

# The First Letter from JOHN

## *The Word of Life*

**L**et me tell you about the One who has existed from the very beginning. He is the Word<sup>a</sup> who gives Life! And we have heard those marvelous words of Life from His very own lips. We have seen Him with our eyes, and have gazed upon Him in amazement! We have even touched Him with our hands.

<sup>2</sup>The very One who gives life actually appeared to us! We saw Him! And because of what we have seen, we now bear witness and report to you concerning this Eternal Life, who was with the Father and who was so clearly revealed to us.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>3</sup>So we are here telling you about the One whom we have actually seen and heard, so that you may join us in our warm fellowship. And the wonderful truth is that our warm fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

<sup>4</sup>We are writing these things so that your joy may be full and overflowing.

**1:1a** *Word* is one of the names of Jesus Christ. He came with God's word, or God's message, to man. God revealed Himself, and expressed Himself to mankind thru Christ, telling us how we could receive His forgiveness and eternal life. And by His death and resurrection for us, Christ became the very means by which we can now receive that eternal life. As the Word of God, He is also the One thru whom God spoke the worlds into existence. Genesis 1:1-31; Hebrews 11:3; 2 Peter 3:5-7.

**1:2a** ... *in human form in such greatness, majesty, and power that there is no doubt in our minds as to who He is.*

**1:5a** *Light* is a sign of life, purity, truth, knowledge, wisdom, beauty, joy, prosperity, and happiness.

**1:5b** *Darkness* is a sign of all that is the opposite of light.

**1:5c** A strong negative. *No, not even one speck of darkness.*

**1:7a** *Or living a holy life* ... Hebrews 12:14.

**1:7b** The measure of light (i.e., holiness) which we may have is not the same in *degree*, but it is of the same *kind* that God has. The true Christian in his character and feelings resembles God. 1 John

## *Living in the Light*

<sup>5</sup>This, then, is the message that we have heard from Him, and now share with you: God is light!<sup>a</sup> There is no darkness<sup>b</sup> at all<sup>c</sup> in Him.

<sup>6</sup>So if we should say we are enjoying warm fellowship with God, but we're living in the darkness of sin, we're lying! We're not telling the truth!

<sup>7</sup>But if we're living in the light,<sup>a</sup> as God does, and living as we sincerely believe He would live if He were in our place,<sup>b</sup> we are having continuous, warm fellowship with Him, as well as with other true followers of the Lord. And when we are in that joyful relationship with God, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, continues to cleanse us from every sin.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>8</sup>If we say we never sin, we're only fooling ourselves, and there's no truth whatever in our claim.

<sup>9</sup>But, if we humbly and sincerely make a practice of confessing<sup>a</sup> our sins to God when we have failed Him, He will be faithful and true to His promise to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from

2:6.

**1:7c** Even when we walk in the light in the best way we know, we are not perfect. But if our heart is truly sincere with God, we have His promise of continual cleansing and forgiveness. But for this to apply to us, we must continually seek to know God's will, and do it. It requires the same surrender to Christ to live daily for God as it did when you were first converted.

Remember, the gate that leads to eternal life is narrow, but so is the path you must daily walk with God in order to get there. Matthew 7:13-14.

**1:9a** It's continuous action that's called for here. When you receive Christ as Lord and Savior, your past sins are forgiven. Then, with God's help (Philippians 2:13), God expects you to begin living as He would have you live. Christ's death on the cross was sufficient to enable God to forgive your past, present, and future sins. But according to the truth given here, you are not forgiven the sins of the present time until you confess to God that in spite of your best and holiest intentions you have sinned against Him—and name the sins.

An essential part of confession before our High Priest (Jesus) is the absolute sincere intention of

all the selfish and immoral things we have done.

<sup>10</sup>If we claim we never sin, we're calling God a liar, and have refused to accept what He has so plainly told us about ourselves.

### *Jesus Is Our Helper*

**2** My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you won't sin. But if any of us should sin, we have One who will act as our Lawyer and speak to the Father in our defense. He is Jesus Christ, the One who always does what is right and pleasing to God.

<sup>2</sup>He's the One who suffered and died on the cross to make amends to God for our sins. And He didn't die for only our sins, but for the sins of everyone in the whole world!<sup>a</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Now here's how we can know if we are truly converted to Jesus—if we continue to do what He has told us to do, and if we refrain from doing what He has told us not to do.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>4</sup>The person who says, "I'm a Christian," but doesn't do what Christ has told us to do, and not do, is a liar, and there's no truth in his claim.

