

**A Three Step Approach
To Understanding**

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

STEP ONE:

STEP ONE: Read the verses from the various translations and stop and discuss them among your group.

1 JOHN CHAPTER 3

In your group read 1 John chapter 3 aloud. As a group discuss the general content of the chapter.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE GROUP: *Read and Discuss each verse and translation.*

**1 JOHN CHAPTER 3
VERSES 1-3**

.....> READ THE FOLLOWING: ¹Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. ²Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. ³And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. **(King James Version)**

1 See how very much our heavenly Father loves us, for he allows us to be called his children, and we really are! But the people who belong to this world don't know God, so they don't understand that we are his children. **2** Yes, dear friends, we are already God's children, and we can't even imagine what we will be like when Christ returns. But we do know that when he comes we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is. **3** And all who believe this will keep themselves pure, just as Christ is pure. **(New Living Translation)**

1The Father has loved us so much that we are called children of God. And we really are his children. The reason the people in the world do not know us is that they have not known him. **2** Dear friends, now we are children of God, and we have not yet been shown what we will be in the future. But we know that when Christ comes again, we will be like him, because we will see him as he really is. **3** Christ is pure, and all who have this hope in Christ keep themselves pure like Christ. **(New Century Version)**

1 Look! How glorious is the love the Father has showered upon us – that we are called the children of God! And we are! That is why the world does not understand us,

just as it did not understand Him. **2** Dear friends, we are already God's children, and all that we are going to be has not yet been made clear to us. But we know that when He appears, so that we see Him as He is, we will be like Him! **3** And all who have this hope in Him will keep themselves pure, just as He is pure. **(The New Translation)**

1 Think what a love the Father has for us, in letting us be called 'children of God!' And such we are. The world does not recognize us? That is simply because it did not recognize him. **2** We are children of God now, beloved; what we are to be is not apparent yet, but we do know that when he appears we are to be like him – for we are to see him as he is. **3** And everyone who rests this hope on him, purifies himself as He is pure. **(Moffatt Translation)**

1 Just think how enormously God loves us, 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. **2** 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. **3** Any 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. **(The Last Days Bible) <:::::::::: STOP AND DISCUSS.**

1 JOHN CHAPTER 3 VERSES 4-6

::::::::::> **READ THE FOLLOWING:** ⁴Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. ⁵And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. ⁶Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. **(King James Version)**

4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. **5** You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. **6** No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. **(New American Standard Version)**

⁴Those who sin are opposed to the law of God, for all sin opposes the law of God. ⁵And you know that Jesus came to take away our sins, for there is no sin in him. ⁶So if we continue to live in him, we won't sin either. But those who keep on sinning have never known him or understood who he is. **(New Living Translation)**

⁴The person who sins breaks God's law. Yes, sin is living against God's law. ⁵You know that Christ came to take away sins and that there is no sin in Christ. ⁶So anyone who lives in Christ does not go on sinning. Anyone who goes on sinning has never really understood Christ and has never known him. **(New Century Version)**

⁴Everyone who sins breaks God's law, because sin is the same as breaking God's law. ⁵You know that Christ came to take away sins. He isn't sinful, ⁶and people who stay one in their hearts with him won't keep on sinning. If they do keep on sinning, they don't know Christ, and they have never seen him. **(Contemporary English Version)**

All who indulge in a sinful life are dangerously lawless, for sin is a major disruption of God's order. Surely you know that Christ showed up in order to get rid of sin. There is no sin in him, and sin is not part of his program. No one who lives deeply in Christ makes a practice of sin. None of those who do practice sin have taken a good look at Christ. They've got him all backwards. (verses 4-6) **(The Message)**

⁴But those who keep on sinning are against God, for every sin is done against the will of God. ⁵And you know that he became a man so that he could take away our sins, and that there is no sin in him, no missing of God's will at any time in any way. ⁶So if we stay close to him, obedient to him, we won't be sinning either; but as for those who keep on sinning, they should realize this: They sin because they have never really known him or become his. **(The Living Bible)**

Everyone who commits sin breaks God's law, for that is what sin is – a breaking of God's law. You know, moreover, that Christ became man to take away sin, and that he himself was free from sin. The man who lives "in Christ" does not habitually sin. The regular sinner has never seen or known him. (verses 4-6) **(Phillips Translation)**

4 Everyone who commits (practices) sin is guilty of lawlessness; for [that is what] sin is, lawlessness (the breaking, violating of God's law by transgression or neglect – being unrestrained and unregulated by His commands and His will). **5** You know that He appeared in visible form *and* became Man to take away [upon Himself] sins, and in Him there is no sin [essentially and forever]. **6** No one who abides in Him [who lives and remains in communion with and in obedience to Him – deliberately, knowingly, and habitually] commits (practices) sin. No one who [habitually] sins has either seen *or* known Him [recognized, perceived, or understood Him, or has had an experiential acquaintance with Him]. **(Amplified New Testament) <:::::::::: STOP AND DISCUSS.**

1 JOHN CHAPTER 3 VERSES 7-8

::::::::::> **READ THE FOLLOWING:** ⁷Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. ⁸He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. **(King James Version)**

7 Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; **8** the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. **(New American Standard Version)**

⁷Dear children, don't let anyone deceive you about this: When people do what is right, it is because they are righteous, even as Christ is righteous. ⁸But when people keep on sinning, it shows they belong to the Devil, who has been sinning since the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy these works of the Devil. **(New Living Translation)**

So, my dear children, don't let anyone divert you from the truth. It's the person who *acts* right who *is* right, just as we see it lived out in our righteous Messiah. Those who make a practice of sin are straight from the Devil, the pioneer in the practice of sin.

