



Talmid תלמיד a Hebrew word that means “a true disciple who desires to be what the Rabbi Jesus is.”

Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did. 1 John 2:6 (NIV)

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STUDY TO SHEW THYSELF APPROVED UNTO GOD, A WORKMAN THAT NEEDETH NOT TO BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY
DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH. 2 TIMOTHY 2:15



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What is the gospel of Jesus Christ? Part 8

THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

I can remember the first time I went to Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe back in the late 1990's. Stretched out below us for miles was a magnificent gash in the earth. A river ran through the bottom of it, sparkling as the sun glinted off it. Birds flew below us, and low-hanging clouds sped by above, caught, I guess, in the wind currents being channeled by the canyon.

What an incredible feeling of smallness

I had at that moment, staring into a dizzying expanse below me and looking into the sky. For a few moments, all three of us were—for the first time all day—speechless. And then one of my friends began to sing,

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder,
consider all the worlds thy hands
have made ...

He wasn't a good singer, God bless him, but his heart was exactly right! For the next few minutes we stood at the edge of the Grand Canyon of the Victoria Falls and praised the One who had created that awe-inspiring masterpiece.

Why Do We Overlook It?

You know, I think the gospel would have that same overwhelming effect on us if we took the time to stop and really think about it. How long has it been since you looked up from the earthly details of life and came face to face with the Grand Canyon of what God has done for us in the gospel—his unfathomable grace in forgiving people who have rebelled against him, his breathtaking plan to send his Son to suffer and die in their place, to establish the throne of the resurrected Jesus over a kingdom of perfect righteousness, and to bring those who are saved and redeemed by his blood into a new heavens and new earth where sin and evil will be forever conquered!

How is it that I let the beauty and power and vastness of that gospel be crowded out of my mind so often and for so long? Why is it that my thoughts and emotions are often dominated by silly things like whether my car is clean, or what's happening on CNN or FOX News

right now, or whether I was happy with my lunch today, rather than by these glorious truths? Why do I so often organize and think about my life as if I were wearing blinders, rather than in the light of eternity? Why does this gospel not permeate, all the time and all the way to the bottom, my relationships with my wife and children, my coworkers and friends and fellow church members?

I know exactly why. It's because I'm a sinner, and worldliness will continue to linger in my heart and war against me until the day Jesus comes back. But until then, I want to fight against that. I want to fight against spiritual laziness—against the drugged stupor this world constantly threatens to put me in—and I want to embrace this gospel hard and let it affect everything—my actions, affections, emotions, desires, thoughts, and will.

I hope you want that too. And I hope this teaching has helped part the trees a little so you can see the grandeur of what God has done for us in Jesus. But what now? Well, let me mention just a few things—there are a million others I won't mention—about how the good news of Jesus should affect our lives.

Repent and Believe

First, if you are not a Christian, thank you for reading this far in this teaching. I hope you've taken the opportunity to give some thought to this good news about Jesus, and I pray it has gotten deeply into your mind. For you, I think the "what now" question is actually really easy. There aren't a million things you ought to do. There is one: repent of your sins and believe in Jesus. That means recognizing your spiritual bankruptcy, acknowledging your complete inability to save yourself, and coming to Jesus as your only hope of ever being forgiven and right before God.

Becoming a Christian is not some laborious process. There's nothing to earn. Jesus has already earned everything you need. What the gospel calls you to do is to turn your heart away from sin and toward Jesus in faith—that is, trust and reliance. It calls you to come to him and say, "I know I can't save myself, Jesus, so I'm trusting you to do it for me."

And then a whole world opens up before you. But it all begins with repenting of sin and trusting in Jesus to save you.

Rest and Rejoice

If you are a Christian, then the gospel calls you first of all to rest in Jesus Christ and to rejoice in the unassailable salvation he has won for you. Because of Jesus, and because I know that I am united to Him by faith, I can fight against the temptation to think that my salvation is somehow fragile or passing. Whether I feel it at any given moment, I can know—deep down beneath the swirling questions—that I belong to Jesus and that no one can snatch me out of his hand. That's because the gospel tells me that my righteous standing before God is not grounded in checking off some spiritual bingo card. Enough fruit? Check. Quiet time? Check! Spiritual conversation? Check, check, check! Great! I'm feeling *really* saved today!