<sup>5</sup>But a love for God has truly been perfected<sup>a</sup> in anyone who makes a practice of obeying what Christ has commanded us. This is how we can have continued, definite assurance<sup>b</sup> that we are united<sup>b</sup> to Him.

forsaking the sins we confess. We cannot ask forgiveness for sins, and expect to receive God's forgiveness, if we have little or no intention of forsaking those sins. As we just said, it takes the same surrender to daily walk the narrow and difficult path that leads to Heaven (Matthew 7:13-14), as it did to enter the narrow gate that put you on that path in the first place. See Luke 13:23-30, and the notes.

**2:2a** So He died for your sins too, whether you ever accept Him as your Savior and surrender to Him as your Lord, or not. He's done all He can for you, until you accept the gift of everlasting life which God now offers you because of what Jesus did for you.

When in all sincerity, you accept God's forgiveness, and turn from living to please yourself to living to please God, there's no limit to what God may do for you and thru you for others. Yes, it will cost you something to be a Christian. It may cost you plenty. But with God's help you can do it. It will cost you infinitely more not to turn to God—both in this life, and in the great eternity that's ahead for all of us.

**2:3a** It's good that the Bible tells us here how we can know if we are truly converted to the Lord and are on our way to Heaven. Be honest with yourself

<sup>6</sup>And whoever claims that he is living in union with Christ, is under a special, personal obligation<sup>a</sup> to consistently live and act as He did.

### *The Command to Love Others*

<sup>7</sup>My dear brothers and sisters, what I'm writing you here is not a new teaching, but an old command that you've heard from the very beginning. I'm only emphasizing an old command that you've had preached to you continually since the time you first heard the Great News.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>8</sup>And yet, I am also now writing you about a new command. It's also about what is true concerning Jesus, and what must now also be true about you,<sup>a</sup> because the darkness<sup>b</sup> is passing away and the true light is already shining.

<sup>9</sup>Anyone who says he is living in the light, and yet has hatred<sup>a</sup> for someone,<sup>b</sup> is still living in darkness.

<sup>10</sup>But anyone who truly loves others, is one who makes a practice of living in the light. He makes sure there is nothing in his life that will cause others to stumble and sin.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>11</sup>But whoever has hatred for someone is in darkness and walks about in darkness. He doesn't even realize where he's headed, because the darkness has blinded him.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>12</sup> I am writing to you, my dear children,

when you make the test concerning your own spiritual condition. Realize that it's not only important that we refrain from doing that which is sin, but also that we obey God by doing what He has commanded us to do. And the New Testament is literally filled with instructions and commands for us. That is why we need to read God's word every day, because we forget so soon.

**2:5a** This word is in the passive voice in the Greek, indicating that the subject is receiving the action. We must each allow God and His word to bring about in us a true love for God. But this doesn't mean that we don't have a part in perfecting that love. The more we obey God and spend time with Him, the more we will love Him.

**2:5b** Both words are present tense (indicating continued state or action) and indicative mood (the mood of certainty).

**2:6a** Some versions use the words "ought" or "should" here, but the primary meaning of the Greek word *opheilo* is *owe*, *indebted*, or *obligated*. So to use the word "ought" or "should" is to water down this very important statement in God's word. For hundreds of years this mistranslated word has given comfort to sinning "Christians". It has and is still giving false hope to people who claim the hope

because your sins have been forgiven because of the effectiveness of what Jesus did when He suffered and died for you.

<sup>13</sup> I am writing to you, fathers, because you have truly come to know the One who has been in existence from the very beginning.

I am writing to you, young people, because you have conquered the evil one.<sup>a</sup>

I am also writing to you, dear children, because you have truly come to know the Father.

<sup>14</sup> I wrote to you fathers in the past, because you have truly come to know the One who has been in existence from the beginning.

I wrote to you young people in the past, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have conquered the evil one.

### ***Do Not Love the World***

<sup>15</sup> But stop your love affair with worldly ambitions and the things of this world! If you persist in loving the world, you show that you have no love for God, your real Father.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Because all the desires of those who live mainly for this very brief life—the desire to pamper and satisfy the various appetites of the flesh, the desire

to buy and have everything that appeals to them, and all the arrogant pride in what they have, do, or have done—doesn't come from the Father but from their love for the world.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Your life in this world, and all the demanding desires of your body and mind, are swiftly passing away,<sup>a</sup> but the one who makes a practice of obeying<sup>b</sup> God will live on in total fulfillment<sup>c</sup> forever!

