

**Live Like a New Creation!**  
**1 John 3:24-4:16**

**God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him (1 John 4:16).**

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):

- Inclusio—key word, *manifest*: You know that the life of God produces righteous behavior, not sin (2:29-3:10a). *Live like a Christian!*
- Inclusio—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!*
- Inclusio—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 third unit reminds us that true Christian righteousness is never the work of mere humans. The righteousness that manifests a child of God is inseparable from the indwelling presence of God's Spirit. The emphasis of abiding now shifts from us abiding *in Him* to Him abiding *in us*. When the Spirit who indwells every believer is comfortable in our lives, we will speak the truth about Christ and love one another with His love:

**Christians who abide in Christ will display His \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_:**  
**Live like a New Creation!**

**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)

**Abiding Christians display the Spirit's truth and love (3:24-4:16)**

Lack of Christian testimony and abiding are mutually exclusive. Abiding produces the righteousness you would expect from a child of God—the release of spiritual power.

I. Only those believers who release the power of the Spirit are truly abiding in Christ (1 John 3:24-4:17).

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)!

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. 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 fruit of truth and love that can only be explained by the abiding presence of God's Spirit (3:24-4:16).
1. Obedient believers who love one another not only know that they *abide* in Christ but the Spirit assures them that God *abides* in them (3:24, 4:16).
    - a. Mutual abiding is the ultimate experience of fellowship the Lord Jesus promised in John 14:20-23 and offers to every believer in Revelation 3:20. Keep in mind that abiding means to be comfortable in a relationship. Every believer is in union with Christ (John 14:20), but only those who love Him enough to keep (guard) His word are abiding in Him and Him in them (John 14:23).
    - b. The Holy Spirit indwells every believer (John 15:4-7; Romans 8:9), but the Spirit manifests Himself only in those believers in whom God *abides* (those who *keep* His commandments, 3:24; those He *fills*, Ephesians 5:18; those who *abide* in His love for one another, 4:16).
  2. Warning: Be careful to distinguish the work of the Holy Spirit from the work of evil spirits (4:1-6).
    - a. Anyone who cannot confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not manifesting the work of the Holy Spirit but the spirit of the coming Antichrist (4:1-3).
    - b. The Holy Spirit who indwells every believer (3:24; 4:2, 13; Romans 8:9) is stronger than Satan and his evil world system (John 16:33). The popularity of false prophets should not surprise us since their message comes from Satan who is the god of this world (John 12:41; 2 Corinthians 4:4), but believers should discern between truth and error (though believers can be deceived, 2:24; 2 John 2:7-11) (4:4-6).
  3. True Christian love comes from God, not from believers (4:7-10).
    - a. True Christian love is superhuman—it comes from God and is only displayed in believers (born of God) who *know* God (virtual synonym for fellowship or abiding, 2:3-5) (7).
    - b. Those who do not love cannot say they “know” the God of love (not abiding, 8).
    - c. That love comes from God is obvious in Christ's atoning sacrifice that God initiated because He loved us, not because we loved Him (9-10).
  4. God's love for us motivates us to love one another in Spirit and in truth (4:11-16).
    - a. God's love for us is never comfortable remaining in us but matures (has its end) only when it is expressed toward others (11-12).
    - b. God's Spirit confirms His abiding presence in us as He works in us to confess Christ and love one another (13-16).
- II. God abides in believers who allow His Spirit to display His truth and love through their lives—and these will have confidence at the Judgment Seat of Christ!
- A. Are you expressing or suppressing the Spirit's ministry in your life? He always tells others the truth about Jesus and always loves others with Jesus' love!
  - B. When someone tells you the Holy Spirit is their source of power, consider the evidence: The Spirit will confess the truth about Christ and display God's love—for the lost and other believers!