually come to the surface.*

**Daniel Akin** notes that here John "explains that the one who claims to know God but is consistently disobedient is a liar. John implies that this individual will be exposed as a liar by his disobedience to God's commands. What is internal will eventually come to the surface. The condemnation of this person is quite similar to what John says in 1Jn 1:6, 8. Not only is the claim of this individual false, but the truth is altogether absent from his life. As Schnackenburg writes: "He lacks the divine nature which alone makes possible the genuine knowledge of God."" (See [1,2,3 John: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

*Disobedience to Christ on the part of a professing Christian*

*is tantamount to being a liar.*

**J Vernon McGee** - I would call this very plain talk! In the previous verse John has said that we know that we know Him—this is the positive side. We know by experience in contrast to the esoteric knowledge of the Gnostics. Now he presents the negative side: disobedience to Christ is a proof that we do not know Him. This is plain and direct language. Disobedience to Christ on the part of a professing Christian is tantamount to being a liar. In other words, his life is a lie. There are a great many people who say they are children of God, but are they?. It is one thing to say you are a child of God, and it is another thing to be a possessor of eternal life, to have a new nature that cries out to the Father for fellowship and wants to obey Him. You cannot make me believe that all of these church members who have no love for the Word of God and are disobedient to Christ are really His children. I do not believe they have had the experience of regeneration. John is making it very clear that we know that we know Him because we keep His commandments. (See [Thru the Bible Vol. 56: The Epistles 1 John](#))



**W E Vine on liar** - He is not merely guilty of certain statements and acts of falsehood, but is himself false in his moral state. The order, too, in the last sentence is more emphatic than in 1John 1:8. There it was "truth is not in us"; here it is "and in this man truth is not." (Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson)

*The word liar describes the character of the man whose entire conduct is opposed to the truth.*

**Kistemaker** - "The man who says, **I know him,** but does not do what he commands is a liar." Although this verse parallels the discussion of the last half of the preceding chapter (1Jn 1:6, 8, 10), where John writes comprehensively about the claim of fellowship with God and the failure to live in the truth, here he quotes an individual. He quotes the person who claims to have come to know (perfect tense) God but who fails to keep (present tense) God's commands. John calls him a liar. That is, this person is a walking lie who says one thing and does the opposite (compare 1Jn 4:20; Titus 1:16). The word **liar** describes the character of the man whose entire conduct is opposed to the truth. (Vol. 14: New Testament commentary : Exposition of James and the Epistles of John: Baker Book House)

*Nothing is taught in the Word of God more clearly—  
than that faith in Christ always implies  
surrender to Christ and obedience to His commands*

**J R Miller** - The Scriptures never give us the impression that we can sin with impunity because we are saved by grace, and not by our own good works, or because God is so merciful and forgives so readily. Nothing is taught in the Word of God more clearly—than that faith in Christ always implies surrender to Christ and obedience to His commands. There is no true faith, without obedience. This is made very plain here, "We know that we have come to know Him—if we obey His commands. The man who says, 'I know Him!' but does not do what He commands—is a liar, and the truth is not in him!" 1 John 2:3-4 ([Devotional Hours with the Bible](#))

*A man may have a speculative knowledge—  
and be no better than a devil....  
They are not intellectually ignorant of Christ—  
yet they are spiritually ignorant.*

**Puritan Thomas Watson** - 1 John 2:4: "He who says, 'I know Him,' and keeps not His commandments, is a liar—and the truth is not in him." A man may have a speculative knowledge—and be no better than a devil. This is the reason why men do not embrace Christ, Who is infinitely lovely, because they do not know His worth. Though they are not intellectually ignorant of Christ—yet they are spiritually ignorant (**Ed**: Like Judas Iscariot!). To this day the veil is upon their hearts. ([The Loveliness of Christ](#))

**Barker** - In 1Jn 2:3 the author dealt with the general question of how we may have assurance that we know God. Here he deals with those who claim that they know God but at the same time break his commandments. For John knowledge of God is clearly not perceived as academic, theoretical, or speculative but as practical and experiential. It is "a relationship to God, in which the one knowing is determined in his existence (and thus also in his 'walking,' his conduct) by God" (Bultmann, p. 25). To claim to know God and at the same time to be disobedient to his commandments is, the author asserts, to lie and be devoid of all truth. (The Expositor's Bible Commentary)

**James** (see Jas 2:14-17+) uses different words to say the same thing - He describes someone who says they have "faith" but they have no good, godly works to authenticate their faith, and the conclusion is that they do not possess true, saving, (eternal) life giving faith but dead lifeless faith.

## **LIKE FATHER LIKE SON!**

**And the truth (aletheia) is** (present tense - continually) (ouk - absolutely) **not in him** - It's as if John wants to make sure we did not miss the seriousness of what he just said, calling this person a liar. And so he adds that the truth is not in him. Jesus said "I am...the **Truth**" (Jn 14:6) and Paul said believers have "Christ in you the Hope of glory." (Col 1:27). It follows that when John says these individuals do not have "**the truth**" in them, they do not have the indwelling Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Truth, but are still of their father the devil (cf Jn 8:44 = the father of lies, 1Jn 3:8, 10), and thus behave like his children by lying!

*People can have no authentic relationship with God  
if they do not obey His commands.*

**Colin Kruse** - The statement, '**the truth is not in him**', is synonymous with '**he is a liar**'. Underlying this whole verse is the recognition that people can have no authentic relationship with God if they do not obey his commands. This does not mean, of course, that those who know God will never fail to obey God's commands, but rather that those who know God will not be

characterised by disobedience to his commands. (See [The Letters of John](#) - **Note** - Many consider this to be the #1 Commentary on First John - He does not seem to equivocate on John's intended meaning in 1 John 2:4).

**Paul** described some on the isle of Crete who claimed to have come to know Him" and yet denied Him with their lying lives...

Titus 1:16+ (cf similar description 2Ti 3:5) They profess (pres tense = continually make this claim!) to know God, but (always pause to ponder the contrasts for they mark a "change of direction") by their deeds (cf they do "not keep His commandments") they deny (pres tense = continually say with their life the do not know) Him, being detestable (derived from bdeo which means "to stink!") and disobedient, and worthless (rejected after examination) for any good deed.

## A QUESTIONABLE COMMENT ON 1 JOHN 2:4

Here is an example of (in my opinion) a highly questionable comment on 1Jn 2:4 from [Dr Thomas Constable](#) (who is often similar to [Zane Hodges](#) in his comments and frequently quotes Hodges in a positive light).

"1Jn 2:4 - The profession in view, in the light of the context (1Jn 1:6, 8, 10), is evidently another claim to having close relationship with God, **not a claim to being saved**" (bold added)

**COMMENT** - Dear Berean, do you see the potential problem in Constable's comment? "The one who says" is in fact one who is claiming to be a believer. But Constable is equating not keeping His commandments with one who does not have "close relationship". John is saying (as well as all of the commentaries quoted above) such an individual does not have **a relationship AT ALL** with Christ. Can you see why this distinction is absolutely critical?

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**Liar** (5583) (**pseustes** from **pseudomai** = to lie) is one who speaks falsehood, untruth, and so attempts to deceive. The most tragic deception is one's own self. Remember sin is deceiving (Heb 3:13-note) and many who claim to know Jesus, are deceived by their sin and are not known by Jesus (Mt 7:21, 22, 23-note) **Thayer** adds that **pseustes** describes "one who breaks faith, a false or faithless man."

**Webster's 1828 Dictionary** definition of **LIAR** - A person who knowingly utters falsehood; one who declares to another as a fact what he knows to be not true, and with an intention to deceive him. The uttering of falsehood by mistake, and without an intention to deceive, does not constitute one a **liar**.

Colin Brown (editor) - In the NT 15 different words contain the root **pseud-** (false). These are found in nearly all the NT writings, but whereas the Synoptic Gospels make only very sparing use of them, they play an important role in Johannine and Pauline writings. Besides the simple use of vb., noun and adj. (**pseudomai**, lie; **pseudos**, lie; **pseustes**, liar; **pseudes**, deceitful), which comprise the major part of the NT instances, there are numerous compound words. These include: **pseudadelphos**, false brother (2 Cor. 11:26; Gal. 2:4; Brother); **pseudapostolos**, false apostle (2 Cor. 11:13; Apostle); **pseudodidaskalos**, false teacher (2 Pet. 2:1; Teach); **pseudologos**, speaking lies (1 Tim. 4:2); **pseudomartyria**, false witness (Matt. 15:19; 26:59); **pseudomartys**, one who gives false witness (Matt. 26:60; 1 Cor. 15:15; Witness); **pseudoprophetes**, false prophet (Matt. 7:15; 24:11, 24; Mk. 13:22; Lk. 6:26; Acts 13:6; 2 Pet. 2:1; 1 Jn. 4:1; Rev. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10; Prophet); and **pseudochristos**, false Christ (Matt. 24:24; Mk. 13:22). ([The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology](#))

**PSEUSTES - 10V** - Jn. 8:44; Jn. 8:55; Rom. 3:4; 1 Tim. 1:10; Tit. 1:12; 1 Jn. 1:10; 1 Jn. 2:4; 1 Jn. 2:22; 1 Jn. 4:20; 1 Jn. 5:10

**Truth** (225) (**aletheia** from **a** = indicates following word has the opposite meaning ~ without + **lanthano** = to be hidden or concealed, to escape notice, cp our English "*latent*" from Latin = to lie hidden) has the literal sense of that which contains nothing hidden. **Aletheia** is that which is not concealed. **Aletheia** is that which that is seen or expressed as it really is. The basic understanding of aletheia is that it is the manifestation of a hidden reality. In Greek philosophy the word often carries the sense of that which really exists, "the reality behind all apparent reality."

**Truth** then is the correspondence between a **reality** and a declaration which professes to set forth or describe the **reality**. To say it another way, **words spoken or written** are **true** when they correspond with **objective reality**. Persons and things are **true** when they correspond with their profession (which we describe with words like integrity, sincerity, non-hypocritical, etc). In other words, "what you see is what you get". Hence a truth is a declaration which has corresponding reality, or a reality which is correctly set forth. Since God is Himself the

great reality, that which correctly sets forth His nature is pre-eminently the Truth of Creation ([Natural Revelation](#)) and the Truth of Scripture ([Special Revelation](#)). Thus it is not surprising that rebellious, sinful men actively hold down or suppress the Truth of Creation (and the glorious Creator) (Ro 1:18<sup>+</sup>) and even exchange the truth, the clearly manifested (and objective) reality (Creation) for the lie (Ro 1:25<sup>+</sup>).