### ***Warning About Antichrists***

<sup>18</sup> My little children, the end is near! You have heard that the great enemy of Christ<sup>a</sup> is coming, but many enemies of Christ have already come. So by that we know that the end is near.

<sup>19</sup> These people were once a part of our group, but they didn't really belong to us. Because if they had been a genuine part of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out from us so that it might be very clear that none of them really belonged to us.

<sup>20</sup> But all of you have an anointing from the Holy Spirit, and you know all about these things.

<sup>21</sup> I have not written you because you don't know the truth; I've written because you do know the truth. And you know that no false teaching has truth as its foundation.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Who, then, is the monstrous<sup>a</sup> liar? It's anyone

of Heaven in spite of their disobedience and disregard for Christ's commands, and in spite of the warnings in the previous three verses.

Anyone who preaches this error, or gladly accepts such preaching, is in danger of the judgment pronounced in Revelation 22:19! Study Christ's life and see what He really lived for, and go thou and do likewise! All of Christ's teachings command that we live as He did and for the same purpose. Christ's whole life was lived with eternity's values in view. The same must be true with us, or we don't belong to Him! To settle for anything less is to settle for less than being born again—which would mean judgment and the second death! Revelation 20:11-15.

**2:7a** ... *that you must live and act as Jesus did.*

**2:8a** John is referring to Christ's new command concerning love in John 13:34-35. This is verified in the next three verses.

**2:8b** ... *of envy, hate, selfishness, self-indulgence, unbelief, unfaithfulness, and disobedience* ...

**2:9a** To hate, detest, abhor, to regard with little affection. "Where love is not, there hatred is; for the heart cannot remain a void."—*Bengel, in J.F. & B.*

**2:9b** For family members, followers of Christ, neighbors, fellow humans everywhere. We can hate what they do, say, and live for, but we must love the

person. *Christ died for us when we were still living in rebellion against obeying or pleasing Him in any way.* Romans 5:8.

**2:10a** Romans 14:1-21; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13.

**2:11a** John insists that, apart from a sincere intention and attempt to do good and to avoid all evil, one cannot in honesty claim to be born again.

**2:13a** Concerning the great importance of *conquering Satan and triumphing over the temptations of the world* see Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 12:11; 21:7. Only those who conquer will be welcomed into God's Heaven.

**2:15a** Matthew 6:24.

**2:16a** If the *ruling principle* of one's life is to have and enjoy the things and satisfactions of this brief life, it shows that one's heart is not renewed and sold out to Christ, and that he or she will have no place in God's eternal Kingdom.

**2:17a** Your present body is surely and quickly passing away. You'll soon be gone—but where?

**2:17b** Hebrews 5:9.

**2:17c** Psalm 16:11.

**2:18a** Antichrist.

**2:21a** But many false teachings develop when truth is twisted and perverted.

**2:22a** An article here in the predicate indicates strong emphasis. Christ proved that He was the Son

who says that Jesus is not the Messiah! He is an enemy of Christ.<sup>b</sup> He's denying both the Father and the Son.

<sup>23</sup>Whoever denies the Son His rightful place in his life as both Lord and Savior, doesn't have the Father either. But whoever recognizes and accepts the authority of the Son, has the Father living within him as well.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>24</sup>So make sure that what you heard from the beginning continues to be a dominating force in your life. If you do, you will remain in union with the Son and with the Father.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>25</sup>And this is what Christ Himself has promised to give us<sup>a</sup>—everlasting life!

<sup>26</sup>I have written these things to warn you about those who are doing their best to lead you astray.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>27</sup>But as for you, the anointing of the Holy Spirit which you received from the Lord remains upon you, and you don't need anyone else to teach you.<sup>a</sup> But under His anointing, the Spirit continues to teach you about everything. And what He teaches is the truth, not a lie. So believe and obey what the Spirit has taught you, and you will remain<sup>b</sup> in Christ.

<sup>28</sup>And now, my little children, remain in Christ<sup>a</sup> so that when He is revealed in the heavens at His second coming to earth,<sup>b</sup> we may approach Him with confident boldness, and not shrink away from Him in shame when He comes.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>29</sup>If you know that God always does what is right, you know that everyone who makes a practice of

doing what is right has been given spiritual birth by Him.

