

OpenTheo

1 John 2:1 - 2:17



1 John - Steve Gregg

In this talk, Steve Gregg examines 1 John 2:1-17, discussing topics ranging from the Holy Spirit as an advocate, to predestination and the importance of obeying God's commandments. He emphasizes the need for believers to continuously walk in the light, love others, and resist the lusts of the world. Gregg also touches on the concept of pursuing eternal things that will last, rather than temporary pleasures that ultimately fade away. Overall, his message emphasizes the importance of following God's will and living a life that reflects His love and grace.

Transcript

We're turning to 1 John chapter 2. This chapter is much longer than the previous chapter, and has a lot of really good stuff in it. In fact, it's got maybe too much stuff to try to cover in an evening. We'll just see how we do.

In verse 1, it says, Presumably, he means the things he's written in the earlier chapter. And he said, Well, what did he write in that chapter that might induce us not to sin? Actually, he said in verse 8, In verse 10, he says, Anyone who says they don't sin is lying. Anyone who says they don't sin is just out of touch with reality.

So, what's even the point of seeking not to sin? Well, he said earlier, And assuming that we want to have fellowship with God, that is the point of being saved anyway. I know some people thought the point of being saved is to escape the flames of hell, but the point of being saved is to be in communion with God. To have a relationship with God, to fellowship with God.

That cannot happen when you're walking in darkness. That cannot happen when you're ignoring the light. And when you live in sin, you are not living the way that encourages you to be in the light.

People whose deeds are evil hate the light, it says in John chapter 3. And they recede into the darkness so that their deeds might not be exposed. So, those who do the truth come to the light. So, walking in the light is something that will be done very readily by those who are not sinning.

But when you are sinning, there's going to be that tendency to go into the darkness and not fellowship with God. So, the ideal is not to sin. Now, of course, we sometimes do sin and there's every need to be open about that.

If we confess our sins, he said in verse 9 of chapter 1, God's faithful and just to forgive us our sins. And so, we read here too. I'm writing these things that you may not sin, but if anyone does sin, and that does happen, of course, we have an advocate with the Father.

This word advocate in the Greek is *parakleitos*. It's found only five times in the New Testament Greek and the other four times are in John's Gospel. Interestingly enough, in John's Gospel, this word is not used as it is used here, although it's the same author.

In John's Gospel, this word appears four times in the Upper Room Discourse, the last discourse Jesus gave to his disciples before his crucifixion. And he said, I'm going away, but I'm going to send you another *parakleitos*, another, some of the older translations say another comforter, some say counselor, some have something else they say, but the word *parakleitos* is the Greek word that is used. I'm going to send you another *parakleitos*.

And he's referring to the spirit of truth, he says. The Holy Spirit is this *parakleitos*, or as we Anglicize it, the *paraclete*. And the *paraclete* in John's Gospel is the Holy Spirit.

But here, we have a *paraclete* Christ. Now, it's interesting in John's Gospel when he said to the disciples, I'm going to send you another *paraclete*, it implies there was a *paraclete* besides the one he's sending. This is another one.

Who's the first one? Well, Jesus is the first one. Jesus is the first *paraclete*, the Holy Spirit is another *paraclete*. In this epistle, Jesus is referred to as our *paraclete*.

Okay, so what's a *paraclete*? *Para* is the Greek word for alongside, *para*, it means beside. *Kaleo* is a verb that means to call. And when those two particles are put together into *parakaleo* or *parakletos*, it means one who is called alongside.

And it refers specifically to a defense attorney in most cases. Its most common use in the Greek language is of a defense attorney in court. One who will stand with you and advocate for you.

In fact, some translations translate it advocate. Well, it's translated advocate here. Some of them also translate it advocate in John's Gospel.

An advocate, someone who stands up and pleads your case for you. It's also somebody who counsels you, like your defense attorney would take you aside and counsel you how to win the case or witness prep and so forth. So it's sometimes called counselor.

Now, at this point, we won't delve into the question of how the Holy Spirit is a *parakletos*,

is an advocate for us, but we are confronted right here with the fact that Jesus is said to be our advocate. And in the context, it's if we sin. That is, if we're guilty of the crime of which we've been accused.

If we sin, we need an advocate. We need a defense attorney. And in fact, how could Jesus or any honest defense attorney successfully defend a guilty criminal? He says it's better not to sin.

That is, don't commit the crime. But if you do commit the crime, we have an advocate. We got a good lawyer.

But a good lawyer in the case of a guilty party is one who's going to fool the jury or fool the judge or something. I mean, if you're guilty, you should be condemned, right? So what good is a good lawyer unless he's a deceiving lawyer? Well, Jesus is not a deceiving lawyer. And if you're guilty and you have him as your advocate, how in the world can he lodge a successful defense against the condemnation that is owed to guilty parties? Well, it goes on to say, he himself is the propitiation for our sins.

Now, what in the world is propitiation? That's a word that's only used twice, this particular Greek word, which is hilasmos. It's used only twice, and that's in this book here and also in chapter 4, verse 10, where he says, In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. The hilasmos in the Greek.

This comes from the same root word as the word hilasterion, which is used in Romans and in Hebrews. And in Hebrews, it's used of the mercy seat. The mercy seat in the tabernacle is called the hilasterion.

And the same word hilasterion is used in Romans 3 by Paul, and it's translated propitiation there. So we're going to have to look into this meaning of this word propitiation. And obviously, it's a word that's used interchangeably with the mercy seat in Greek.

The mercy seat was a piece of furniture in the tabernacle where the blood was sprinkled by the high priest once a year on the day of atonement, and which atoned for the sins of the nation. A propitiation is really a sacrifice of atonement. And in fact, most new translations don't even use the word propitiation, because the aim of a new translation is to make things understandable.

And what modern person knows what the word propitiation means? Little would be known except in the realm of theology, because that's not really used in the secular world anymore. But if you look over at Romans 3, where we also have propitiation, or we could say a sacrifice of atonement. That is a sacrifice that reconciles.

Atonement means reconciliation. The idea is if you have sinned, you are alienated from

God, whose laws you have violated. And you need to be reconciled, and there needs to be a sacrifice of reconciliation, a sacrifice of atonement.

Fortunately, there is one. And both John, in the verses we read, and Paul, in Romans 3, tell us about this. It says, if we start reading in Romans 3, verse 21, Paul says, but now the righteousness of God, apart from the law, is revealed, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.

Now, what he's saying is, the Jews have always sought to be made righteous through keeping the law. But there is a righteousness that's independent of keeping the law. It's not related to the law.

And if you think that I'm speaking against the law, no, this phenomenon I'm describing is witnessed to by the law and the prophets. That is, the law and the prophets themselves speak of a righteousness that is apart from the law. How can this be? Well, of course, Paul's thinking of the law and the prophets speaking about justification by faith.