The Son of God entered the scene to abolish the Devil's ways. (verses 7-8) **(The Message)**

7 Dear children, don't let anyone lead you down the wrong path. Those who do what is right are holy, just as Christ is holy. **8** Those who do what is sinful belong to the devil. They are just like him. He has been sinning from the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy the devil's work. **(New International Reader's Version)**

7 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. **8** 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. **(The Last Days Bible) <:::::::::: STOP AND DISCUSS.**

1 JOHN CHAPTER 3 VERSES 9-10

::::::::::> **READ THE FOLLOWING:** ⁹Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. ¹⁰In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. **(King James Version)**

9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. **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. **(New American Standard Bible)**

⁹ God's children cannot keep on being sinful. His life-giving power lives in them and makes them his children, so that they cannot keep on sinning. ¹⁰ You can tell God's children from the devil's children, because those who belong to the devil refuse to do right or to love each other. **(Contemporary English Version)**

People conceived and brought into life by God don't make a practice of sin. How could they? God's seed is deep within them, making them who they are. It's not in the nature of the God-begotten to practice and parade sin. Here's how you tell the difference between God's children and the Devil's children: The one who won't practice righteous ways isn't from God, nor is the one who won't love brother or sister. A simple test. (verses 9-10) **(The Message)**

⁹The person who has been born into God's family does not make a practice of sinning because now God's life is in him; so he can't keep on sinning, for this new life has been born into him and controls him—he has been *born again*. ¹⁰So now we can tell who is a child of God and who belongs to Satan. Whoever is living a life of sin and doesn't love his brother shows that he is not in God's family; **(The Living Bible)**

The man who is really God's son does not practice sin, for God's nature is in him, for good, and such a heredity is incapable of sin. Here we have a clear indication as to who are the children of God and who are the children of the devil. The man who does

not lead a good life is no son of God, nor is the man who fails to love his brother. (verses 9-10) **(Phillips Translation)**

9 Everyone who has been given birth by God does not keep on sinning, because God's new life is in him, and he cannot keep on sinning, because he had been given birth by God. **10** In this way you can see who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are, namely, everyone who does not do right or love his brother is not God's child. **(God's Word to the Nations)**

No one who has received the new Life from God lives sinfully, because the very nature of God dwells within him; and he cannot live in sin, because he has received the new Life from God. But this the Children of God are distinguished from the Children of the Devil – No one who lives unrighteously comes from God, and especially the man who does not love his Brother. (verses 9-10) **(The Twentieth Century New Testament)**

9 No child of God keeps on sinning, because God Himself is living in him. And so he can't keep on sinning, because he is God's child. **10** And this makes it possible for everyone to see who are God's children and who are the devil's children. The person who doesn't do what God says is right can't be God's child. And the person who doesn't love his brother and sister can't be God's child either, **(New Testament in Everyday American English) <:::::::::: STOP AND DISCUSS.**

1 JOHN CHAPTER 3 VERSES 11-12

::::::::::> **READ THE FOLLOWING:** ¹¹For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. ¹²Not as Cain, *who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.* **(King James Version)**

¹¹This is the message we have heard from the beginning: We should love one another. ¹²We must not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and killed his brother. And why did he kill him? Because Cain had been doing what was evil, and his brother had been doing what was right. **(New Living Translation)**

For this is the original message we heard: We should love each other. We must not be like Cain, who joined the Evil One and then killed his brother. And why did he kill him? Because he was deep in the practice of evil, while the acts of his brother were righteous. (verses 11-12) **(The Message)**

For the original command, as you know, is that we should love one another. We are none of us to have the spirit of Cain, who was a son of the evil one and murdered his brother. Have you realized his motive? It was because he realized the goodness of his brother's life and the evil of his own. (verses 11-12) **(Phillips Translation)**

11 For this is the message (the announcement) which you have heard from the first, that we should love one another, **12** [And] not be like Cain who [took his nature and got his motivation] from the evil one and slew his brother. And why did he slay him? Because his deeds (activities, works) were wicked *and* malicious and his brother's were righteous (virtuous). **(The Amplified New Testament)**

11 Because this is the message you heard from the very beginning, that we are to always love each other. 12 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. **(The Last Days Bible)**
<:::::::::: **STOP AND DISCUSS.**

1 JOHN CHAPTER 3 VERSES 13-15

::::::::::> **READ THE FOLLOWING:** ¹³Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. ¹⁴We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death. ¹⁵Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. **(King James Version)**

[13] Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you. [14] We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. [15] Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him. **(New International Version)**

¹³ So don't be surprised, dear brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. ¹⁴ If we love our Christian brothers and sisters, it proves that we have passed from death to eternal life. But a person who has no love is still dead. ¹⁵ Anyone who hates another Christian is really a murderer at heart. And you know that murderers don't have eternal life within them. **(New Living Translation)**

¹³ Brothers and sisters, do not be surprised when the people of the world hate you. ¹⁴ We know we have left death and have come into life because we love each other. Whoever does not love is still dead. ¹⁵ Everyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderers have eternal life in them. **(New Century Version)**

¹³ So don't be surprised, dear friends, if the world hates you. ¹⁴ If we love other Christians, it proves that we have been delivered from hell and given eternal life. But a person who doesn't have love for others is headed for eternal death. ¹⁵ Anyone who hates his Christian brother is really a murderer at heart; and you know that no one wanting to murder has eternal life within. **(The Living Bible)**

13 Do not be surprised, my fellow Christians, if the world hates you. **14** We know that we have come from death into life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. **15** Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has everlasting life awaiting him. **(God's Word to the Nations)**

13 My brothers and sisters, don't be surprised if the world hates you. **14** We know that we have left our old dead condition and entered into new life. We know it because we love our brothers and sisters. Those who do not are still living in their old condition. **15** Those who hate their brothers and sisters are murderers. And you know that murderers do not have eternal life in their hearts. **(New International Reader's Version)**

13 Do not be surprised *and* wonder, brethren, that the world detests *and* pursues you with hatred. **14** We know that we have passed over out of death into Life by the

fact that we love the brethren (our fellow Christians). He who does not love abides (remains, is held and kept continually) in [spiritual] death. **15** Anyone who hates (abominates, detests) his brother [in Christ] is [at heart] a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding (persevering) within him. **(The Amplified New Testament)**

13 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. **14** We know we have escaped the second death and now have the promise of eternal life, because we love all who faithfully love, serve, and obey the Lord. (*...no matter what race, color, age, intellect, wealth, or denomination*). 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. **15** Whoever hates his brother or sister is a murderer. And you know that no murderer has eternal life in him. **(The Last Days Bible) <:::::::::: STOP AND DISCUSS.**

1 JOHN CHAPTER 3 VERSES 16-18

::::::::::> **READ THE FOLLOWING:** ¹⁶Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren. ¹⁷But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of *compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? ¹⁸My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. **(King James Version)**

16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. **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? **18** Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. **(New American Standard Version)**

¹⁶We know what real love is because Christ gave up his life for us. And so we also ought to give up our lives for our Christian brothers and sisters. ¹⁷But if anyone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need and refuses to help—how can God's love be in that person? ¹⁸Dear children, let us stop just saying we love each other; let us really show it by our actions. **(New Living Translation)**

¹⁶We know what love is because Jesus gave his life for us. That's why we must give our lives for each other. ¹⁷If we have all we need and see one of our own people in need, we must have pity on that person, or else we cannot say we love God. ¹⁸Children, you show love for others by truly helping them, and not merely by talking about it. **(Contemporary English Version)**

We understand the nature of love from the fact that Christ laid down His Life on our behalf. Similarly we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. If the man who has plenty of this world's goods sees his brother in need and withholds compassion from him, how can there be any love of God in him? Dear children, don't let us be satisfied with a love shown only in words, but let us translate it into sincere deeds. (verses 16-18) **(The New Testament Letters)**

16 We know what love is because Jesus Christ gave his life for us. So we should give our lives for our brothers and sisters. **17** Suppose you see a brother or sister in need and are able to help them. If you don't take pity on them, how can the love of God be in you? **18** Dear children, don't just talk about love. Put your love into action. Then it will truly be love. **(New International Reader's Version)**

16 This is how we know what real love is: Jesus gave his life for us. So we should give our lives for our brothers and sisters in Christ. **17** Suppose a believer is rich enough to have all the things he needs. He sees his brother in Christ who is poor and does not have the things he needs. What if the believer who has things does not help the poor brother? Then the believer who has the things he needs does not have God's love in his heart. **18** My children, our love should not be only words and talk. No! Our love must be true love. We should show our love by the things we do. **(The Easy-to-Read New Testament)**

16 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. **17** 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? **18** My dear children, we should always love with sincerity and in truth by what we do, and not merely talk about the situation. **(The Last Days Bible)** <::::::::::
STOP AND DISCUSS.

1 JOHN CHAPTER 3 VERSES 19-21

::::::::::> **READ THE FOLLOWING:** ¹⁹And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. ²⁰For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. ²¹Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence toward God. **(King James Version)**

19 We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him **20** in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things. **21** Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; **(New American Standard Bible)**

¹⁹ It is by our actions that we know we are living in the truth, so we will be confident when we stand before the Lord, ²⁰ even if our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹ Dear friends, if our conscience is clear, we can come to God with bold confidence. **(New Living Translation)**

¹⁹ When we love others, we know that we belong to the truth, and we feel at ease in the presence of God. ²⁰ But even if we don't feel at ease, God is greater than our feelings, and he knows everything. ²¹ Dear friends, if we feel at ease in the presence of God, we will have the courage to come near him. **(Contemporary English Version)**

¹⁹ Then we will know for sure, by our actions, that we are on God's side, and our consciences will be clear, even when we stand before the Lord. ²⁰ But if we have bad consciences and feel that we have done wrong, the Lord will surely feel it even more, for he knows everything we do. ²¹ But, dearly loved friends, if our consciences are clear, we can come to the Lord with perfect assurance and trust, **(The Living Bible)**

19 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. **20** Because if our conscience condemns us, just remember that God is far greater than our conscience. He knows every single thing about us. **21** And so, my dear friends, if our conscience does not condemn us, then we can approach God with bold confidence. **(The Last Days Bible) <:::::::::: STOP AND DISCUSS.**

1 JOHN CHAPTER 3 VERSES 22-24

::::::::::> **READ THE FOLLOWING:** ²²And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. ²³And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. ²⁴And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us. **(King James Version)**

²²And we will receive whatever we request because we obey him and do the things that please him. ²³And this is his commandment: We must believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he commanded us. ²⁴Those who obey God's commandments live in fellowship with him, and he with them. And we know he lives in us because the Holy Spirit lives in us. **(New Living Translation)**

²²And God gives us what we ask for because we obey God's commands and do what pleases him. ²³This is what God commands: that we believe in his Son, Jesus Christ, and that we love each other, just as he commanded. ²⁴The people who obey God's commands live in God, and God lives in them. We know that God lives in us because of the Spirit God gave us. **(New Century Version)**

²²He will give us whatever we ask, because we obey him and do what pleases him. ²³God wants us to have faith in his Son Jesus Christ and to love each other. This is also what Jesus taught us to do. ²⁴If we obey God's commandments, we will stay one in our hearts with him, and he will stay one with us. The Spirit that he has given us is proof that we are one with him. **(Contemporary English Version)**

We're able to stretch our hands out and receive what we asked for because we're doing what he said, doing what pleases him. Again, this is God's command: to believe in his personally named Son, Jesus Christ. He told us to love each other, in line with the original command. As we keep his commands, we live deeply and surely in him, and he lives in us. And this is how we experience his deep and abiding presence in us: by the Spirit he gave us. (verses 22-24) **(The Message)**

We receive whatever we ask for, because we are obeying his orders and following his wishes. His orders are that we should put our trust in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another – as he commanded us to do. The man who does obey God's commands lives in God and God lives in him, and the guarantee of his presence within us is the Spirit he has given us. (verses 22-24) **(Phillips Translation)**

Dear friends, if our conscience does not condemn us, then we can approach God with confidence, and obtain from him whatever we ask, because we are keeping his commands and doing what he approves. This is his command: to give our allegiance to his Son Jesus Christ and love one another as he commanded. When we keep his commands we dwell in him and he dwells in us. And this is how we can make sure that he dwells within us: we know it from the Spirit he has given us. (verses 21-24) **(New English Bible)**

And we receive from him whatever we ask, because we are laying his commands to heart, and are doing what is pleasing in his sight. His Command is this – that we should put our trust in the Name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, in accordance with the Command that he gave us. And he who lays his commands to heart maintains union with Christ, and Christ with him. And by this we know that Christ maintains union with us – by our possession of the Spirit which he gave us. (verses 22-24) **(The Twentieth Century New Testament)**

22 And he will give us anything we ask. That's because we obey his commands. We do what pleases him. **23** God has commanded us to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ. He has also commanded us to love one another. **24** Those who obey his commands remain joined to him. And he remains joined to them. How do we know that God lives in us? We know it because of the Holy Spirit he gave us. **(New International Reader's Version)**