**Jesus** comments on the importance of **truth** in his reply to Pilate - John 18:37+ (cf 1Jn 3:18, 19) Pilate therefore said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. **Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice**"

**ALETHEIA - IN JOHN'S WRITINGS** - Jn. 1:14; Jn. 1:17; Jn. 3:21; Jn. 4:23; Jn. 4:24; Jn. 5:33; Jn. 8:32; Jn. 8:40; Jn. 8:44; Jn. 8:45; Jn. 8:46; Jn. 14:6; Jn. 14:17; Jn. 15:26; Jn. 16:7; Jn. 16:13; Jn. 17:17; Jn. 17:19; Jn. 18:37; Jn. 18:38; 1 Jn. 1:6; 1 Jn. 1:8; 1 Jn. 2:4; 1 Jn. 2:21; 1 Jn. 3:18; 1 Jn. 3:19; 1 Jn. 4:6; 1 Jn. 5:6; 2 Jn. 1:1; 2 Jn. 1:2; 2 Jn. 1:3; 2 Jn. 1:4; 3 Jn. 1:1; 3 Jn. 1:3; 3 Jn. 1:4; 3 Jn. 1:8; 3 Jn. 1:12

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**W E Vine** - a comparison should here be made with 1 John 1:6 and might be set out as follows:

#### 1 John 1:6

- (a) If we say that we have fellowship with Him,
- (b) And walk in the darkness,
- (c) We lie and do not the truth.

#### 1 John 2:4

- (a) He that saith, I know Him,
- (b) And keepeth not His commandments,
- (c) Is a liar and the truth is not in him.

A comparison may further be made with parallel clauses in 1 John 1:6, 8 and 10. The apostle increases the forcefulness of his statement concerning the iniquity of mere profession without conformity in the life, till he here reaches the greatest pitch of severity. In such inconsistency—

- (a) A person does not the truth—1 John 1:6
- (b) The truth is not in him—1 John 1:8
- (c) He makes God a liar—1 John 1:10
- (d) He is a liar himself and in him the truth is not.

## Sincerity and Duplicity

### 1 John 2:3-4

C H Spurgeon

**Excerpt from Spurgeon sermon** ([click here for full sermon](#))

THE Epistles of John possess and combine certain qualities which seem, at the first blush, to stand opposite as the poles to one another. Their style of expression is simple, chaste, and unadorned. Short words are used. For the most part words of one syllable—such little homely words as a young child might easily spell. And the sense is so clear and obvious, that the captious critic or the astute reasoner must be puzzled to distort it. Yet there is no lack of dignity in the language, and as for the matter of these Epistles, it is grand and sublime. Where would you turn in the pages of the New Testament, save only to the book of the Revelation, given by the pen of the same writer, for more notable mystery?

The language charms our ears, while the Truth it expresses holds us in awe. There are deep meanings and veiled mysteries here. Albeit the hidden wisdom which baffles finite thought is not couched in strange terms, but declared in such plain speech as trips lightly off the tongue, and yet sinks deeply into the heart. Again, the spirit of John is love, all love. Every line he writes is perfumed with charity. And yet to what close self-examination, to what a severe testing does he put us! How truly may it be said that these Epistles are a touchstone by which we may discern between the true gold and the counterfeit!

Generous but discriminating, glowing with affection but rigid in fidelity, the Apostle mingles caution with caress, and qualifies the most soothing consolations with such stern warnings, that in well-near every sentence he constrains us to deep searching of heart.

The text is a case in point. With a wise discrimination he draws a contrast between him who knows that he knows Christ, and him who says that he knows Christ. The one he acknowledges, but the other he brands with that hard word, that ignominious title, "a liar," and sends him away as unworthy of further consideration.

Not only in this case, but all through his Epistles, John continues to unravel the tangled web of hypocrisy. Ah, that deceit should steal such gentle shapes and seem like Truth! To show the diverging point between facts and sayings, between realities and professions, between those who have, and those who only say that they have, was his constant aim. It may interest you just to open your Bibles and turn to one or two of the passages that illustrate this. In his first chapter, at the sixth verse, he has been speaking of those who walk in the light and have fellowship with God, and he adds, "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth."

Then in the text he speaks of those who know Christ, and he adds, "He that says, I know Him, and keeps not His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him." And further on, in the ninth verse, speaking of those who have the light, he says, "He that says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness even until now." Not to multiply the instances, there is a notable one in the fourth chapter, at the twentieth verse, "If a man says I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he that loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God Whom he has not seen?"

So to have a thing, or to boast that you have it—to be, or to pretend to be such-and-such a character—are as opposite as white and black, as light and darkness. Indeed, we scarcely need Revelation to tell us this, for it is so in things secular, and it must be certainly applicable to religion. We meet in common life with persons who say that they are rich, but this does not make them so. They apply for credit and say that they are wealthy when they are worth nothing. Companies will ask for your money with which they may speculate, and they say that they are sound, but they are oftentimes found to be rotten. Though some of them make a very fair show in the prospectus, the result appears very foul in the winding-up of the association.

Persons have been known to say that they were of distinguished rank, but when they have had to prove their title before the House of Lords, oftentimes has it been discovered that they have made a mistake. Lunatics in Bethlehem Hospi-

tal, near here, have been found by scores to say that they were kings or queens. In the old houses, where madmen were confined, it often happened that some poor creature twisted a crown of straw, put it on his head, and said that he was a monarch. But that did not make him so. No armies arose at his bidding. No fleets crossed the ocean to do his will. No tribute was brought to his feet. He remained a poor pauper madman still, though he said that he was a king.

Many a time you have found the difference, in your commercial transactions, between blank saying and positive truth. A man has said that he would meet that bill, or that he would discharge that debt. He has said that the rent should be paid when it was due. He has said a thousand things—and you have found out that it was easy enough for him to say, but it was not quite so easy for you to obtain the doing of it. And when the engagement has been turned to writing, registered, and made as fast as black and white can make it, you have not found it thoroughly reliable, for to say by subscribing a contract or covenant does not always make it certain that a man will fulfill it. To say is not necessarily a pledge of good faith, or a warrant against treachery.

Rest assured, then, that if in these temporal matters to say is not the same thing as to be or to do, neither is it so in spiritual things. A minister may say that he is sent of God, and yet be a wolf in sheep's clothing. A man may say that he unites himself to the Church of God, but he may be no better than a hypocrite and an alien who has no part in her fellowship. We may say that we pray, and yet never a prayer may come from our hearts. We may say to our fellow men that we are Christians, and yet we may never have been born again—never have obtained the precious faith of God's elect— never have been washed in the blood of Jesus Christ.

And, Sirs, as you would not be satisfied with merely saying that you are rich. As you want the title-deeds of the broad acres. As you want to hear the coins chink in your box. As you want the real thing, and not the mere saying of it— so, I pray you, be not put off with the mere profession of religion. Be not content with a bare assertion, or think that is enough. Seek to have your own profession verified by the witness of Heaven, as well as by that of your own conscience. It is not written, "He that says he believes shall be saved." But "he that believes and is baptized shall be saved." It is not said that he who says he has confessed shall be forgiven. But "He that confesses and forsakes his sins shall find mercy." Your mere sayers, though they say, "Lord, open to us," and aver that Christ did eat in their streets, shall have for an answer, "I never knew you! Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity."

Let us not be gulled and deceived. Let us not be duped and taken in by any notion that saying so makes it so! Take heed, lest with a flattering tongue you do impose on your own soul. Standing in view of that Eye which penetrates the inmost heart, may we learn to distinguish between the mere profession and the full possession of real Grace and vital godliness.

The matter in hand tonight, in which this distinction is to be made, is the knowing of Christ. Let us speak first about what it is to know Him, then about knowing that we know Him. And after that, solemnly expostulate with those who merely say that they know Him.

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**1 John 2:5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: ([NASB: Lockman](#))**

**Greek:** hos d' an tere (3SPAI) autou ton logon, alethos en touto e agape tou theou teteleiotai. (3SRPI) en touto ginokomen (1PPAI) hoti en auto esmen; (1PPAI)

**Amplified:** But he who keeps (treasures) His Word [who bears in mind His precepts, who observes His message in its entirety], truly in him has the love of and for God been perfected (completed, reached maturity). By this we may perceive (know, recognize, and be sure) that we are in Him: ([Lockman](#))

**ESV:** but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him:

**KJV:** But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

**NIV:** But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: (Note: The NIV mistakenly renders this as a conditional sentence. In fact it is a statement).

**NLT:** But those who obey God's word really do love him. That is the way to know whether or not we live in him.

**Phillips:** Obedience is the test of whether we really live "in God" or not.

**Wuest:** But whoever habitually with a solicitous care is keeping His word, truly, in this one the love of God has been brought to its completion with the present result that it is in that state of completion. In this we have an experiential knowledge that in Him we are. ([Wuest](#))

**Young's Literal:** and whoever may keep his word, truly in him the love of God hath been perfected; in this we know that in him we are.

- **Whoever:** 1Jn 2:3,4 Ps 105:45 Ps 106:3 Ps 119:2,4,146 Pr 8:32 Pr 28:7 Ec 8:5 Eze 36:27 Lk 11:28 Jn 14:21,23 Rev 12:17 14:12
- **In him:** 1Jn 4:12,18 Jas 2:22
- **By this:** 1Jn 2:27-28 1Jn 3:24 1Jn 4:13-16 1Jn 5:20 Jn 6:56 15:5 Ro 8:1 1Co 1:30 2Co 5:17,21 Col 2:9,10
- [1 John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:**

2 Corinthians 5:17+ Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

1 John 3:24+ The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

1 John 4:13-16+ By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. 14 We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. 15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. 16 We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

**HOW TO KNOW YOU  
ARE IN CHRIST FOREVER**

**But** - Always take note of contrasts (contrast), for they mark a "change of direction" by the author and beg at least one simple question "What is being contrasted?" (also Why? Why now? - 5W/H questions). Discipline yourself (cf 1Ti 4:7, 8+) to pause and ponder the passage, for as you do, you will be practicing the blessed discipline of Biblical Meditation.