Paul can quote from the law, that is from Genesis, the Torah, from Genesis 15, 6, that Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. And by the way, Paul will quote that in the next chapter of Romans. We're not going to get there because we're not studying Romans.

But he does quote that verse in Romans 4, 3. That's in the law. What about the prophets? Well, Paul likes to quote from Habakkuk 2, 4, which says, The just shall live by faith. So, Paul quotes from the law and from the prophets to justify his assertion that there is a righteousness available through faith, which is independent of the law.

For one thing, Abraham lived before the law was given and he was declared righteous by faith. His righteousness by faith was independent of the law, which wasn't given until 400 years later. Okay, so, there is this righteousness of God, which is ours, apart from our obedience to the law.

Verse 22, Even the righteousness of God, which is through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. In this, he agrees with John, which we read in chapter 1. If we say we haven't sinned, we're lying.

We're even making God a liar because he says we've sinned and we're saying he's a liar. Paul says the same thing. All have sinned.

Everyone's a sinner. Everyone has broken God's laws at one time or another. And that creates a dilemma.

Because that means if God is indeed just, he has to do something about that. If a judge is just, he cannot let sinners or criminals go free. It's a danger to society and it's just not

justice.

Crime should be punished. And this is true even if the criminal happens to be the son or the nephew of the judge. And, of course, in a real case, the judge would recuse himself from a case like that.

But suppose he was obliged to sentence his own son for a crime that his son had truly committed. He would not be allowed to show more clemency toward his son than he would to a stranger or else he'd be a corrupt judge. This is not justice.

A judge can't say, well, I'm going to overlook your crimes just because I happen to be fond of you. And this is the dilemma God finds himself in. We are criminals but he's fond of us.

He loves us. He wants us to be saved, not lost. But we've done everything to deserve to be lost.

So how does God solve that dilemma? And that's what Paul's facing here. He said, in verse 24, that we have been justified freely by his grace through the redemption, that is a purchase price that Jesus paid in his blood, that is in Christ Jesus, whom, that is Jesus, God set forth to be a propitiation or a sacrifice of atonement by his blood through faith to demonstrate his justice or his righteousness. Righteousness and justice are the same thing.

God is, in fact, just because in his forbearance, God had passed over the sins that were previously committed. He hasn't killed us because of our sins we've committed. In fact, he even saved some Old Testament people who committed sins previous to Jesus dying.

But he did so because Jesus was, in fact, going to come and die. And therefore, people who sinned and died before Jesus came could be forgiven in advance on credit because God knew that Jesus was going to come and pay the tab with his blood. And so, this is how God justified himself.

He could be righteous in passing over the sins that were previously committed, previous to Jesus' death. And to demonstrate at the present time his righteousness, that is, again, God's justice, that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Now, the justifier means the acquitter.

A judge wants to acquit his son or any friend of crimes, but he can't do that justly because if the criminal is guilty, a just judge cannot just let him go. How does a just judge acquit a guilty criminal? That's the problem. Paul says God has worked that out.

He set Christ out as a sacrifice of atonement. The punishment has been brought upon Christ. The punishment has been meted out.

The fine has been paid by Jesus. There had to be a fine paid, but we couldn't pay it. We were disqualified from paying it.

We were the guilty parties. We couldn't fix that. He could, though.

He could become one of us. He could take our sins upon him and die in our place, and that is die as a propitiation or sacrifice of atonement. So, Paul talks about that, and John talks about that.

In 1 John 2, he says, you know, we do have an advocate in court, and even if we're guilty, we can win this case, and justly so because God has taken our guilt, and he's taken our penalty, and he's put the burden of that on Jesus, and Jesus paid the penalty by dying for us. So, he himself, 1 John 2 says, is the propitiation for our sins, and this is why he can justly advocate for us, even though we're guilty sinners, and he can win the case. He can win acquittal for us, because, in fact, there is a penalty, but it has been paid by a substitute, one who stood in for us.

That's his work as a propitiating sacrifice. Now, he says, but not only for our sins, but also for the whole world. That is, Jesus died not just for the sins of us, who have been saved, but even for people who haven't yet been saved.

The whole world. Now, if you have political, I mean, not political, but if you have theological savvy, you know that this verse addresses one of the theological controversies that are often discussed. If you don't have theological savvy, you might not give a rip about this, and I don't suppose you really need to that much, but there are practical ramifications.

The Calvinist view, which I do not hold to myself, teaches that Jesus did not die for everyone in the world. He died only for the few that he had selected before they were born to be saved, the elect. That he had predestined certain people to be saved before they were born.

They had no real choice in the matter, because he made that choice before they were here. And likewise, those who were not chosen have no real choice in the matter, because he didn't choose them, and that was before they were here, too. All these choices were made before any of us were born, and therefore, they're not our choice, but God's choice.

So if I get saved, that's his choice, not mine. If I don't get saved, that was his choice, too. This is a predestination Calvinistic style.

Now, since on this view, God didn't really even want all people to be saved, he would have saved them all if he wanted to, but he only selected the ones he wanted. And therefore, when Jesus died, he didn't die for anyone except the elect ones. He didn't die for the whole world.

He died for just the elect. That's one of the five points of Calvinism. It's the middle point, the L in tulip.

Limited atonement, limited to the elect. Now, the view that was held by the church before Calvinism came along, and which is held still by people like myself who are not Calvinists, is that Jesus, in fact, did die for all people. How this may work out for people who do not become Christians in this lifetime is not revealed.

Some people think that people who don't become Christians in this life will have a chance in the next life, but the Bible says nothing about that. It doesn't say yea or nay about that. That's just something that God has left in the realm of mystery for us.

But one thing is certain, I believe, and that is that Jesus did die for the sins of everybody. Now, why is that practical? Why is that important? I mean, if only the believers end up being forgiven anyway, what does it matter if Jesus only died for them or died for everybody and only they get any benefit from it? Isn't it all the same? Not exactly, because if Jesus didn't die for everybody, we can't assure anyone that he died for them, no one in particular. You see, if Jesus didn't die for everyone, I can't be sure that he died for me, because I might be one of those he didn't die for if he didn't die for everyone.

There's obviously, on that view, a great number of people Jesus never died for, and who knows that I'm not one of them. Now, they would say, well, you know you are the elect because you believe. Well, I know a lot of people who believed and fallen away, and before they fell away, they believed just like I believe now.

But they fell away, and according to Calvinism, the fifth point of Calvinism is perseverance. If they fall away, they weren't saved in the first place. So, in other words, you never really know if you're elected until you die saved, because any time before that, you might fall away and prove you weren't saved in the first place.

That's what Calvinism teaches. So, no one can know for sure if Jesus died for them until they happen to die saved and persevere to the end. If they do that, then they can wipe their brows and say, whew, I really was one of the elect.