### *We Are God's Children*

**3**Just think how enormously God loves us,<sup>a</sup> when you consider that He calls us His children—which, indeed, we are! And the reason the people of the world refuse to recognize us for who we really are, is for the same reason they refuse to recognize Jesus for who He is.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>2</sup>My dear friends, we are now already God's children, but it hasn't yet been revealed what God's ultimate plans are for us as His children. But we do know that when Christ is revealed in His glory in the heavens, we will be like Him, because we will see Him as He really is.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>3</sup>And everyone who has this glorious hope in what God has promised, purifies himself—with the intent and desire to be just as pure as Christ is.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Everyone who makes a practice of sinning is actually living in rebellion against God and breaking His laws, because all sinning is a breaking of God's laws.

<sup>5</sup>You all know that the Lord Jesus appeared among us to take away our sins.<sup>a</sup> And not even once did He disobey God and sin.

<sup>6</sup>No one who lives in union with Him, in heart and mind, will keep on sinning. Anyone who does continue to live in sin hasn't yet come to understand Him<sup>a</sup> or know Him.<sup>b</sup>

of God in such numerous ways that only a monstrous liar can deny the proof. For itemized proof that He is indeed the Messiah, the Son of God, see *The Amazing Story of God*, Appendix 247, page 520.

**2:22b** Antichrist.

**2:23a** John 14:23; Revelation 3:20.

**2:24a** John 8:31; Acts 14:22; Colossians 1:23.

**2:25a** ... *if we do remain in Him* ...

**2:26a** John was evidently warning about those who claimed even then that it wasn't necessary to obey Christ as Lord in order to be saved, as long as they believed in Him as Savior. Such wrong teaching ends only in judgment and death! The Bible is literally filled with teaching that we must be done with sin, or face God's judgment.

**2:27a** Yes, read the word of God and allow the Holy Spirit to be your Teacher.

**2:27b** Same Greek word and tense as v 24.

**2:28a** Colossians 1:23a.

**2:28b** Acts 1:9-11; Matthew 24:29-31.

**2:28c** See 1 Corinthians 3:1-18; 2 Corinthians 5:10, and the notes.

**3:1a** See John 17:23, and the note there.

**3:1b** The reason is: People who live mainly for what they can get out of this brief life want to live in their sin without being reminded of Judgment Day. But Judgment Day is approaching nevertheless. Then, sadly, the Lord and Savior they have spurned will be their Judge!

**3:2a** To understand what this means, just ask yourself, "Who can see a human being as he really is?" The obvious answer is that it takes another human being, or someone higher and greater than a human being, to see that person as he actually is. The promise we have here is that we will see Jesus Christ as He really is. This is not speaking of seeing with the eye. This is seeing with the understanding.

Animals can see people with the physical eye, but they can't understand us because they're not like us. It appears that in God's Kingdom there are many beings who see God, but only His children, who are like Him, will really see and understand and know Him as He really is.

**3:3a** That is, the tendency of such a glorious hope is to make one strive to be holy now, even though the results may be imperfect; but the effect will be

<sup>7</sup>My little children, don't let anyone ever fool you into believing that a person can be right with God even if he doesn't live right. It's the person who lives a good, upright life in obedience to God, even as Christ did, who is right with God.

<sup>8</sup>Anyone who continues to live in sin is acting just like the devil, and he belongs to him, because the devil has continued to sin ever since he first introduced sin into the universe. The reason the Son of God came to earth in human form was for the very purpose of destroying the devil's work in our lives.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>9</sup>When God makes someone His child, that person no longer continues to live in sin, because the new principle for living, which he has received from God, now operates in him. So he cannot continue living in sin, because he is now born of God.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Here's how you can tell the children of God from the devil's children: Anyone who doesn't make a practice of doing what's right is not a child of God. The same is true of anyone who doesn't treat others with love.

### ***We Must Love Each Other***

<sup>11</sup>Because this is the message you heard from the very beginning, that we are to always love each other.

<sup>12</sup>Don't be like Cain, who belonged to Satan and killed his own brother. And why did he kill him? Because he thought only of himself, and lived to please himself, while his brother lived to please

and obey God.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>13</sup>So don't be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the people who live to please themselves instead of God during their brief time in this world, hate you.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>14</sup>We know we have escaped the second death<sup>a</sup> and now have the promise of eternal life, because we love all who faithfully love, serve, and obey the Lord.<sup>b</sup> In fact, anyone who doesn't truly love all others who are true followers of Christ is still under the condemnation of the second death.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Whoever hates his brother or sister is a murderer. And you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.

