

## Identity of a Christian 1 John 3:19-24

### Introduction

Thus far, John has marked what Christians should look like in his letter in 1 John. Remember the church has gone through a split where there were false teachers that were teaching things that were contrary to Christ, and when they encountered the truth, they split. John assures the church that they are of the truth, and he explains how they are to know that they are in the truth. In fact in **5:13**, he writes the letter so that whoever reads it will know that they (those who believe in Jesus, the Son of God) have eternal life.

John quotes this phrase “and by this we know” two times...in **verse 19** and in **verse 24**. In **verse 19**, he says that by this we know we are of the truth. In **verse 24**, he says by this we know we abide in Him. He is saying that these are the reasons that we are saved...these are the reasons that we are of the truth and abide in Him. What is “by this”? What does “this” refer to? **Verse 19** is looking back at the two topics of the practice of the Christian: righteousness and love. He then expounds on what a Christian looks like in **verses 19 through 24**. Again, he is assuring us that we can know for sure if we are of the truth and that He abides in us.

### I. Passion for Righteousness (v7)

- Zeal of Christ

**John 2:13-17** *Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers doing business. When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."*

**Note:** Jesus fulfilled the prophecy that zeal for His house has eaten Him up, which is to say that He was appalled by the evil of the system in a place of worship of the One True God. He couldn't stand it and had to drive away the moneychangers from the Temple.

- Be like Christ

**Romans 8:29** *For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son*

**2 Corinthians 5:21** *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

**Note:** Because Christ is righteous, and we are conformed to the image of Him, our nature changes to be able to practice righteousness because of Him.

### II. Loving the Christians (v 16-18)

- Self-sacrificial love (v 16)

**John 13:1** Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

**Note:** What love the Saviour had for us. He willingly died for us so that we can have eternal life!

- Love in action (v 17-18)

**Romans 12:9-10, 13** Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

**Note:** I love what Paul says here. Outdo one another in showing honor. In other words seek to serve people...really seek to serve their needs. Outdo in serving them! This is love in action. This is what it means in Acts where everybody sold all that they had and shared with one another.

### III. Seeking God's Grace (v 20)

- Condemning heart

**Note:** Last week we talked about how our conscience kills us, condemns us. "You blew it, you hypocrite. What is with your pride? Why are you seeking their attention?" When we are saved, our conscience becomes sensitive to our sins and scolds us.

- Greatness of God

**Note:** God is greater than our conscience. Remember He hates sin more than our conscience. He hates our hypocrisy more than our conscience. He is holy and just. He is also faithful and merciful. To those who believe in Him, He forgives them completely. He removes our sins as far as the east is from the west, and He remembers them no more.

**John 3:18** He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

**Romans 8:1** There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,  
**1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

### IV. Boldness in Prayer (v 21-22a)

- Confidence toward God

**Ephesians 3:12** in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.

**Note:** We have access to God only through Christ who is our intercessor.

**Hebrews 4:14-16** Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

**Note:** “Therefore” is the key word because the writer of Hebrews is talking about our weaknesses and how Christ understands and sympathizes with our weaknesses because He was human like us. We can come to the throne of grace for mercy and forgiveness and for prayer at any time.

**Hebrews 10:22** let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

**Note:** This is confidence toward God because our hearts have been cleansed.

- Answered prayer

**Psalms 34:15** *The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry.*

**Matthew 7:7** *Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.*

**1 John 5:14** *Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.*

**Note:** We must be aware that God is not obligated to answer our every prayer. If it is His will, then He will answer. He listens to our prayers and pays attention to what we say. When we know His will, we know what to ask that will bring glory to Him. Consider the prayer of Jabez.

**1 Chronicles 4:9-10** *Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, "Because I bore him in pain." And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, "Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!" So God granted him what he requested.*

**Note:** See how much Jabez’s prayer looks like the Lord’s prayer! He seeks God’s glory. He seeks His protection from the evil one. He seeks to not sin against others. In the context of him asking for the enlargement of the land, it was in the period before David’s birth when the nation of Israel were not doing what was right in God’s eyes. Jabez was seeking both physical and spiritual expansion (removing the Canaanites from the land) and seeking the righteousness of God in the land.

## V. Obedience and Pleasing Him (v 22b)

**Note:** We cannot separate obedience with pleasing God. We cannot please God if we are “obedient” but doing things that we hate to do.

- Pleasing God
  - Christ pleased God

**John 8:29** *And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.*

- We are to please God

**2 Corinthians 5:9** *Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.*

**Colossians 1:10** that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

- What is pleasing to Him?
  - Not pleasing to Him

**Mark 7:6-8** He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: "'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.' You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men."

**Matthew 7:21** Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

**Note:** It is the heart that is important...not the outward act. David said that He desires the contrite heart rather than an outward sacrifice.

- Pleasing to Him

**Colossians 3:20** Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.  
**1 Thessalonians 4:1-8** Brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.

## VI. Faith in Jesus Christ (v 23)

## VII. Indwelling of the Holy Spirit (v 24)

- Fruits of the Spirit

**Galatians 5:22-23** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

**Roman 8:10** And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

**Note:** John says in verse 24 that by this we know that He abides in us by the Spirit He has given us. We couldn't do any of those things without the power of the Holy Spirit. We couldn't have desire for righteousness or loving our brothers and sisters-in-Christ. We couldn't have faith in Jesus Christ apart from the Holy Spirit. We wouldn't be able to keep His commandments or do the things that are pleasing to Him.

## Conclusion

In all the illustrations that John has given us, we see that all the verbs are in present tense. We continue to do all these things. John says that by this we are assured that we are Christians. We can assure our hearts that we are in the truth and that He abides in us.