How ridiculous in light of what the gospel says about Jesus! Thank God, my relationship with him is not based on my fickle will or my ability to live righteously. No, God has already pronounced his verdict over me, and it is "**FORGIVEN!**" Even more, that verdict will never change because it is grounded solely and forever in Jesus—his death on the cross in my place and his intercession for me even now before the throne of God.

If you are a Christian, then the cross of Jesus stands like a mountain of granite across your life, immovably testifying to God's love for you and his determination to bring you safely into his presence. It's as Paul said in Romans: ³¹ "**What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?**" ³² **He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?"** ([Romans 8:31–32 NASB](#)).

Love Christ's People

Also, Christian, the gospel should drive you to a deeper and livelier love for God's people, the church. Not one of us Christians has earned his or her way into the inheritance God has stored up for us. We are not "self-made" citizens of the kingdom. We are included in God's promises only because we know that we are dependent on Jesus Christ to save us, and we are united to him by faith.

But here's the kicker. Do you realize that the same thing is true of that brother or sister in your church who annoys you? He or she believes in and loves the same Lord Jesus that you do, and even more, he or she has been saved and forgiven by the same Lord who saved and forgave you. Think about that brother or sister

you've not really taken the time to get to know because you just don't think you'd click. Think about that person with whom you have a broken relationship that you've refused to repair. Now consider that he or she loves and trusts in the same Lord you do. Consider that the same Lord who died for you, also died for him, for her.

I wonder if your understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ—the good news that Jesus saved you even though you didn't deserve it—is deep enough to swallow up the little criticisms you have of your brothers and sisters. I wonder if it's deep enough to sink the offenses they've committed against you, even the most painful ones, and lead you to forgive them and love them just as Jesus Himself has done for both of you.

I wonder if the vastness of God's love for you has increased your love for others.

Speak the Gospel to the World

Not only that, but I wonder if God's grace to you has caused you to love the world around you more, and too long to see people come to know and believe in Jesus Christ. If we truly understand the grace God has shown us, our hearts will burn to see that same grace shown to others.

After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples and told them this: “⁴⁶...**Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,**
⁴⁷**and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.**” There it was, laid out in crystal clarity for the disciples—God's grand plan to save a people for himself. And then, stunningly, Jesus added this: “⁴⁸**You are witnesses of these things**” ([Luke 24:46–48 NASB](#)). I've always imagined that the color must have drained out of the disciples' faces when they heard that! God's purpose was nothing less than the redemption of the world, and here was Jesus telling them that purpose **would be accomplished through them!**

I don't know about you, but that thought makes me feel incredibly inadequate. God intends to bring about His purposes in the world through **us**? Amazing! But if you feel unworthy and inadequate, let me give you some encouragement. You **are** unworthy, and you **are** most certainly inadequate! How's that for encouragement? Look at **us**—frail, weak human

beings who still struggle against sin every day of our lives. And yet Jesus says to us, “You will be my witnesses.” It is through our proclaiming the gospel—whether through preaching or teaching or conversations over meals with friends, family members, and coworkers—that God has determined to save sinners.

Have you ever wondered why the angel who spoke to Cornelius in [Acts 10](#) didn't just tell him the gospel? Why go to all the trouble of having Cornelius send for Peter, who was in an altogether different town? Really, if the angel could tell Cornelius all that, surely he could just as well have told him the gospel! But no, God has determined that the gospel will advance through the spoken words of His people—that is, through the mouths of those who have themselves embraced the good news about Jesus and have known the forgiveness that comes from Him.

If you are a Christian, realize that you hold in your hands the only true message of salvation the world will ever hear. There will never be another gospel, and there is no other way for people to be saved from their sins. If your friends, family, and coworkers are ever to be saved from their sins, it will be because someone speaks the gospel of Jesus Christ to them. That's why Jesus commissions **us** to go into all the world, preaching and teaching this good news to the nations. It's also what Paul meant in [Romans 10](#) when he asked, “**How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?**” ([v. 14](#)). There are many good things that we can do as Christians, but the fact is that most of those good things will happily be done also by people who are not Christians. But if we Christians fail to proclaim the gospel of Jesus, who else is going to do that? No one.

So let the truths of the gospel penetrate your heart and even break it for those who do not know Jesus Christ. Meditate on what it will mean for your friends, family, and coworkers to stand before God the righteous Judge apart from Jesus Christ. Remember what the grace of God has done in your own life, and imagine what He could do in theirs. Then take a deep breath, pray for God's Spirit to work, and open your mouth and speak!

Long for Him

Finally, the gospel should cause us to long for the day when our King Jesus will return to establish His kingdom fully and finally and forever. That's not a longing borne ultimately of just *being* in the kingdom;

we don't long for Jesus' return just because we will live in a world where evil is conquered and justice reigns.

Those are wonderful promises, but even they are not big enough. No, if we understand the gospel rightly, we will long not so much for the kingdom as for the King. The gospel has brought **US** to know Him and love Him, and therefore to long to be with Him. **"I desire that they ... may be with me where I am"** Jesus said ([John 17:24](#)). And we desire to be with Him, too, joining with millions of others to worship Him.

The book of Revelation contains an amazing vision of what God has prepared for **US** who love Him. It's just a hint, but you can still feel the overwhelming sense of victory, joy, rest, and finality in this picture of the redeemed worshipping Jesus Christ.

Revelation 7:9-10 (NASB)

⁹**"After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands;**
¹⁰**and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."**

That is the day the gospel drives **US** to long for. Even as we slog through the trials, persecutions, irritations, temptations, distractions, apathy, and just plain weariness of this world, the gospel points **US** to heaven where our King Jesus—the Lamb of God Who was crucified in our place and raised gloriously from the dead—now sits interceding for **US**. Not only so, but it calls **US** forward to that final day when heaven will be filled with the roaring noise of millions upon millions of forgiven voices hailing Him as crucified Savior and risen King.

CORAM DEO **(Before the face of God)**

*The New Testament is in the Old concealed;
the Old Testament is in the New revealed.*
—Augustine

Please remember that in this study I am concerned with the big picture of Hosea, not the minute details. Our interest is in why and how the parts fit together to advance the revelation of the Christ and the gospel, rather than a technical exegesis to interpret all the specific parts. There are commentaries for that. So while I acknowledge that all the problems of interpretation may not be resolved, it is my prayer that throughout this study the Lord Jesus Christ will be evidently set forth and that the Holy Spirit will lead into truth by showing Christ and glorifying Him.

JUST THE FACTS

The Bible did not fall to earth from heaven complete and leather-bound. Different men—all of whom were inspired by the Holy Spirit—wrote the Old Testament over a period of about a thousand years. But each one lived in his own time and place; each one reflected and addressed the specific issues of his day. The truths of the Bible are universally and timelessly relevant, but they were first given to a specific people at a specific time to meet specific needs. The ultimate objective of our Bible study is to understand those universal and timeless truths and to apply them to our specific times and needs. An important part of Bible study is to learn what we can about the author, his times, and his particular circumstances. So here are just some facts about Hosea—the man and the book.

HOSEA: A MESSIANIC MAN

HIS PROFESSION

An Appointed Position.

First, a messiah was a *divinely chosen* individual. This was true for kings ([Deuteronomy 17:15](#)). It was true for priests ([Deuteronomy 18:5](#); [Numbers 17](#)). It was true for prophets ([Deuteronomy 18:15, 18](#)). Although not every prophet recounts the details or occasion of his call to the ministry, I would suggest that the detailed record of Jeremiah's call to the prophetic office is paradigmatic for every other true prophet ([Jeremiah 1:4-10](#)); therefore, it is instructive regarding Hosea.

The Lord's word to Jeremiah in [Jeremiah 1:5](#) is particularly informative: **"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; [b]efore you were born I sanctified you; and I [appointed] you a prophet to the nations."** Three verbs express the nature of the divine choice. The Lord said that He *knew* him. This is more than simple awareness or intellectual knowledge. It is, rather, an intimate, special, and selecting knowledge. This knowledge is part of the Old Testament's vocabu-

lary of election. Humanly speaking, God knew Jeremiah before there was anything to know. The Lord then said that He *sanctified* him. Before he was born, God had set Jeremiah apart for the special purpose of being a prophet. His service was divinely determined before he knew what was happening. Finally, the Lord said that He *appointed* him to be a prophet. This verb has the normal meaning “to give,” but also has the special sense of appointing or assigning to a specific task. God chose Jeremiah to be prophet; He called Jeremiah to be a prophet; and Jeremiah was a prophet. So it was for Hosea and, indeed, for every other true prophet.

What God determined in heaven happened on earth. There was no slip between the eternal purpose and the temporal fulfillment of God’s intent. There never is. That’s an important messianic lesson, particularly regarding the certainty of God’s purpose in redemption. But it is, as well, an important lesson for everything in life, and for everyone’s life. It was certainly true for Hosea. What Hosea preached and what he had to endure in connection with his ministry were the temporal manifestation of God’s eternal plan. We may know nothing of the occasion and the details of Hosea’s call, but the fact of the call is evident from its consequence. The Lord’s beginning to speak by Hosea ([Hosea 1:2](#)) is irrefutable verification that he was God’s select spokesman, His prophet. Just as God raised Jeremiah to speak for Him in the final hours of the southern kingdom, so He raised Hosea before Him to preach to the northern kingdom on the eve of its destruction.

An Authoritative Position.

Second, a messiah was an *accredited* individual. He had the authority to exercise his office. The prophet’s authority rested in the fact that he was the representative of God before men, speaking the Lord’s word to men. The Hebrew word translated “**prophet**” implies something of the inherent authority in the prophet’s words. It is formed from a verb that most likely means simply “to speak.” The word *prophet* evidences the same pattern as the word *messiah* in that it conveys the passive idea of the verb. A prophet, therefore, is one who has been spoken to and who in turn conveys that divine message to men. The only legitimate prophetic word—whether predicting the future, exposing sin, or inviting repentance—was “**thus says the Lord God**” ([Ezekiel 2:4](#)).

Perhaps one of the clearest statements that the prophet was God’s messenger with God’s message

is [Haggai 1:12–13](#). [Verse 12](#) actually equates obeying the voice of the Lord God with obeying the voice of Haggai the prophet. [Verse 13](#) identifies Haggai as the “**Lord’s messenger**” speaking “**the Lord’s message.**” Although miracles and fulfilled prophecies were visible means to validate the authenticity of the prophet ([Deuteronomy 13:1–3](#); [Deuteronomy 18:21–22](#)), his ultimate accreditation was his faithfulness in proclaiming the word of the Lord.

When self-proclaimed prophets voiced their opinions, God forthrightly dismissed them; they had no authority (see [Jeremiah 14:14](#)). But regardless of whether the people received or rejected the prophet’s word, if the chosen prophet spoke the word of the Lord, then one way or another there would be evidence that a prophet had been there ([Ezekiel 2:5](#)). The sin, rebellion, and unbelief of the people would often rob a prophet of honor, but they could not nullify his authority. The authority of the prophet was in the Word. At the very beginning of his prophecy, even in the biography section, Hosea cites evidence of the Lord’s speaking to him (see for examples [Hosea 1:1-2](#), [4](#), [6](#), [9](#); [Hosea 3:1](#)). Significantly, he begins the preaching section of his prophecy, “**Hear the word of the LORD**” ([4:1](#)).





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Introduction to 1 John Part 2

In this introductory study it is important to at least mention several of the key components of **1 John**. Some of this is repetitive, but it is critical not to lose perspective on how this letter is constructed and what John is trying to do. If the perspective of those two simple things is lost, then in reality it will dilute the impact that **1 John** is intended to have on its readers. What these introductory studies are doing is purely diagnostic in nature. The intent is not to dissect any passage, but simply to provide an initial and brief overview of what John is doing.

First it was seen that **1 John** is a book that has very strong spiritual contrasts without any alternatives. John never provides anything in the middle. Believers are either walking in the light or walking in the darkness. I.e., there is no such thing to John as walking in the shade or walking in the shadows. He says that believers either love the Father or they love the world. Once again, to John there is no middle of the road here. Certainly believers often feel that way in certain areas of their lives – where being in the middle of the road is unacceptable. I.e., my wife would not want me to say that I love her, but I also have love for someone else's wife. There is no room in a marriage for that – none, zero. It is not an

option. However, when coming to **1 John**, it is the absolute nature of what John is describing that seems to cause so much tension in people. John is not into options, variables, and certainly not personal preferences. However, many Christians on the other hand are all about personal preferences – having things their way, what they like, what they do not like, and because of that spiritual mentality, they often bring that same thinking and perspective into the Christian life and into the Christian church. The 21st century mentality is to minimize absolutes and to keep all of the believers' options open. That way believers can have a Christianity with which they are comfortable. However, that simply is not a biblical approach. It is the absolutes of Scripture that provide the deepest meaning to the Christian life.

The following are some of the absolute statements and contrasts that John provides in **1 John** just to give a flavor of how he approaches this letter.