After all, Jesus really did die for me. But that makes it rather hard for me to celebrate today his dying for me if I'm not really sure. And it makes it impossible for me to tell any unbeliever whom I do not know whether they will ever become a believer or not, I can't tell any individual, Christ died for you.

I can't even tell them that Christ loved them because John said, this is how the love of God was manifest over in 1 John 4, 10. We saw it. And this is love, not that we love God, but that he loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins.

If God loves us, he sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins. If he didn't die for me, he didn't love me. And if he didn't love everybody and die for everybody, then there's no

guarantees that I'm one of the ones that he died for and that he loved.

Or you, or anyone else. So there are practical ramifications. In Calvinism, in their view, I realize Calvinists don't take it to its logical conclusion and most people don't take their theology to its logical conclusion as they should.

If Calvinists take their theology to their logical conclusion, they have to admit, as one Calvinist pastor I knew did, that he can't know if he's elect or not. He can't know until he dies persevering. That means you can live your whole life without knowing if God loves you, without knowing if Jesus died for you, without knowing if you're saved or not.

And certainly that goes against everything 1 John teaches. By this we know. By this we know.

By this we know. He says again, we can know that we're saved, but we can't know it if the Calvinist doctrines are true about this. And certainly John says the propitiation not for our sins only, but also for the whole world.

Well, Calvinists know that verse. What do they say about that? They say, well, the whole world, John's not thinking of every individual. The whole world, you know, as so many individuals, but all classes of people in the world, not just the Jewish believers, but the Gentile believers too.

Not just the elect among Israel, but the elect among the nations as well, the whole world. Still they say the death of Jesus is only for the elect and not for the rest, but the whole world speaks geographically or multiracially, not of every individual. However, John uses the term the whole world in one other place.

And it's in 1 John 5, 19. He says, we know that we are of God and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. Notice a contrast here.

We versus the whole world. We are of God. The whole world, on the other hand, lies under the sway of the wicked one.

Now the Calvinist says that in 1 John 2, 2, when it says, not us only, but also the whole world, us means the Jews. John is a Jew. And assuming his readers are Jews, by the way, there's no reason to assume that, but the Calvinist assumes that, his readers are Jews, he's a Jew, we are the Jews.

The whole world would be not just the Jews, but also the Gentiles. But if we are the Jews and the world is the Gentiles, what does this mean? We are of God and the whole world lies in the wickedness. The Jews are of God and the Gentiles lie in wickedness? That's not certainly the teaching of the New Testament.

And it's not what John would be saying. The whole world clearly refers to the unsaved,

those who are not believers. We are the believers and we know we're of God because we're believers and that's one of the ways we know.

But the whole world is the rest of the people who aren't believers. So, to John, the contrast between we, on the one hand, and the whole world, on the other hand, is Christians versus non-Christians. Believers versus the rest of the world.

John says we, who are believers, are of God. The rest of the world, they're lying under the sway of Satan. So, taking the use of the word the same here, where there's the same contrast, not us only, meaning us believers only, but the whole world, meaning all the unbelievers.

It's clear that Jesus is saying, I mean, that John is saying that Jesus died for everybody. And, by the way, the rest of the New Testament teaches the same thing, too. It says in 2 Peter 3 that God's not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

In Hebrews, it says, Jesus tasted death for every man. Everyone. John the Baptist said of Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

Jesus died for the sins of the whole world, not just the elect. And so, John affirms here. And, no doubt, this is the most clear affirmation of it we have in the Scripture.

Of course, the question then becomes, well, if he died for the whole world, how come everyone doesn't say it? Well, the standard way of looking at it would be, if you're not a Calvinist, that there's a general pardon been issued. It's as if the President of the United States would say, I'm pardoning everyone who's in prison, everyone on death row, I'm putting out a general pardon, you can walk out. But there are still some prisoners who aren't quite sane, and they say, I don't trust that guy.

As soon as I walk out of there, they're going to have the guards shoot me in the back and say I was trying to escape. This is a trick. I'm not going to do this.

And so they stay in their cell and they never leave until they're in the electric chair. In other words, the pardon is general, but you still have to believe it to benefit from it. Not everyone who's been pardoned escapes judgment because they don't want to.

And so there's some free choice involved here. All right. In another place, Paul said in 1 Timothy 4, that Christ is the Savior of all men, especially those who believe.

That is, he saved everybody by his death, but not everyone really benefits from those who believe, especially he's their Savior in a special sense because they actually escape judgment. So we have this from John. Now another departure to another direction here in 1 John 2, 3. Now by this we know that we know him.

If we keep his commandments, he who says I know him and does not keep his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps his word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in him.

He who says he abides in him ought himself also to walk just as he walked. Now let's stop there. This is one of the ways we can know that we're really believers, that we really know God.

There's a lot of people who think they know God, but they don't. And Jesus said, there's many on the judgment day will say, Lord, we did these things in your name. He'll say, I didn't know you.

We're not friends. Who are you? Go away. You're not one of mine.

Obviously people who were convinced that they were his, but they didn't know on what basis to test that. And that's why this book gives us so many tests. We know that we're saved because we passed these general tests that we can just sort of checklist.

We can look at it. Do I have this? Do I have this? Do I have this? Yes. Thankfully I'm saved then.

One of those things is obedience to Christ. Now Jesus said in John 8 31, written by the same author, by the way, but Jesus said it, Jesus said, if you continue in my words, then you are my disciples. Indeed.

Now by saying indeed, he means genuinely as opposed to something else in name only. You're my disciples. Indeed.

The real deal. You're genuine disciples. If you continue in my word.

And that's of course what John says here. If you continue keeping his word, Jesus said in Luke 6 40, why do you call me Lord? And you don't do what I say. That doesn't make sense.

Obedying Jesus is really what Christianity is all about. Now I pointed out Paul's writing earlier in Romans 3, where he said we're justified by faith and through grace and not by keeping the law. So where does this business of saying obedience is what Christianity is all about? Being a Christian is all about obeying Christ.

How can that be so? How do we know if we're saved by grace and not by works? Simply this. We are saved from something. And what we're saved from is the life we were living before, which was aimless, disobedient, pointless, rebellious.

Now that's a life that some people enjoy, but it's the life that kills you. And we need to be saved from it. We need to be rescued from that.

When we have been saved by grace through faith, the result is we're saved from that life. We're saved from those sinful patterns. We are changed inwardly, so that's not the kind of behavior that's generated from within anymore.

God writes his laws on our hearts. He takes out the heart of stone, puts in a soft heart that's responsive to him. He changes, regenerates us.

We have a new nature. We're partakers of the divine nature, Peter says in 2 Peter 1.4. All this changes when we're saved, because that's what we're saved from. We're saved from our corruption.

We're saved from our sin. When the angel appeared to Joseph before Jesus was born, he said, this baby's name is going to be called Jesus because he's going to save his people from their sins. Not from the consequences of their sins per se, but from their sins.

The sins themselves. We're slaves of sin. When Jesus said, if the Son sets you free, you'll be free indeed.

The Jews said, we're children of Abraham. We've never been in bondage. Why do you say we're going to be free? And he said, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin.

And you need the Son of God to set you free from that. You need to be rescued, saved from the bondage of sin, which dominates your life. Just try to live a perfect life without Jesus.

Try to live it with him. You can't. You can't live a perfect life.

I mean, theoretically, you could, if you were on top of it every second, but no one is. Presumably, every time you attempted to sin, you could, you know, make yourself not do it. But who's got that resolve? Who's got that attention? Who's got that will to do that? Unfortunately, nobody, because nobody lives a perfect life.

And therefore, we need to be saved. We need to be saved from that bondage, that slavery to sin that makes us live a life that's displeasing to God, and that transforms us into people who will walk in his ways. Salvation comes to us through faith, but it exhibits its presence through obedience.

And it's like, you know, if you have a fever and you take an aspirin and it brings the fever down, it's the aspirin that brings the fever down. It's the thermometer that shows that the fever has come down. The results are measured, not by the aspirin, but by the thermometer.

The way you live is the thermometer. The aspirin is the faith. You are saved by faith, and the result is your temperature goes down, and the thermometer proves it.

If you're saved from your sins, you don't sin so much. You, in fact, live a life generally of

obedience to God. Now, John is very clear.

If we sometimes sin, that means we're sometimes disobedient, but in general. You see, John is going to talk about how Christians don't sin, and that those who sin are of the devil, and so forth. But he's very clear.

We do sometimes sin. So, what does he really mean by this? He's talking about patterns of life. He's not assuming anyone lives a perfect life.

What he's assuming is everyone lives in general up to their commitments. Everyone lives by their principles, mostly. Everyone falls short once in a while, but in general, the choices you make, the goals you set, the disciplines of your life are aimed toward whatever your values are.

And if your value is to please yourself, you're going to live in sin. If the value you choose is, I want to live pleasing to God. I love God.

I want Him to be happy with me. Then, if that's really where your heart is, it's going to be reflected in the direction you take. And although no one's going to take any direction perfectly without a flaw, the direction you go is visible by the trend.

Are you, in general, ordering your life by the commands of God or ignoring them? If you're doing it by the commands of God, then it says you aren't sinning. In general, your life is departing from sin. You're not practicing sin.

And so that's obedience to Christ's law, to His commandments, is the sign that we are saved. Not perfect obedience. John is already dispensed with that notion of perfect obedience, but in general, a non-Christian doesn't bother themselves with what Jesus commanded.

Who cares what He said? If I cared about Him, I'd be a Christian. You know? But that's just it. If you were a Christian, you'd care about Him.

If you're a Christian, you'd want to obey Him. You'd know He's the Lord. He's the commander.

He's your boss. You're going to do what He says. And if you don't do what He says, but you say you know Him, you don't know Him.

He says, anyone who says, I know Him and doesn't keep His commandments, is lying. That person isn't really regenerated, isn't born again. But whoever keeps His word, it says, truly the love of God is perfected in him.

Now, that is perfected. In English, sounds like it could mean is being perfected. So that as you keep His words, as you keep His commands, it is perfecting God's love in you.

But that's not how it is in the Greek here. In the Greek, it means has been perfected. God's love has been perfected in you if you are obedient.

Now, how do we understand that? Let me show you a similar worded passage in James, making a slightly different point, but in the same manner. And I think it may help to illustrate what he means by if you're obedient, then the love of God is perfected in you. Remember the word perfected means completed.

And in James chapter 2, speaking of Abraham, in verse 22, it says, Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works his faith was made perfect? Now, a man can say he has faith, but that's not a complete thing unless there's the works that go with it. If you say you believe something, let's see if you behave that way. Let's see if your actions measure up to what you say your convictions are.

We'll believe you when we see it. That's what James is actually saying. A man may say, you have faith and I have works.

I'll show you my faith by my works. You show me your faith without works. I'll believe that you have faith when I see it.

And when I see it, that is the complete demonstration. Not just you saying you have faith, but doing the works also. Your claim to faith is perfected or completed when the other part is present.

Not just the claim, but the works that go along with it that confirm the claim. In other words, faith is something that's more or less invisible. And claiming to have faith is one thing, but works are visible.

And you therefore have to have the invisible confirmed by the visible. And one without the other is incomplete. The works complete it.

The works, that is, they provide the other part of this demonstration that you're a Christian. Faith is one thing, invisible. Works are visible.

You need to have both. Now when John said, a person who keeps God's word, his love, God's love, or his love for God is what it means, is perfected in him. That is to say, just like Abraham's faith was perfected by his works, meaning the works provided the other part and completed the demonstration that he had faith.

So our obedience to God's law demonstrates that we have love for God. We say we have love for God. Well, let's see it.

Okay? Obedience is it. Jesus said, if you love me, keep my commandments. And so John is saying, it's great to say you love God, but let's see it in keeping the commandments.

If you are in fact keeping his commandments, then we can see the completion of love's

work in you, your love for God. Just like Abraham offering Isaac was the completion of his faith. It was the other part.

It's the part that made it visible. Faith and love are both invisible qualities in your heart. Works and obedience are the things that demonstrate that those invisible qualities are there.

Without those visible parts, it's an incomplete phenomenon. And it's completed by the visible outworking of those things. I know that's a concept that's a little strange, but John is saying it this way.

He says, whoever keeps his word, then his love for God, the love of God here means his love for God, the love of God, the person's, is completed, perfected. Just like Abraham's faith was perfected in his words. He who says he abides in Him, and Christians of course do make this claim, we abide in Christ.

This idea of abiding in Christ goes back to Jesus' words about the vine and the branches. He said, I'm the vine, you're the branches, the branch has to abide in me. Now the word abide, It's kind of an old-fashioned word.

In the Greek, what it really means is to remain, to stay, to continue, as opposed to, you know, accepting Christ and doing and not continuing to follow Him. To continue in Him, to remain, is what this word abide means. And so he's saying the person who says that he's continuing or remaining in Christ, well, then he ought to walk as Jesus walked.

The fact that you are continuing to abide in the vine is visible by the way you're walking or living. So this whole paragraph is saying your Christian profession is made credible by your obedient walking with God. Jesus walked a certain way, He lived a certain way, we should walk that way too.

Now, in what way are we supposed to imitate Christ's walk? After all, Jesus didn't do what everyone's supposed to do. He died on a cross. We're not all called to do that necessarily.

Presumably, He, well, He never got married. Is everyone supposed to not get married? Presumably, He wore a beard. Do we all have to wear a beard? I mean, how much imitation of Christ is required? In what ways are we supposed to be like Him? Well, we're supposed to walk the way He walked.

Does that mean in sandals? No, it means something very different. There's many places in the Bible that tell us how we are to walk and we can see that when we look at this list, this is in fact the way Jesus walked. For example, in Acts 9.31, it says the entire church walked in the fear of the Lord.

Well, Jesus walked in the fear of the Lord too. Fear of the Lord is a good thing, makes you

not sin. 2nd Corinthians 5.7 says we walk by faith, not by sight.

Jesus walked by faith too, actually. Galatians 5.16 says we walk in the Spirit. Jesus walked in the Spirit.

He walked led by the Spirit, empowered by the Spirit. That's what we're supposed to do too. Ephesians 5.2 says walk in love.

Jesus certainly walked in love. In Colossians 4.5, it says we need to walk in wisdom. Well, no one can deny that Jesus walked in wisdom.

This is how he walked. We're supposed to walk as he walked. Colossians 1.10 says we should walk worthy of God.

Well, Jesus certainly did that. In 3rd John, verse 3, it says that Christians walk in the truth. Well, Jesus did that too.

We're also told to walk in the light in 1st John, chapter 1, in verse 7. So, this is all the ways we walk. Now, walking, of course, is a metaphor for living, and it's a metaphor that is used because it is a continuing process. If I say I'm gonna walk over there to the piano, and I take one step, I haven't walked there.

I've taken one step, but I haven't walked there. Walking there means taking a succession of steps and continuing in it until I get to the goal. Life is a walk, metaphorically speaking.

We're going somewhere, and we need to keep taking the steps that take us closer there. Our life is progressing toward a goal. The decisions we make every day, probably every moment, are either moving us closer to that goal or further from that goal.

To walk is a continuous process until you reach the place you're walking to, and therefore life is very much like a walk. It involves a succession of steps, and those steps need to be taken, governed by wisdom, love, the truth, the Holy Spirit, faith, the fear of the Lord. These are the ways we're supposed to walk in, and this is the way Jesus walked.

He set the example for us. When Jesus washed the disciples' feet and made a servant, a humble servant of himself. By the way, walking humbly is another thing it says in Micah 6.8, that God wants us to walk humbly with our God.

Well, Jesus certainly walked humbly. He washed his disciples' feet, which was the lowliest task of a servant, and he said, I'm your Lord, and here I'm washing your feet. He says, I've given you an example that you should do what I have done, he says in John 13, where he washed their feet.

So Jesus didn't do these things just to be unique. He did them to be the first of a crowd

doing the same. He's to start a new trend.

I'm gonna walk this way, you going with me? You walk this way too. And so John said, you know, people can always talk about how they abide in Christ, but if they're not walking like he walked, their claim has no credibility at all. Every Christian should walk as Jesus walked.

Verse 7, 1 John 2.7, Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you.

It sounds like he contradicts himself. Which thing is true in him and in you? Because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining. He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in darkness until now.

He who loves his brother abides in the light or remains in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes. So here we are introduced again as in the first chapter to this contrast between light and darkness.

And now light and darkness are linked respectively with love and hatred. The person who hates is in darkness. The person who loves is in the light.

Now what's interesting, I said it looks like John contradicts himself because in verse 7 he says, Brethren, I write no new commandment to you. But in verse 8, again a new commandment I do write to you. Now he should make up his mind, right? But the point he's making is the commandment he's talking about is the command that you should love your neighbor.

That you should love yourself. So that's not a new commandment. That's been around for a long time.

Love has always been required. It goes back to Leviticus. That's where the command is originally found in Leviticus.

Love your neighbor as you love yourself. This is not a new commandment that we've always known we have to love. But in a sense it is a new commandment because Jesus said in John 13 34, a new commandment I give you, that you love one another.

So Jesus called it a new commandment. John says in one sense it's very old. It's a very old commandment.

It's been enforced for a long time. But on the other hand it is, as Jesus said, a new commandment. Well what's new about it? Well the command to love remains.

But Jesus changed it from love your neighbor as you love yourself. He says this is my new commandment. That you love one another as I loved you.

The standard, the bar has been raised. To love your neighbor as you love yourself is just to do what John the Baptist said. You got two coats.

You got some friend who doesn't know, someone you see who doesn't have one, give one of them to away. That's putting him on the same level with you. That's loving your neighbor as you love yourself.

You're on one level, he's on the same level. You look for his needs just to the same degree you look at yours. That's the Old Testament command of love.

Jesus raised the bar. He said now I've got a new commandment. I want you to love each other the way I love you.

Well how did he love us? Well as Paul put it in 2nd Corinthians, he says you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ how that though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor so that you through his poverty might be made rich. That is he didn't in a sense put us on his same level. He put us above him.

He made himself poor so you could be rich. He died so you don't have to die. He sacrificed so that you could benefit.

This is not putting us on his level. This is putting us above him in one sense. That is he's laying down his privileges to confer privileges to us.

So it's not the same as saying okay we're all on the same level. Treat your brother the same way you treat yourself. He's saying basically treat your brother better than you treat yourself.

It says in Romans 12 10 that the way we should begin to treat each other is he Paul says in honor preferring one another. That is preferring them to ourselves. That we should count another man's needs better than ours.

Now you might say but that's not realistic. He doesn't deserve more better treatment than I do. He may not deserve it but then Jesus didn't deserve to be crucified either.

It's not a question of what you deserve. It's a question of what you're told to do. This is what makes being a Christian different than not being a Christian.

Lots of people will love other people essentially similarly to the way they love themselves but to lay down your rights so that somebody else can have an enhanced experience and a better life and to put yourself below. Not to give if you have two coats to give one to someone who has none but if you have one coat to give it to someone who has none. So you don't have one anymore.

I've actually had to do that twice in my life. When I was very poor and didn't have the money to buy another one. Actually I was teaching on love from first John in a Christian community in Orange County back in probably 19 I'm saying probably 1975 something like that.

And I taught on love and I taught about how it's practical and John said if you say you know if you see your brother have need and you shut up your heart from him how does the love of God dwell in you. A guy came up to me afterwards said I like your coat I don't have one. So what am I gonna do? I took off my coat and gave it to him.

What are you gonna do? He doesn't have a coat. He needs a coat. It's winter.

I didn't know where I'd get one but actually I did get one. Someone gave me one within the next week. But another time I was traveling cross-country in a Greyhound bus and someone got on the bus somewhere maybe it was in Colorado I'm not sure and we were heading east.

He was going to Wyoming and he had lost his coat and I had one. He didn't ask me for mine but we were riding on the bus together. I knew he was gonna get off the bus.

He's kind of a homeless hippie drifter you know and I just felt God speaking to me give the guy your coat. I was kind of resisting it because I was also going to the Midwest and I only had one coat. And finally when he got off the bus I said I got something for him.

I gave him my coat. Well by the time I got to Chicago someone gave me a coat because I didn't have one. Didn't ask for it.

Someone just saw I didn't have one and gave me one. So the Lord provides but the point is John the Baptist said if you have two coats give one to someone who doesn't have one. That's love your neighbor as you love yourself.

That's the old commandment. The new commandment is love people the way Jesus loves and that would mean you may have to sacrifice in order that somebody can have something that they need at your expense. You don't have it anymore.

That of course is a way of life that requires being led by the Holy Spirit because you shouldn't just liquidate everything you have and give it to the first charity you find because that's not always a responsible way to do it. God may actually have you in a position to on an ongoing basis meet the needs of the poor rather than just dump it all in one garage sale you know and put it all in the Salvation Army dumpster or bin. Excuse me.

So anyway this is a new commandment and it's an old commandment. It's an old commandment that has a new layer added to it by Jesus himself and you know if you don't if you don't love your brother you aren't in the light. Jesus said in John 13 35 by this

all men will know that you're my disciples if you love one another.

So if you don't love one another you're not in the light. You're not a disciple and if you do you are in the light. That's what John says here.

Now verses 12 through 14 are strange and you and if you don't know how strange they are I'll read them and you'll see immediately how strange they are and even commentators have said there's really never been any good explanation of the strangeness of these verses. John says I write to you little children because your sins are forgiven you for his namesake. I write to you fathers because you've known him who is from the beginning.

I write to you young men because you've overcome the wicked one. I write to you little children because you've known the father. I have written to you fathers because you've known him who is from the beginning.

I have written to you young men because you are strong and the Word of God abides in you and you've overcome the wicked one. Now you may have noticed there's a bit of repetition here. There's three statements that are essentially repeated although modified only a little bit in the retelling.

Actually he makes a statement, he makes two different statements to little children and he speaks also to fathers and he speaks to young men. Now almost all commentators agree that John is not talking about people of chronological age but of spiritual age, spiritual maturity. That some are new converts, they're the little children that he speaks to, new converts to Christianity, babes in Christ so to speak.

There are some who are not babes in Christ but they're growing, they're growing Christians and they are the young men. The fathers on the other hand are the ones who are mature, patronly Christians who've been around a long time and who can be, can provide you know leadership and oversight through the church and so forth. And that John is simply speaking of the different categories of spiritual maturity using the familial language of children and fathers and so forth.

So he has something to say to the new converts, something to say to the growing Christians and something to say to the ancients, to the elders. But what's interesting is notice he says I write to you fathers in verse 13 because you've known him who is from the beginning. Look at verse 14, I have written to you fathers because you've known him that is from the beginning.

The exact same statement with a change in the verb tense. There are altogether six sentences here, three followed by three very much like them. The first four of the six he says I write.

The last two he says I have written. Essentially it's the same meaning but why did he

change? I mean there's so much symmetry in this passage, intentionally obviously. Why did he arbitrarily change the verb tense? Nobody knows.

Why did he say the same to the fathers in both cases but different things to the children and you know amplify on what he said to the young men. See to the children he says I write to you little children verse 12 because your sins are forgiven you for his namesake. But then at the end of verse 13 he says I write to you little children because you've known the father.

So it's like different. I wrote to you because your sins are forgiven you or actually I wrote to you because you've known the father or actually both. He changes it for them.

For the fathers he says exactly the same thing. I write to you fathers because you've known him that is from the beginning and the young men it's very similar. First time he says because you've overcome the wicked one.

The second time he kind of amplifies it because you're strong and the Word of God abides in you and you've overcome the wicked one. Some people think the first three was his first draft and then the second three were sort of a modified draft of the same and you know he intended only the second to be printed but somehow the first draft and the second draft ended up put in there together. No one knows for sure.

One thing we can say is you know the things he says to the frankly to the children could be said to all of them. All Christians their sins are forgiven them. They've known the father.

What he says to the fathers is essentially the same thing. You've known him who is from the beginning. Well all Christians have.

To the young men he speaks to them as somewhat more stalwart in the spiritual warfare. Maybe because young men just want to be heroes and you know can be encouraged by the the imagery here that you've overcome the wicked one, the devil and he adds to it in the second instance you're strong and the Word of God abides in you and you've overcome the wicked one. But you know honestly you can take each statement from at face value but there's not much to say about why he has done it this way.

Now notice in the New King James they've set the type as poetry here whereas the passages before it and after it are not set as poetry. They're set as prose but these three verses are set up as if it's poetic and it's set up as poetic because of the repetition no doubt. Some perhaps think that John is quoting some kind of a poem or a song or something like that but no one really knows and even my favorite commentator FF Bruce says there's never really been any satisfactory explanation of these phenomena in this short passage from commentators and I'm not gonna break that pattern.

I don't have anything very satisfactory to say about it either. One thing we can say is

that John is mindful that not all Christians are exactly in the same point of their spiritual progress and each one needs encouragement or acknowledgment or recognition in whatever stage they're at but having said that there's not very much more to say about the passage that I'm aware of. Verse 15.

Do not love the world or the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world.

And the world is passing away and the lust of it but he who does the will of God abides forever. We first have to ask ourselves what is meant by the world. He has used that expression earlier when he said Jesus is the propitiation for our sins not only for ours but the whole world.

But in that case he seems to be talking about the demographics of the world, all the people of the world, not just the Christian people but the other people. The whole world in chapter 2 verse 3 seems to mean or verse 2 seems to mean the population of the world. But here he says don't love the world.

He doesn't mean the population of the world because we are supposed to love the population of the world. In fact, even God does. John 3 16 says God so loved the world and now we're told not to love the world.

But it's different. The word world here is cosmos in the Greek and it is used a variety of ways in Scripture. Sometimes it seems to mean the planet Earth.

Sometimes it seems to mean the Roman Empire world. For example, in Luke chapter 2 where it says that the decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered for a census. In Luke 2. Well, certainly Caesar Augustus didn't expect the whole planet to be registered for a census, only the Roman Empire.

He couldn't register the people of India or of Australia or the Navajo Indians over here. They would be technically part of the planet or the population. But obviously the world, the whole world should be registered means the whole Roman world.

And so the term world is used a lot of ways. Now in Scripture and especially in John's writings the word world sometimes has a peculiar meaning of that system of society that is under the sway of Satan. Because in John's gospel three times Satan is called the ruler of this world.

Once Jesus said, now shall the ruler of this world be judged, meaning Satan, meaning at the cross. Another time he says the ruler of the world is coming and he has nothing in me. There's three times actually in John's gospel that Satan is called the ruler of this world.

And this world doesn't mean the planet but the society that is in rebellion against God is under the rulership of Satan. And so in John's gospel a number of times the world doesn't mean the planet or even the population but the society that the the culture of disobedience to God which permeates the world that is not following God. The unsaved world and its culture is really what it means.

So that Jesus said to the disciples in John chapter 15, if you are of the world the world would love its own but because I've chosen you out of the world therefore the world hates you. Obviously the disciples are one group and the world is a different group and it is the world that hates Jesus and hates the disciples. In fact we'll see that also in John 1st John 3, our present book.

He says in verse 1, Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God. Therefore the world does not know us or doesn't understand us because it did not know or understand or appreciate him. The world by definition in these cases means the society of man following the prince of this world Satan rather than following God.

The unbelieving world and its culture. Now when John says don't love the world he doesn't mean don't love the people of the world. He means don't love this worldly culture and its norms and its values and so forth.

Don't be absorbed with it. Paul even uses the term that way and where Paul says do not be conformed to this world in Romans 12 but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. So Paul uses the term world sometimes the way that John does.

Don't be conformed to this world. This is Romans 12 too. You shouldn't be enamored with the world and its values, its heroes, its culture, its you know forms of life and entertainment and so forth.

I mean there are there's things that are simply contrary to God which the world loves and we need to not be sucked into that and that's the world as the term is used when he says don't love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world the love of the father is not in him and this is because the world doesn't love the father and you don't love the father if you love the world. You can't love God and his enemy too.

That is to say you can't take sides with God and take sides with his enemy at the same time. You've got to take a stand because the world is at war with God and you can't be on both sides. James has said something rather interesting about that too.

In chapter 4 verse 4, James 4 4 he says adulterers and adulteresses and by this he's not talking about people committing sexual sin literally but people who are spiritually committing adultery. Idolatry is called spiritual adultery against God. He says do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God that is hostility or a state of being

an enemy.

If you're a friend of the world and he means it but the way John's talking about in our passage the world the system the system organized under Satan and following loyally after the enemy of God if you're a friend of that you're an enemy of God. Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Now that doesn't seem like a very good bargain to make.

There is something to be said for wisely choosing your enemies and choosing your battles. If you're gonna choose your battles and you say I think I'll make God my enemy. You're a very very foolish person.

Why would you choose an enemy who could if he wished squish you like a bug under his thumb and not even know he'd done it because you're inconsequential. But of course God doesn't want to squash you like a bug but if you make yourself his enemy he says if you love the world you make yourself a friend of the world. You're making yourself an enemy of God.

You're putting yourself opposing to God and that's what it says in 1st John 2 15. Whoever loves the world the love of God is not in him. You don't love God if you love his enemies in that way if you side with them.

He says for all that is in the world this is 1st John 2 16. For all that is in the world the lust of the flesh the lust the eyes and the pride of life that's not of God that's of the world. Now what is the lust of the flesh the lust the eyes and the pride of life? The lust of the eyes or the lust of the flesh actually is simply your bodily cravings which are not wrong in themselves but they can get you into trouble.

Lust is a word in the Greek that means desire. It is not strictly speaking a word that means bad desire. Jesus used that word in the Gospel of Luke when he said at the Last Supper he said to his disciples with great desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you.

The word desire is the same as word lust. It could be translated with great lust I have lusted to have this Passover with you. Obviously lust just means strong desire it doesn't mean bad desire necessarily.

Now this could be translated the desires of the flesh and this would mean your bodily desires. What does your body desire? Well it desires food, drink, sleep, sex. There's certain things that your glands crave and those are the desires of your body.

Are they wrong? No not one of those is wrong unless it becomes your idol unless it dictates what you're going to do. You see if you control your desires and govern them by the principles of obedience to God not a one of them is bad. God made them after all.

He made the body. He gave it the glands. If you think that some desire of your body is itself evil then you have to think that God made a mistake when he designed those hormones and those glands that make your body crave food or sex or sleep or any of those things.

This is just the working of your body. That's not bad in itself but the world craves and worships the desires of the body. The world worships sex.

It worships food. It worships pleasure. Now there's great uses for food and for sex and pleasure.

God is not against those things. He invented them but he says okay here's the desires you have and here's what I want you to do with them. These things are powerful things.

If they get away from you they can do a lot of damage. Often the desires of the flesh are likened to fire in the Bible. Solomon in Proverbs talks about a man who sleeps with his neighbor's wife.

It's like he's taking fire into his bosom. Well that's not a good place to put fire. You want fire to be in the fireplace.

You take it into your clothes your clothes are gonna burn up. Fire is good when it's in the fireplace. It's bad when it's in your clothes.

Sexual desire is good when it's in your home where it belongs. It's bad when it's exercised elsewhere. The idea here is that the desires of the body are inflaming.

We can be inflamed with desire and if you don't keep it in its fireplace it'll take over the whole house. The lust of the flesh are something to enjoy in their proper place but to be wary of in their improper place because they ruin lives. A person who just gives vent to his appetite and never hinders his appetite for food generally speaking is to be unhealthy and probably die young from you know clogged arteries and overweight and things like that.

That's just we know that. We're aware of that. A person who has indiscriminate sex every time they have the urge, well they're gonna get in trouble for one thing because they'll be sleeping with people that are already taken by someone else and they're also probably gonna get diseases and things like that and they're gonna do serious psychological harm to themselves and other people.

God didn't design these desires to be ungoverned or worse to be the governors. Many people are simply driven by their desires. Those desires need to be driven by us.

We need to say okay I can acknowledge appetite for food that's a good thing. The desire for sex that's a good thing. God made it.

The devil didn't make it. The desire to drink when you're thirsty, the desire to sleep when you're hungry, when you're tired, that's good stuff but if you sleep all day and you're lazy that's not a good thing. If you eat when you're not supposed to eat or more than you should eat that's not a good thing.

If you have sex in the wrong places that's not a good thing. Those things have to be governed. The world however and its culture doesn't see the same boundaries as those dictated by God who invented these things.

He's the owner. He made the manual about how to operate the machine and the world ignores God's instructions and just does it the way they think best or the way they want to and that's one of the things of the world is just to be governed by the lusts of the flesh and the lusts of the eyes. What is the lusts of the eyes? This is a Hebrew term.

It refers to greed. You might not think that would be the natural way to understand it, greed, lusts of the eyes, but it is. In the Hebrew idiom, a man who had an evil eye was a greedy man.

A man who had a good eye was a generous man. You can find this language in the Psalms. You can find it in the Proverbs.

You can find it in the teaching of Jesus even. In fact, when Jesus told a parable about people who complained because they didn't get paid more than someone who worked a shorter day, Jesus said, the owner, the paymaster said, is your eye evil because I'm generous to these other people? In other words, are you greedy? The evil eye is a Hebraism for greed. Good eye is a Hebraism for generosity and lusts of the eyes has to do with craving for things that you see but which are not necessarily for the flesh.

For example, if I didn't have a piano, I saw that in a store. Boy, I'd love to have that in my house. Now that's not because I have any particular lust of the flesh.

I'm not going to eat it. I'm not going to sleep on it. It's not going to enhance the lust of my flesh, but it's just I like it.

I want it. I see it. I want it.

The desire to have fancy cars or fancy houses, this is the lust of the eyes. You could be as comfortable in another kind of car or house, but it's the way it looks. It's the status that goes with it.

It's knowing that other people are going to look at it and envy you for having it. Those are the things that are part of the lust of the eyes. The acquisitiveness, the desire for things is the lust of the eyes.

So the desire to satisfy your fleshly cravings and the desire to satisfy your

acquisitiveness for more stuff. The worst cases of this that we see out of control are on that show, The Hoarders. I mean, these are people who just hang on to worthless stuff, but it's valuable to them because they see it.

They want it. They can't use it. It doesn't make their life more comfortable.

It makes their life miserable, as a matter of fact, but they can't help themselves. They crave it and take it. The lust of the eyes is I say I want.

And then there's the pride of life, which I take to mean that ambition to be better than others or to be better than you're supposed to be in some area, to have something, some status, some rank, some recognition, because your pride wants that notice. Now you know when Eve sinned, it says in Genesis 3, 6, how she sinned, it says she saw the forbidden fruit, so she saw that it was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and that it was desirable to make one wise, therefore she took it. That's all three of these things.

It was good for food, that's the lust of the flesh. It was pretty to the eyes, she wanted to take that home and put it on an arrangement on her, you know, dining room table. It was pleasant to the eyes, and it was desirable to make one wise.

She wanted to be wise in ways that that fruit could make her, but which God has said no, that's not the way I want you to be wise. It was a desire to have some rank and some status, it was an ambition that was ungodly, but it was driven by pride. That's how the devil gets to people, through these three avenues.

John said this is all that is in the world. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, all of that, that's not from God. That is the pursuit of that, the loving of that, the valuing of those things.

That's not what God wants you to be valuing and pursuing, that's of the world. He says, and the world is passing away, and the lust of it, these lusts, these things that people pursue and worship, they're passing away. They're not going to be here forever.

You can't take it with you, but he that does the will of God abides forever. If you're a Christian, you're going to live forever, but the stuff isn't. The stuff you accumulate isn't going to go with you.

So what is the lesson here? Well, maybe you should accumulate stuff that will go with you. If you're going to live forever, why cultivate tastes for things that you're going to not have with you forever? Remember when Jesus said, do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust corrupt and thieves break through and steal, but lay up treasures in heaven, because that's permanent. Moth and rust don't corrupt them.

Thieves don't break in and steal. You'll have that forever. Why not cultivate a taste for that which you can take with you and enjoy forever, instead of a taste for things that are not going to last and that are going to pass away when the world passes away? Notice he says, he that does the will of God abides forever.

It doesn't say all people do. It doesn't say all people are immortal and last forever, but those who do the will of God, Christians, are forever people. They're going to live forever, and therefore it seems like it makes sense for them to seek those things which are above, where Christ sits, and not those things of the earth, as Colossians tells us.

To seek things that have lasting value and which we will value in another life, and not only in this one. That's what John is saying. Don't love, don't crave, don't pursue, don't value, don't worship the worldly things.

You have some higher calling that you're going to go on forever. Those aren't. Why settle for those? Why put out your energies for those? Look what Isaiah said, and we're going to close with this because it's about time to close, but Isaiah chapter 55, he says, Ho! That must be an old way of saying yo, because it's just an attention getter.

Hey yo, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, and you who have no money, come buy and eat. Yes, come buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Why do you spend money on what is not bread, and your wages for what doesn't satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance.

Now, what's the saying? It's saying that there is that which is real food, indeed, that really satisfies, and what is that? My words. Listen to my words, and you'll eat what is good. Your soul will be satisfied.

You'll be consuming that which has lasting nourishment as its result, but why do you spend money on that which doesn't satisfy? Why don't you take what is free from God, the free gift of God, His word, His truth, the spiritual benefits that can be yours if that's what you seek, the treasures in heaven, instead of those things which you spend your money and your effort on to acquire, and they don't satisfy anyway. You can be satisfied if you hearken to me. Remember, Jesus said man does not live by bread alone, meaning physical food, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

Jesus is quoting Deuteronomy 8 when He says that, but He says it. Man lives by two kinds of nourishment, one by his natural food and by the other, the spiritual food. The spiritual food lasts forever.

In fact, Jesus said that in John chapter 6. He says don't labor for that food that perishes, but labor for that food that endures to eternal life. We have two choices. We can seek that which satisfies temporally, or we can seek that which satisfies eternally.

That doesn't mean that if we're seeking what satisfies eternally that we won't have

temporal satisfaction. I'm a very happy and satisfied person in terms of my temporary needs. As you can probably see, I'm comfortable, happily married, I eat well, I've got everything I need, got no complaints, and that's in terms of temporary things.

Although there have certainly been times when I didn't have any of those things, I was also satisfied then too. But doing the will of God is the main thing. As you do the will of God, He'll provide whatever else you need, and He's provided very nicely for me up to this point.

I've got no complaints, but there were times when if you'd seen me, you wouldn't have thought that He was providing very much, but even then He provided more than I need. Paul said having food and clothing with these will be content, and I've always felt that's true. If I am alive, if I have clothes on, if I've eaten, then I can't complain.

I'm not deprived of anything. But God also provides abundantly. It says in 1st Timothy chapter 6 that God richly gives us all things freely to enjoy, and that He's talking about money in that passage, because He's talking about rich men.

He says tell rich men not to be high-minded or put their trust in their riches, but to in the living God who richly gives us everything to enjoy. And so there's nothing wrong with enjoying what God provides, but in pursuing it, that's the problem. What you pursue is where your heart is.

Jesus said where your treasure is, that's where your heart is. Let your pursuit be for things that are eternal, things that last, things that are going to last as long as you're going to last. And so we have that statement I alluded to in Colossians 3.1. If you then were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God.

Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. If you love the world, the love of the Father is not in you. The world is passing away.

Its lusts are passing away, but if you are doing the will of God, you'll last forever. So John says pass on that. When the world makes its appeal to you and you have your options to advance yourself through the worldly means and to take advantage of those things, the world values, take a pass on that and say you know I've got some things far more satisfying I'm after than that.

I'm not easily satisfied. I'm not satisfied with anything except God and at his right hand are pleasures forevermore and in his presence is fullness of joy. In Psalm 17, 15 I think it is, it says I will be satisfied when I awake with his likeness.

That's what's going to satisfy me. Less than that is not going to do it for me. And so that's what John is basically saying I believe.

And that's what we are going to end with tonight.