*True love for God is expressed not in sentimental language or mystical experience but in moral obedience....The proof of love is loyalty.*

-- John Stott

**Whoever keeps ([tereo](#)) His Word - keeps ([tereo](#))** is again in the present tense picturing one as "keeping on keeping God's word," as exhibiting ongoing obedience (enabled by continually relying on the enabling power of [the Holy Spirit to obey](#)). Earlier John used

the word **commandments** (1Jn 2:3-4), but now uses **word** (lógos) which is more general, and would include not just commands but instructions, principles, etc. **Vine** adds that "His Word (lógos) is the whole, of which His commandments are the parts. It is the complete divine revelation." John like a patient father continues to belabor the point that a truly changed heart will inevitably result in a changed life.

Obedience has always been what God looks for as evidence of a changed life, a surrendered heart (cf 1Sa 15:22). As Jesus declared...

But (Remember to pause and ponder what Jesus is contrasting = Lk 11:27+) He said, "On the contrary, blessed are those who **hear** the word of God, and **observe** (Not tereo but similar word [phulasso](#) = guard like a military sentinel) it (the word heard)." (Luke 11:28+)

**Comment:** Jesus clearly links hearing and heeding (doing) of His Word. His half brother James issued a similar charge to his readers "**prove** (present imperative = command calling for habitual practice) yourselves **doers** of the word, and not merely **hearers** who delude (paralogizomai) themselves." (Jas 1:22+)

Remember that the only way a sinner can **keep** the **word** is by entering the New Covenant and receiving the new source of power which enables obedience motivated by love not legalism. Ezekiel quotes Jehovah's New Covenant promise...

And I will put My Spirit within you and **cause you to walk in My statutes** (God's Part!), and you will be careful to observe (Lxx uses [phulasso](#) = guard) My ordinances (Our Part - enabled by the Spirit!). (Ezekiel 36:27+, cf Php 2:12+, Php 2:13NLT+)

**In him** - The one who exhibits a truly changed life as evidenced by his or her obedience to God's Word of Truth. Wuest says "The demonstrative pronoun is used, "**in this one** truly is the love of God perfected." ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

**Vincent** - The change in the form of this antithetic clause is striking. (Here is the first clause in the prior verse) He who claims to know God, yet lives in disobedience, is a liar. We should expect as an offset to this: He that keeps His commandments is of the truth; or, the truth is in him. Instead, we have, '**In him has the love of God been perfected**.' In other words, the obedient child of God is characterized, not by any representative trait or quality of his own personality, but merely as the subject of the work of divine love: as the sphere in which that love accomplishes its perfect work. ([Word Studies in the New Testament](#))

**The love ([agape](#)) of God has truly been perfected ([teleioo](#))** - **The love of God** could refer to either His love for us or our love for Him. Either way this speaks of the **love of God** as attaining maturity or reaching completeness. God's love achieves its purpose when we hear His Word and keep His Word. **perfected ([teleoo](#))** is in the perfect tense which means when we are keeping His Word, obeying His Word as the habitual practice, the general direction of our lives, John says we have an enduring or abiding maturity.

**D Edmond Hiebert** writes that "**The love of God**" may be taken as an objective genitive, "man's love for God," or as a subjective genitive, "God's love." Both make good sense, but the latter here seems more probable. These words (**love of God has truly been perfected**) speak of the glorious outcome of obedience." ([1 John 1:5-2:6](#))

**Marvin Vincent** on the other hand feels that "the fundamental idea of the **love of God** as expounded by John is the love which God has made known and which answers to His nature." (See his lengthy explanation [Word Studies in the New Testament](#))

**Steven Cole** writes that "The phrase, "**the love of God**," is ambiguous. It may mean "God's love for us," or, "our love for God."... Scholars are divided between the first two options, and it's hard to decide. But perhaps it does not really matter, in that if God's love for us is perfected in us, we will also love God. And, no one can really love God without first experiencing His love. So the two concepts are intertwined. ([How to Know that You Know Him 1 John 2:3-6](#))

**W E Vine** feels that **the love of God** is the exercise of God's love manifesting itself in the human heart and life in practical love toward God and our fellowmen. This is confirmed in 1Jn 4:10, 11. Love is the fulfilling of God's commandments ("love therefore is the fulfillment of the law." Ro 13:10), which are summed up in the one commandment concerning love (Ro 13:8, Ro 12:30,31), and in the fulfillment of this the love of God is (or has been) perfected in us. Love has thus attained to its end. Selfishness and carnal desires are banished, and the will of God is carried out both in us and through us toward others. The perfect tense thus expresses the abiding effects produced by God's love and the response to it in our heart."

Here is **Kenneth Wuest's** excellent summary of the question regarding the **love of God** - To sum up the matter, we would say that the **love of God** here is the love that God is in His nature, produced in the believer yielded to the Holy Spirit by the same Holy Spirit, which love causes him to have a solicitous watchful care of His precepts. This love is brought to its completion or perfection in the sense that it accomplishes that for which it is intended, namely, to cause the saint to obey God's Word, not because he should, not because it is right to do so, not in order to escape chastisement should he disobey it, all of which motives may enter into the subconscious reasons he may have for obeying it and which in themselves are proper motives, but he obeys the Word because he loves the Lord Jesus. Paul, in Galatians 5:1-26, teaches that the saint is not under law, and has been put under a superior restraint

to evil and a compelling urge to do right, namely, divine love, produced in the heart by the Holy Spirit. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

**Brown** - Since keeping the commandments (or God's word) certainly involves living out the commandment to love one another, the **love of God** shown us in Jesus Christ reaches its **perfection** when the same love is shown to "one another" and to the God who abides in the Christian. ([The Epistles of John -The Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries](#))

**Robert Law** writes that "Perfected love, in the phraseology of the Epistle, signifies, not love in a superlative degree, but love that is consummated in action. Bearing fruit in actual obedience, Love has been perfected: it has fulfilled its mission, has reached its goal. ([The Tests of Life: A Study of the First Epistle of St. John](#))

**Barker** explains **love of God is perfected** this way - "The true knowledge of God does not end with speculative ideas, as for the Gnostics, but with obedience to the moral law and with the presence of God's love in the believer. The term "made complete" (teleioō) carries with it the idea of continuous growth and development. It describes both state and process. As obedience is practiced, so also God's love matures in us. ([The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** - Obedience to God's Word is proof of our love for Him. There are three motives for obedience. We can obey because we **have** to, because we **need** to, or because we **want** to. A slave obeys because he has to. If he doesn't obey he will be punished. An employee obeys because he needs to. He may not enjoy his work, but he does enjoy getting his paycheck! He needs to obey because he has a family to feed and clothe. But a Christian is to obey his Heavenly Father because he wants to—for the relationship between him and God is one of love. "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). This is the way we learned obedience when we were children. First, we obeyed because we had to. If we didn't obey, we were spanked! But as we grew up, we discovered that obedience meant enjoyment and reward; so we started obeying because it met certain needs in our lives. And it was a mark of real maturity when we started obeying because of love. "**Baby Christians**" must constantly be warned or rewarded. **Mature Christians** listen to God's Word and obey it simply because they love Him. (See [Be Real 1 John: Turning from Hypocrisy to Truth](#) or borrow [Bible exposition commentary](#))

**By this** - Although it may seem simplistic, always pause to ponder, asking questions like 'By what?' or 'What is this?' Your Teacher the Spirit will never scoff at you for asking childlike questions and as you develop this habit in all your Scripture reading, I guarantee that you will be amazed how it changes your insights and comprehension!

**Hiebert** - **By this** we know that we are in Him" (1Jn 2:5b) may be taken with what precedes or follows. Views are divided, but it seems best, with most modern versions, to take it with what follows. ([1 John 1:5-2:6](#))

[A T Robertson](#) ties **by this** back to "whoever keeps His Word" remarking "That is by continuous keeping of Christ's commandments, not by loud talk and loose living."

**W E Vine** comments that **by this** "may refer to "whoever keeps His word" at the beginning of the verse. More probably, however, the RV is correct in connecting it, as a fresh sentence, with 1Jn 2:6; just as the "hereby" in 1Jn 2:3 referred to what immediately followed.

**John Stott** on **by this we know** - It is never easy in this letter to decide whether expressions like 'this is how we know' look back to what precedes or forward to what follows. Usually the look is forward; once or twice it is clearly backward; while sometimes the expression is what Alexander calls a 'swing-door' because it appears to move in both directions! In this case the symmetry between verses 3–4 and 5–6 suggests that the NIV punctuation is correct, making the reference a forward one, namely This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims... (Borrow [The Letters of John](#) or see [The Letters of John: An Introduction and Commentary - Page 96](#))

**Colin Kruse** says **by this we know** "could be linked with what precedes, and so form, with the opening words of 2:3 ('by this we can be sure we know him', kai en toutō ginōskomen ...), an inclusio for 2:3–5.45 Alternatively they could be linked with what follows, and thus pave the way for what is to come in 2:6 (so NIV). In favour of the latter alternative is the fact that the words 'this is how we know we are in him' foreshadow the concept of remaining in him, which is developed in 2:6. Also supporting this approach is the fact that the first of the author's statements beginning with the words 'the one who says'/'the man who says' (ho legōn) (2:4) is preceded by a positive statement about assurance beginning with the words 'by this we know ...' (kai en toutō ginōskomen ...) (2:3). If we do connect 2:5b with what follows rather than with what precedes, then the second of the author's statements beginning with the words 'the one who says' (ho legōn) (2:6) is likewise preceded by a positive statement about assurance beginning with the words 'by this we know ...' (en toutō ginōskomen ...) (2:5b). For these two reasons it is probably better to read 2:5b with what follows rather than with what precedes it. If this is the case, we must look for the meaning of the statement, 'This is how we know we are in him', by examining what follows in 2:6. (See [The Letters of John](#))

**We know** ([ginosko](#) - present tense) **that we are in Him** - We know experientially that we are in Him. Again **know** is in the present

tense so the idea is that this "is simply a statement of a constantly enjoyed experience." (Vine)

**In Him** - While this is ambiguous and could be the Father or the Son, I take it primarily to refer to the Son. If so to be "in Him" is synonymous with Paul's phrase "**in Christ**." This is "shorthand" for a follower of Christ, a regenerated individual. To be "in" Jesus speaks of the oneness and identification of covenant. John goes on in the next verse (1Jn 2:6) to amplify that "in Him" means "abiding in Him."