1 John 1:5-6 says,

^{1Jn 1:5} **This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.**

It is extremely foolish to think that Christians can have meaningful and purposeful fellowship with God, and yet continue to deliberately and willfully live in sin.

1 John 1:8, 10,

^{1Jn 1:8} **If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.**

^{1Jn 1:10} **If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.**

The tendency is to both minimize and justify personal sins, but John says that if that is the case that that individual is simply self-deceived and clearly reveals that neither God's truth nor God's word are a meaningful part of their life.

1 John 2:4, 6, 9

^{1Jn 2:4} **He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.**

^{1Jn 2:6} **He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.**

^{1Jn 2:9} **He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now.**

John simply is not going to let a believer just “say” that they are Christians, but rather he is going to demand that their life reflect their confession. Believers have become very accommodating in the Christian culture with open and blatant sin against God. Certain sins have become “acceptable” because individuals are emotionally attached to people, and rather than taking a very biblical stance against someone’s demeaning lifestyle in the face of their so-called Christian confession, what they have done is actually promote sin and demote God’s Word. The modern church lacks both discernment and discipline.

1 John 2:15,

^{1Jn 2:15}Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

John is not going to allow someone to say that they love God, but still love the world at the same time. This will be a very difficult area for most American Christians who all have so very much. If someone makes \$25K a year, they are wealthier than 95% of the world’s population. I have a student in the school in Romania who has 4 children and a wife, has been working for 15 years for the railroad, and only makes \$500/month. Most Romanian village pastors only make \$200 - \$400/month.

1 John 3:6, 9 are probably the verses in **1 John** that make people the most uncomfortable.

^{1Jn 3:6}Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.

^{1Jn 3:9}Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

1 John 3:10,

^{1Jn 3:10}In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.

1 John 5:16(b) can be very disturbing when it says,

^{1Jn 5:16}If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin

not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that.

There simply is no wiggle room in any of these verses. It just does not exist. These are absolutes, and absolutes make people very uncomfortable when their life does not reflect the absolute.

Secondly, John will give some spiritual “tests” to validate the reality of someone’s confession. Everyone is at some spiritual place in their life. There are no exceptions, and it is critical that the church have a way of properly evaluating where people really are in their spiritual walk and confession. In America, most Christians think that they are much further along than they really are in their Christian life and they are more than comfortable in that perspective. John says that believers are committed or uncommitted, faithful or unfaithful, Christlike or not Christlike. There is not any toleration or any flexibility in this letter. John is not going to leave any doubt as to what it means to be a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ – none. Now, if a person’s life is not in alignment with what John is teaching, then they will not like **1 John** at all. It is much too direct for the average believer.

Thirdly, **1 John** is written to challenge, to confront, and to test believers. That is one of its purposes. John wants believers to clearly know that they are saved and that they are living as Christ would want them to live. Christians cannot separate their profession of faith from the practice of faith – but that is exactly the kind of spiritual climate that exists within the modern church. There are so many people who live much differently than what they profess they believe. Somewhere there has been a spiritual disconnect. So John does not want there to be any doubt whatsoever as to what it really means to be a Christian. The modern idea is that someone can just make a “decision” and then kind of live how they want to live. That perspective has absolutely nothing to do with biblical salvation. Salvation is a work of God that completely impacts how the individual lives. It transforms a person. That is what salvation is – a transformation. John states this in **1 John 5:12,**
^{1Jn 5:12}He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

When this particular verse is studied, it will be seen that the verb “has” in “has life” is an indicative present active verb which simply means that having this life is a present reality. This is one of the simplest definitions of what salvation means. It means that the person has spiritual life that is operating and working and functioning in their life right now. It is operative, functional, active, working, and effective in its impact on their life. The very life of the Son of God is never passive, never stag-

nant, and never ineffective. So, what does that mean for someone who “says” that they are a Christian, but there is never any real evidence of that salvation in their life? Well, John says if someone truly has the Son, then they have this “life” operating and functioning within them. The worst thing that could ever happen to someone is for them to find themselves living under the illusion that they are saved when in reality they are not. Now, the intent is not to try and get someone to doubt their salvation, but simply to help everyone have a biblical understanding of what salvation is and what salvation does in a person’s life.

