

Lesson 29- The Assurance of Love

We are continuing our study of 1 John and today we are going to finish chapter 3, and we will be looking at verses **1 John 3:19-24**.

The assurance of Everlasting life has been the common theme throughout this epistle. John says in 5:13, I have written to you so that you might know that you have eternal life... John wants us to KNOW and to be assured that we are Christians. Because of this, all through this letter John has been giving us tests of Truth, and there are three functions to these tests: 1) to expose the darkness so that we might know those who are trying to deceive us... 2) to convict the sinner... 3) and give believers the assurance of Eternal Salvation, that we as children of God can be assured of our Everlasting Life in Christ.

Lets read verse 19 again...

19 And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. 19 καὶ ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐσμέν, καὶ ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πείσομεν τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν,

“**by this...**” - “in this” - en touto, ἐν τούτῳ This is a very common phrase in this epistle and in chapter 3 John says this 4 times. Again, giving us assurance of our Fellowship with God. Verse 10 begins this by saying, “**In this** the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest.” Verse 16 he says, “**by this** we know love.” In verse 19 he says, “**by this** we know that we are of the Truth.” And then he ends the chapter in verse 24 saying, “**by this** we know that He abides in us...” He wants us to know we are children of God, and we can know this by the fruit that we are bearing...

Christians bear fruit... “by this we know...”. This is how we know we are a Christian. But I want to remind you, this is not a letter of Legalism. These are not a list of rules we need to follow to be a Christian, this is the natural fruit that a Christian will bear in His life. The focus on this entire letter is our Fellowship with God. If we have Fellowship with God and we are abiding in Him, there are tangible proofs that we will manifest as a result. Lets look at verse 19 again...

“**And by this we know that we are of the Truth ...**” - we ginosko, γινώσκω, we intimately know by experience that we are of the Truth, ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας, out from the Truth. And how do we know this? Because we love the Brethren, we lay our lives down for the Brethren and we love in deed and in Truth... by this we know we are of the Truth. John’s not saying we do this to become a Christian. He’s saying... this is what Christians do... We love each other. John is not getting really theological here. He just trying to describe how Christians act and Christians love each other and we walk in Truth.

And John continues in verse 19... And because we are of the Truth..., “**we shall assure our hearts before Him.**” John is telling us that we can stand before God in confidence because we are His children. Because we are born of God and we are of the Truth.

Now let’s continue in verse 20...

20 For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. 20 ὅτι ἐὰν καταγινώσκη ἡμῶν ἡ καρδία, ὅτι μείζων ἐστὶν ὁ Θεὸς τῆς καρδίας ἡμῶν καὶ γινώσκει πάντα.

This is such a wonderful verse, because he is saying that even if we don’t think we are worthy to stand before God, His love and grace is greater than our sin. And He is yearning for our Fellowship with Him. He loves us so much, this is why He sent His Son, so we can boldly come up to Him crying, daddy, Abba Father.

“**For if our heart blames us ...**” - ὅτι ἐὰν καταγινώσκη ἡμῶν ἡ καρδία,,

The heart John is speaking of is our conscience. And the conscience of a born-again Christian at the point we are Justified is made clean and pure and perfect, and it is extremely sensitive to sin and lawlessness. The conscience is to the soul what nerves are to our body and when our nerves feel pain, we have a warning system that alerts our body of danger. The same is true with our conscience and sin. When your soul sins, the conscience detects that sin and it

warns you by testifying of this sinful behavior to your thoughts and it attacks you, or in John's words, it condemns you.

The Greek word for condemn is *kataginosko*, *καταγινώσκω*. This isn't condemnation as in Romans 8:1. This isn't *katakrima*, *κατάκριμα*, a judgement to hell. It is *kataginosko*, *καταγινώσκω*. It is *ginosko*, *γινώσκω*, with a *kata*, *κατα*, in front, making it an intensely degrading knowledge- a good English word is "blame, accuse, or convict". There is a beautiful play on words here in the Greek that John is using with this word. We know we are of the Truth, but that knowledge, that assurance is intensely attacked when we sin, it is *kataginosko*, *καταγινώσκω*. It intensely degrades this knowledge, But even if our conscience blames us, we have the assurance, because God is greater and He knows, *ginosko*, *γινώσκω*, our heart.

Being a Christian doesn't mean we are perfect. We still sin. We are not committed to sin, but we still have occasions of sin. And when this happens, our conscience comes along, our warning system is alerted, and it accuses us; it blames us and convicts us of sin. This is the work of our conscience. And when this happens, if it is not dealt with properly, it can result in shame and feeling unworthy, and it can lead to being unassured of our Eternal Salvation.