<sup>16</sup>We know what true love is, because we saw it when Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we should be just as willing to give our lives for each other, whenever necessary.

<sup>17</sup>So if we have the means to support life, and we see one of our own people in need, but we take no action to help that person, how can we dare say we love God?<sup>a</sup>

<sup>18</sup>My dear children, we should always love with sincerity and in truth by what we do, and not merely talk about the situation.

<sup>19</sup>When our love is of the kind that results in sincere action, we can know that we are indeed true followers of the Lord. This will assure our own hearts and minds that we are truly pleasing to God.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Because if our conscience condemns us, just

to make him *perfectly* holy in the world to come.

**3:5a** He didn't come to make it possible for us to be free to sin! *For the reward for sinning is death.* Romans 6:23.

**3:6a** ... *hasn't yet come to grasp the meaning of who Jesus really is, and what His great love has actually caused Him to suffer for us, nor why, nor all the incomprehensible results that are involved for us for all eternity*—depending on whether we totally surrender our heart and will to Him, or continue toward Hell.

**3:6b** In other words, *cannot be a true Christian.* He is still unchanged, unregenerate, unforgiven—and lost, until he is truly converted from willfully living to please himself, to living to joyfully please and obey God.

**3:8a** So if the Son of God came to destroy all the works of the devil, the one who continues to live in sin can't be a true follower of Jesus.

**3:9a** Anyone who claims to be converted to Christ, but continues to live in disobedience to Him, is giving proof that his conversion was not genuine. He has not yet fully surrendered his will to Christ as

Lord—and this is what being born again is all about.

The new birth is of God, but it does not happen without the full consent and full cooperation of the one being converted. One who is truly converted to Christ has a hatred for sin of every kind, and has an unceasing desire to resist it. "It's true that in this conflict the child of God receives wounds daily, but he never throws away his weapons or makes peace with his deadly enemy." — *Martin Luther*

**3:12a** ... *And Cain became jealous when God showed He was pleased with his brother, but not with him.* Genesis 4:1-16.

**3:13a** John 15:18-25.

**3:14a** Revelation 20:11-15.

**3:14b** ... *no matter what race, color, age, intellect, wealth, or denomination.* John 13:34-35.

**3:17a** A true Christian also helps non-Christians who are in need, as God leads.

**3:19a** The meaning here seems to be that we will in this way dissolve the doubts, trouble, and guilt of our minds, and produce a state of quiet assurance by the evidence that we are indeed doing the will of

remember that God is far greater than our conscience. He knows every single thing about us.

<sup>21</sup>And so, my dear friends, if our conscience does not condemn us, then we can approach God with bold confidence.

<sup>22</sup>When we obey His commands and make a practice of doing the things that please Him, it's then that we can expect to receive whatever we ask from Him.

<sup>23</sup>And this is what God commands: that we believe in all that the name of His Son, Jesus Christ,<sup>a</sup> implies—and that we love one another, as Jesus commanded us.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Now those who obey His commands are living in Him, and He is living in them.<sup>a</sup> And it is by means of the Spirit within us, whom He has given us, that we know He is living in us.<sup>b</sup>

### Warning Against False Teachers

**4** My dear friends, many false prophets have gone out into the world. So don't believe everyone who claims to be speaking for God. But test the spirits to see whether these preachers really do have the Spirit of God.

<sup>2</sup>Here's how you can recognize those who have God's Spirit: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus is the Christ who came to earth in human form, is God's Spirit.

<sup>3</sup>But any spirit that refuses to acknowledge that Jesus is God's Son in human form, is not from God. Instead, it is the spirit of the great enemy of Christ.<sup>a</sup> You have been warned that Antichrist is coming,<sup>b</sup> and his spirit is even now already in the

world.

<sup>4</sup>But you belong to God, my dear children, and you have won your fight against them,<sup>a</sup> because the One who is living in you is far greater than the one living in the people of the world.

<sup>5</sup>Those false preachers belong to the world. And what they say is influenced by their love affair with the world. So the people who love the world gladly listen to them.

