

1. **INTRODUCTION:** The Epistles [letters] written by the Apostle John actually form a composite message to the Church along with his Gospel and Revelation. As with all Scripture, they are written to speak into a specific occasion of need in the Church at that time with application made relevant through hermeneutic interpretation. In understanding what was intended for his original hearers, we can more properly interpret the documents and then apply relevant insights to our present day environment. The following is a brief discussion of 1st John with an analysis of who wrote it, why it had been written, and how we might now apply it.

2. **AUTHOR, DATE, AND PURPOSE FOR WRITING:**
 - a. 1st John was written anonymously and because the author has simply referred to himself as “The Elder,” the person and authority of the writer had to be determined before it could be accepted as authentic Scripture. While it is reasonable that the recipients knew who it was by the title, it is important that from very early in Church history that the author was accepted as being the Apostle John. John having been the longest lived apostle, had a significant following. It is widely accepted that he had a school or theological community that he trained through the years. Certainly there is nothing that would preclude the “Apostle” and the “Elder” from being one in the same person, especially since he was writing to his students and old congregations from exile on the Isle of Patmos. Ancient church tradition has uniformly held that John was the author, which was supported by early Church fathers Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen and Dionysius. Add to this the unmistakable thematic similarity with John’s Gospel, and most scholars agree that John is the author.
 - b. G. M. Burge in his article on 1 John which appears in the reference book The Dictionary of the Latter New Testament & Its Developments, makes some interesting observations on John’s writings. Burge says, “Interest in the Johannine Epistles has always been eclipsed by the untiring fascination with the Fourth Gospel. John’s recasting of Jesus’ life (compared with the Synoptic portrait), his theological probing’s into the essence of the incarnation and his theological contributions in Christology [theology of the Christ], Pneumatology [theology of the Spirit], and Eschatology [theology of the End Times] have all drawn unexpected attention. [In contrast] the Johannine epistles [seem] an enigma.” Burge continues, “In recent years however, scholars have taken a second look at the letters as one more avenue into exploring the composition and social history of the Johannine community.” This corpus of writings of Gospel, Epistles, and concluding in John’s Apocalyptic work Revelation, all provide a necessary view into the dazzling Spirit Life of the early Christian community, and beckons believers throughout redemptive history to ponder anew the wonders of God and the Spirit Life that is available to us all.
 - c. These letters were written to believers directed to the province of Asia Minor, along with John’s Gospel and Revelation near the end of the 1st century AD where John had taught and served the local churches. The dates between 90 and 95 AD are widely accepted as reasonable dates for his writing. John would have been an old man at this time, exiled to the Island of Patmos, and the

last of the Apostles who had walked with Jesus to remain alive. In light of this, it seems eminently plausible that John would segway from his Apostolic authority in favor of his authority as the Elder, thereby enhancing the authority of other known and accepted elders as the ongoing leaders of the Church in the soon to be post-apostolic period of the church. There are also similarities in the opening paragraph of 1 John which mirrors his Gospel, lending additional credibility to common authorship. The introductions of John’s Gospel and Revelation are also useful background for John’s Epistles.

- d. John’s writings often contended with the heresy of Gnosticism promoted by “false teachers” and also referred to as “Anti-Christ’s” being in opposition to Christ and His Gospel. These false teachers undermined the Gospel by teaching that Jesus was not the incarnated God promised by Scripture, and also that God’s Word alone was inadequate to secure knowledge of God, that in addition true disciples needed secret knowledge that could only be imparted by certain teachers usually for a prescribed fee.
- i. Judaism, Gnosticism, Hellenistic philosophical teachings, and Pagan Roman mysticism all vied for their place in the emerging Christian faith. Each presented a teaching that promoted syncretism... the blending of religions such that the resultant beliefs are no longer true to the original pure faith. The integrity of the Scriptures remained the best means to preserve a pure Christian faith.
 - ii. The Apostolic mandate of “Sola Scriptura” [Scripture alone as the standard for faith and practice] and “Sola Christos” [Christ alone as the vehicle of Salvation and eternal life] are uniformly supported by Peter, Paul, and John who fought for the clarity and primacy of a “Triune Christocentric” and “Spirit Shepherded” Church identity.
 - iii. God as Trinity is a hallmark of Christianity... the Persons of Father, Son, and Spirit as equal and co-eternal God [Trinity] are unique to Christianity. Trinitarian Unity is messy, but we should not expect God to be subservient to our sensibilities, instead we should accept what God has revealed and submit to the standard He calls us to follow and serve. One God in Three Persons is God’s revelation, not our construct of what He should look like.
 - iv. The draw of syncretism [the merging of divergent faith elements and beliefs that obfuscates if not destroys the original belief structure] has always been a problem for God’s people throughout redemptive history, and it remains so in our present day culture. The need for clear and concise theology to enable God’s people to remain separate as a “counter-cultural” salt and light standard to the world is what Jesus and His apostles taught. (See the links below to Authentic Discipleship articles on ministry, and a Billy Graham article for more on this important topic of Christian theological identity:
 1. <http://www.authenticdiscipleship.org/pdfs/Ministry%20Introduction%20and%20Philosophy.pdf>
 2. <http://billygraham.org/decision-magazine/march-2011/be-separate/>