Satan tries to use our conscience against us, and there is two ways the enemy attacks us when we sin. 1) The enemy tries to keep us trapped feeling ashamed and unworthy, because he knows that a shameful heart will run from God instead of coming before God, so he continues accusing the brethren through lies, keeping us trapped in our guilt, Rev 12:10; 1 Jn 2:28; Heb 9:14; 10:22. 2) The enemy masks the sin, and hides the sin behind the veil of false love and tells the conscience that it is ok to keep on sinning. This is what the world does. The world says things like, "This is who you are..."; "its ok to be you..."; "just do whatever feels good to you..."; "decide what your truth is, then live it...", 2 Tim 4:3-4, itching ears; 1 Jn 1:8, 10. This kind of thinking leads to a love of yourself more than a love of God, and as this sin persists, it leads to searing and numbing the conscience to the point that you get used to sinning, you commit yourself to sin and this leads to apostasy. Both instances lead to the same result, a turning away from God.

So when our conscience accuses us of sin, what is the right response? John gives us this in **1 John 1:9**. We confess our sins and lay it at the foot of the cross, 1 John 2:1-2. By confessing our sins the blood of Jesus will cleanse our soul from a guilty conscience and it will give us the assurance to come boldly to the throne of grace. This is the right way to respond when our conscience blames us for sinning, **Hebrews 9:14; 10:22**. This is the sanctification of the soul, and when we walk in sanctification and we confess our sins and humble ourselves to Him, we can have the confidence to draw near to God.

"For if our heart blames us... **God is greater than our heart, and knows all things...**"- This is God's grace. Our conscience doesn't know grace and mercy, it just knows right and wrong, so John says God is greater than our conscience because God knows our heart. He knows that we believe in Jesus and He knows and sees the blood of Jesus that was shed on our behalf. And because of His precious blood, our sins are forgiven and rather than blame and condemnation, His love, mercy and grace is lavished on us and we are called His children. God is greater!

This idea flows seamlessly into verses 21 and 22...

21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.

22 And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

²¹ ἀγαπητοί, ἐὰν ἡ καρδία ἡμῶν μὴ καταγινώσκη ἡμῶν, παρρησίαν ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν,

²² καὶ ὃ ἐὰν αἰτῶμεν, λαμβάνομεν παρ' αὐτοῦ, ὅτι τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ τηροῦμεν, καὶ τὰ ἀρεστὰ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ ποιοῦμεν.

This is why we continually confess our sins, not for the justification of our spirit, but for the sanctification of our soul. And when this is our continual behavior, the blood of Jesus continually cleanses our guilty conscience so we can continually have confidence to come boldly before God.

This word "**confidence**" is *pareisia*, *παρρησία*- a boldness of speech so that "**whatever we ask we receive from Him...**" This "whatever" is not whatever our flesh wants. It must be in line with His will, and if you are abiding in Him and

have laid down your life for Him, then the things you ask for will be according to His will, **1 John 5:14-15**. Whatever we ask “according to His will” That’s the key, **James 4:3-4; 1:7-8**.

Then continuing in verse 3:22...

22 “**And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.**”

This word, “**keep**” is tereo, *τηρέω*. It means to hold tight, to keep as precious, hold safe, hold fast, to keep watch upon, to guard. This word is in the present tense, meaning we are continually holding fast His commandments as precious. Not just a onetime occasion, but continually.

We receive what we ask from Him because we ask in line with His will because we are holding fast His commandments as precious and we are doing, poieo, *ποιέω*, we have committed our hearts to do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

This is simply walking by faith. Paul, three times in three separate epistles, said, “the just shall live by faith”, Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38. And remember Hebrews 11:6- “...without faith it is impossible to please Him.” What is the one thing above all else we can be doing that would please Him? Verse 23 answers this... believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ.

23 And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.	<i>23 και αυτη εστιν η εντολη αυτου, ινα πιστευσωμεν τῳ ὀνόματι τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, και αγαπωμεν ἀλλήλους, καθως ἔδωκεν ἐντολὴν ἡμῖν.</i>
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Believing is faithing, pisteuo, *πιστεύω*. So when we have faith in Jesus, we are pleasing to Him because we are fulfilling His commandment of receiving Eternal Life in His Son.

