

# Confidence Before God

1 John 3:19-24

February 19, 2017

1 Jn 3:19-24 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; 22 and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. 23 This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. 24 The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

## I. Introduction

John wants his readers to have a confident relationship with God. If there is a barrier of sin, then it can be confessed and forgiven. After that, Christians can live in God's presence with the same assurance that children have with a loving father.

A confident relationship with God means we obey his commands and receive his blessings. If we live in God's way, we can ask him for anything—because the things we ask will be the things he wants to give. Above all, we will believe in Jesus and share his love with one another. <sup>1</sup>

## II. Word and phrase study

3:19

### "We will know by this"

Refers to the loving acts previously mentioned, which is the proof, or evidence that we are Christians.

**by this** (used 12 times in 1Jn)

1Jn 2:3 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

1Jn 2:5 but whoever keeps His word, ... By this we know that we are in Him:

1Jn 3:10 By this the children of God ... are obvious ... practice righteousness ... love his brother.

1Jn 3:16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; ...

1Jn 3:19 We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him

1Jn 3:24 ... We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

1Jn 4:2 By this ... every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God;

1Jn 4:6 ... By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

1Jn 4:9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, ...

1Jn 4:13 By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

1Jn 4:17 By this, love is perfected with us, ... because as He is, so also are we in this world.

1Jn 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.

### "that we are of the truth"

That we are not deceived in what we profess to be; that is, that we are true Christians. To be of the truth stands opposed to cherishing false and delusive hopes. <sup>2</sup>

### "and will assure our heart before Him"

**assure** = "assure, quiet, conciliate"

Though a person's heart may condemn him as guilty, his mind may be calmed down and soothed by evidence that he IS a child of God, and that he will NOT be finally condemned. A true Christian does not attempt to conceal the fact that there is much for which his own heart and conscience might justly accuse him but he finds, notwithstanding all this, evidence that he is a child of God, and he is persuaded that all will be well. <sup>3</sup>

3:20

### "in whatever our heart condemns us" (NASB).

"for if our heart condemns us" (NKJV).

"whenever our hearts condemn us" (NKJV).

"if our conscience condemns us" (NRSV).

"even if our own feelings condemn us" (NJB).

**condemns** = occurs only three times in the New Testament, (1Jn 3:20, 21; Gal 2:11). It means to know something against one, to condemn.<sup>4</sup>

John is trying to console believers who are living by the standard of love but still struggling with sin. All believers have experienced the inner grief of not living up to the “standard” that they know is God’s will for their lives.

This pain of conscience can be from:

God’s Spirit (appropriate guilt) to cause repentance; or from  
Satan (inappropriate guilt) to cause condemnation.

### **"for God is greater than our heart"**

**"greater"** = when our heart condemns us we shall quiet it with the assurance that we are in the hands of a God who is greater than our heart—who surpasses man in love and compassion no less than in knowledge.<sup>5</sup>

we shall assure our hearts', (to gain over, so as to be stilled, implying a previous self-condemnation by the heart, which is got over by the consolatory thought, 'God is greater than my heart,' which condemns (knows against) me: God 'knows all things', not 'condemns', therefore knows my love and desire to serve Him; knows my frame, so as to pity my weakness (Ps 103:13-14).<sup>6</sup>

### **“and knows all things”**

God knows our true motives, He searches our hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts.

1Chr 28:9 “As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever. (1Sa 16:7; 1Ki 8:39; Jer 17:10; Lk 16:15; Ac 1:24; Rom 8:26-27; 1 Cor 4:4)

## **3:21**

### **“Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us”**

**"Beloved"** Remember, you are loved by God, even when you feel condemned!

Rom 8:31-35 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? 33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; 34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. 35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ?

All believers at times struggle with sin (1Jn 2:1; 5:16-17). In temptations, sometimes we act inappropriately; consequently our conscience condemns us and makes us feel guilt and/ or shame!

**"not condemn"** = (the converse of the heart condemning) is not a claim to sinlessness, but the consciousness of fellowship in God's presence.<sup>7</sup>

### **“we have confidence before God”**

**confidence** speaks of open and free access to God’s presence. It is an oft-repeated term and concept of John<sup>8</sup>

1Jn 2:28 Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

1Jn 3:21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;

1Jn 4:17 By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

1Jn 5:14 This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

Heb 3:6 but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.

Heb 10:35 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.

This phrase introduces two of the benefits of assurance:

- 1) that believers have perfect confidence before God; and
- 2) they obtain from Him whatever they ask.

### 3:22

#### “whatever we ask we receive from Him”

##### Comparison to other Scriptures:

1. **We are encouraged to ask, seek, knock** (and keep asking, seeking, knocking), and it will be answered.