3. <http://www.authenticdiscipleship.org/pdfs/3-leadership-dev/LD%20-%206.6%20-%20Basic%20Doctrine%20&%20Theology.pdf>

3. **HISTORICAL TIMEFRAME** – a brief look at the timing of the historical events of the Christian first century:

- a. 6-4 BC [Before Advent of Christ] – The Birth of Jesus
- b. 26 AD [After the Advent of Christ] – John becomes a Disciple of Jesus
- c. 30 AD – The Cross, Resurrection, and Pentecost
- d. 54-68 AD – Nero’s Reign
- e. 62 AD – James the Just martyred in Jerusalem
- f. 67-68 AD – Paul and Peter martyred in Rome
- g. 69-79 AD – Vespasian’s Reign
- h. 70 AC – Destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem
- i. 81-96 AD – Domitian’s Reign
- j. 90-95 AD – John exiled on Patmos where his writings were penned

4. **STRUCTURAL OUTLINE #1** – Dr Gary Tuck:

- a. Prologue – the message of Life – 1:1-4
- b. Basic Principles of Christian Fellowship – 1:5-2:11
 - i. Negative Context – dealing with Sin – 1:5-2:2
 1. God is Light amid the Darkness – 1:5
 2. The Christian as Light amid the Darkness – 1:6-2:2
 - ii. Positive Context of Obedience to God – 2:3-11
 1. The general principle of obedience – 2:3-6
 2. The specific principle of Love – 2:7-11
- c. Clarification of True and False Christianity – 2:12-27
 - i. Encouragement of True Believers – 2:12-14
 - ii. Warning against Worldly Opposition – 2:15-17
 - iii. Contrast between True and False – 2:18-27
- d. Christian Confidence – 2:28-4:19
 - i. Exhortation to Progress in Godliness – 2:28
 - ii. Present Confidence – 2:29-3:24
 1. The family of God and Righteousness – 2:29-3:10a
 2. The family of God and Love – 3:10b-18
 3. Christian Assurance – 3:19-24
 - iii. Future Confidence – 4:1-19
 1. Two spirits – 4:1-6
 2. Imperative of Love – 4:7-11
 3. Abiding in God – 4:12-16

Bible Survey – Epistles – 5-5 – 1 John

4. Confidence at the Judgment – 4:17-19

- e. Review of a Christian’s Confidence – 4:20-5:12
 - i. Love one another – 4:20-5:1
 - ii. Obedience to God – 5:2-4
 - iii. Faith in Christ – 5:5-12
- f. Conclusion – 5:13-21
 - i. Assurance of Eternal Life – 5:13
 - ii. Assurance of Answered Prayer – 5:14-17
 - iii. Assurance of Protection from Sin – 5:18
 - iv. Assurance of Divine Kinship – 5:19
 - v. Assurance of Knowledge of the Truth and the True One – 5:20-21

5. STRUCTURAL OUTLINE #2 – Zondervan’s NIV Archaeological Study Bible:

- a. The Reality of Jesus’ Incarnation – 1:1-4
- b. Fellowship with Father and Son – 1:5-2:28
 - i. Walking in the Light – 1:5-2:11
 - ii. John’s Poetic reason for writing – 2:12-14
 - iii. Love of this World is an obstruction to Christian Faith – 2:15-17
 - iv. Denial of Jesus as Christ is an obstruction to Christian Faith – 2:18-28
- c. The Children of God – 2:29-4:6
 - i. What a Christian Child of God looks like – 2:29-3:24
 - ii. What a Christian Child of God knows – 4:1-6
- d. God is Love – 4:7-5:12
- e. Certainties of Christian Faith – 5:13-21