We join ourselves to Jesus by having faith in Him, and by believing in Him we put our full trust in Him and we are abiding in Him, this is Fellowship, and then having Fellowship with Him we bear fruit as a result: holding fast His commandments and His Word as precious, practicing Righteousness, practicing Truth, and loving the Brethren... just to name a few. The fruit is a result of our being connected to Him by faith and enjoying the rich sap of our Fellowship in Him... which leads into verse 24...

24 Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.	<i>24 και ο τηρων τας εντολας αυτου, εν αυτω μενει, και αυτος εν αυτω. και εν τούτω γινωσκομεν οτι μενει εν ἡμῖν, ἐκ τοῦ Πνεύματος οὗ ἡμῖν ἔδωκεν.</i>
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This is Fellowship. This is abiding in Him and bearing fruit. Remember the analogy of the branch and vine in John 15. What does the branch have to do for it to bear fruit? Just abide in the vine. It doesn’t do anything except rest in the vine. The same is true with us. This is living every day completely and totally dependent on Him. It is abiding in Him and in His Word, 1 John 2:3-5. This is John’s whole point in this letter. This isn’t following a list of rules, it’s being in love with Jesus and His Word and when this is the state of your heart, there is going to be fruit as a result, it is in this that we know we have Fellowship with God.

Now in 1 John 3:24, John adds another level of understanding for our complete assurance...

“...And in this we know that He abides in us... **by the Spirit whom He has given us.**”- John gives us the ultimate assurance to know that we are abiding in Him, by the Holy Spirit whom he has given us.

This is the first time John specifically mentions the Holy Spirit in this letter. Up until this point, John has alluded to the Spirit as the anointing that guides us and teaches us the Truth, 2:20-27, but now from this verse, 3:24, to the end of the letter, the Holy Spirit is named specifically, and we see the entire Trinity at work on our behalf for the purpose of our Eternal Life in Christ.

The Holy Spirit is the seal of promise, the guarantee of Eternal Life, **2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13-14**. So when John says, “in this we know...”, the Holy Spirit is the ultimate guarantee that we know that we are in Him and He in us and that we have Fellowship with God, **John 14:15-18; 7:37-39**. There is no better proof of Eternal Life than to have the Holy Spirit living within you. And we have this assurance by the testimony that comes out from the Spirit*. That is what the living waters are... it is His Truth, and the Holy Spirit is testifying of this Truth. The Spirit is the testimony of the Words of Eternal Life that Jesus has given us. This is the function of the Holy Spirit, to bear witness of Jesus Christ and our Eternal Life in Him, **John 15:26; 16:12-15; Romans 8:16; 1 John 5:6**.

The Holy Spirit keeps us focused on the Truth, who is Jesus Christ, and continues to bear witness with our Spirit that we are children of God. This is our assurance. The Holy Spirit testifies of the Truth that Jesus has paid my debt of sin, He has rescued me from the power of darkness and translated me into the kingdom of His dear Son and He has made me a child of God.

This is the assurance of God’s love that has been poured into our lives. I want to end our lesson by reading these verses again in my own words based on what we have learned today starting with verse 19...

¹⁹ In this we know we are of the Truth, [we are assured by His perfected love that is poured out in our hearts and manifested out through us in Truth] and we will assure our conscience before Him, ²⁰ because even if our conscience blames us [when we sin, our heart is assured] that God is greater than our heart and He knows all things. [He knows our heart better than we do. And because we believe in Jesus, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, who is our Propitiation for our sins, and He has forgiven us of our sins, and cleansed us from all unrighteousness. Behold what manner of love the Father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God!] Therefore, ²¹ beloved... [those loved of God, if and when we sin, God’s Grace is greater, and when we confess our sins, Jesus is faithful and just to cleanse our guilty conscience from sin.] And if our conscience is clean and it does not blame us, we have confidence toward God, and we can come with a boldness of speech to the throne of Grace. ²² And whatever we ask we receive from Him [because we ask according to His will] and we are holding fast His commandments as precious and are continually committing our hearts to do the things that please Him. ²³ And this is His commandment: [this is how we please Him] that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment. ²⁴ Now he who is continually keeping His commandments [by putting His entire trust in Jesus and abiding in Him, this one] continually abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He continually abides in us by the Spirit whom He has given us, [because He is testifying and bearing witness of the Truth that we are children of God, having been sent to us by the Righteous One Himself as a seal and a guarantee of our Eternal Life in Christ Jesus.]

* 1 John 3:24 ...ἐκ τοῦ Πνεύματος οὗ ἡμῶν ἔδωκεν