**Bob Utley** - The concept of our being **in Him** ("abiding," cf. 1 John 2:6) is a recurrent theme of John's writings (cf. John 14:20,23; 15:4-10; 17:21,23,26; 1 John 2:24-28; 3:6,24; 4:13,16).

**John Stott** on the identification of **in Him** - John now states the same general principle in a slightly different form, and adds another and more positive illustration of it. The whole context, and especially 1Jn 2:6, suggests that the phrase **in Him** refers to Christ. To be 'in Christ' is Paul's characteristic description of the Christian. But John uses it too. To be (or to 'live', 1Jn 2:6) 'in' Him is equivalent to the phrase to 'know' Him (1Jn 2:3, 4) and to 'love' him (1Jn 2:5). Being a Christian consists in essence of a personal relationship to God in Christ, knowing him, loving him, and living in him as the branch lives in the vine (John 15:1ff.). This is the meaning of 'eternal life' (John 17:3; 1 John 5:20). (Borrow [The Letters of John](#) or See [The Letters of John: An Introduction and Commentary - Page 95](#))

**Vine** observes that John "speaks of being **in Him**." This is one of the great central truths of the Christian faith. Introduced here in the Epistle it is taken up in various ways subsequently. It is also especially brought out in the Gospel; compare, e.g., Jn 14:20; 15:4; 17:10, 21, 23. The condition of being **in Him** is not a matter of absorption into deity, as Pantheism teaches, but of spiritual relationship and unity of life, which involves the removal of the alienation of man in his unregenerate state from God, and the enjoyment of fellowship with God and oneness with Him in His will and purpose."

**Steven Cole** agrees with **Vine** writing "Although some take the last phrase of 1Jn 2:5 to point back, I understand it to point forward to 1Jn 2:6: **"By this we know that we are in Him the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked."** John equates being **in Him** with **abiding in Him**. **Abiding** is John's term for fellow-ship or a close, intimate relationship. As with the phrases, "keeping His commandments" and "the love of God," so also the term "abiding" goes back to the Upper Room Discourse, to Jesus' words about the vine and the branches. There Jesus said (John 15:4), **"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of it-self unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me."** ([How to Know that You Know Him 1 John 2:3-6](#))

**Jamieson** - in our progressing towards this ideal of perfected love and obedience. There is a gradation: 1Jn 2:3, "know Him"; 1Jn 2:5, "we are in Him"; 1Jn 2:6, "abideth in Him"; respectively, knowledge, fellowship, abiding constancy. [Bengel].

**J Ligon Duncan** - Test #1 ([See Duncan's comments](#) under 1Jn 2:3) expressed differently here in verse 5 is this: "Do you manifest your love of God by keeping His word?" You see, true love for God is expressed not in sentimental language. True love for God is not expressed in some claim of mystical experience. True love for God is expressed in moral obedience. The proof of love is loyalty. What would a wife think of a husband who said, "Oh, honey, I love you," but every week he engaged in an affair with another woman? Well, that profession of love would ring hollow. True love is loyal. And, therefore, God says, "You truly love Me? You'll be loyal to My word; you'll be committed to My word." You see, the truth of God does not exist in order to promote merely right notions about God; the truth exists to promote an active and experiential relationship with the Living God. And that relationship, that fellowship-knowledge, always expresses itself in love to God, in obedience to God, in love and obedience to His word. Love delights to do God's will. What is Jesus' refrain in the gospels? John catches it so frequently. He says, "It is My meat--it is My food to do the will of the One who sent Me." Jesus loved to do God's will. And so, if we're like Jesus, then we will love to do God's will as well. If we love God, we will keep His commands, and that obedience will in turn evidence our true love to God. Do you remember what Jesus said to His disciples on the night that He was betrayed in the upper room in John 14:15? "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." That's what He said. And so, the Christian who teaches that you can love Christ and not keep His commandments is contradicting the Master. Well, that's the second way He expresses this truth. ([If You Love Me, Keep My Commandments](#))

**David Guzik** comments on this passage - A perfected (the idea is mature) love for God will show itself in obedience, and the presence of this obedience and love gives us assurance that we are in Jesus (By this we know we are in Him). Mark it, when one becomes a Christian, there is a change in their relationship with sin. Sin is not eliminated in the believer until he comes to glory, but their relationship to sin is changed when they truly become a Christian. (1) A Christian no longer loves sin as he once did. A Christian no longer brags about their sin as he once did. (2) A Christian no longer plans to sin as he once did. (3) A Christian no longer fondly remembers his sin as he once did. (4) A Christian never fully enjoys his sin as he once did. (5) A Christian no longer is comfortable in habitual sin as he once was.

**C H Spurgeon** - "The Christian no longer loves sin; it is the object of his sternest horror: he no longer regards it as a mere trifle, plays with it, or talks of it with unconcern . . . Sin is dejected in the Christian's heart, though it is not ejected. Sin may enter the heart, and fight for dominion, but it cannot sit upon the throne." (See full sermon [The Sinner's Advocate](#))



**Van Gorder** says: The practical obedience of a genuine believer is contrasted with the statement of the man who claims to know Christ, yet "keepeth not His commandments . . ." (1 John 2:4). To claim the knowledge of God yet disobey Him is an unresolvable contradiction. The evidence and the assurance that one knows God is simple obedience to His Word.

*Obedience to His Word is the measure of our love for Christ and is also the evidence of our fellowship and union with Him.*

**Mitchell** says: If obedience to the Word of God is not the desire of your heart, then, my friend, I would like to ask you a question. Have you really accepted Christ as your personal Saviour? Have you come into right relationship with Him? Obedience to His Word is the measure of our love for Christ and is also the evidence of our fellowship and union with Him.

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**Love** (26)(**agape**) is that selfless, sacrificial, supernatural, Spirit wrought love that characterizes the essence of God (1Jn 4:8), so again "like Father, like sons." From this definition, you should surely realize that you cannot love like this! Only by relying on the Spirit of Christ in you can you exhibit this quality of love (cf Gal 5:22+) . **Agape** may involve emotion, but it **must** always involve **action**. **Agape** is unrestricted, unrestrained, and unconditional. **Agape** love is the virtue that surpasses all others and in fact is the prerequisite for all the others. **Agape** does not condone or gloss over sin in the one loved but actively, purposely seeks the welfare of the one loved. To reiterate we have no capacity to generate **agape love** on our own, but are wholly dependent on [the Holy Spirit](#) to manifest this God-like, Christ-like love.

**AGAPE IN JOHN'S WRITINGS** - Jn. 5:42; Jn. 13:35; Jn. 15:9; Jn. 15:10; Jn. 15:13; Jn. 17:26; 1 Jn. 2:5; 1 Jn. 2:15; 1 Jn. 3:1; 1 Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 3:17; 1 Jn. 4:7; 1 Jn. 4:8; 1 Jn. 4:9; 1 Jn. 4:10; 1 Jn. 4:12; 1 Jn. 4:16; 1 Jn. 4:17; 1 Jn. 4:18; 1 Jn. 5:3; 2 Jn. 1:3; 2 Jn. 1:6; 3 Jn. 1:6

**Perfected** (reached maturity) ( [5048](#) ) (**teleioo** related to **teleios** from **telos** = an end, a purpose, an aim, a goal, consummate soundness, idea of being whole) means to be brought to the intended goal, to accomplish, to carry to consummation, to bring to an end or to the intended goal (**telos**). It means to be complete, mature, fully developed, full grown, brought to its end, finished, wanting nothing necessary to completeness or in good working order. It does not mean simply to terminate something but to carry it out to the full finish which is picked up in the translation "perfected". **Teleioo** signifies the attainment of consummate soundness and includes the idea of being made whole. Interestingly the **Gnostics** used this word group (**teleios**) of one fully initiated into their mysteries.

**Kenneth Wuest** - **Teleios** the adjective, and **teleioo** the verb. The adjective is used in the papyri, of heirs being of age, of women who have attained maturity, of full-grown cocks, of acacia trees in good condition, of a complete lampstand, of something in good working order or condition. To summarize; the meaning of the adjective includes the ideas of full-growth, maturity, workability, soundness, and completeness. The verb refers to the act of bringing the person or thing to any one of the aforementioned conditions. When applied to a Christian, the word refers to one that is spiritually mature, complete, well-rounded in his Christian character. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

**TELEIOO** - 24X/23V - **accomplish(2), accomplished(1), finish(1), fulfill(1), full number(1), made perfect(4), made...perfect(1), make...perfect(1), make perfect(1), perfect(2), perfected(7), reach...goal(1), spending the full number(1)**. Lk. 2:43; Lk. 13:32; Jn. 4:34; Jn. 5:36; Jn. 17:4; Jn. 17:23; Jn. 19:28; Acts 20:24; Phil. 3:12; Heb. 2:10; Heb. 5:9; Heb. 7:19; Heb. 7:28; Heb. 9:9; Heb. 10:1; Heb. 10:14; Heb. 11:40; Heb. 12:23; Jas. 2:22; 1 Jn. 2:5; 1 Jn. 4:12; 1 Jn. 4:17; 1 Jn. 4:18

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**LESSONS OF OBEDIENCE** - When young Kofi came home after Sunday school, his mother asked him what he had learned that morning. His quick reply spoke volumes: "Obedience . . . again!"

Although I'm many years older than Kofi, I agree that obedience to God is a lesson that we must, sometimes reluctantly, learn over and over again.

Oswald Chambers wrote: "The Lord does not give me rules, but He makes His standard very clear. If my relationship to Him is that of love, I will do what He says . . . . If I hesitate, it is because I love someone I have placed in competition with Him, namely, myself."

When we are obedient, we show God that we love Him and have more faith in Him than we do in ourselves. Arthur W. Pink said that love is "a principle of action, and it expresses itself . . . by deeds which please the object loved." To obey God means to relinquish what we want and to choose to do what He asks.