6. STRUCTURAL OUTLINE #3 – Theological Development as suggested by Ron Blankley in his Study Booklet on John’s Letters – Discovering Genuine Christianity:

- a. Chapter 1 – Fellowship & Forgiveness
 - i. 1-4 – prologue
 - ii. 5-10 – tests of our fellowship with God
- b. 2:1-11 – Talking and Walking the Truth
 - i. 1-2 – genuine fellowship with God causes us to oppose sin
 - ii. 3-6 – necessity of obedience to Jesus’ commands
 - iii. 7-11 – the command to love our Christian brothers [and sisters]
- c. 2:12-17 – Encouragement and Warning
- d. 2:18-27 – How important is Theology
 - i. 18-21 – Contrast of true & false believers
 - ii. 22-23 – Basic test to determine true and false faith

- iii. 24-28 – Combat error by continuance in truth
- e. 2:28-3:10 – Like Father, Like Son
 - i. God is righteous and those who live with Him and are born of Him will live a righteous life.
 - ii. 2:28-3:3 – The positive influence of God’s righteousness on His children is that they will continue to live in obedience to Him.
 - iii. 3:4-10 – the negative influence is the polarization of true faith from false faith as the false continue to live in sin.
- f. 3:11-24 – Blessed Assurance
 - i. The result of real Truth is the whole of the Gospel as John taught it.
 - ii. 3:11-14 – the result of receiving and living out God’s Truth is that we become vessels of His love.
 - iii. 3:16-18 – this result brings us confidence as God’s life within transforms us from the inside out.
 - iv. 3:19-24 – this is also the basis for our confidence before God.
- g. 4:1-12 – Discernment and devotion
 - i. 4:1-6 – those who believe the Truth of Jesus as God’s Christ are true Christians; those who believe something else are not.
 - ii. 4:7-12 – our love of God is demonstrated in our love for God’s people; a lack of this love is evidence of a false faith.
- h. 4:13-21 – Fear’s remedy
- i. 5:1-12 – Faith is the victory
- j. 5:13-21 – What we know as Christians

7. THEOLOGICAL THEMES:

- a. High Christology – The Reality of the Incarnation [Advent] of Jesus who is God in the Flesh [Emmanuel] and the Lamb of God, as well as the nature of Christian Trinitarianism were of foremost of concern to John – 2:22; 4:2-3. It is impossible to overstate the importance of these theological issues that needed to be properly understood in its context of the developing Gnosticism at the time of his writing. We should pay close attention to these issues because there are elements of this ancient heresy that still confuse many Christians:
 - i. Greek philosophy and Paganism [Hellenism] held to a world view where the physical and spiritual dimensions were clearly distinct and separate. Christian theology holds to an integration of the material world [natural world] and the spiritual world [supernatural world]. Christians hold that humans are spiritual beings living out a life on a material plane. John’s theology of the coming “New Heaven and Earth” where both the Spiritual and material are perfected and integrated. Thus for Christians, a new perfected Heaven and earth is the Kingdom of God and our rightful home.

