

# Discipleship: True Assurance

1 John 5:13-14

People think they are Christians because they were born in America, part of a particular family, live in a certain neighborhood, and countless other presumptuous reasons. On the other side of the spectrum, otherwise rock-solid Christians doubt their salvation due to the slightest sin. True assurance is a wonderful stone in the foundation of biblical discipleship. God wants to save us, and He wants us *to know* we are saved (v13). The result of this assurance is confidence in prayer (v14). John's whole letter is written to give us this assurance by answering questions that *can* be answered.

## ***Testify***

When God efficaciously calls a person to Himself, He gives him the Holy Spirit (1 Jn. 4:13). The Spirit is not an unknowable, gauzy sense of peace, but a Person who prompts the believer to “testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world” (4:14). Similarly, Paul says, “no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:3). Christians believe and confess that Jesus is the Christ, and God abides in them (4:15). This is testimony in the most basic sense. To believe and confess this gladly is the work of the Spirit. To believe in God and despise Him is to be like the demons (Jms. 2:19). Not every Christian is a gifted evangelist, but every true Christian has this foundational conviction of who Christ is. True faith includes doctrinal content about the Son (2:21-23).

## ***Love the Body of Christ***

**“We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death” (1 Jn. 3:14). One of the strangest parts of becoming a Christian for many people is starting to like and eventually love other Christians. We are adopted into God’s family where there are brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers (1 Tim. 5:1-2). It’s not possible to be in the light and hate your brother (1:9). To love him is to avoid all causes of stumbling, but to hate him is to walk blind in the darkness (1:10-11). We test our love for God by our demonstrated love for our brother: “he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen” (4:20). This is the Divine version of Charles Schultz Peanuts cartoon: “I love mankind ... it’s people I can’t stand!!” God delights to see His people blessing one another (Ps. 133).**

## ***Walk in the Light***

Read out of context, many of John’s statements can unsettle our assurance of salvation—“No one who abides in him keeps on sinning” (3:6). But read naturally, John’s teaching is practical and eye-opening: “If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin” (1:6-7). What does it mean to walk in the light? It means keeping the commandments (2:3-4). Legalism is adding to God’s law, but keeping the law is the way to love Jesus (Jn. 14:15; Rom. 13:9). An essential part of walking in the light is recognizing our sinfulness, and confessing our sins (1:8-9). If we refuse to do this we deceive ourselves and call God a liar (1:7, 10). It is tragically common for Christians to lack the assurance and joy of their salvation because they delay and refuse to confess sin. David describes this experience as wasting away, groaning all day, suffering under the heavy hand of the Lord day and night, and having his strength dried up as by the summer heat (Ps. 32:3-4; Ps. 51:12). If we walk in the light and are quick to confess our sins and grant forgiveness to others, we have fellowship with God and one another. The Spirit guides us as we walk in the light wherever we are at, and we’re not to compare ourselves to others (2 Cor. 10:12; Lk. 18:11-12). We bear the fruit of the Spirit, which is glorious—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Gal. 5:22-23)—but it’s not Franken-fruit. Conversely, the “works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these” (Gal. 5:19-20). God makes the gospel clear for us, and then He makes living the gospel also clear. We confess Jesus is Lord and God, love His people, confess our sins, keep the commandments, and thrive in the grace of God.

## NOTES FOR LITTLE SAINTS

### **Today's Passage: 1 John 5:13-14**

*13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life. 14 And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.*

1. What does John want his readers to know, and why do you think this is important (verse 13)?
2. When we know that God is our Father, that He loves and forgives us in Jesus, and gives us the Holy Spirit, what will we do (verse 14)?
3. The letter of first John encourages us to know God loves and lives in us in three ways: 1) By our confession that Jesus is God and Messiah; 2) By our love for other believers; 3) By our keeping God's commandments and walking in the light. Can you think of ways you seen Christians do these things?
4. Draw a picture of kids playing a fun game in the bright sunshine, having fun together.

### **Memory Verse to Recite Next Week:**

*I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.  
-1 John 5:13*