

**Love Like a Christian!**  
**1 John 3:10-23**

**Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and truth (1 John 3:18).**

The joy of fellowship is not confined to our existence here on earth as Christians. A day is coming when every believer will stand before the Savior to give an account for his or her life. John's extended exhortation to live in fellowship with Christ now so that we will have confidence at His Coming is marked by the inclusio—*that you may have confidence at His coming judgment* (2:28; 4:17). This introduces a new idea to the discussion of the joy of fellowship: The joy or lack of it at the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Three inclusions within the inclusio paint a portrait of the abiding and loving Christian who will stand before Christ with the open confidence of a friend who has nothing to hide and nothing to be ashamed of. The confident believer lives righteously, loves other Christians, and releases the life of God (2:29-4:16):

- Inclusion—key word, *manifest*: You know that the life of God produces righteous behavior, not sin (2:29-3:10a). *Live like a Christian!*
- Inclusion—key phrase, *love one another*: You know that the love of God produces love for Christians, not hate (3:10b-23). *Love like a Christian!*
- Inclusion—key idea, God *abiding in believers*: You know that the Spirit of God produces spiritual victory—confessing Christ and overcoming the world (3:24-4:16). *Live like a New Creation!*

The second unit defines true Christian righteousness as more than mere morality. The righteousness that manifests a child of God is inseparable from genuine Christian love that is expressed in concrete, Christlike acts. The Greek term for *love* has only occurred seven times so far in 1 John. From this point forward it will be repeated 35 times! There is no refuting John's emphasis—if you want confidence when you stand before Christ then you better start loving your brothers and sisters in Him now:

**Christians who abide in Christ will display His \_\_\_\_\_ for one another:  
Love like a Christian!**

**1 John: Life in the Family**

**Prologue**—*call to fellowship* (1:1-4)

**Preamble**—*living in fellowship with God* (1:5-2:11)

Walking in God's Light—*stay on the path of holiness* (1:5-2:2)

Knowing the God of Light—*follow Christ and love His people* (2:3-11)

**Body**—*the confidence of fellowship* (2:12-4:17-19)

Reassurance—*spiritual assets to resist the world* (2:12-17) *and the antichrists* (2:18-27)

Exhortation—*live in fellowship with Him now and you will be confident at His Coming* (2:28-4:19)

Abiding Christians display Christ's righteousness (2:28-3:10a)

**Abiding Christians display Christ's love for one another (3:10b-23)**

Lack of Christian love and abiding are mutually exclusive. Abiding produces the righteousness you would expect from a child of God—Christlike love for the brethren.

- I. Only those believers who love one another are truly abiding in Christ (1 John 2:28-3:10a).
  - A. Those who live in fellowship with Christ will have confidence when they meet Him and not shrink away in shame (2:28; 4:17)!
    1. Every Christian must give an account of his or her life in Christ—from the time they believed to the time they died (2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10). This is not merely a citing of our "good works" to be rewarded but a comprehensive review of both "good and bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Corinthians 3:5-15). The goal of every believer should be to hear Christ's "well done" as we stand before Him at His Coming. Only those who "abide" in Him will be affirmed in this way.

2. A sure sign of abiding is the growth or maturity of the God-given love we received when we believed in Jesus. His mature love in us now brings confidence at His coming (4:17).
- B. Believers who abide in Christ produce the love for one another you would expect from a child of God (3:10b-23).
1. The abiding influence of God only produces righteousness—more specifically, the righteous and “divine” love God gives Christians for one another (3:10).
  2. What righteous love is *not*: Any believer who hates his or her brother in Christ is not abiding in the new life He gave them but doing the work of the devil as they abide in the sphere of death they were delivered from (10b-15).
    - a. Biblical proof that *not* loving one another is *not* of God: Not loving one another breaks Jesus’ foremost commandment (11; 2:3-11; John 13:34); the most famous example of brother-to-brother hatred, Cain’s murder of Abel, was the devil causing spiritual envy (12); and the world—Satan’s evil world system—hates Christians (13; 2:15-17; John 15:18-19).
    - b. Experiential proof that *not* loving one another is *not* of God: When we passed from death to life we began loving one another—that is how we expressed our new life, eternal life (14a). When we hate one another we are expressing our old life—Cain-like hatred that just wants to get rid of a brother—and cannot be expressing our new life (14b-15).
  3. What righteous love is: True Christian love is self-sacrificing and expressed in tangible acts of kindness (16-18).
    - a. True Christian love has an objective standard: The love Christ demonstrated when He laid down His life for us (16; John 15:13).
    - b. Christ’s love in us is never expressed by lack of compassion for the needs of the brethren or mere words, but by sacrificial deeds of kindness that truly follow Christ’s example and teaching (17-18).
  4. What righteous love does for believers: True Christian love brings confidence to a believer’s prayers on earth and appearance before Christ in heaven (19-23).
    - a. Though the needs of other Christians will always seem overwhelming and we may feel inadequate in our love, those who express Christ’s love in specific acts of kindness will have confidence in their prayers because the Spirit will let them know they pleased Him (19-22)
    - b. Summary Statement: The confident believer at His judgment (context) knows he or she has pleased Him by doing what He says (22, John 15:4)—trusting Him (John 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23-24) and loving His people (John 13:34-35) (23).

II. Christlike love for other Christians required if you want confidence at the Judgment Seat of Christ!

- A. Are you expressing or suppressing Christ’s love for His church and other Christians? How? Why Not? Any Christian you wish was *out of the way*? One way you can love an unlovely believer?
- B. When someone tells you they “abide” in Christ, consider the evidence! If they “hate” the church...
  1. Ask them if they have believed in Christ because this is not what you would expect from a child of God.
  2. If they have believed, ask them if they have heard of the Judgment Seat of Christ because this is not what He approves from His people.