- ii. Hellenistic Jews combined elements of Greek Philosophy and Pagan mysticism with Jewish theological elements. A key component of this thinking was that the material world was transitory and inferior to the Spiritual world. They also believed that your life in the spiritual realm would be similar to your life in the material realm, meaning if you lived a “good life” you would have a good afterlife. Thus, Hellenists had no interest in the concept of the physical resurrection of Christ or the resurrection of Christians. The account of Paul in Athens in Acts 17:16-34 should be understood in this context, as well as the conflict Paul had with the Sadducees who didn’t believe in physical resurrection – Acts 23:6-8.
- iii. The Syncretism of Hellenistic Judaism and Christian Trinitarianism is what both Paul and John argued against in many of their writings. Again, syncretism is a blending of faiths where the original faith is largely unrecognizable, and they were deemed heresies by the elders. Two of the major heresies of this type are Gnosticism and Modalism:
 - 1. Gnosticism – is an anti-Trinitarian heresy expressed also in a variety of ancient religions. Gnostics shunned the material world [lower world] and embraced the spiritual world [higher world].
 - a. Gnostic ideas influenced many ancient religions that taught that *gnosis* (variously interpreted as “knowledge, enlightenment, salvation, emancipation, or oneness with God”) may be reached by practicing certain ethical values including materially helping others and pursuing the disciplines of diligently searching for wisdom.
 - b. However, actual practices varied among those who were Gnostic. Many held that since the material was of little value, thus one could engage in physical pleasures including sexual and other activities which would not have an impact on their spiritual life. Others thought moral excellence was a necessary virtue, not including eating and drinking what you pleased. For a Gnostic that desired to rise to the God level, this necessitated a personal discipline to reach their “*higher knowledge goal*” which mixes philosophy, metaphysics, curiosity, culture, knowledge, and the *hidden secrets* of history and the universe.
 - c. To enable this personal meta-physical climb, an individual would be initiated into this secret order by a “Master” who was an experienced “Gnostic Practioner” who would then become their spiritual guide... usually for considerable paid fees.
 - d. Gnosticism was considered heresy by the Church because it was in complete opposition to the New Covenant values of:
 - 1) Sanctification by Grace.
 - 2) Justification by faith in Christ.

- 3) Scripture being the only authoritative standard for faith and practice.
2. Modalism – Is another anti-Trinitarian heresy. In the Modalist view, the Heavenly Father, Resurrected Son, and Holy Spirit are perceived as three different *modes* or *aspects* of the One God instead of the “Three Persons” of Christian Trinitarians.
 - a. Greek and Roman Paganism accepted that the “gods’ would enter the world in disguise with alternate identities and interact with humans. Thus the Pagans and Hellenistic Jews argued for this as a better approach in regarding the Father, Jesus, and the Spirit, but it is an un-Scriptural theological heresy. The Modalist argument is perceived from the vantage point of *the believer*, rather than as what was given in the revelation of Trinity in Scripture. The New Testament Gospel clearly teaches that God is three distinct and co-eternal persons within *the Godhead*.
 - b. Modalist’s hold that there are no real or substantial differences between the three perceptions of God, such that there is no substantial individual identity for the Spirit or the Son that is separate from the Father.
 - c. In some modern versions, some hold that Jesus was not born as God... essentially they say there was no incarnation. Instead they hold that Jesus was merely a man who became God’s instrument when the Spirit descended upon him at Jesus’ baptism by John, who then left him when he was dying on the cross. Unfortunately, this is still taught by some well-known tele-evangelists who are misleading many.
 - d. Trinitarian theology is messy, but we need to allow the Scripture to inform our theology on the basis of Biblical revelation. John’s Book of Revelation in particular has all Three Persons of the Trinity interacting in Heaven. We do well in allowing Scripture to speak the Truth from God’s perspective, rather than attempting to force it to conform to our own sensibilities.
3. Both Gnosticism and Modalism are not Christian concepts, and need to be corrected with a better understanding of normative Christian Theology.
- iv. F.F. Bruce in his book The Epistles of John, makes an argument that John was speaking out against two heretical constructs when he wrote. He lists these as a “New Theology” and a “New Morality” being taught by false teachers:
 1. A New Theology – which centered on a denial of the Advent and Incarnation, following Gnostic and Modalist philosophical thoughts.
 2. A New Morality – by removing the need for the Incarnation of Jesus, the physical realm could be ignored, whereas if Jesus was God in the flesh as the Bible asserts [the Emmanuel – God with us] then the physical realm must be given a high status. Thus the denigration of the flesh by the Gnostics and Modalists which allowed

them to engage in any activity they chose without moral consequence doesn't stand.