God requires the obedience of His followers, and Jesus placed great importance on it. He asked, "Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). And He issued this challenge: "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John

To say we follow Jesus Christ  
Without attempting to obey  
Reveals our lack of faith that He  
Will lead us right in every way.  
—Sper

**Obedience to God is an expression of our love for God.**

**1 John 2:6 the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked. [NASB: Lockman](#)**

**Greek:** ho legon (PAP) en auto menein (PAN) opheilei (3SPA) kathos ekeinos periepatesen (PAN) kai autos [houtos] peripatein. (3SAAS)

**Amplified:** Whoever says he abides in Him ought [as a personal debt] to walk and conduct himself in the same way in which He walked and conducted Himself. ([Lockman](#))

**ESV:** whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

**KJV:** He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

**NLT:** Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Christ did.

**Phillips:** The life of a man who professes to be living in God must bear the stamp of Christ.

**Wuest:** He who is constantly saying that he as a habit of life is living in close fellowship with and dependence upon Him is morally obligated just as that One conducted himself, also himself in the manner spoken of to be conducting himself. ([Wuest](#))

**Young's Literal:** He who is saying in him he doth remain, ought according as he walked also himself so to walk.

- **Who says:** 1Jn 2:4 1:6
- **He:** 1Jn 2:28 3:6 Jn 15:4-6
- **To walk:** 1Jn 1:7 Ps 85:13 Mt 11:29 Jn 13:15 1Co 11:1 Eph 5:2 1Pe 2:21
- [1 John 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:**

Matthew 4:1+ Then Jesus was **led up by the Spirit** into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Luke 4:1-2+ Jesus, **full of (CONTROLLED BY) the Holy Spirit**, returned from the Jordan and was **led around by the Spirit** in the wilderness 2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry.

Luke 4:14+ And Jesus returned to Galilee **in the power of the Spirit**, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district.

Acts 10:37-38+ you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed. 38 "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how **God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power**, and how **He went about doing good** and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

John 13:15+ "For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.

1 Corinthians 11:1+ **Be** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

Ephesians 5:2+ and **walk** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

1 Peter 2:21+ For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, **leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps**, (See famous book [In His Steps](#))

## WALKING LIKE JESUS CONFIRMS ABIDING IN HIM

Vine, Cole, Stott, Kruse, et al feel that this verse is best connected to the last clause of preceding verse - **By this we know that we are in Him**" (See preceding comments). **Colin Kruse** "This verse then spells out the basis on which people may 'know they are in him'." (See [The Letters of John](#))

*"If you have the life, it is bound to show itself,  
and if it does not, then you have not the life"*

-- D Martyn Lloyd-Jones

**The one who says** (lego present tense) he **abides** ([meno](#) - present tense) **in Him** (Christ) **ought** ([opheilo](#) - present tense) **himself to walk** ([peripateo](#) - present tense) **in the same manner as He walked** ([peripateo](#)) - **Says** is in the present tense indicating this person in continually claiming that he continually abides in Christ. **In Him** in context is clearly a reference not to the Father but to the Son, and so to abide **in Christ**. What does **abide in Him** mean? To **abide** in the Lord Jesus first is "defined" as walking like Jesus walked. Further, **abides** means to remain, to dwell, to live in and implies not only one's practice, but also one's fellowship, friendship, dependence, harmony, communion, etc (See Oneness of Covenant). Then John gives the "test," the criteria to assess whether this claim can be judged as true or false. He says that one's claim needs to be authenticated or validated by one's conduct. **Ought** ([opheilo](#) - present tense) conveys the idea that the one making the claim that he abides is continually bound by duty, moral obligation and/or necessity to walk (live, conduct one's self) the way Jesus **walked**. In other words, John is saying that the person who makes the claim that he **abides in Him** has a moral and spiritual obligation to walk the way Jesus walked. To say it another way, one can deduce from one's walk like Jesus that they possess the supernatural power to walk like Jesus and therefore are clearly **in Him**. You may be saying "I cannot walk like Jesus walked, because He was God and I'm not!" Remember that Jesus emptied Himself of His divine prerogatives and became a Man Who functioned in the power of the Holy Spirit and in so doing gave us the perfect example by the perfect Man of how we too can walk. Obviously we will never attain to His walk of perfection, but one who professes he abides in Him should definitely walk in the general direction (and manner) He walked. (See [Related Passages above](#))

**THOUGHT** - Do you understand that you cannot live the Christian life in your own power? You must rely on supernatural power, power provided by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Most Christians do not really understand this vital truth and thus we see so many Christians living lives like a yo-yo bobbing up and down! Remember that Jesus ascended and the Spirit descended. The Spirit is your power source. For more of this critical teaching see my discussion of [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)

*We abide in Christ  
as our Shelter, our Home, and our Life*

-- C H Spurgeon

**Warren Wiersbe** - To **abide** in Christ means to depend completely on Him for all that we need in order to live for Him and serve Him. It is a living relationship. As He lives out His life through us (cp Col 3:4), we are able to follow His example and walk as He walked. Paul expresses this experience perfectly: "Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). This is a reference to the work of the Holy Spirit. Christ is our Advocate in heaven (1John 2:1), to represent us before God when we sin. The Holy Spirit is God's Advocate for us here on earth.....Christ lives out His life through us by the power of the Spirit, who lives within our bodies. It is not by means of imitation that we abide in Christ and walk as He walked. No, it is through incarnation: through His Spirit, "Christ liveth in me." To walk in the light is to walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (cf. Gal. 5:16). (See [Be Real 1 John: Turning from Hypocrisy to Truth](#) or borrow [Bible exposition commentary](#))

**C H Spurgeon** was quite clear when he said "If any man abide in me, he shall bring forth fruit." Fruits of righteousness are good works, and they are evidences that we abide in Christ. **If I am living in sin day by day, what right have I to conclude I am a child of God?"** (See sermon - [Good Works - Titus 2:14](#))

**THOUGHT** - Indeed, as Spurgeon wisely asks "What right?" Dear reader, do not be deceived by the false teaching that says you can believe in Jesus and thereafter behave any way you please (e.g., teachings of [Zane Hodges](#))! Or the corollary false teaching that if you at any point in time in your life profess "belief" in Jesus Christ, then it makes no difference how you live after that because you are "saved" and you have a "fire insurance policy!" And you reason falsely that even if you spend the remainder of your days living in sin, you are still saved by your momentary "profession." (See [easy believism](#)) This is an affront to the Gospel of Jesus Christ which frees men from the shackles and domination of the [old Sin nature](#) and makes them slaves to a new Master (Ro 1:1+), energized, enabled and empowered by the Spirit of grace (Heb 10:29+), not the law

(Read Ro 6:16-18+). This is utter foolishness, sheer craziness! And this genre of false teaching will take many who are duped by it straight to an eternal hell! **Do not be deceived dear reader.** Genuine belief in Jesus will always show itself genuine by holy fruit in one's life. Genuine belief births holy behavior! And note carefully that we are not talking about **perfection** of one's life, but of the general **'direction'** of one's life. If one says he believes and lives like the devil, well, what would be the logical conclusion of his ultimate fate?

**D Edmond Hiebert** writes that "**Abides** ([meno](#)), a characteristic Johannine term, portrays habitual fellowship with Him as an active relationship that endures." ([1 John 1:5-2:6](#))

**NET Bible Note** on **abide** ([meno](#)) - "The Greek word ([meno](#)) translated resides indicates a close, intimate (and permanent) relationship between the believer and God. It is very important to note that for the author of the Gospel of John and the Johannine Epistles every genuine Christian has this type of relationship with God, and the person who does not have this type of relationship (cf. 2 John 9) is not a believer at all (in spite of what he or she may claim).

**W Hall Harris** - Insofar as the word "**abide**" indicates a close, intimate (and permanent) relationship between the believer and God, it is not inaccurate; but it must be remembered that for the author of the Gospel of John and the Johannine letters **every genuine Christian has this type of relationship with God**, and the person who does not have this type of relationship is **not a believer at all** (in spite of what he or she may claim). ([Ibid](#))

**Steven Cole** on **abide** writes "Dr. James Rosscup devotes an entire book to the theme of **abiding in Christ** as found in John 15 (ED: BORROW [Abiding in Christ: studies in John 15](#) - HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!). He sums up the concept of abiding in three ways ([Abiding in Christ](#), p. 116): "**Abiding** involves a person's relating himself to Christ the Vine, to His Person and His purpose; rejecting attitudes, words, actions, or interests which Christ's Word reveals He cannot share; and receiving the quality-essence of Christ's imparted life for authentic fulfillment." ([How to Know that You Know Him 1 John 2:3-6](#))

*"Now we abide in Christ in this sense, that we are joined to Him,  
as the stone is, in the wall, as the wave is in the sea, as the branch is in the vine,  
so are we in Christ*

**Spurgeon on in Him** - We have entered into Christ as into the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, as guest; into a banquet-hall, as returning travelers into their home. And now we **abide** — in Christ in this sense, that we are joined to Him : as the stone is, in the wall, as the wave is in the sea, as the branch is in the vine, so are we in Christ (Jn 15:4+). As the branch receives all its sap from the stem, so all the sap of spiritual life flows from Christ into us. If we were separated from Him, we should be as branches cut off from the vine, only fit to be gathered up for the fire, and to be burned (Jn 15:6+). So that we **abide in Christ** as our Shelter, our Home, and our Life. Today we remain in Christ, and hope (not "hope so" but absolute assurance of future good) for ever to remain in Him, as our Head. Ours is no transient union; while He lives as our Head we shall remain His members. We are nothing apart from Him (Jn 15:5, Col 3:4). As a finger is nothing without the head, as the whole body is nothing without the head, so should we be nothing without our Lord Jesus Christ. But we are in Him vitally, and therefore we dare ask the question, "Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?" ([In Him-Like He Is - Sermon on 1Jn 2:6](#))

**Hiebert** writes that "A believer's testimony involves moral obligation: "ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked." "Ought" (opheileo), rather than "must" (δεῖ), points to an abiding inner realization that "he who declares his position is morally bound to act [according] to the declaration which he has made." ([1 John 1:5-2:6](#))