22 And we receive from Him whatever we ask, because we [watchfully] obey His orders [observe His suggestions and injunctions, follow His plan for us] *and* [habitually] practice what is pleasing to Him. **23** And this is His order (His command, His injunction): that we should believe in (put our faith and trust in and adhere to and rely on) the name of His Son Jesus Christ (the Messiah), and that we should love one another, just as He has commanded us. **24** All who keep His commandments [who obey His orders and follow His plan, live and continue to live, to stay and] abide in Him, and He in them. [They let Christ be a home to them and they are the home of Christ.] And by this we know *and* understand *and* have proof that He [really] lives *and* makes His home in us: by the [Holy] Spirit Whom He has given us. **(Amplified New Testament)**

22 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. **23** And this is what God commands: that we believe in all that the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, implies – and that we love one another, as Jesus commanded us. **24** Now those who obey His commands are living in Him, and He is living in them. And it is by means of the Spirit within us, whom He has given us, that we know He is living in us. **(The Last Days Bible) <:::::::::: STOP AND DISCUSS.**

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**A Three Step Approach
To Understanding**

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

***STEP TWO:
INSIGHTS FROM THE GREEK***

STEP TWO: Insights from the Greek goes behind the English language by reading from Greek Lexicons (Dictionaries), and looking at the Greek tenses as well as some short commentary. After reading then discuss among your group.

1 JOHN CHAPTER 3

A KEY TO UNDERSTAND GREEK TENSES

PRESENT TENSE: A present tense in Greek conveys continuous or habitual action.

AORIST TENSE: An aorist tense means the action is viewed as a complete whole or one-time action.

PERFECT TENSE: A completed action that has lingering effects.

FUTURE TENSE: Indicates a contemplated event which has not yet occurred.

**1 JOHN CHAPTER 3
VERSES 1-3**

.....> **READ THE FOLLOWING:** ¹Behold (aorist tense), what manner of love the Father hath bestowed (perfect tense) upon us, that we should be called (aorist tense) the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth (present tense) us not, because it knew (aorist tense) him not. ²Beloved, now are we (present tense) the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear (aorist tense) what we shall be (future tense): but we know (perfect tense) that, when he shall appear (aorist tense), we shall be (future tense) like him; for we shall see (future tense) him as he is (present tense). ³And every man that hath (present tense) this hope in him purifieth (present tense) himself, even as he is (present tense) pure. (King James Version)

(Verse 1) – “Behold, what manner of love.” The Greek word “**behold**” is *eido* and means “to turn the eyes, the mind, the attention to anything, to pay attention” (Thayer’s Greek Lexicon). In this verse it means to pay special attention to how much

the Father really loves us. **“The Father hath bestowed upon us.”** **“Hath bestowed”** is from *dedoken*, the perfect tense form of *didomi*, “to give something to someone.” The perfect tense is used here to indicate that the gift becomes a permanent possession of the recipient. God has placed His love upon the saints in the sense that they have become the permanent objects of His love. One of the results of this love in action is that we are called sons of God (Wuest’s Word Studies in Greek, p. 142).

(Verse 2) – As children of God, we belong in the same family. God has not yet revealed what we will become. We do know when Christ appears we shall be with Him, know Him in His true nature, and become like Him, thus renewing the image of God (Disciple’s Study Bible, p. 1617).

(Verse 3) – Every person who has the hope of seeing Jesus purifieth and continues to purify himself (the Greek uses the present tense meaning habitual action). The Christian life is a process of becoming more and more like Christ ((See Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18). Knowing that Christ likeness is our ultimate destiny should motivate us to purity in dependence upon the Holy Spirit and the work of the cross. <:::::::::: **STOP, DISCUSS OR COMMENT.**

1 JOHN CHAPTER 3 VERSES 4-6

::::::::::> **READ THE FOLLOWING:** ⁴Whosoever committeth (present tense) sin transgresseth (present tense) also the law: for sin is (present tense) the transgression of the law. ⁵And ye know (perfect tense) that he was manifested (aorist tense) to take away (aorist tense) our sins; and in him is (present tense) no sin. ⁶Whosoever abideth (present tense) in him sinneth (present tense) not: whosoever sinneth (present tense) hath not seen (perfect tense) him, neither known (perfect tense) him. (King James Version)

(Verse 4) – **“Whosoever committeth sin.”** Now John shows the incompatibility of being a child of God and yet continuing in sin. “Committeth” and “transgresseth” are in the present tense in Greek which conveys continuous or habitual action. John is saying that whosoever continues in a lifestyle of sin also continues to transgress God’s law. Law is used in its broadest concept here and includes the law of one’s conscience (Romans 2:14), the moral principles contained in the law of Moses (EX. 20:2-17), and the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2; 1 Corinthians 9:21). **“Sin is the transgression of the law.”** Literally, *sin is lawlessness*. The terms are interchangeable (because of the use of the article with both words). Sin is lawlessness and lawlessness is sin (Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p. 1019). The Gnostic idea that matter was evil and only spirit was good led to the idea that either the body should be treated harshly, a form of asceticism, or sin committed in the body had no connection or effect on one’s spirit (See 2 Cor. 7:1; Prov. 18:14; 1 Th. 5:23). This led some, especially John’s opponents, to conclude that sin committed in the physical body did not matter; absolute indulgence in immorality was permissible; one could deny sin even existed (1 John 1:8-10) and disregard God’s law (1 John 3:4). John emphasized the need for obedience to God’s laws, for he defined the true love of God as obedience to His commandments (1 John 5:3) (MacArthur Study Bible, p. 1961).

(Verse 5) – “He was manifested to take away our sins.” Under the Old Testament sacrifice system, a lamb without blemish was offered as a sacrifice for sin. Jesus is “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn. 1:29). Because Jesus lived a perfect life and sacrificed himself for our sins, we can be completely forgiven (1 Jn. 2:2). We can look to Him and know that we need never suffer eternal death (1 Peter 1:18-20) (Life Application Bible, p. 2279).

(Verse 6) – “Whosoever sinneth (present tense) hath not seen him, neither known Him.” In verses 4-10 John shows the basic contrast between light and darkness, between the children of God and of the world. It is explained as a contrast between those who practice sin and those who do not. Jesus was sinless, and what is more He came to take away sin (1 Jn. 3:5). The New Birth sets a person irrevocably against sin because the seed of new life “remains” in that person (1 Jn. 3:9).

“Whosoever sinneth” is in the present tense in Greek and suggests behavior that is characteristic, usual, habitual and a lifestyle. John acknowledged, but does not excuse, the possibility of the believer sinning (1 Jn. 1:8), but it is not his true nature to do so (1 Jn. 3:9) (New Geneva Study Bible, p. 1989). A believer who commits a sin repents, confesses and receives cleansing (1 Jn. 1:9; Acts 8:22; 2 Cor. 7:8-9; 2 Cor. 12:21; Rev. 2:5; Rev. 2:16; Rev. 3:3; Rev. 3:19). A person who continues to sin, by contrast, is not sorry for what he or she is doing. Thus this person never repents nor turns to God. Such a person is in opposition to God, no matter what religious claims he or she makes (Rom. 2:8-9; 1 Jn. 3:6) (Life Application Bible, p. 2279). <::::::::::: **STOP, DISCUSS OR COMMENT.**

1 JOHN CHAPTER 3 **VERSES 7-8**

::::::::::> **READ THE FOLLOWING:** ⁷Little children, let no man deceive (present tense) you: he that doeth (present tense) righteousness is (present tense) righteous, even as he is (present tense) righteous. ⁸He that committeth (present tense) sin is (present tense) of the devil; for the devil sinneth (present tense) from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested (aorist tense), that he might destroy (aorist tense) the works of the devil. (King James Version)

(Verses 7-8) – These verses suggest strongly that the doctrine of the antichrists involved a confusion between sin and righteousness. Perhaps the antichrists felt free to sin while at the same time denying their guilt. John warned against such ideas: All sin is satanic in nature. To take part in sin at all is to take part in his activity. It is also opposing the work of the Son of God who came to put an end to that activity (1 Jn. 3:8). Even the smallest sin runs counter to the work of Christ. Believers are to *overcome* “the evil one” (1 Jn. 2:13-14), not to *participate* in what he is (The Bible Knowledge Commentary, p. 894). He that abides in Christ, continues not in the practice of sin. Renouncing sin is the great proof of spiritual union with, continuance in, and saving knowledge of the Lord Christ. Let us not serve or indulge what the Son of God came to destroy. Renewing grace is an abiding principle. Religion is not an art, a matter of dexterity and skill, but a new nature. And the regenerate person cannot sin as he did before he was born of God, and as others do who are not born again. There is a

spiritual principle that opposes sinful acts. And there is repentance for sin, if committed (A Complete Bible Commentary, p. 990).

We all have areas where temptation is strong and habits are hard to conquer. These weaknesses give the devil a foothold, so we must deal with our areas of vulnerability. If we are struggling with a particular sin, however, these verses are not directed at us, even if for the time we seem to keep on sinning. John is not talking about people whose victories are still incomplete; he is talking about people who make a practice of sinning and look for ways to justify it. Steps are necessary to find victory over prevailing sin: (1) The power of the Holy Spirit and God's Word. (2) Stay away from tempting situations. (3) Seek the help of the body of Christ, by prayer and the willingness to hold yourself accountable (Life Application Bible, p. 2279).

(Verse 7) – “Let no man deceive you,” expresses a warning against the false teachers, that is, do not be deceived by any one (Help for Translators, p. 83). **“He that doeth righteousness is righteous.”** If a person does what is right he actually is right, he has repented, one is what one does. Probably this sentence is also aimed at a doctrine of the false teachers, who held that their acts did not matter once they had reached the state of righteousness (Ibid., p. 83). The heretics appear to have indulged in the subtly perverse reasoning that somehow you could ‘be’ righteous without necessarily bothering to ‘practice’ righteousness. John roundly denies the possibility. Doing is the test of Being (Tyndale NT Commentary, p. 124). It is obvious that there were teachers around with a sophisticated theory of salvation which left plenty of room for illicit behavior. John was neither the first to encounter this, nor the first to declare that such people try to lead you astray (1 Cor. 6:9; Eph. 5:6) (International Bible Commentary, p. 1579). T

(Verse 8) – “He that committeth sin is of the devil.” Whereas the man who does right lives according to the norms of God, sinners live according to the norms of the devil, God's adversary (Ibid., p. 83). **“Committeth”** is *poieo*, in a present tense participle, “He who is continually doing sin,” that is, “He that makes sin his business or practice.” **“Of”** is *ek*, “out of.” He who continually does sin is out of the devil as a source (Wuest's Word Studies in Greek, p. 148). “Those who do what is sinful belong to the devil. They are just like him” (NIVRV). **“The devil sinneth from the beginning.”** The Greek verb is in the present tense, indicating habitual action: the devil was sinning when the world began and has continued to do so ever since (Help for Translators, p. 84). **“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil.”** Just as the devil cannot be conquered except by Christ's help, so we cannot free ourselves from this slavery by our own strength (Ap II 48-50). <::::::::::: **STOP, DISCUSS OR COMMENT.**

1 JOHN CHAPTER 3 VERSES 9-10

::::::::::> **READ THE FOLLOWING:** ⁹Whosoever is born (perfect tense) of God doth (present tense) not commit sin; for his seed remaineth (present tense) in him: and he cannot (present tense) sin (present tense), because he is born (perfect tense) of God. ¹⁰In this the children of God are (present tense) manifest,

and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth (present tense) not righteousness is (present tense) not of God, neither he that loveth (present tense) not his brother. (King James Version)

(Verses 9-10) – John does not teach perfectionism; otherwise, he would contradict himself (1 Jn. 1:8-9). Although interpretations of this text vary, it seems John’s argument is grammatically based. By using the Greek present tense he does not declare that Christians are unable to commit an occasional act of sin (1 Jn. 1:8-10; 2:1), but that they are not characterized by the spirit of lawlessness (1 Jn. 3:4), powerlessly led into a habitual practice of sin. Sin is natural to children of the Devil, who has sinned from the beginning, but unnatural to children of God, who cannot sin without the Spirit’s conviction. A constant indulgence in sin contradicts the claim to have a personal knowledge of Christ (Spirit Filled Life Bible, p. 1931).

(Verse 9) – **“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.”** Some teach that the “seed” of God that dwells in the believer is that part that does not commit sin. As true as that may be the Greek present tense is used. This means that no one who is born of God “continues to sin,” “practices sin,” or “keeps on sinning.” “Sin” (Gk. *hamartano*) is a present active infinitive, implying continued action. John emphasizes that one truly born of God cannot make sin his way of life because the life of God cannot exist in one who practices sin (1 Jn. 1:5-7; 2:3-11, 15-17, 24-29; 3:6-24; 4:7-8, 20).