- v. Bruce suggests John provided “Two Tests” of Christian theology, one doctrinal and the other moral:
 - 1. Doctrinal – what does a person believe about Jesus as a man and God.
 - 2. Moral – how does one respond to the commandments of Jesus.
 - 3. If Jesus was not a man, then all His commandments had only spiritual application. If He was both man and God, then there are both physical and spiritual actions that need redress when we sin. If He wasn't man, there would be no sin for a Christian.
- vi. Based upon this, Bruce suggests the structure of 1st John follows validating faith in a series of tests:
 - 1. Part 1 – Prologue – 1:1-4.
 - 2. Part 2 – 1st test cycle – 1:5-2:27.
 - 3. Part 3 – 2nd test cycle – 2:28-4:6.
 - 4. Part 4 – 3rd test cycle – 4:7-5:12.
 - 5. Part 5 – Conclusion – 5:13-21.
- b. Two other Theological Themes John taught:
 - i. Love – The Primacy of Love is a definitive Christian Characteristic – 3:10-11, 23; 4:11, 21.
 - 1. The result of love is self-sacrifice in the name of Christ in caring for others – 3:17.
 - 2. Love is a gift from God – 4:7.
 - 3. Genuine love can only be expressed as God lives in us and through us – 4:12; and as we are secure in Him – 4:16.
 - ii. Abiding [Perseverance, or Believer's Security] – The Certainty of God's Assurances to His beloved people:
 - 1. Jesus is God's Son – 5:5.
 - 2. Believers have eternal life through Jesus – 5:11.
 - 3. God hears and answers prayers – 5:14.
 - 4. Believers are no longer in bondage to sin and death, and are safe from the evil one – 5:18.
 - 5. Believers are God's children – 5:19.
 - 6. Believers can know God through the Son... by being in intimate relationship – 5:20.
 - 7. Jesus is the true God – 5:20.
- c. It is important to understand that John's writings demonstrate an “old man's theology” meaning:
 - i. His theology is characterized by duality – John simplistically sees things as “either/or” rather than “both/and.” In theological terms, either/or represents “duality” while both/and represents “paradox.” You could argue that John's maturity, experiences, and age have given him a clarity of insight.

- ii. A young person is more apt to see and question the shades of gray in which we live. It takes maturity to see things more as black and white and to act consistently accordingly. This is wisdom, it is living in the Spirit in Truth.
- iii. Dualities that are often present in John’s thought development include:
 - 1. Light and darkness.
 - 2. Spiritual and material.
 - 3. Good and evil.
 - 4. Belief and doubt.
 - 5. True and false.
 - 6. Right and wrong.
- d. John’s personal view on theological growth is focused on Eternity – this mindset being dynamic and transforming, whose truth is unchanging. It is a Kingdom of God mindset, with Jesus as King.
 - i. *“Hen-Dia-Dys”* – This is a Greek term meaning “one through two” – where there could be a distinction made, John would hold there is a functional unity of human experience; meaning you essentially cannot have one without the other.
 - ii. Examples of these functional unities include:
 - 1. Spirit and truth.
 - 2. Heart [emotive, EQ] and head [cognitive, IQ].
 - 3. Wisdom and maturity.
 - 4. Belief and obedience.
 - 5. Life and growth.
 - iii. John would hold that when you believe something is true, it is inconsistent to not submit to that truth or to live according to that truth.
 - iv. To John, true faith is:
 - 1. Consistent – words and actions bear it out. John would see the confusion of a person’s expressed belief and their wrong actions as evidence their faith is deficient.
 - 2. Enduring – viable and growing over time. Paul said much the same in expressing the necessity of Spiritual Fruit developing in the believer’s life. In other words, they should look more and more like Jesus over time. If there is no growth, there is something deficient in their faith.
 - 3. Spiritual – a believer’s life is necessarily a “Spiritual Life” that is consistently being lived out in the flesh, and enduring in eternity.

8. EXEGETICAL MESSAGE OF 1ST JOHN:

- a. 1:1 – “From the Beginning” is clearly a mirrored thought from the fourth Gospel also written by John. John proclaims the message of Christ which is real and true because has been heard, seen, and touched – personally experienced by John... both witnessed and it is founded on redemptive history.
- b. 1:2-3 – Reaffirms the reality of the Deity of Jesus as the Son of God, meaning same substance. Right from the beginning of his epistle he refutes the Gnostic lie, affirming that Jesus is God in the flesh.