## **LIVE LIKE CHRIST IF YOU PROFESS TO LIVE IN CHRIST!**

Now before you say "That sounds a little like [legalism](#) to me," remember that God never calls us to do anything for which He does not also empower us! Think with me a moment. If we are charged to live **like** Christ, does that not beg the question of "How did Christ live?" Or maybe a question like "He was God, so how could I possibly be expected to live like Him?" Both good questions! Yes, Christ never ceased to be God on earth, but He did relinquish His divine prerogatives (cf Php 2:6-7+) and took on flesh and blood to give us the perfect pattern of how we are to live. In short, Jesus the Man lived in the power of the Holy Spirit (cf Lk 4:1, 14+, Acts 10:38+, Eph 5:18+, Gal 5:16+, et al), the same Source which every believer has continual access! There is the answer. Yes, we are commanded to work out our salvation in fear and trembling (Php 2:12+) (OUR RESPONSIBILITY), but not in reliance on our natural power, but on His supernatural power, which continually energizes us with the desire and the power to walk in a manner pleasing to our Heavenly Father (cf Php 2:13+)(HIS PROVISION). Try it, you'll like it! Learn to daily confess sin which grieves and quenches the Spirit (and saps supernatural power - Eph 4:30+, 1 Th 5:19+), [jettison](#) your tendency toward [self-reliance](#) (cf **daily** death to self - Mk 8:34, Lk 9:23+), and rest your weight fully (trust) on the indwelling Spirit's ability to enable you. Notice, the Spirit does not just give you a little "[help](#)" for that implies you are doing some of the living like Christ in your own power (which you cannot

accomplish!). [Enable](#) means He gives us both the desire to live like Christ and the power to live like Christ (in Christ - learning to live and "breathe" in the "atmosphere" of Christ and His Spirit. It is a learning process. Don't give up. In time this Spirit filled life will become more "natural.").

**Vine** - The word [opheilo](#), rendered "ought," suggests the thought of a debt, and so of moral responsibility, a duty incumbent upon the one who makes the profession. The responsibility is to walk "even as" Christ walked, the "even as" suggesting the closest conformity to Him in character and conduct.

**Hiebert** writes that - A believer's testimony involves moral obligation: "ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked." **Ought** ([opheilo](#)), rather than **must** (dei), points to an abiding inner realization that he who declares his position is morally bound to act [according] to the declaration which he has made. ([1 John 1:5-2:6](#))

*If we say we must do. If we talk, we must walk, or it will, be mere talk.*

*If we make the profession of abiding in Christ,*

*we must prove it by our practice of walking with Christ.*

-- C H Spurgeon

**Spurgeon** - A Bible **ought** has great weight with a conscientious man. **Ought** it to be so? Then it shall be so, God helping me. If we **say** we must **do**. If we **talk**, we must **walk**, or it will, be mere talk. If we *make the profession of abiding* in Christ, we *must prove it by our practice of walking* with Christ. If we say that we are in Christ and abide in Him, we must take care that our life and character are conformed to Christ, **or** else we shall be making an empty boast. This is true of every man who says he is in Christ, for the text is put in the most general and absolute manner: be the man old or young, rich or poor, learned or simple, pastor or hearer, it is incumbent upon him to live like Christ if he professes to live in Christ. ([In Him-Like He Is - Sermon on 1Jn 2:6](#))

*A Bible "OUGHT" has great weight  
with a conscientious man.*

**Ought** ([opheilo](#)) **himself to walk** ([peripateo](#)) - **Walk** in present tense calls for this to be our lifestyle, not perfection, but definitely direction! It should be "a continuous performance, not a spasmodic spurt." (A T Robertson This is not optional if we say we are believers - a follower of Christ should follow in His steps (1 Peter 2:21+). If we say we are abiding in Christ, our walk should match our profession. John is clearly giving us a parameter by which we can discern whether our profession of faith is genuine.

**THOUGHT** - John's "logic" is simple - If you say you are "in Christ", in union with Him, in oneness with Him, then it follows you are a partaker of the divine nature (2Pe 1:4+), and thus "equipped" to be able to walk the way Jesus walked. How did He walk? What was His source of strength? Jesus was filled with the Spirit (Lk 4:1+) and led by the Spirit (Mt 4:1+) and in dependence on the Spirit (Acts 10:37-38+), with prayerful dependence on and submission to the will of His Father (Jn 5:19, 30+, Jn 8:28, 29+), He walked for 3+ years giving us His example. John is saying that if you are in Him, then you have the power to imitate His walk as a Man. And if there the general tenor of your conduct (your walk) is not similar to Jesus, there is cause for pause to honestly assess whether or not you are genuinely in Him, abiding in Him. **HERE'S THE CRUCIAL QUESTION** - Are you (am I) [Walking Like Jesus Walked?](#)

**W Hall Harris** - The obligation to conduct oneself the way Jesus did is likewise placed upon all true Christians. It is not an option for Christians not to follow the example of Jesus. We may presume, however, that this is a major part of the fault the author finds with his opponents - while claiming to "reside" in God, they are not following the example of Jesus in their conduct. ([Ibid](#))

*Faith is not only a decision, but an ongoing personal relationship with Jesus  
that naturally issues in daily Christlike living.*

**Bob Utley** on **ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked**- This is another emphasis on "true faith" as lifestyle faith (cf. James 2:14-26). Faith is not only a decision, but an ongoing personal relationship with Jesus that naturally issues in daily Christlike living. Eternal life has observable characteristics! This is parallel to 1 John 1:7. The goal of Christianity is not just heaven when we die, but Christlikeness now (cf. Rom. 8:29-30; 2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 4:19; Eph. 1:4; 1 Thess. 3:13; 4:3; 1 Pet. 1:15)! We are saved to serve. We are sent on mission as He was sent on mission. As He laid down His life for others, so we too, must see ourselves as servants (cf. 1 John 3:16).

*The test of our religious experience is whether it produces  
a reflection of the life of Jesus in our daily life;  
if it fails this elementary test, it is false.*

-- I Howard Marshall

**Gary Burge** - The second test of authenticity, of genuine spiritual vigor and life, has to do with living as Jesus lived (1Jn 2:6-8). If we

claim to live in Him, we must also walk as He did. (See [The Letters of John - Page 99](#)).

*Faith and obedience are bound up in the same bundle.*

*He that obeys God, trusts God; and he that trusts God, obeys God.*

-- C H Spurgeon

**Steven Cole** notes that while no one can walk perfectly as Jesus did in His humanity "everyone who claims to abide in Christ should have the same focus and direction, not to act in independence from God, but in total dependence on Him. We should not live to please ourselves apart from God, but to do the things that are pleasing to Him....(Spiritual) Walking is not as spectacular or swift as running, leaping, or flying, but it is a steady, sure movement in one direction. It implies progress toward a destination or goal. A walk is made up of many specific steps, but it points to the overall tenor or general quality of a life, not to any one step. To **walk as Jesus walked** means that our lives should be characterized by daily dependence on God, submission to Him, and obedience to His will. (ED: UNFORTUNATELY COLE LEAVES OUT THE KEY "INGREDIENT" - CONTINUAL RELIANCE ON THE HOLY SPIRIT) Our overall aim in life will be to seek first His kingdom and righteousness (Mt 6:33). We will seek to please Him by our thoughts, words, and deeds (Col 1:10, Eph 5:10). While we will never perfectly walk as Jesus walked, it should be our constant aim and effort to do so." ([How to Know that You Know Him 1 John 2:3-6](#))

**in the same manner** - Jesus is to be our example for our spiritual walk. We see this idea repeatedly in the New Testament..

For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you **an example** for you to **follow in His steps**, (1Pe 2:21+)

**Be** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ. (1 Cor 11:1+)

You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For **I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.** (Jn 13:13-15+)

**He walked** ([peripateo](#)) - If we are truly **in Him**, He is in us via His indwelling Spirit (Spirit of Christ, Ro 8:9, 1Pe 1:11 Spirit of Jesus Acts 16:7, Spirit of Jesus Christ Php 1:19, Spirit of His Son Gal 4:6), Who was His source of power (Lk 4:14, Lk 5:17, Acts 10:37, 38) and the source of our power to walk as He walked!

*It is not Christ's walking on the sea,*

*but His ordinary walk, that we are called on to imitate.*

-- Martin Luther

**THOUGHT** - The question is how can we possibly imitate Jesus? The answer has already been alluded to above, but for more in depth treatment of this vital truth, read the following article for a better understanding of how this is possible (and it is possible or God would not have commanded us through Paul to imitate Jesus! Paul wrote "**Be** (present imperative = make this your lifestyle! [See role of Spirit Who enables us to obey this command](#)) imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ." (1 Cor 11:1-note). Several years ago there was a popular saying "[What Would Jesus Do? \(WWJD\)](#)" While that is fine, if you think about it for a moment, this question could have a tendency to place you under the heavy grace-less burden of [legalism](#)! Why? Because you may be tempted to try to do what Jesus did in reliance on your own *natural* strength. You might succeed for a while, but eventually you will become frustrated, tired and even burnt out! In fact, I think the better question that we should ask is "**How Did Jesus Do It? (HDJDI)**" In other words how did Jesus as a Man forgive those who wronged Him, not return evil for evil, etc? As we summarized above -- by being continually filled with and reliant upon the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit, the same One to Whom we have continual access! Once this vital prerequisite for power is understood, then we can ask the question throughout the day "What would Jesus do?" And in reliance on His Spirit, we can follow through with Christ-like forgiveness, love, turning of the other cheek, etc. Naturally **IM**-possible! Supernaturally **HIM**-possible!