(1) The new birth produces spiritual life resulting in an ever-present relationship with God. In this epistle, every time John speaks of the new birth of the believer, he uses the Greek perfect tense to emphasize the continued and sustained relationship which the new birth began (1 Jn. 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18).

(2) For one to have God’s life in him (that is, to be born of God) and to go on sinning is a spiritual impossibility. A believer may occasionally lapse from God’s high standard, but he will not continue in sin (1 Jn. 3:6, 10).

(3) That which keeps the faithful from sinning is God’s “seed” in him. The picture is of human reproduction, in which the sperm (the Greek for “seed” is *sperma*) bears the life principle and transfers the paternal characteristics. The “seed” is God’s very life, Spirit, and nature dwelling within the believer (1 Jn. 5:11-12; John 1:1; 15:4; 2 Pet. 1:4) (Full Life Study Bible, p. 581). “Cannot commit sin” means “cannot go on sinning.” Not a complete cessation of sin, but a life that is not characterized by sin (NIV Study Bible, p. 1911).

(4) All believers can live moment by moment free from offense and sin, by faith (1 Jn. 5:4), the indwelling Christ, the power of the Holy Spirit and the written Word. The apostle Paul called both the church and God Himself as witnesses that the sufficient grace of God through Christ had enabled him, to cleanse himself “from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1; 2 Cor. 1:12; 6:3-10; 1 Thess. 1:5) (Full Life Study Bible, p. 581).

(Verse 10) – **“In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil.”** This is the heart and conclusion of John’s teaching in 1 John 2:28-3:10. He has warned the reader not to be deceived about the nature of salvation (1 Jn. 3:7). Consequently, the believer must reject any theology or teaching which alleges that one can be out of fellowship with God (1 Jn. 1:3), continue in sin, do the works of the devil (1

Jn. 3:8), love the world (1 Jn. 2:15), do harm to others (1 Jn. 3:14-18), and yet be assured that he is a child of God.

Contrary to some teaching, John clearly believed that anyone who continues in sin (1 Jn. 3:9) “is of the devil (1 Jn. 3:80 and “is not of God” (1 Jn. 3:10). If the one who habitually practices sin claims to possess eternal life and be God’s child, he is deceived and “is a liar” (1 Jn. 2:4) Furthermore, what characterizes a true child of God is a love for God manifested in keeping His commandments (1 Jn. 5:2) and showing genuine concern for the spiritual and physical needs of other believers (1 Jn. 3:16-17) (Full Life Study Bible, p. 581). <::::::::::: **STOP, DISCUSS OR COMMENT.**

1 JOHN CHAPTER 3 VERSES 11-12

::::::::::> **READ THE FOLLOWING:** ¹¹For this is (present tense) the message that ye heard (aorist tense) from the beginning, that we should love (present tense) one another. ¹²Not as Cain, *who was* (aorist tense) of that wicked one, and slew (aorist tense) his brother. And wherefore slew (aorist tense) he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous. (King James Version)

(Verse 11) – “This is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.” The same expression, almost verbatim, appears in 1 Jn. 1:5, “This is the message which we have heard of him ...” It appears again at 1 Jn. 2:7 and 1 Jn. 2:25. The formula stresses that what is expressed was an important part of the Word of God. John had also expressed in his Gospel (Jn. 13:34-35) that love for one another should be an identifying characteristic of Christians (Liberty Bible Commentary, p. 770). “**That we should love one another.**” The command the “We should love one another” goes back to Christ Himself (Jn. 13:34) to “the beginning” of the gospel (international Bible Commentary, p. 1580). The verb is in the present tense, expressing duration (Help for Translators, p. 87).

(Verse 12) – “**Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one.**” Cain “was of that wicked one.” The words “wicked one” are the translation of *poneros*, “evil in active opposition to good.” A *poneros* person, seeks to drag everyone else down with himself into the corruption and destruction that awaits him. That is Satan. “**And slew his brother.**” The word “slew” is *sphazo*, “to slay, slaughter, butcher, by cutting the throat.” It is used in the LXX (Greek translation of the Old Testament), of the slaying of the Levitical sacrifices (Lev. 1:5). The inspired writer goes out of his way to use a specialized word to describe the murder of Abel by Cain. The latter cut his brother’s throat. The method Cain used to kill his brother was one in which much blood would be shed. The cutting of the jugular vein would fit that description. “**His own works were evil.**” Cain’s works are described as evil. The same word (*poneros*) is used when the devil is spoken of as “that wicked one.” His works were pernicious, actively opposed to that which is good (Wuest’s Word Studies in Greek, p. 151). Scripture presents Cain outwardly as a God-worshiper who even offered sacrifice (Gen. 4:3-5). Cain’s murderous actions, however, revealed that inwardly he was a child of the devil (Jn. 8:44) (MacArthur Bible Commentary, p. 1961). <::::::::::: **STOP, DISCUSS OR COMMENT.**

1 JOHN CHAPTER 3
VERSES 13-15

::::::::::> READ THE FOLLOWING: ¹³Marvel (present tense) not, my brethren, if the world hate (present tense) you. ¹⁴We know (perfect tense) that we have passed (perfect tense) from death unto life, because we love (present tense) the brethren. He that loveth (present tense) not *his* brother abideth (present tense) in death. ¹⁵Whosoever hateth (present tense) his brother is (present tense) a murderer: and ye know (perfect tense) that no murderer hath (present tense) eternal life abiding (present tense) in him. (King James Version)

(Verse 13) – “Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.” It is only to be expected that the wicked should continue to regard and treat the righteous as Cain regard and treated his righteous brother Abel. Jesus warned us that it would be so (See Jn. 15:18-19, 25; 16:1-3; 17:14), and by its hatred the world is simply giving evidence of its true spiritual condition, which is ‘death’ (1 Jn. 3:14) (Tyndale NT Commentary, p. 140).

(Verse 14) – “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” The fact that *we love the brethren* gives us a good ground for certainty that we possess eternal life. John associates himself with his readers in this glorious affirmation. Love is the surest test of having life. (Ibid., p. 141). Love for fellow Christians is just as much a characteristic of the new nature of believers as righteous living (See John 13:35) (NIV Study Bible, p. 1931).