<sup>6</sup>But we belong to God. And those who know and love God pay attention to what we say. But those who don't belong to God have no desire to listen to our message. That's how we can recognize those who have the Spirit of Truth and those who are controlled by the spirit of error.

### God's Love and Ours

<sup>7</sup>My dear friends, let us practice loving one another, because true love originates with God. And everyone who is truly loving and kind has been born of God and knows Him.

<sup>8</sup>Anyone who doesn't show kindness and love doesn't know God, because God's innermost and most compelling nature is to sincerely love.

<sup>9</sup>And the way God revealed His immeasurably deep love for us was to send His incomparable<sup>a</sup> Son into the world, so that we might live because of all that His Son would suffer for us.

<sup>10</sup>Here is the very highest expression of love—not that we loved God, because we didn't—but that God's love for us was so overflowing and immeasurable, that He sent His Son to sacrifice Himself for us, so that He could be compassionate

God. Our consciences are often restless and troubled by thoughts of past guilt, but as we prove our love for others by our actions and our witness to them, we can assure our hearts and minds that we are truly born-again children of God.

Let us always realize that while there are physical needs that need to be met, the spiritual needs are the greatest. Be sure to always encourage others to read God's message and allow God to speak to them. You may even wish to give or loan them a copy of the Bible or New Testament. By this means, you can share eternal life with them and also give them peace of mind and the joy and assurance that only God can give.

**3:23a** *Jesus* means *Savior*, the One who died on the cross to save us from the penalty and power of sin. *Christ* means *the Anointed One*, the One whom God sent to earth and anointed with great power, as proof that He truly was and is the Son of God.

**3:23b** John 13:34-35; 15:12-13.

**3:24a** Matthew 28:20; John 14:20-23.

**3:24b** John 14:23; Romans 8:16.

**4:3a** Antichrist.

**4:3b** The word *antichrist* means *one who opposes Christ and works against Him*. All such opposers and false teachers are inspired by Satan and his spirits. At the end of this age, a powerful world leader (empowered by Satan) will organize all opposition against Christ. See Appendix 231 for a list of the names given Antichrist in Scripture.

**4:4a** ... *your fight against their lies and temptations and endeavors to draw you into error and sin* ...

**4:9a** See John 1:14 note.

**4:10a** Our reconciliation originates with God. He didn't allow Christ to be crucified to pacify Himself, but to enable Him to deal with sin in a just way, so that He would be doing what was honorable and right when He offered forgiveness to all who have sinned.

**4:11a** Matthew 22:39.

**4:12a** Even though no man has ever yet seen God,

toward us and offer us forgiveness for our sins.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>11</sup>My dear friends, if God loved us with such self-denying sacrifice and such genuine concern, we most certainly should love one another in the same way!<sup>a</sup>

<sup>12</sup>No man has ever seen God.<sup>a</sup> But if we practice sacrificial love and concern for one another, God is living in us, and His genuine, perfect love has been brought to perfection in us.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>13</sup>Here's how we know that we are living in Him and that He is living in us—because He has given us a portion of His Spirit.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>14</sup>And we ourselves have even seen the Son of God. And we testify to the fact that the Father has indeed sent the Son to be the Savior of the world!

<sup>15</sup>God very definitely continues to live within anyone who sincerely confesses to others that Jesus is the Son of God.<sup>a</sup> And that person continues to live in God.

<sup>16</sup>We have actually known by experience, and have believed, that God does indeed love us dearly. Because the very character and essence of God is love! And whoever continues to love continues to live in God, and God lives in him.

<sup>17</sup>If<sup>a</sup> God's love has been brought to a state of perfection in us, we will be able to approach Him with confident assurance on Judgment Day, because we will have lived our life on earth as Jesus would, if He were in our place.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>18</sup>There is no fear of Judgment Day in the heart of one who in all sincerity loves God and his fellow men. Love that has been brought to a state of per-

fection drives out fear. Because the greatest fear that man has is fear of the torment of judgment in Hell.<sup>a</sup> And anyone who has this legitimate fear is one who has not allowed God to make him perfect in love.

<sup>19</sup>But because God first loved us in such marvelous ways, let us now in all sincerity truly love<sup>a</sup> Him.

<sup>20</sup>If someone says, "I love God," but at the same time he has hatred in his heart for someone, he's a liar. Because how can anyone who doesn't love those he can see, love God, whom he has never seen?