John was writing during a time where there was a smorgasbord of beliefs, philosophies, and novel religious notions. With that cultural setting there was a surplus of false teachers and false teaching in the church, so John has a lot of instruction as to how the church is to identify and address false teachers. Now, there are a couple of technical issues that need to be addressed to provide better understanding of how [1 John](#) is constructed. 67% of the verbs in [1 John](#) are in what is known as the indicative mood - 255 out 387 verbs. There are also only four imperative tense verbs, or commands - [1 John 2:24](#), [1 John 3:1](#), [1 John 3:7](#), [1 John 5:21](#). When the writer uses the indicative mood as his primary verb tense, what that means is that there is a great deal of doctrinal teaching. If this was a historical narrative like one of the gospels, then someone would say that he was telling a story. However, since this is not a historical narrative, it means that nearly two thirds of this letter is doctrinal in nature. The mood of a verb represents how the action of the verb is related to reality. With mood, there are only two possibilities – actual or that which is possible. As an example, someone might say that “The child is running”. That is actual. Or they might say, “The child may run” – that is possible. So, the indicative mood is the mood which denotes the verbal action as actual. I.e., the writer is stating a fact and not something that is possible. So, what all of that means is simply that John is going to provide clear, definitive, conclusive, and absolute statements regarding the Christian life. He is not talking in “gray” terms, but is authoritatively defining what it truly means to be a Christian. For some this will create a great deal of tension personally because the absolute nature of his statements are very strong and very authoritative. They are fact, and there is no wiggle room within his statements.

The way that John states His purpose is by stating why he is writing the letter. There are more refer-

ences to why he is writing, but the following are the major reasons and they are delineated by the word “that”. In [1 John 1:4](#) he says,

^{1Jn 1:4} **And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.**

He wants the believer’s life to be full of joy. Some Christians are always complaining, never satisfied, and fault finders with everyone and everything. Seemingly, they have never entered into any kind of meaningful Christian living and certainly are not displaying meaningful “joy” in their life.

Next, he says in [1 John 2:1\(a\)](#),

^{1Jn 2:1} **My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.**

Obviously, much is said about sin in what John presents, and it is clear that he wants to give an understanding of what it means to live in sin so that believers can refrain from living in that sin. The verb is in the subjunctive mood which is the mood of probability. I.e., something is possible. So, what John is saying is that every Christian has a choice as to whether or not to sin. In simple terms, John is telling his readers to stop making certain choices in their life. Do not choose to sin, but choose to live godly. How someone lives is always a choice that they have to make, and so John is going to encourage his readers to make the right choices. Every believer has to deal with sin. Before salvation, everyone was chasing after sin, but after they were saved, sin began chasing after them.

Next [1 John 2:26](#) says,

^{1Jn 2:26} **These things I have written to you concerning those who *try to* deceive you.**

Now the plot seems to be getting a little thicker. First he was concerned about the believers losing their joy, and obviously one of the reasons was because of some sin in their life. However, now it is learned that there are those who are actually deceiving these believers with their false teaching. In some ways, these false teachers have somehow convinced these believers that they did not have to be accountable for their sin. Immorality was rampant under the Gnostic teaching. Believers are not only accountable to God, but they have a very real accountability to one another. How they live affects everyone around them – either good or bad.

Then finally John writes his overarching purpose in [1 John 5:13](#) which says,

1Jn 5:13 **These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may *continue to believe* in the name of the Son of God.**

The following is how this could read in the tenses that are used. It would be like this:

“These things I have written to you who believe [that is in the present tense, "who are believing, who are in the process of believing right now] in the name of the Son of God [those who are believing daily, constantly, moment-by-moment, not those who once believed but now are being lured off the track] in order that you may know [intuitively] that you have eternal life.”

The reason a lot of people constantly doubt their salvation is simply because they have lost sight of what God has clearly stated. It is because they are not daily believing in Christ and living in obedience to Him. It is because they are not willing to truly trust Him with their life, but would rather live in willful disobedience to Him and what He has clearly stated. If a Christian is not living in obedience to Christ, it is because they do not believe Him. John is not going to allow his readers to just simply say that they love God, know God, and are following God, but then not be obeying Him or living for Him. It simply is not going to happen! Believing God is something that a person does, not something that they just tell people about. However, to that individual who is daily living out what they say they believe, they know in their spirit that they have eternal life.

John wants his readers to have complete assurance about this thing called salvation, and one of the ways that that will happen is when they understand what sin is and then take the tests that reveal where they really are in their Christian life.

ENDNOTES

¹Barber, Introduction section, not known (electronic page).


²Barber, Introduction section, not known (electronic page).

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Notes

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