(Verse 15) – “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.” The lack of love is evidence of spiritual death. He is not necessarily denying the possibility of repentance and of forgiveness to a murderer. He is rather stating a general principle (Tyndale NT Commentary, p. 142). <:::::::::: STOP, DISCUSS OR COMMENT.

1 JOHN CHAPTER 3
VERSES 16-18

::::::::::> READ THE FOLLOWING: ¹⁶Hereby perceive we (perfect tense) the love *of God*, because he laid down (aorist tense) his life for us: and we ought (present tense) to lay down (present tense) *our* lives for the brethren. ¹⁷But whoso hath (present tense) this world’s good, and seeth (present tense) his brother have (present tense) need, and shutteth up (aorist tense) his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth (present tense) the love of God in him? ¹⁸My little children, let us not love (present tense) in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. (King James Version)

(Verse 16) – “Hereby perceive we the love *of God*, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.” The sacrificial death of Christ defines what love is. Love can be defined only in action. The supreme expression of love is the death of Christ on our behalf. True love acts to help the one in need (Disciple’s Study Bible, p. 1618).

(Verse 17) – “But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” This verse gives an example of how to lay down our lives for others – to help those in need. John is quick to note that love is not a feeling or an intention. Love is a choice, a course of action (The Teacher’s Commentary, p. 1055). To refuse to give of our food, clothing, or money to help others in real need is to close our hearts to them (See Deut. 15:7-11) (Full Life Study Bible, p. 582). The Bible repeatedly places great value on gifts to the poor. Jesus emphasized giving as He spoke of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:30-37) and of giving a cup of water in His Name (Mt. 10:42), etc., in so doing the believer is actually giving unto Him (Mt. 25:40) (Disciple’s Study Bible, p. 1618).

“Whoso hath this world’s good.” “Hath” is present subjunctive, speaking of habitual possession. The verb speaks of a person who regularly has the necessities of life. **“Seeth his brother have need.”** “Seeth” is *theoreo*, the verb speaks of continuous action. This person deliberately contemplates over a protracted space of time. This is not a hasty glance. It is seeing a Christian in need of the necessities of life over a long period. **“Shutteth up his bowels of compassion.”** “Shutteth up” is *kleio*, “to shut up.” The word could be used of the slamming of a door. It speaks here of this person who snaps shut the door of his heart against any compassionate feelings toward his needy brother and against any merciful actions. **“Bowels”** is *splagchna*, the oriental metaphor for what we speak of as the heart (Wuest’s Word Studies in Greek, p. 154). This term is used figuratively for the seat of emotions, especially the seat and source of love, sympathy, and pity (Help for Translators, p. 92).

(Verse 18) – “Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.” John does not say: ‘Let us love those who are saintly, agreeable, and rich.’ No, he says: ‘Let us love the brethren,’ in such a way that then nothing but brotherhood is loved and regarded; for a brother is loved out of a sense of duty, not because of usefulness and not because of praise. All the gifts we have should serve those who do not have them. For example, he who is learned should serve him who is not learned; he who is rich should serve him who is poor; he who is sensible should serve him who is foolish, etc.” (AE 30:278-79). <::::::::::: **STOP, DISCUSS OR COMMENT.**

1 JOHN CHAPTER 3 VERSES 19-21

::::::::::> **READ THE FOLLOWING:** ¹⁹And hereby we know (present tense) that we are (present tense) of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. ²⁰For if our heart condemn us (present tense), God is greater than our heart, and knoweth (present tense) all things. ²¹Beloved, if our heart condemn (present tense) us not, *then* have we (present tense) confidence toward God. (King James Version)

(Verses 18-20) – “¹⁸My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. ¹⁹And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. ²⁰For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.” The foregoing exhortation may have

awakened a misgiving in our hearts: ‘Am I as loving as I ought?’ Our failures in duty and service rise up before us, and ‘our heart condemns us.’ So the apostle furnishes a grand reassurance: The worst that is in us is known to God, and still He cares for us and desires us. Our discovery has been an open secret to Him all along. He knows everything and sees the deepest things. Our failures are on the surface, yet like King David (a man after God’s own heart) our general tenor of life is toward Him (Wuest’s Word Studies, p. 155). The Christian life is not perfection but direction towards God (Acts 20:21). **“God is greater than our heart.”** The clause gives the reason why “we” may reassure our heart in God’s presence. It is because God is greater, in the sense of more merciful, than our conscience dares to suppose (Help for Translators, p. 95).

(Verse 21) – “If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence.” The words, “If our heart condemn us not,” do not claim sinless perfection, but represent the heart attitude of a saint that so far as he knows has no unconfessed sin in his life, has nothing between himself and the Lord Jesus, a saint who is yielded habitually to the Holy Spirit and living in close fellowship with his Lord (Wuest’s Word Studies, p. 156). **“Confidence”** is *parresia*, and is rendered “boldness” (Vine’s Lexicon). **“Heart”** in Greek is *kardia*. The heart of man is his very person: his psychological core. The conscious awareness each of us has that makes us persons and the spiritual dimension of responsiveness or unresponsiveness to God are both expressed by the word “heart” (Expository Dictionary of Bible Words, p. 334). **<:::::::::: STOP, DISCUSS OR COMMENT.**

1 JOHN CHAPTER 3 VERSES 22-24

::::::::::> READ THE FOLLOWING: ²²And whatsoever we ask (present tense), we receive (present tense) of him, because we keep (present tense) his commandments, and do (present tense) those things that are pleasing in his sight. ²³And this is (present tense) his commandment, That we should believe (aorist tense) on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love (present tense) one another, as he gave (aorist tense) us commandment. ²⁴And he that keepeth (present tense) his commandments dwelleth (present tense) in him, and he in him. And hereby we know (present tense) that he abideth (present tense) in us, by the Spirit which he hath given (aorist tense) us. (King James Version)

(Verse 22) – “And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.” The blessing of an uncondemning heart is now stated. We have confidence not only to have access to Him in prayer, but to receive answers from Him. The same combination of confidence and granted petitions is found in 1 John 5:14-15 (Tyndale NT Commentary, p. 149). **“Whatsoever we ask.”** Jesus expressed such confidence in the Father (Jn. 11:41-42) and encouraged His disciples to have similar confidence (Jn. 14:13-14). This confidence depends on the awareness that our desires are attuned to God’s (1 Jn. 5:14-15) (New Geneva Study Bible, p. 1991). You will receive if you obey and do what pleases him because you will then be asking in line with God’s will (Life Application Bible, p. 2280). This is not at all like legalism, any more than it is like antinomianism; the believer just naturally wants to do the will of God (Liberty Bible Commentary, p.