<sup>21</sup>And Christ has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brothers and sisters.<sup>a</sup>

### *Our Victory Over the World*

**5**Whoever in all sincerity believes<sup>a</sup> that Jesus is the Christ<sup>b</sup> is born of God, and whoever loves the Father also loves the other children born to Him.

<sup>2</sup>When we truly love God and obey His commands, we know that the natural result will be genuine love for His other children as well.

<sup>3</sup>In fact, the only way we can prove that we truly love God is to obey what He tells us to do and not do. And it's not a burden to obey Him.

<sup>4</sup>Because every true child of God makes a practice of conquering the attractions and temptations of the world. And that which has given us the victory in conquering the world is our faith.<sup>a</sup>

the angels constantly see Him. Matthew 18:10. And we have the promise that we will one day see Him. Matthew 5:8. But even now, if we are truly His, we have the witness within us that He is living in us—His Spirit in fellowship with our spirit! Romans 8:16.

**4:12b** A prayer for today, and for every tomorrow: *O my God, help me to so give of myself (my time, my strength, thoughts, ambitions, wealth, love), that I may truly be a rich blessing to You and others, both for time and eternity.*

**4:13a** But the Holy Spirit has been given without measure, in all His fullness, only to Christ. John 3:34; 14:16-17,23; 20:22; Romans 8:16.

**4:15a** Romans 10:9-10.

**4:17a** ... *with God's help* ...

**4:17b** 1 John 2:6.

**4:18a** Surveys reveal that 95 percent of all people believe in a real Heaven. But Hell is also real. Jesus warned about Hell more than all other persons in Scripture put together. And He should know. Give all diligence to make *sure* that Heaven is your eter-

nal home. 2 Peter 1:10. You can truly surrender your heart and life to God right now. Do it!

Then read your Bible every day to allow God to cleanse you daily by His word (Ephesians 5:26) and wash and renew you by His Holy Spirit. Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:23-24; Titus 3:5.

**4:19a** The word for *love* here can be translated in either the indicative or subjunctive moods. But the context demands that it be translated in the subjunctive, as we have it here. The indicative declares a fact, while the subjunctive proposes a possibility. John is *encouraging us* to love God (subjunctive), but he's not stating that each reader does love God just because God loves him.

**4:21a** Matthew 22:39; John 13:34-35.

**5:1a** To believe that Jesus is the Christ means that we believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the Savior sent from God, and that we owe our all to Him—our very existence and salvation. We especially owe Him all our love, adoration, trust, and obedience.

**5:1b** Or *the Messiah*, the One promised by God.

**5:4a** That means *our faith* in God and in His Son,

<sup>5</sup>So who is it that continues to conquer the temptations of the world? Only the one who is believing that Jesus is indeed the Son of God.<sup>a</sup>

### ***Who Jesus Is***

<sup>6</sup>Jesus Christ is the One who was endorsed by the Father at His water baptism, and again just shortly before He shed His blood for us on the cross. He came not only with the endorsement of His Father at His water baptism, but with both the water and the blood<sup>a</sup> endorsements. And it is the Holy Spirit who now continues to bear witness about Him—because the Holy Spirit is the very embodiment of truth.

<sup>7</sup>So there are three that bear witness to the truth:

<sup>8</sup>the Holy Spirit, the voice of God at Jesus' baptism, and God's voice just before Jesus died. And they all say the same thing.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Ordinarily, we believe what people tell us, but we should realize that what God tells us is of far greater importance and far more certain than anything anyone else can tell us. And God has clearly told us that Jesus is His Son!

<sup>10</sup>Anyone who believes that Jesus is the Son of God, has the witness of the Spirit within himself that it is true. But anyone who refuses to believe what God has said about His Son is actually calling God a liar, by refusing to believe the testimony He has given about His Son.

<sup>11</sup>This is what God has said about His Son: that thru Him He has given us the means of obtaining everlasting life, and that this life can only be

obtained thru His Son.

<sup>12</sup>Anyone who has sincerely invited God's Son into his life<sup>a</sup> has everlasting life.<sup>b</sup> But anyone who doesn't have the Son of God in his life<sup>a</sup> doesn't have eternal life.

### ***About Eternal Life***

<sup>13</sup>I have written these things to you who are living out the true meaning of the name<sup>a</sup> of the Son of God, so that you may know for certain that you have eternal life; and so that you may make certain that you continue to give full allegiance to the name<sup>a</sup> of the Son of God.