- c. 1:3a – John faithfully reports the message given to him including the events that he witnessed and knows to be true.
- d. 1:3b-4 – Faithful application of this message leads to joyful fellowship both with Father and Son, as well as with all believers.
- e. 1:5-7 – God is light, and because Jesus is God He is light as well. Claiming to have fellowship with believers only to walk in darkness is living proof there is no light in us. Walking in His light in fellowship purifies us from all unrighteousness.
- f. 1:8-10 – Sin is a real problem, but the reality is that to sin is part of being human. Sins of omission and commission are common to all. The proper response to this is to acknowledge it when it occurs and to confess it both to God and our brothers. When we sweep it under the carpet, it festers; when we confess it, we are healed and forgiven.
- g. 2:1-2 – Christ is the resolution of all sin for all time. When we confess it, we can count on our Lord to be faithful and forgiving. There is no such thing as sin without consequence; Christ is the only solution.
- h. 2:3-6 – Christians should learn through Scripture and the indwelling Spirit that we have resources to remain obedient to Christ’s Character developing within us and to resist sin; and the Spirit will not long allow us to continue in sin. There is something amiss for those who continue to sin without remorse. We should learn to walk and live as Jesus did.
- i. 2:7-11 – Though James’ teaching is not new, it has added impetus because of the light that is shining in the churches and lives of Christ-filled disciples. The test of the light within is how we love each other. While what we say is important, how we act proves our love through our obedience and commitment to Christ.
- j. 2:12-14 – There is an interesting development of Spirit life played out in individual lives:
 - i. He is writing to children – meaning the young and growing who are both vulnerable and dependent upon their fathers.
 - ii. He is writing to fathers – who are mature and have a responsibility to grow their children and young men.
 - iii. He is writing to young men – who have their own vulnerability because of their need for guidance and discipline that is usually in conflict with the tendency that they usually want to go their own way and have their own freedom. Here is where the spiritual battle is often fiercest for the young, hence the Parable of the Prodigal Son – Luke 15:11-32.
- k. 2:15-17 – The world and eternity are put in conflict, and the choice could not be more important. It is easy to settle for the good of the immediate pleasure, rather than hold fast to the greatest good of eternity with God. If you know the value of the forgiveness Christ has secured for us, then you cannot have fierce attachments to the world and what it offers.
- l. 2:18-21 – There was most likely a church split here where some leaders having been swayed by the Gnostic camp led a group of believers away. John wrote to reassure the remaining

congregation that their leaders are true and led by the Spirit, while the leaders who left have been seduced by the Antichrist.

- m. 2:22-25 – At issue here is the integrity of the Gospel has originally preached by John, that Jesus is the Christ – the prophesized God/man Messiah and Savior of the world. To deny this is to reject who Jesus is and what He has done for us individually and for humanity in general. The stakes could not be higher... eternity hangs in the decision.
- n. 2:26-27 – The group who have left are labeled as deceivers trying to lead others astray. The group who have remained have an anointing that is the indwelling Spirit who is keeping them safe and secure. “Remain in Him” is a call for perseverance, to hold fast to the Truth they know and believe.
- o. 2:28 – the children are again the most vulnerable because their faith is not as deep or strong as the mature, hence they are more easily led astray by false beliefs. John reminds them to abide or hold fast to what they know.
- p. 2:29 – Doing what is right means living righteously which is a demonstration of your abiding faith – see James 1:22-25.
- q. 3:1-3 – God’s great love for his children properly understood should be a main motivating factor our faith, as well as looking forward to the future knowing that we will become like Jesus in a new eternal physical body when He returns. The result of such faith is that we strive to be purified because Jesus is Pure.
- r. 3:4-9 – Though sin is an aspect of fallen humanity, those who continue to sin without remorse or repentance ought to be concerned about the quality of their faith. To live a sinful life is in opposition to the life of Christ born in every believer. Discipleship is a process where the root and fruit of sin are dealt with.
- s. 3:10 – Doing what is right and loving your brothers and sisters is how we prove God’s love has taken root in our life.
- t. 3:11-15 – The negative example of Cain is the opposite of righteous love.
- u. 3:16-18 – “Laying down our life” in Christ is treating others as equal in value as ourselves, and selflessly giving and ministering to others.
- v. 3:19-22 – “We set our hearts at rest in His Presence” – is a picture of prayer and submission. Believers can have confidence of our salvation because we have confidence that God hears and answers our prayer. “Our hearts do not condemn us” is an inward look to God to sense conviction and remorse. We can be confident because of our desire to remain obedient and do what pleases God.
- w. 3:23-24 – Spirit life is proved out of our faith in obedience out of love, therefore we can trust in God who knows our hearts as we conform to God’s commands. See this as sort of a restatement of John’s Gospel 17:22-26 –