770). When we “keep his commandments” we give evidence that we are in harmony with God’s will (Jn. 15:7) and thus pray accordingly.

(Verse 23) – “This is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another.” The writer had declared that a confident and effective prayer life is founded on obedience to God’s “commands” (1 Jn. 3:22). Now those commands are summed up in a single command consisting of faith and love. The phrase “**believe in the name of His Son**” contains the epistle’s first direct reference to faith (The Bible Knowledge Commentary, p. 897). In the ancient world, “**name**” was more than a means of identification. It represented the character and authority of the person and all he stood for, sometimes even the person himself. In the Gospels, to be persecuted “because of the name of Jesus” is translated “because of loyalty to Jesus” (The Translator’s NT, p. 568).

(Verse 24) – “He that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.” The concept of mutual abiding, mentioned here in this Epistle for the first time, we in Him and He in us, is derived ultimately from our Lord’s allegory of the vine and the branches (John 15:1). Both here and in John 15 (v. 10) the condition of continuous abiding is obedience. With 1 John 3:24 John unties the various strands which he has been unfolding separately in these first three chapters of his Epistle. No-one may dare claim that he abides in Christ and Christ in him unless he is obedient to the three fundamental commandments which John has been expounding, which are belief in Christ, love for the brethren and moral righteousness. The Spirit whose presence is the test of Christ’s abiding in us, manifests Himself objectively in our life and conduct. It is He who inspires us to confess Jesus as the Christ and it is also He who empowers us to live righteously and to love the brethren (Gal. 5:16, 22) (Tyndale NT Commentary, p. 151). The way a believer can verify that God lives (*meinei*, “abides”) in him is by the operation of God’s Spirit in his life (The Bible Knowledge Commentary, p. 898).

<:::::::::: STOP, DISCUSS OR COMMENT.

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**A Three Step Approach
To Understanding**

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

STEP THREE:

STEP THREE: Questions are provided that will take you directly to the Scriptures to again discuss what you have already seen and understood.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

(1 John Chapter 3)

Discover the answers by going to the appropriate Scriptures.

- 1. Read 1 John 3:1.** God shows how very much He loves us by allowing us to be called: a. the sons of thunder. b. the children of the world. c. the sons of God.
- 2. Read 1 John 3:2.** All that we are going to be has not yet been made clear to us. But we know that when Christ appears again: a. we shall run and hide. b. we will be like Him! c. we shall see Christ as He really is.
- 3. Read 1 John 3:3.** All that have the glorious hope in what God has promised at Christ's return will: a. be careful to attend Sunday services. b. keep themselves pure, just as Christ is pure. c. live as if it doesn't matter what you do.
- 4. Read 1 John 3:4.** Everyone who practices sin also practices: a. lawlessness. b. on the piano. c. magic.
- 5. Read 1 John 3:4.** Sin is the transgression of: a. the church's creed. b. God's law. c. the family tradition.
- 6. Read 1 John 3:5.** Jesus appeared in visible form and became a man: a. to take away our sins. b. to show us how to be a good person. c. to start another religion.
- 7. Read 1 John 3:6.** People who stay one in their hearts with Christ: a. obey the Sabbath. b. attend church regularly. c. won't go on sinning, that is, practice sin.
- 8. Read 1 John 3:6.** Those who habitually practice sin don't know Him (Jesus) or understand who He is. True or False.

- 9. Read 1 John 3:7.** Don't let anyone fool you into believing that a person can be right with God even if he doesn't live right. It is the person who lives right, who is right with God. True or False.
- 10. Read 1 John 3:8.** The one who practices sin: a. is a bad example. b. will get in trouble. c. is of the devil.
- 11. Read 1 John 3:8.** The reason the Son of God came to earth was: a. to destroy the devil's work. b. to preach the prosperity message. c. to show us a good example.
- 12. Read 1 John 3:9.** No one who is born of God practices sin, because: a. they can get into trouble. b. the police can arrest them. c. God's seed abides in them, that is, God's life and nature lives in them.
- 13. Read 1 John 3:10.** You can tell God's children from the devil's children, because those who belong to the devil refuse to do right or to love each other. True or False.
- 14. Read 1 John 3:11.** The original command is: a. pay tithes to the church regularly. b. pray often. c. that we should love one another.
- 15. Read 1 John 3:12.** Cain killed his brother Abel because: a. he was better looking. b. he wanted his money. c. he thought only of himself, and lived to please himself, while he brother lived to please and obey God.
- 16. Read 1 John 3:13.** Do not be surprised, my fellow Christians, if: a. the world likes you. b. others think you are great. c. the world hates you.
- 17. Read 1 John 3:14.** We know we have escaped the second death and now have the promise of eternal life, because we love all who faithfully love, serve and obey the Lord. True or False.
- 18. Read 1 John 3:15.** Anyone who hates another Christian is really a murder at heart. True or False.
- 19. Read 1 John 3:16.** We understand the nature of love from the fact that Christ laid down His life for us. True or False.
- 20. Read 1 John 3:17.** If we have all we need and see one of our own people in need, we must have pity on that person, or else we cannot say we love God. True or False.
- 21. Read 1 John 3:18.** You show love for others by truly helping them, and not merely by talking about it. True or False.
- 22. Read 1 John 3:19.** When our love is of the kind that results in sincere action, we can know that we are indeed true followers of the Lord. True or False.

23. Read 1 John 3:20-21. It is important to keep our conscience clear. True or False.

24. Read 1 John 3:22. We are able to stretch our hands out and receive what we asked for because we're doing what He (God) said, doing what pleases Him. True or False.

25. Read 1 John 3:23. This is God's command: to give our allegiance to his Son Jesus Christ and love one another. True or False.

26. Read 1 John 3:24. Those who obey God's commandments live in fellowship with Him, and He with them. True or False

27. Read 1 John 3:24. We know that God lives in us because of the Spirit God gave us. True or False.

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