- [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)

**Hiebert** explains that **walked** "calls for careful conformity to the pattern left by Christ as He engaged in His daily activities here on earth. The completed example now stands before the believer, challenging him to be walking "in the same manner" (houtos), in exact conformity to the example before him. In thus insisting that there is an inseverable bond between the believer's professed relationship to Christ and his morally consistent conduct, John delivered a crucial blow against the Gnostics who tried to divorce their claimed spiritual enlightenment from their daily moral conduct." ([1 John 1:5-2:6](#))

**Wuest** comments that the verb **meno** (abide) "refers to the saint's fellowship with and dependence upon Him, communion,

closeness of intercourse. The word **peripateō** (walk) means “to order one’s behavior, to conduct one’s self,” (and) speaks of the saint’s manner of life. The first idea, the saint’s position in Christ, makes possible his Christian manner of life. The second, the saint’s fellowship with and dependence upon the Lord Jesus, conditions that manner of life, makes it what it should be. The word **peripateō** literally means “to walk around.” And since the way a person walks is often a good index as to the kind of person he is, the word not only referred to the physical act of walking, but came to have the idea of the manner of life of the person.’...(**Peripateo**) is a **present** infinitive in the Greek text emphasizing habitual, continuous action. The Christ-like life here admonished must be the continuous, habitual, moment by moment experience of the believer, no spasmodic, infrequent sort of thing.([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

**D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones** sums up these verses "If you have the life, it is bound to show itself, and if it does not, then you have not the life....You cannot be receiving the life of Christ without becoming like Him. You cannot walk with God without keeping His commandments. You cannot know God without immediately, automatically loving Him. Love always manifests itself by doing what the object of its love desires."

**Barker** - The author is not claiming that the walk of Jesus can be perfectly imitated but that there is a divine imperative which must be taken seriously—for believers to live according to the way Jesus lived. **Also included is the true test for those who want to know whether their life in God is real or mere fantasy:** To claim a relationship to God necessitates a commitment to moral standards expressed positively (to love as God himself loves) and negatively (to obey commandments and not to sin). (The Expositor’s Bible Commentary)

**Colin Kruse** - Those who keep God’s commands may have assurance that they are people who know God; those who claim to know God while not obeying his commands are liars; those who say they live in God must walk as Jesus walked, that is, keeping God’s commands to them as Jesus obeyed God’s commands to him. (See [The Letters of John - Page 82](#))

**J Ligon Duncan** comments on 1Jn 2:6: "In other words, here's somebody who's saying, "Oh, I'm **abiding** in Christ, John." And John says, "Good. Well, then if you're **abiding** in Christ, then one thing that will happen is you'll walk like Christ."--in other words, you'll live like Christ. And how did Christ live? He lived in obedience to the Father. So, John is saying that you'll **abide** in Christ. And what does he mean by "**abiding in Christ**"? Well, to **abide in Christ** is to experience a life-giving relationship of the deepest and closest sorts with God through Jesus Christ, a relationship that issues forth not in passivity and indifference and indolence and inattention to duty, but a relationship that issues forth in activity and commitment and effort and love for God's will and following after Christ's way of living. And so John says, "Good. You abide in Christ? Well, then no doubt your whole life will have been transformed by that." If you're resting in Jesus Christ, if you've found Him to be the Source of every spiritual blessing, you're trusting in Him for salvation; you're fellowshiping with Him in grace; then your whole life will have been changed. You see, everyone who is **united with Christ** expresses that **union with Christ** by **living like Christ**, by emulating Christ's love for these to the Heavenly Father. Oh, we'll never do it perfectly. If you're looking for perfect obedience as the answer to this test, then no one will pass this test. But by grace God always works some obedience and some love for obedience in the life of those who claim to be His disciples....Now, my friends, that message is important for us; it's important for at least two reasons. It's important because there may be some of us here today who profess to be Christians who are not living in accordance with God's word and really have no deep desire to do so. And what John is saying to you is, "**You're not a Christian, friend. Come to grips with that. Realize that you need grace! You don't need to be brushed up and made to live it better; you need grace; you need saving grace!**" And there may be other Christians here today that are wrestling with a lack of assurance because of imperfections in their lives. And John is saying, "I'm not asking for perfect obedience to God's word; I'm asking you to look at your heart and answer this question: Do you long to obey God's word? If you answer that question 'yes,'" John says, "well, then I have some help for you here." He's going to give that help to you in the rest of this book. But, my friends, in that way this message is for all of us today. May God grant us to answer rightly John's questions. ([If You Love Me, Keep My Commandments](#))

**Abides** (3306) (**meno**) in simple terms means to remain in the same place or position over a period of time. In the present context, **meno** means more than simply remaining in a place. **Meno** is often used of persons abiding or dwelling in a home, "which implies more than mere position, but rather fellowship, communion, dependence, harmony, friendship (cf uses of **meno** in Mt 26:38, Lk 1:56, Lk 19:5, Jn 1:39, 40).

**MENO IN JOHN'S WRITINGS** - Jn. 1:32; Jn. 1:33; Jn. 1:38; Jn. 1:39; Jn. 2:12; Jn. 3:36; Jn. 4:40; Jn. 5:38; Jn. 6:27; Jn. 6:56; Jn. 7:9; Jn. 8:31; Jn. 8:35; Jn. 9:41; Jn. 10:40; Jn. 11:6; Jn. 11:54; Jn. 12:24; Jn. 12:34; Jn. 12:46; Jn. 14:10; Jn. 14:17; Jn. 14:25; Jn. 15:4; Jn. 15:5; Jn. 15:6; Jn. 15:7; Jn. 15:9; Jn. 15:10; Jn. 15:16; Jn. 19:31; Jn. 21:22; Jn. 21:23; 1 Jn. 2:6; 1 Jn. 2:10; 1 Jn. 2:14; 1 Jn. 2:17; 1 Jn. 2:19; 1 Jn. 2:24; 1 Jn. 2:27; 1 Jn. 2:28; 1 Jn. 3:6; 1 Jn. 3:9; 1 Jn. 3:14; 1 Jn. 3:15; 1 Jn. 3:17; 1 Jn. 3:24; 1 Jn. 4:12; 1 Jn. 4:13; 1 Jn. 4:15; 1 Jn. 4:16; 2 Jn. 1:2; 2 Jn. 1:9; Rev. 17:10

**Ought** (3784)(**opheilo** from **ophéllō** = heap up)means to owe something to someone. Literally it speaks of financial indebtedness

and thus means to owe money, to be in debt, or to describe that which is due (Mt 18:28, Lk 7:41, 16:5, 7, Philemon 1:18). The verb *opheilo* was sometimes used to describe "the debt" itself. Figuratively, *opheilo* describes a sense of indebtedness to someone for something. For example, it was used to describe owing good will (1Co 7:3), love (Ro 13:8 = we can never love enough and will always "owe" this debt). **Opheilo** in most of the NT uses conveys the sense of necessity, duty or to be under obligation (obligation = moral requirement which conveys the binding force of civility, kindness or gratitude, when the performance of a duty cannot be enforced by law). The idea is that one is held or bound by duty, moral obligation or necessity to do something.

**OPHEILO - 35X/34V - had(1), have(1), indebted(2), must(1), obligated(3), ought(15), owe(4), owed(4), owes(1), responsible(1), should(2).** Matt. 18:28; Matt. 18:30; Matt. 18:34; Matt. 23:16; Matt. 23:18; Lk. 7:41; Lk. 11:4; Lk. 16:5; Lk. 16:7; Lk. 17:10; Jn. 13:14; Jn. 19:7; Acts 17:29; Rom. 13:8; Rom. 15:1; Rom. 15:27; 1 Co. 5:10; 1 Co. 7:36; 1 Co. 9:10; 1 Co. 11:7; 1 Co. 11:10; 2 Co. 12:11; 2 Co. 12:14; Eph. 5:28; 2 Thess. 1:3; 2 Thess. 2:13; Phlm. 1:18; Heb. 2:17; Heb. 5:3; Heb. 5:12; 1 Jn. 2:6; 1 Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 4:11; 3 Jn. 1:8

**Walked** (Behaved, Conducted) (4043) (**peripateo** from **peri** = about, around + **pateo** = walk, tread) literally means to walk around, and figuratively means to conduct one's life or order one's behavior (cf (Ephesians 2:10; Eph 4:1, 17; Eph 5:1, 8, Eph 5:15; Col 1:10; 1 Th 2:12) The 39 uses in the Gospels always refer to literal, physical walking. Seven of the 8 uses in Acts are also in the literal sense (except Acts 21:21+). ([See Spurgeon's comments on what it means to walk](#))

**PERIPATEO IN JOHN'S WRITINGS** - Jn. 1:36; Jn. 5:8; Jn. 5:9; Jn. 5:11; Jn. 5:12; Jn. 6:19; Jn. 6:66; Jn. 7:1; Jn. 8:12; Jn. 10:23; Jn. 11:9; Jn. 11:10; Jn. 11:54; Jn. 12:35; Jn. 21:18; 1 Jn. 1:6; 1 Jn. 1:7; 1 Jn. 2:6; 1 Jn. 2:11; 2 Jn. 1:4; 2 Jn. 1:6; 3 Jn. 1:3; 3 Jn. 1:4; Rev. 2:1; Rev. 3:4; Rev. 9:20; Rev. 16:15; Rev. 21:24

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## 1 John 2:6 - [WWJD? \(What Would Jesus Do\)](#) (J.C. Ryle, "[Holiness, Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, and Roots](#)")

A holy man will strive to be like our Lord Jesus Christ. He will not only live the life of faith in Him, and draw from Him all his daily peace and strength — but he will also labor to be conformed to His image (Romans 8:29). It will be his aim . . .

- to bear with and forgive others — even as Christ forgave us;
- to be unselfish — even as Christ pleased not Himself;
- to walk in love — even as Christ loved us;
- to be lowly-minded and humble — even as Christ humbled Himself.

A holy man will remember . . .

- that Christ would continually deny Himself in order to minister to others;
- that He was meek and patient under undeserved insults;
- that He thought more of godly poor men, than of kings;
- that He was full of love and compassion to sinners;
- that He was bold and uncompromising in denouncing sin;
- that He sought not the praise of men, when He might have had it;
- that He went about doing good;
- that He was separate from worldly people;
- that He continued instant in prayer;
- that He would not let even His nearest relations stand in His way, when God's work was to be done.

All these things, a holy man will try to remember. By them, he will endeavor to shape his course in life.

He will lay to heart the saying of John: "He who says he abides in Christ, ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (1 John 2:6); and the saying of Peter, that "Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that you should follow His steps" (1 Peter 2:21, cf 1Co 11:1).