<sup>14</sup>Then you can approach Him in prayer with confident boldness, knowing that He keeps listening to you when you ask Him for what you are certain He wants to give you.

<sup>15</sup>And if we know He is listening to us, we know that whatever we may continue asking for,<sup>a</sup> we are definitely in the process of receiving from Him.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>16</sup>If any of you sees a fellow Christian committing a sin that does not lead to death, you should earnestly pray for him, and God will give him life. I'm speaking of those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to certain death. I'm not saying you should pray about that.

<sup>17</sup>All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to certain death.

<sup>18</sup>We know that no one who is born of God makes a practice of sinning. But a person who is truly born of God continues to be watchful in order to keep himself from sinning.<sup>a</sup> As long as he does that, the evil one isn't able to touch him.

Jesus Christ, our faith in the fact that Jesus overcame the temptations of the world, and that God will fulfill every promise He has ever made to help us overcome (Philippians 2:12-13), and that He will carry out the judgment in every warning of His that went unheeded. A faith that is active and alive is obedient to God.

**5:5a** The end and aim of this person is not the present life. All of his purposes and decisions about this world are made with eternity's values in view. All other persons are governed by worldly aims, reasonings, and principles.

**5:6a** There are numerous theories as to what is meant by *water and blood*. Our understanding is that these words mean: Jesus both began and ended His ministry on earth by confirmations from God that He was indeed the Son of God. This happened at His baptism by *water* (Matthew 3:16-17) and just before He shed His *blood* for our sins. Luke 9:28-35; John 12:27-33. This entire section, thru v 11, deals with the testimony of God concerning Jesus Christ.

**5:8a** ... *that Jesus is the Son of God.*

**5:12a** ... *as both his Lord and Savior* ...

**5:12b** John 5:24.

**5:13a** Trusting Him as Savior and obeying Him as Lord. Again, it is just as important that you *continue* to keep yourself in the will of God as it is that you be converted from living to please yourself to living to please God in the first place. Jude 21; Matthew 7:13-14.

**5:15a** ... *if it is indeed for our best good, and for God's glory* ...

**5:15b** ... *if we don't give up*. Luke 11:1-13; 18:1-8.

**5:18a** You cannot do this by your own strength alone, but when you allow God to work within you (John 15:1-5; Romans 8:12-13; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Philippians 2:12-13; 1 Peter 1:13-16; Jude 1c) you can do it. God hasn't promised to live our lives for us, but He has promised to give us the strength to conquer sin and Satan. We *must* conquer sin, or we are lost. See Revelation 2:7,11,17,26; 3:5,12,21;



<sup>19</sup>We know we are children of God, even though all the rest of the whole world is under the control of Satan.

<sup>20</sup>We also know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding of all that we need to know about the One who is the only true God.<sup>a</sup> And we are now in Him who is the true God,

and in His Son Jesus Christ. He is indeed the true God, and our eternal life is in Him.

<sup>21</sup>My little children, keep yourselves from worshipping anything that might take God's place in your minds and hearts.<sup>a</sup> So be it!

Sincerely in Christ,  
John

21:7-8.

There are four things that are absolutely indispensable in the Christian life. They are: 1) Keeping in close touch with God by prayer; 2) feasting on God's word every day; 3) exercising, by taking a stand for your Lord at every opportunity (Romans 10:9-10); and 4) being refreshed and strengthened regularly by fellowship with other true believers who are faithfully obeying and serving the Lord.

**5:20a** There is only one true God, and that's the Father. John 17:3. All that is has come from the Father. 1 Corinthians 8:6. True, all things have been created thru Jesus, the Son of God (John 1:1-4), but it was the Father who did the creating thru Him. See John 1:3 note, also Hebrews 1:2.

**5:21a** Literally *keep yourselves from idols*. An idol is any thing or person you love, trust, revere, and fear more than God.

**B**ut stop your love affair with worldly ambitions and the things of this world! If you persist in loving the world, you show that you have no love for God, your real Father.

<sup>16</sup>Because all the desires of those who live mainly for this very brief life—the desire to pamper and satisfy the various appetites of the flesh, the desire to buy and have everything that appeals to them, and all the arrogant pride in what they have, do, or have done—doesn't come from the Father but from their love for the world.

<sup>17</sup>Your life in this world, and all the demanding desires of your body and mind, are swiftly passing away, but the one who makes a practice of obeying God will live on in total fulfillment forever!

—1 John 2:15-17