“The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know

that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

- x. **4:1-4 – Spirit life is the heart of Christian faith, too many want to leave faith so abstract it is meaningless or so defined by knowledge that it is dead. Christian life is Spirit and Truth. Because we have the Spirit within, we can test our motives and the actions of others. It is unwise to accept as true what others may say without prayerfully asking the Spirit for clarification. Do not trust what you now know to be false teaching; instead rely on the indwelling Spirit who is greater than the deceivers.**
- y. **4:5-6 – Truth is clearly differentiated between what is from the world and what is from God.**
- z. **4:7-11 – The imperative of love is again emphasized by John. It is presented in a reasonable argument:
 - i. **Love matters because of what it says about my relationship with God.**
 - ii. **Love is demonstrated by God sending His ultimate gift of Love to humanity, Jesus.**
 - iii. **Because God loves us, we should love one another. Put another way, we don’t love others because they are lovable, we love them because God loves them.**
 - iv. **If God’s love is in us, we ought to express His love to the people God loves.****
- aa. **4:12 – This verse marks a transition in the epistle, a segue from love to abiding [persevering]. The surety of saving faith does not reside in the believer, it resides in the reality of the One we believe in. We express the reality of God who cannot be seen, but can be experienced by the expression of loving others with the love God has given us.**
- bb. **4:13-16 – The persevering of a believer is supported by all three Persons of the Trinity. The believer possesses the Spirit, we confess the Son as Savior and Lord, and we then abide in the Father’s love as He lives in us and we in Him.**
- cc. **4:17-19 – The theme of “Believer’s Confidence” or the security of the believer, is one of the primary theological themes of John’s epistle:
 - i. **Its focus is upon the judgment of the saints.**
 - ii. **Its proximate basis is perfect love – the completed cycle of divine love received by the believer and passed on to others.**
 - iii. **Its subjective result is the freedom from fear.**
 - iv. **Its ultimate basis is the original love of God.****
- dd. **4:20-5:1 – Moving toward his conclusion, John reviews the basis of a Christian’s confidence. In this passage John traces the vertical axis of love between God and the believer, as necessarily manifesting itself on the horizontal axis of love in the community of faith. The conclusion of 5:1**

- is stunning** – “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well.” **Here he integrates his themes High Christology and love.**
- ee. 5:2-3a – Love is an outgrowth of obedience.**
 - ff. 5:3b-4 – Obedience is possible because we triumph over the world.**
 - gg. 5:5-10 – By expressing faith in Jesus who is well tested and known. Jesus being validated by the Spirit [anointing], the water [human birth, advent] and the blood [priestly substitutionary sacrifice on the Cross, propitiation] – vs 8; with the verbal [theophany] and prophetic testimony provided in Scripture – vs 9.**
 - hh. 5:11-12 – Such faith leads to eternal life. Thus, these elements are interrelated and lead to an unassailable confidence in the believer.**
 - ii. 5:13 – In conclusion, John again articulates his purpose in writing as instilling confidence in his disciples of their eternal life that they already possess.**
 - jj. 5:14-15 – Because of God’s assurance of eternal life, we can have absolute confidence in our prayer life with God.**
 - kk. 5:16-17 – Our prayers are effective for our brothers and sisters who may be mistaken in their judgment, but have not renounced their faith. Prayer through our indwelling Spirit can affect them.**
 - ll. 5:18-21 – Is an Epilogue including three statements validating assurance:**
 - i. Those who continue in a life of sin brings their faith into question as the Spirit will not long allow one to sin without remorse or repentance.**
 - ii. All believers are children of God who continue to live out their life in a broken physical body and on a Fallen world order where death and disease are the norm. In this environment, Satan and his minions attempt to subvert genuine faith preventing the redemption and reconciliation of believers and the eternal legacy God intends to restore for His people.**
 - iii. All believers have the resource of Messiah Jesus and the Truth He has revealed to us which brings eternal life. Keeping away from idols is a warning against anything that would inhibit the primacy of Jesus in our life.**