Happy is he who has learned to make Christ his "all," both for salvation and example! Much time would be saved, and much sin prevented — if men would oftener ask themselves the question: "**What would Jesus have said and done — if He were in my place?**"

**COMMENT** - While I love Bishop Ryle's points that relate to walking as Jesus walked (1Jn 2:6), I would add that the power to walk like Jesus walked is the same power Jesus relied on, the Holy Spirit. To attempt to walk like Jesus walked in our own fleshly strength is doomed to disaster (including putting yourself under legalistic constraints you simply cannot carry out!) We simply cannot succeed unless we depend on the Holy Spirit! The following article helps you understand this critically important dynamic which I fear is sorely missing in the



teaching in many evangelical circles - [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#) There is a tendency to shy away from too much teaching on the Spirit for fear that one might be labelled a bit "radical"! And while I appreciate the intent of the famous slogan "WWJD" I think it has the potential to lead one into legalism. WWJD needs to be supplemented with what I like to call HDJD, or "How Did Jesus Do it"? [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#) addresses the HDJD approach.

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**ILLUSTRATION OF WALKING THE TALK** - A congregation was singing, as a closing hymn, the familiar song, "For You I Am Praying." The speaker turned to a man on the platform and asked quietly, "For whom are you praying?"

The man was stunned. "Why, I guess I'm not praying for anybody. Why do you ask?"

"Well, I just heard you say, 'For you I am praying,' and I thought you meant it," the preacher replied.

"Oh, no," said the man. "I'm just singing."

Pious talk! A religion of words! To paraphrase James 1:22+, "We should be doers of the Word as well as talkers of the Word." We must walk what we talk. It is not enough to know the language; we must also live the life. "If we say—" then we ought also to do! (Wiersbe - [Be Real 1 John: Turning from Hypocrisy to Truth](#))

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You are writing a gospel,  
A chapter each day,  
By the deeds that you do,  
By the words that you say;  
Men read what you write,  
Whether faithless or true.  
Say—what is the gospel,  
According to you?  
—Paul Gilbert

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In the February 26, 1963, issue of *Look*, C. P. Snow made this trenchant comment concerning Winston Churchill: "He has not only helped to save us from dying. He has shown us a pattern of how life can be lived."

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Leslie Flynn points out that the Italian word for *influence* is *influenza*. The word *influenza* was introduced into English in the mid-1700s, apparently coming from the Italian phrase which attributed the origin of this malady to an *influenza di freddo* (influence of the cold). We are, by our very natures, very contagious people—our example tends to spread to others as easily as the flu. Everyone exerts influence.

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The comedian Sam Levenson once recalled that his over-protective mother went with him on his very first day of school and insisted on talking to the teacher before leaving him. Levenson said that, among other things, his mother told the teacher that if he misbehaved she should punish the boy next to him. Why? "My little boy learns by example," she said.

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**C H Spurgeon** - I believe that many weak ones in our churches are seriously injured, if not entirely broken down, by following the example of their ministers in matters wherein they come short of the Lord's mind. How grievous it would be if any believers were dwarfed through our conduct!

If we were better, our church-members would be better.

A minister soon gets round him people like himself: "like priest, like people."

He that cannot be safely imitated ought not to be tolerated in a pulpit.

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**G. Campbell Morgan** once received a letter from a man who was converted under his ministry. The man spoke of coming into the church as a boy, neglected and hungry, and as he listened to the great preacher he resolved that he, too, would like to become a preacher of the gospel. Not only did he become a minister, but in the course of time his son also went into the ministry. In the letter the man said: "From that night you became my great human ideal.... I think I have read every book you have written. I placed your picture on the fly-leaf of my Bible, and I have never stood up to preach without first turning to look upon it. It somehow helps me more than anything else."

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I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day.  
I'd rather one would walk with me than merely show the way.  
The eye's a better pupil and much sharper than the ear.  
Fine counsel can confuse me, but example's always clear.  
The lectures you deliver may be very wise and true,  
But I'd rather get my lesson by observing what you do.  
—Author unknown

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We unconsciously imitate what pleases us and approximate to the characters we most admire.—Christian Nestell Bovee (1820–1904), U.S. author and lawyer

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I talk and talk and talk, and I haven't taught people in fifty years what my father taught by example in one week.—Mario Cuomo, former governor of New York

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**Like Jesus** - He who says he abides in [Jesus] ought himself also to walk just as He walked. —1 John 2:6

During a children's church service, the teacher talked about the first of the Ten Commandments: "You shall have no other gods before Me" (Ex. 20:3). She suggested some ways for the kids to keep this command. She said, "Nothing should come before God—not candy, not schoolwork, not video games." She told them that putting God first meant that time with Him reading the Bible and praying should come before anything else.

An older child in the group responded with a thought-provoking question. She asked if being a Christian was about keeping rules or if instead God wanted to be involved in all areas of our life.

Sometimes we make the mistake of viewing the Bible as a list of rules. Certainly obeying God (John 14:21) and spending time with Him are important, but not because we need to be rule-keepers. Jesus and the Father had a loving relationship. When we have a relationship with God, we desire to spend time with Him and obey Him so we can become more like Jesus. John said, "He who says he abides in [Jesus] ought himself also to walk just as He walked" (1 John 2:6). He's the example we can follow.

When we want to understand how to love, or how to be humble, or how to have faith, or even how to set our priorities, we can look at Jesus and follow His heart. By Anne Cetas ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, as I look ahead to another day, I give myself  
to be led by Your Spirit. Give discernment in  
priorities, but most of all a sensitive heart to live like  
Jesus did—filled with Your love and power. Amen.

Jesus calls us to follow Him.

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**The World Is Watching** - He who says he abides in [Jesus] ought himself also to walk just as He walked. —1 John 2:6

If the people in your community were asked about the Christians who live there, what do you think they would say? Would they say they recognize Christians by their love, or because of something else?

Consider these two true situations: In one small town a restaurant decided to close on Sunday nights because the staff refused to work for the after-evening-church crowd. The people who came from church were rude, messy, and left small tips.

In another town, the manager of a store that sold concert tickets reported that some of the rudest people she had ever met were several who had bought tickets to hear a well-known Christian singing group.

Sometimes we don't realize it, but the non-Christian world is watching us. Our neighbors and acquaintances and others we encounter notice our behavior. They know that if we claim to be followers of Christ we are supposed to be kind and compassionate. They know that our lives should reflect love and Christlikeness (John 13:35; 1 John 2:6). They know that we shouldn't be so busy with our own interests that we don't love other people.

Let's make sure the people who are watching our lives will want to get to know our Savior. By Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I want my life to shine for Jesus  
So that everywhere I go  
The watching world will see He loves them  
And His saving grace will know.  
—Hess

Nothing is so attractive as being like Christ.

## Marks/Tests of a true Christian from 1 John

1 John 5:13 THESE THINGS I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

THESE THINGS: This phrase has reference to all that John has written in his letter. (The MacArthur Bible Commentary)

### TRUE CHRISTIAN

#### I. DOCTRINAL TESTS

##### 1. Scriptural views of SIN

Confesses sin.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

##### 2. Scriptural views of JESUS

Believes Jesus is man.

1 John 4:2 This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God

Believes Jesus is God.

1 John 4:15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.

Believes Jesus is the Messiah.

1 John 5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God

#### II. ETHICAL/MORAL TESTS

##### 1. Obeys God

Obeys/Keeps God's commands.

1 John 2:3 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

1 John 3:24 The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him.

Does God's will.

1 John 2:17 the one who does the will of God lives forever.

##### 2. Lives a righteous life (a life of holiness)

Walks in the light.

1 John 1:7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Walks as Jesus did.

1 John 2:6 Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did.

Practices righteousness.

1 John 2:29 If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.

1 John 3:7 Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous

Purifies himself.

1 John 3:3 And every one who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Does not practice sin.

1 John 3:9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him

1 John 5:18 We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin

3. Loves the brethren

Loves the brethren.

1 John 2:10 The one who loves his brother abides in the Light

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

1 John 4:12 if we love one another, God abides in us

Meets his brother's needs.

1 John 3:17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

Loves with actions and truth.

1 John 3:18 Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

4. Does not love the world

Does not love the world.

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Overcomes the world.

1 John 5:4 every one born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

5. Perseveres

Remains with us.

1 John 2:19 They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

Overcomes false teachers/teaching.

1 John 4:4 You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

Listens to God's people.

1 John 4:6 We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

6. Has the Holy Spirit

- 1 John 2:20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.  
1 John 3:24 And this is how we know that He lives in us: We know it by the Spirit He gave us.  
1 John 3:24 And this is how we know that He lives in us: We know it by the Spirit He gave us.

## **FALSE CHRISTIAN/PROFESSOR**

### **I. DOCTRINAL TESTS**

#### 1. Unscriptural views of SIN

Claims to be without sin.

- 1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.  
1 John 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

#### 2. Unscriptural views of JESUS

Denies that Jesus is the Messiah.

- 1 John 2:22 Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ?

Denies Jesus.

- 1 John 2:23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.

Does not believe testimony about Jesus.

- 1 John 4:3 every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God  
1 John 5:10 Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son.

### **II. ETHICAL/MORAL TESTS**

#### 1. Does not obey God

Does not do what Jesus commands.

- 1 John 2:4 The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what He commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

#### 2. Lives a sinful life.

Walks in the darkness.

- 1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth

Practices sin.

- 1 John 3:6 No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen Him or known Him.  
1 John 3:8 the one who practices sin is of the devil

Does not practice righteousness.

- 1 John 3:10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

#### 3. Does not love the brethren

Hates the brethren.

- 1 John 2:9 The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now.  
1 John 2:11 But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness  
1 John 3:15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life

abiding in him.

1 John 4:20 If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.

Does not love the brethren.

1 John 3:10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

1 John 4:8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Shows no mercy to needy brethren.

1 John 3:17 If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?

#### 4. Loves the world

Loves the world.

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Has worldly values.

1 John 4:5 They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them.

#### 5. Does not persevere

Abandons the brethren.

1 John 2:19 They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

Does not listen to God's people.

1 John 4:6 We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us.

#### 6. Does not have the Holy Spirit

1 John 2:20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.

1 John 3:24 And this is how we know that He lives in us: We know it by the Spirit He gave us.

1 John 3:24 And this is how we know that He lives in us: We know it by the Spirit He gave us.