Mt 7:7-8, 11 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 “For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened ... 11 “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him! (see Mt 7:7-11)

Lk 11:9-13 “So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 “For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened. 11 “Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? 12 “Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? 13 “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?” (see Lk 11:5-13)

2. **We are to persevere and not give up, as we pray.** God hears the humble and repentant.

The parable of the unrighteous judge (Lk 18:1, 7-8)

Lk 18:1 He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, Lk 18:7-8 will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? 8 “I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?” (see Lk 18:1-8)

The parable of the Pharisee and the sinner (Lk 18:9-14)

Lk 18:9-14 And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: 10 “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 “The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 ‘I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.’ 13 “But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the sinner!’ 14 “I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

3. **We are to pray in agreement, binding and loosening.**

Mt 18:18-20 “Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. 19 “Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. 20 “For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.” (see Mt 18:15-20)

4. **We are to ask for "whatever" in faith without doubting.**

Mt 21:21-22 And Jesus answered and said to them, “Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ it will happen. 22 “And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.”

Mk 11:23-24 “Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted him. 24 “Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you. (see Mk 11:23-26)

5. **We are to do greater works in Jesus' name through prayer.**

Jn 14:12-15 “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father. 13 “Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 “If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. 15 “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

6. **We are to abide in Jesus, abide in His Word, bear fruit and pray.**

Jn 15:7 “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 “My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. 9 “Just as the Father

has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. 10 "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

**7. Prayer will be answered in friendship with Jesus as we walk in love.**

Jn 15:15-17 "No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. 16 "You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. 17 "This I command you, that you love one another.

**8. Prayer will be answered as we pray "in the Name of Jesus".**

Jn 16:23 "In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. 24 "Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.

**9. Prayer will be answered as we believe in the name of Jesus and love one another.**

1Jn 3:22-24 (our present text)

**10. Prayer will be answered as we ask according to His will.**

1Jn 5:14-15 This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him. (see 1Jn 5:14-16)

**11. Prayer will be answered as we ask in faith without any doubting.**

Jas 1:5-7 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord,

**12. The prayer of faith will restore the sick and forgive their sins.**

Jas 5:14-16 Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; 15 and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. 16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

**"because we keep His commandments"**

**"Keep His commandments"**

1Jn 3:23 This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.

Gal 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love. (Gal 6:15)

**1. We are to live by faith, it is the only thing that pleases God.**

Heb 11:5-6 ... for he (Enoch) obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God. 6 And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Heb 11:39 And all these, having gained approval through their faith, ...

Jn 6:29 ... "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

**2. We are to live by the law of love (Rom 13:8-10).**

v. 8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.  
v. 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Jas 2:8 ... fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "you shall love your neighbor as yourself,"

Eph 5:1-2 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

Gal 5:14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "you shall love your neighbor as yourself."  
(Jn 13:34-35; 15:12, 17; 1Thes 4:9; 1Jn 3:23; 4:7-11, 21)

### **"and do the things that are pleasing in His sight"**

Jesus did the things that are pleasing to Him (His Father).

Jn 8:28-29 ... I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. ... I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." (Jn 5:19, 30; 12:49)

Jesus surrendered to God's will.

Jn 5:30 "... I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. (Jn 6:38; Mt 26:39, 42; 14:36; Lk 22:42)

### **3:23**

#### **"This is His commandment"**

(see above)

The gospel is a message to be believed, a person to receive, and a lifestyle to live! (from Study Guide Commentary Series)

#### **"that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ"**

The concept of believing in "the name" or praying "in the name" reflects the near eastern understanding that the name represents the person.<sup>9</sup>

To believe in the name of Jesus Christ the Son of God, is to accept as true the revelation contained in that title.<sup>10</sup>

Jn 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,

#### **"and love one another, just as He commanded us."**

### **3:24**

#### **"The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him."**

#### **"We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us."**

**The Holy Spirit gives us assurance that we are Christians.**

Rom 8:16 the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirits that we are children of God  
(1 Jn 3:24; 5:6-8; 1Cor 6:17; Rom 8:9)

**The Holy Spirit is our seal and pledge.**

2Cor 1:21-22 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, 22 who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge. (2 Cor 15:5)

Eph 1:13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, ....

<sup>1</sup> from Study Guide Commentary Series

<sup>2</sup> from Barnes' Notes

<sup>3</sup> from Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament

<sup>4</sup> from Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament

<sup>5</sup> from Vincent's Word Studies

<sup>6</sup> from Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary

<sup>7</sup> from Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament

<sup>8</sup> from Study Guide Commentary Series

<sup>9</sup> from Study Guide Commentary Series

<sup>10</sup> from Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament