

Basic Training Bible Ministries

"The Transforming Power of
Abiding in Christ"

A Study in 1st John



“That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that our joy may be full ... These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may [continue to] believe in the name of the Son of God.” 1Jo 1:3–4; 5:13

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Book of First John
Entering and Maintaining Abundant Life
(How to Abide In Christ)

Introduction:

1. The book of First John is a follow up to the Gospel of John. It is the product of a lifetime of John's appropriation of John 13–17.
2. The Gospel of John is written with the primary emphasis on entering eternal life by faith, with a secondary emphasis on how to have abundant life (Joh 10:10b; Joh 20:31).
3. The Epistle of First John is written with the primary emphasis on living the abundant life, with the secondary emphasis on how to have eternal life (1Jo 1:3–4; 1Jo 5:12–13).
4. Just as eternal life is entered by initial faith in Jesus Christ, even so, abundant life is sustained through living by faith in Him.
5. Therefore, the epistle is largely built on the truths revealed to the disciples of Jesus in the Upper Room Discourse (Joh 13–17).
6. Of special interest is the way in which John uses the phrase "In Him," as distinct from Paul's use of the phrase "In Christ." We will see this through our study.
7. It is evident that few in this world will enter eternal life through faith in the Son of God. The great tragedy is that of those who enter eternal life, even fewer will enter or maintain abundant life by persistent faith in His Word.

Three Major Discourses of Jesus

1. The Sermon on the Mount: Mat 5–7

This is a discourse on discipleship, particularly aimed at those living during the age of Israel, or the Law (Note: 5:17–48).

2. The Olivet Discourse: Mat 24–25; Luk 21

Here we have Jesus' discourse on discipleship, aimed at those believers living during the seven-year Tribulation period.

Note:

- The "*end of the age*" (Mat 24:3) is the age of Israel
- Also, references to "*tribulation*" in verse 9
- "*abomination of desolation*" in verse 15
- "*great tribulation*" in verse 21
- Followed by His Second Coming in verses 29–31

3. The Upper Room Discourse: Joh 13–17

This is a discourse on discipleship aimed at believers living during the Church Age. Emphasis is on the unique provision of the indwelling Spirit of God (Joh 14:16–18; 15:26–27; 16:7–8, 13–15).

Due to this we are able to “abide” in Christ in a new way of resurrection power (Joh 14:21, 23).

The Theme Statement of First John: Chapter 1:3–4

“That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that our joy may be full ... These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may [continue to] believe in the name of the Son of God.” 1Jo 1:3–4; 5:13 (emphasis added)

Purpose and Result

John’s primary purpose is that believers will enter and maintain fellowship with God, with the result of inner joy.

His secondary purpose is to give believers assurance of their salvation, with the result that they will continue to live by faith.

Application to Believers Today

1. John is writing to believers who have a desire to learn how to gain and sustain true fellowship with God on a daily basis.
2. This book is for believers who seek inner joy in their spiritual life.
3. Knowledge of the teachings of 1 John will also provide assurance to believers who sometimes doubt their security in Christ.
4. In addition, the teachings of this book provide great instruction and encouragement to live by faith.
5. The doctrines of this little book are absolutely essential to grow in grace and live productively.
6. This book is the *Enchiridion* of the Christian Warrior. (The *Manual of War* by the philosopher, Epictetus)

The Seven-Fold Purpose of First John **(Seven Spiritual Potentials of the Believer)**

1. 1Jo 1:3—that we may have fellowship (see also Joh 13:1–17)
2. 1Jo 1:4—that our joy may be full
3. 1Jo 2:1—that we may not sin
4. 1Jo 2:28—that we may have confidence at His coming
[Note: inclusio—2:28; 3:18–21; 4:17]
5. 1Jo 5:13—that we may have assurance of salvation
6. 1Jo 5:13—that we may continue to believe in Christ (abide in Him)
7. 1Jo 5:20—that we may know Him (experiential intimacy)

Seven Things About John’s “Message”: 1 John 1:1–4

The relative pronoun “*that which*” ... 1Jo 1:1–4 (the “message” of life):

1. “*Was from the beginning....*” (amplified in parenthetic, v. 2)
The seven beginnings of the Bible:
 - A. The beginning before time—eternity past (Joh 1:1; 1Jo 1:1; Rev 22:13)
 - B. The beginning of creation (Gen 1:1; Heb 1:10)
 - C. The beginning of the angelic conflict (Joh 8:44; 1Jo 3:8)
 - D. The beginning of human history (Isa 64:4; Mar 10:6)
 - E. The beginning of the Gospel of Christ (Mar 1:1; Luk 1:2; 1Jo 1:1)
 - F. The beginning of the Church Age (Act 11:15)
 - G. The beginning of our salvation (1Jo 2:7, 24; 3:11)
2. “*We have heard*”
3. “*We have seen with our eyes*”
4. “*We have looked upon*” (to gaze on with wonder/admiration)
5. “*Our hands have handled*”
6. “*We declare to you*” (v. 3) and “*bear witness*” (v. 2)
7. “*These things we write to you*” (v. 4)

All that we might have fellowship with God and fullness of joy.

Point: The “Life” of God, which was manifested in Jesus Christ (1:2), is perceptible in common life by normal sensory perception. If we “*walk just as He walked*” (2:6), it will be our greatest witness to Christ (Joh 17:23).

13 Contrasts in the Epistle of First John

1. Light vs. darkness (1:5–7; 2:10–11)
2. Truth vs. falsehood (1:6–10; 4:6)
3. Love vs. hate (2:9–11, 15–17; 3:11–17)
4. Life vs. death (3:14; 5:16)
5. God vs. the world (2:15–17; 5:19)
6. Christ vs. antichrist (4:2–3)
7. (Doing) Righteousness vs. (doing) sin (3:7–8)
8. Children of God vs. children of the devil (3:7–8, 10)
9. Confessing Christ vs. denying Christ (2:22–23; 4:2–3)
10. Spirit of truth vs. spirit of error (4:1–3, 6)
11. He Who is in you vs. he who is in the world (4:4)
12. The believer untouched by the evil one; the world lying in his power (5:18–19)
13. The true God vs. idols (5:20–21)

Apparent Problems and Contradictions in First John

1. In passages like 1:8–10; 2:1, and 5:16, John talks of the reality that we as believers do commit sin.
2. Then, in passages like 2:9, 11; 3:6, 9–10; 4:20 and 5:18, it appears that John makes a case for sinlessness in the believer's life.

Solution: Only when we keep in mind that John is speaking in absolute terms concerning a life of fellowship (the spiritual believer) and the abundant life, do these “apparent” contradictions disappear.

Working Outline of First John

- I. The Call to Fellowship—Abiding (1Jo 1:1–4)**

- II. The Ingredients for Fellowship (1Jo 1:5–2:11)**
 - A. Cleansing from sin (1Jo 1:5–2:2)
 - 1. Spiritual integrity (1Jo 1:6, 8, 10)
 - 2. Obedience to His Word (1Jo 1:7)
 - 3. Confession of sins (1Jo 1:9)
 - 4. Christ’s substitutionary and intercessory work (1Jo 2:1–2)
 - 5. Abiding in Christ (1Jo 2:3–11; Joh 14:21, 23 cf. Joh 15:1–8)
 - B. Doctrine: The three cleansings of the believer

- III. Overcoming the Enemies of Fellowship (1Jo 2:12–27)**
 - A. Preparation for the battle (1Jo 2:12–14)
 - B. Three enemies of the believer (1Jo 2:15–23)
 - 1. self
 - 2. the world
 - 3. the devil (and his workers)
 - C. The only means of victory (1Jo 2:24–27)

- IV. The Fruits of Fellowship (1Jo 2:28–4:21 cf. 1Co 2:15a)**
 - A. The Goal of Fellowship (1Jo 2:28–29)
 - 1. By discerning the believer in fellowship (1Jo 3:1–12)
 - 2. By discerning the love of the Spirit (1Jo 3:13–24)
 - 3. By discerning the Spirit of Truth (1Jo 4:1–16, cf. Joh 14:17)
 - B. The result of sustained fellowship (1Jo 4:17–21)

- V. The Assurances of Fellowship (1Jo 5:1–21)**
 - A. Obedience through love (1Jo 5:1–3)
 - B. Victory through faith (1Jo 5:4–5)
 - C. Confidence through the Gospel (1Jo 5:6–13)
 - D. Answered prayer through obedience (1Jo 5:14–17)

Conclusion: Review of three foundational doctrines 1Jo 5:18–20

- 1. The sinlessness and security of the new man (1Jo 5:18)
- 2. The separation of the believer from the world (1Jo 5:19)
- 3. The surety of the provision of fellowship (1Jo 5:20)

Final warning against idolatry (1Jo 5:21 cf. Col 3:5)

Major Issues and Outlines of First John

Gene Cunningham Outlines:

(Sections marked by phrase, “*these things I have written ... that*”)

- I. The Purpose Statement (1Jo 1:1–4)
- II. How to overcome sin, maintain fellowship (1Jo 1:5–2:2)
- III. How to overcome deception and error (1Jo 2:3–29)
- IV. How to sustain faith and fellowship in the face of sin, error, and hatred 1Jo (3:1–5:13)
- V. How to wage war through prayer (1Jo 5:14–21)

OR

I. God, as Revealed in Christ, is LIFE (1Jo 1:1–4) (Regeneration)

Key verse: 1Jo 1:2 “*The Life was manifested...*”

- A. The Life demonstrated (1Jo 1:1–2)
- B. The Life declared (1Jo 1:3–4)

II. God, as Revealed in Christ, is LIGHT (1Jo 1:5–2:28) (Illumination)

Key verse: 1Jo 1:7 “*If we walk in the light as He is in the light ...*” cf. 2:8

- A. The means of walking in the light (1Jo 1:5–2:2)
- B. The focus of walking in the light (1Jo 2:3–14)
- C. The battle against the light (1Jo 2:15–28)

III. God, Revealed in Christ, is LOVE (1Jo 3:1–5:17) (Transformation)

Key verse: 1Jo 3:1 “*Behold what manner of love ...*” cf. 4:9

- A. God’s love for us (1Jo 3:1–3)
- B. The attack on love (1Jo 3:4–15)
- C. Our love for God demonstrated (1Jo 3:16–5:17):
 - 1. By abiding in Him (1Jo 3:16–24)
 - 2. By discerning truth from error (1Jo 4:1–6)
 - 3. By abiding in love (1Jo 4:7–16)
 - 4. By love perfected in us (1Jo 4:17–21)
 - 5. By overcoming the world (1Jo 5:1–13)
 - 6. By prevailing prayer (1Jo 5:14–17)
- D. The divine demonstration of love (1Jo 3:1–3)
- E. The battle for love (1Jo 3:4–24)
- F. The victory of love (1Jo 4:1–5:5)
- G. The witness of love (1Jo 5:6–20)

[Note: 1Jo 2:15–17 illustrates the direct contrast of these principles.]

IV. Conclusion: Three Foundational Doctrines: “*We know*”

- A. The doctrine of divine preservation (1Jo 5:18 cf. 2:13; 3:9)
- B. The doctrine of positional sanctification (1Jo 5:19 cf. 1:6; 2:8, 15; 3:10, 13)
- C. The doctrine of experiential illumination (1Jo 5:20)
(i.e., providence, sanctification, illumination)

[Note: The above outline parallels that of the Gospel of John—Joh 1:4; 3:16]

Outline Adapted from Alfred Plummer

I. The Life of Christ—Gospel + Faith (1Jo 1:1–4)

Jesus Christ manifests the life of God as:

- A. Eternal
- B. Tangible
- C. Experienced

Note: What exactly is the “fellowship” of which John speaks (context)?
(The experiential presence of Christ: cf. Joh 1:18; 14:21, 23; 15:4; 1Jo 4:12)

II. The Light of Christ—Teaching + Obedience (1Jo 1:5–2:29)

- A. How to walk in the light—what to do (1Jo 1:5–2:14)
 - 1. Obedience and confession—cleansing (1Jo 1:5–10; Joh 13:1–10)
 - 2. Application and imitation (1Jo 2:1–6; Joh 13:12–17)
 - 3. Spiritual love of brethren (1Jo 2:7–11; Joh 13:34–35)
[Note: Both “love” and “hate” involve choice and action (1Jo 3:17)]
 - 4. Continue to grow up in faith (1Jo 2:12–14; Joh 15:1–8).
- B. How not to walk in the light—what not to do (1Jo 2:12–29)
 - 1. Flee the love of the world (1Jo 2:15–17).
 - 2. Beware of antichrists (1Jo 2:18–26).
 - 3. Do not leave the safety of fellowship—abiding (1Jo 2:27–29).

Note: What are the essential ingredients of walking in the light?
(integrity, honesty, obedience, dependence, growth, discernment)

III. The Love of Christ (1Jo 3:1–5:12)

- A. The manner and effect of God’s love (1Jo 3:1–3)
- B. The contradiction of love and hate (1Jo 3:4–15)
- C. The blessing of abiding in His love (1Jo 3:16–24)
- D. Love in relation to truth and error (1Jo 4:1–6)
- E. Love perfected in us—spiritual maturity (1Jo 4:7–21 cf. 2:5)
- F. The victory of faith working through love (1Jo 5:1–12)
 - 1. Regeneration (v. 1)
 - 2. Obedience (vv. 2–3)
 - 3. Victory (vv. 4–5)
 - 4. Life—abundant (vv. 6–12)

Conclusion: 1Jo 5:13–21

1. Three great facts: life, love, intercession (vv. 13–17)
2. Three great doctrines: security, sanctification, assurance (vv. 18–21)

Outline by Zane Hodges:

- I. Prologue: The Call to Worship (1:1–4)**
- II. Preamble: Living in Fellowship with God (1:5–2:11)**
 - A. Staying on the path: walking in God’s Light (1:5–2:2)
 - B. Reaching the goal: knowing the God of Light (2:3–11)
- III. Purpose: The Readers Must Resist the Antichrists (2:12–27)**
 - A. By recognizing/utilizing their spiritual assets (2:12–14)
 - B. By recognizing their spiritual adversaries (2:15–27)
 1. Resisting the world (2:15–17)
 2. Resisting the antichrists (2:18–27)
- IV. The Body of the Epistle: The Life That Leads to Boldness Before Christ’s Judgment Seat (2:28–4:19) Note: *inclusio* (2:28; 4:19)**
 - A. The theme verse: abide to be bold (2:28)
 - B. By learning to see God’s children (2:29–3:10a)
 - C. By learning to see Christian love (3:10b–23)
 1. What love is not (3:10b–15)
 2. What love is (3:16–18)
 3. What love does for believers (3:19–23)
 - D. By learning to see the God of Love (3:24–4:16)
 1. God’s indwelling affirmed (3:24)
 2. God’s Spirit recognized (4:7–16)
 - E. Conclusion: Having boldness at the Judgment Seat (4:17–19)
- V. Conclusion: Learning How to Live Obediently (4:20–5:17)**
 - A. What loving our brother means (4:20–5:3a)
 - B. What actually empowers our love (5:3b–15)
 - C. What faith and love can do for our brother (5:16–17)
- VI. Epilogue: Christian Certainties (5:18–21)**

What John Means by “In Him”

The phrase “In Him” in First John (cf. Hodges, pp. 81–82)

1. John’s theme statement, “*That you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full*” (1Jo 1:3–4), helps to set the doctrinal parameters for this phrase.

2. First use (2:5–6) is definitive. “*Abides in Him*” (v. 6) is parallel to “*the love of God perfected in him*” (i.e., the believer living the abundant life). Thus the test determining if “*we know Him*” (v. 3, experiential sense) and therefore if we are “*in Him*” or “*abide in Him*” (vv. 5–6) is not that of believing the Gospel (cf. Joh 20:31), but rather “*we keep His commandments*” (2:3) or “*keep His word*” (2:5), or “*walk just as He walked*” (2:6). THIS DEFINITION IS CRITICAL TO UNDERSTANDING THE ENTIRE EPISTLE!

“The expression ‘in Him’ must not be superficially read as an equivalent to Paul’s concept of being ‘in Christ.’ Instead, the seedbed for John’s idea is our Lord’s teaching in John 15:1–8. This is made clear by the words that conclude the vine/branch discourse: ‘*By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples*’ (John 15:8).” Hodges, *Epistles of John*, p. 81.

3. [1Jo] 2:8, the “*new commandment*” is experientially “*true in Him*” (i.e., “in fellowship with Him) “*and in you*” (experiential Christian life) “*because the true light (1Jo 1:6–7) is already shining.*”

Note: in context (v. 9) “*in the light*” equals “having fellowship.”

Synonyms Note: “*in the light*” (2:9), “*abides in the light*” (2:10), and in contrast to “*walks in darkness*” (v. 11), would equal “*walks in the light*” (1:7), and “*walk just as He walked*” (2:6).

4. In 2:24 to “*abide in the Son,*” by letting His Word abide in us (cf. Joh 15:7), is the equivalent of being “in Him” experientially. Also notice the secondary theme of eternal life brought in here (2:25). We are able to “*abide in Him*” (2:27) as we adhere to the truth we have been taught (cf. Joh 15:7).

5. The key to having confidence in His presence is that we “*abide in Him*” (2:28), i.e., maintain a life of fellowship through obedience to His Word and confession of sins when necessary (1:9; 2:1).

6. When the believer is having fellowship “in Him,” there is no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not sin.” (3:5–6). This truth is precisely what Paul teaches in Gal 5:16. It is impossible to sin while in fellowship with Him, while we are “In Him.”

Note: In John’s writings, “*everyone*” and “*whoever*” are used to state a universal truth in relation to the abundant life (fellowship) that is without exception (cf. 2:23, 29; 3:3, 4, 9, 10, 15; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18). If these verses are applied to eternal salvation instead of “*abiding,*” we find that not only is John in contradiction with himself (1:8, 10; 2:1, 5:16, etc.), but we all “fail the test.”

Note: John's concern is the "manifest" (evident) distinction between the believer and the unbeliever (3:7–10), which is not seen in the carnal believer, simply because he lives like the unbeliever (1Co 3:1–3).

7. When the believer maintains fellowship through obedience, he "*abides in Him, and He in him*" (3:24). This assurance comes from the indwelling Holy Spirit.

8. Again, "God abides in us" when we love one another. This is the proof that "*we abide in Him, and He in us*" (4:12–13).

9. Further, the believer whose life is a continual confession that Jesus is the Son of God, "*God abides in him, and he in God*" (4:15–16) is a parallel to vv. 12–13. Based on Joh 15:4, to "abide in Him" is for Him to abide in us. This goes beyond the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (positional truth) and enters experiential truth.

10. Confident prayer (5:14) is the possession of those "*in Him.*"

11. John declares that he and company are "*in Him*" (5:20) and thus, true witnesses of the life, that is in Christ.

The Doctrine of “Abiding”: 1 John 2:6

“He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.”

1. The Lord Jesus Christ introduced the concept of abiding based on a common cultural custom of hospitality shown to a guest by a host.
Note: The verb *meno* in Greek occurs 120 times in the New Testament; 68 of those times are in John’s writings.
 - A. The common cultural usage of “abide”
 - The idea of staying where you have been placed (Gen 22:5)
 - To remain in a place of safety and security from threat or harm (Job 39:27–28; Rut 2:8; 1Sa 22:23)
 - To stay in a place of provision and supply (Exo 16:2)
 - To live by faith in obedience and dependence (Psa 91:1)
 - To be a guest; to be at home. Here, the idea is to receive hospitality as someone’s guest (Mat 10:11; Mar 6:10; Luk 9:4).
 - B. Jesus’ spiritual usage of “abide”
 - Discipleship based on “abiding” in His Word (Joh 8:31)
 - The believer is not to “*abide*” in darkness (Joh 12:46).
 - The Holy Spirit to “*abide*” with us forever (Joh 14:16).
 - The Father and Son will “be at home” in us (Joh 14:23).
 - C. The most extended and definitive passage (Joh 15:4–10):
 - Abiding in Christ is for the believer only (vv. 1–3)
 - The believer must “*abide*” in Christ in order for Christ to “abide” in the believer (vv. 4–5 cf. 1Jo 3:24).
 - Failure to abide brings loss of fruit and witness. Also there will be increasing divine discipline (v. 6).
 - D. Abiding in Christ requires abiding in the Word (v.7–14 cf. Joh 8:31) and results in eight areas of blessing:
 - Effective prayer (cf. 1Jo 5:14–15; Jam 5:16b)
 - Bearing much fruit (cf. Gal 5:22–23)
 - Evident discipleship (witness/evangelism)
 - Glorification of the heavenly Father
 - Deepening love relationship with Christ (cf. “perfected love” of 1 Jo 2:5; 4:12, 17, 18 w/ Eph 4:12–13)
 - Stability of inner joy (1Jo.1:4 cf. Gal 5:22)
 - Obedience to His command to love one another
 - Entering into genuine friendship with Christ (3Jo 14 cf. “*Abraham*” in Jam 2:23; 2 Chr.20:7)

2. The use of “abiding” in the Epistle of First John:

- A. The term “abide” is a synonym for having fellowship (1Jo 2:6). Note that “abide in Him” and “*we are in Him*” (v. 5) is a fellowship term in John, not a positional term as Paul’s use of “in Christ” (essential to interpret 1 John).
- B. “Abiding in the light” (1Jo 2:10) is equal to “walking in the light” (1Jo 1:7), and bears the fruit of loving one another.
- C. The Word of God “*abides in you*” (1Jo 2:14b) as you abide in Christ (cf. Joh 15:7). It is impossible to separate the two, as 2:24 makes clear. To abide in Him, His Word must abide in us.
- D. The believer who does the will of God “*abides forever*” (1Jo 2:17), in the same sense that his “fruit remains” (Joh 15:16). This relates to eternal reward.
- E. The “*anointing*” (i.e., indwelling of the Spirit: 3:24; 4:2) “*abides*” in the believer so that we might “*abide*” in Christ (1Jo 2:27–28). The believer who does “abide” will have confidence at the Bema Seat of Christ.
- F. It is impossible to “abide” in Him and commit sin (1Jo 3:6), which is the same thing Paul teaches in Gal 5:16, you cannot “*walk in the Spirit*” and fulfill the lusts of the flesh.
- G. In the same truth found in 1Jo 3:6, it is impossible to “abide in Him” (or “walk in the light”) and hate your brother (1Jo 3:14, 24). If you do not “abide in light/life” then you are “abiding in darkness/death” (cf. Jam 2:17 with 1Ti 5:6, 15). As 1Jo 3:24 makes clear, it is only when we “keep His commandments” that we “abide in Him,” and by this alone “*we know that He abides in us,*” through His Spirit.
- H. John’s final statement on “abiding” is that when we “abide in Him” we will “love one another” and now John says that “*God abides in him*” (1Jo 4:12–16). Thus we see that in the “abiding” life of fellowship we have:
 - 1. Christ abiding in us (Joh 15:4; 1Jo 3:24)
 - 2. The Holy Spirit abiding in us (1Jo 2:27; 3:24; 4:13)
 - 3. The Father abiding in us (1Jo 4:12, 15–16)

Note: The “abiding” life of fellowship is a life of:

- Faith (5:12–13);
- Obedience (1:7, 2:3–6);
- Love (2:7–11, 3:16–23); and especially
- Assurance (“*by this we know,*” 2:3, 5, 28; 3:14, 16, 19, 24; 4:2, 6, 13; 5:2, 18, 19, 20).

In fact, **assurance** is one of the primary objectives of this book (5:13).

The Doctrines that “We Know” (Apostolic authority)

The “*we know*” statements relate to Bible doctrines, the “*by this we know*” passages relate to experiential assurance due to “abiding.” As always, it is the TRUTH of the doctrine that leads to the ASSURANCE in our experience.

1. We know that in resurrection we shall be like Him (3:2).
2. We know we have passed from death to life (3:14).
3. We know that the believer in fellowship cannot sin (5:18).
4. We know that believers are of God, not of the world (5:19).
(sanctification: positional truth to be made experiential)
5. We know that the Son of God has come and given us an understanding of the true spiritual life (5:20).

The Eight Proofs of Fellowship (Abundant Life) in First John

“By this we know ...”

1. The proof of fellowship is obedience to God’s Word (1Jo 2:3, 5) i.e., “*in Him,*” or “abiding in Him,” or “having fellowship”).
2. The proof of God’s love is the cross of Christ (1Jo 3:16). The proof that we truly know this is that we lay down our lives for the brethren.
3. The proof that assures our hearts before Him is when we love the brethren (1Jo 3:18).
4. The proof of Christ abiding in us through the Spirit is obedience to His commands (1Jo 3:24).
5. The proof of the Spirit of God being the source of a message is the confession that Jesus has come in the flesh (1Jo 4:3–4) (This is against early Gnosticism of the Docetic branch).
6. The proof that someone is of God is the willingness to receive the truth of the Word (1Jo 4:5–6).
7. The proof that we are abiding in Him is that we love one another (1Jo 4:12–13).
8. The proof of our love for one another is obedience to God and His commandments (1Jo 5:2–3).

The 12 Conditional (“If”) Statements of First John

These are all third class (*ean*) conditional statements. Note how each of them relates to “abiding” or “walking in the light”:

1. If we deny the presence or practice of sin (1:8, 10), we both deceive ourselves, and make Him out to be a liar.
2. *“If we walk in the light,”* we have fellowship with Him (1:7).
3. *“If we confess our sins,”* He is faithful and forgives our sins (1:9).
4. If we commit sin, we have an advocate with the Father (2:1–2).
5. If the truth abides in us, we will *“abide in the Son and in the Father”* (2:24). (The answer to the “oneness” Jesus prayed for in John 17:
 - that we may be kept *“from the evil one”* (vv. 11, 15);
 - be sanctified (vv. 17–18);
 - be one with the Father and Son (v. 21);
 - *“be made perfect in one”* (v. 23); *“that the world may know that”* the Father has sent the Son (v. 23); and
 - that the Father’s love might be in us (v. 26).Isn’t it amazing how these themes run through First John?)
6. The world will hate us, if Christ is seen in us (3:13).
7. *“If our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart”* (3:20).
8. *“If our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence”* before God (3:21).
9. *“If we love one another God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us”* (4:12) i.e., a level of maturity has been attained.
10. *“If someone says he loves God, yet hates his brother, he is a liar”* (4:20).
11. *“If we ask anything according to His will,”* we know He hears us, and if we know He hears us, we know our prayer will be answered (5:14–15).
12. If a believer *“sees his brother sinning”* (not unto death), and prays for him, God *“will give him life”* (i.e., spare him) (5:16).

The 21 Fruits/Evidences of Fellowship in First John **(commanded or implied)**

1. “*Walk in the light*”—obedience to God’s Word (1:7)
2. Confession of sin when necessary (1:9, cf. Psa 32:5–6; Pro 27:13; 1Co 11:28, 31)
3. To resist sin through the Word (2:1)
4. “*Keep His commandments,*” let love be perfected (2:3, 5).
5. “*Walk ... as He [the Lord Jesus Christ] walked*” (2:6).
6. Love the brethren (the new commandment—Joh 13:34; 15:12), repeated throughout the epistle (2:10 cf. 4:7, 21).
7. “*Do not love the world or the things in*” it (2:15–17). Note: First John is built on Christ as Life, Light, and Love. The three things in v. 16 that are antithetical to these three divine gifts:
 - The “lust of the flesh” results in “*death*” (Rom 8:6)
 - The “lust of the eyes” in “*darkness*” (1:6, 2:11); and
 - The “pride of life” in “*hate*” (2:9, 11, 3:12–13).
8. Let the revealed truth abide in you (2:24 cf. Col 3:16).
9. Listen to the teaching of the indwelling Spirit (2:27; Joh 14:26; 15:26; 16:13).
10. Maintain fellowship with a view toward eternal reward (2:28).
11. Hold fast to the “*blessed hope,*” and purify yourself (3:3, cf. Tit 2:11–13).
12. “*Let no one deceive you*” about the effects or source of sin (3:7–8).
13. Do not be surprised by the world’s hatred (3:13 cf. 1Pe 4:12).
14. Be willing to lay down your life for others (3:16, 17 cf. Joh 5:13).
15. “*Love not in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth*” (3:18, see Jam 2:14–17).
16. Keep believing in Jesus Christ and loving one another (3:23).
17. “*Test the spirits*” to see if “*they are of God*” (4:1, cf. 2:22–23, 4:3).
18. “*Overcome the world*” by our faith (5:4–5).
19. Maintain assurance by continual growing faith (5:13).
20. Pray for fellow believers who fall into sin (5:16 cf. Gal 6:1; Jam 5:19).
21. “*Keep [yourself] from idols*” (5:21).

16 Synonyms and Correlating Concepts of “Abiding” in First John

1. “Fellowship” (1:3)
2. “Walk in the light” (1:7); abide in the light (2:10)
3. “Confess our sins” (1:9)
4. “Keep His commandments” (2:3, 3:24, 5:2)
5. God’s love perfected in us (2:5, 4:12, 17, 18)
6. “Abide in Him” (2:6, 2:27–28, 3:6, 24, 4:13, 15–16).
7. “Walk just as He walked” (2:6)
8. Love his brother, abide in the light (2:10, 3:10b–11, 3:18, 23, 4:7, 11, 12, 21)
9. Doing “the will of God” (2:17)
10. Let the truth abide in you (2:24)
11. Practice righteousness (2:29, 3:7, 10)
12. Purify yourself as He is pure (3:3)
13. “Lay down our lives for the brethren” (3:16)
14. Overcoming the world (4:4, 5:4–5)
15. Receptive to the apostolic message (4:6)
16. “Confesses [in word and life] that Jesus is the Son of God” (4:15)

Major Texts of First John

1. **The Life manifested (1:1–4)**
The life of God is tangible, perceptible, practical, and profitable.
2. **The essence of fellowship is truth and spiritual integrity (1:5–10)**
Conformity to Christ is the issue; deception—the danger, of spiritual life.
3. **The foundation and function of fellowship (2:1–6)**
This section is the essence of the entire book (definition of the terms)! First John 2:7–11 expands on “walk just as He walked” (2:6). Here is the evidence/fruit of one having fellowship with God.
4. **Necessity for growth so as to overcome the world (2:12–17)**
First John 2:18–29 describes the spiritual conflict and means of victory:
 - the Word (v. 24);
 - the Spirit (v. 27); and
 - maintenance of fellowship (vv. 24b; 27b–29).
5. **The nature and effects of the matchless love of God (3:1–3)**
From 3:4–24, John discusses both the positive and negative effects of the love of God in the life of the believer, regarding his relationship to others and his relationship to sin.

6. The victory of the Spirit over the spirit of this world (4:1–4)

From 4:5–21, we have a discussion of victory through spiritual love.

7. Summary of the main theme; victory through fellowship (5:1–5)

This theme is based on our faith in the testimony that God has given to us about His Son Jesus Christ, and its practical application to life (5:6–17).

Review of Essential Truths: (three **absolute** facts):

1. The absolute security and sanctity of the believer (5:18)
2. The absolute separation of the believer and the world (5:19)
3. The absolute necessity and availability of fellowship (5:20)

The final warning of verse 21 sums up all the **potential dangers** to maintaining fellowship contained in the book. These are:

1. dishonesty
2. deception
3. disobedience

The Life Manifested: A Close Look at 1 John 1:1–4

Introduction:

1. In the humanity of Jesus Christ, the life of God was revealed in tangible form.
2. In the life of Christ as witnessed by the apostles, the Word of God came alive.
3. Not until Pentecost did they fully realize that this very life was available to them.
4. John writes of fellowship as the progressive enjoyment of the very life of God.
5. This little book is an invitation to fellow believers to enter and mature in His life.

Parallel Scriptures:

John 1:1, 4, 18, *“In the beginning was the Word ... in Him was life, and the life was the light of men ... and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth ... no one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.”*

Titus 2:11; 3:4, 6, *“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men ... but when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.”*

Romans 8:29, *“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”*

Romans 12:1–2, *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”*

1 Corinthians 15:49, *“And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.”*

2 Corinthians 3:18, *“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”*

Colossians 3:10, *“And [you] have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him ...”*

1 John 3:2, *“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”*

Note: What John observed of Christ’s earthly life is what we ought to be now. What we shall be will not be seen until Christ is revealed in His glory.

Main Points (1 John 1:1–4)

1. Six times John uses the masculine singular neuter indefinite pronoun *Ho* to refer to the manifestation of Jesus Christ in tangible terms:
 - A. He was from the beginning.
 - B. He was heard by John and company—*akouo*: (perfect, active, indicative)
 - C. He was seen—*horao*: (perfect, active, indicative), “to look to the horizon/heaven/earth.”
 - D. He was visibly contemplated—*theaomai*: (aorist, middle, indicative), “theater.”
 - E. He was handled with hands—*pselaphao*: (aorist, middle, indicative) “grope of the blind.”
 - F. He was declared—*apangello*: (present, active, indicative), main verb of sentence (vv.1–3)
2. The second verse is a parenthetic to explain “*that which*” as referring to “*the life*” which is in “*the Word of life*,” and “*eternal life which was with the Father*” (eternal co-existence) and “*was manifested to us*” (earthly incarnation).
3. The purpose statement of John is two-fold, found in vv. 3–4.
 - A. “*that you [fellow believers] also may have fellowship with us*” (i.e., John, Apostles, the Father, and the Son)—*koinonia*: “joint participation,” “sharing in the life,” “fellowship.”
 - B. “*that your joy may be full*”—*pleroo*: (perfect, passive, participle).
Note: Same word used in Col 2:9 “*In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily*,” and in Eph 5:18 “*Be filled with [by means of] the Spirit*.”

Principles of Application:

1. Biblical fellowship is the personal, experiential, realization of the presence of the living Christ in the tangible, active participation in His life.
2. We are not “in” fellowship (our common usage), rather we are “having” fellowship. John uses *echo*: (present, active, subjective), “potential of possession/experience.”
Note: Just as “*He who has the Son has life [eternal]*” [emphasis added] (5:12), even so he who “has” the Son may (potential) “have” fellowship (abundant life).
3. The only means of attaining “fullness of joy” (secondary purpose) is to enter and maintain “fellowship with Him.” That means “joint-participation” in His will (2:17).
4. When we lay hold of our potential (1 John is a book all about potential—12 third-class conditions found there), Jesus Christ will be manifested in and through us.
5. Biblical spirituality is tangible—as with the life of Christ incarnate it will be heard, seen, observed, handled (touched), and verbally declared. In other words, it will be a witness of word and life that cannot be ignored.

The Seven Truths of Upper Room Discourse Repeated in First John (order of occurrence in First John)

1. **Potential for Fellowship: 1:3–4**
 - A. Gospel: Joh 13:8, 10, 12–17, 15:4
 - B. Epistle: 1Jo 1:3–4 → 1:7 → 2:3–6 → 2:28–29 → 3:3–6 → 3:23–24
Fellowship synonyms: “know Him,” “in Him,” “abide,” “walk”

2. **Presence of Conflict: 1:5–6**
 - A. Gospel: Joh 13:2–3; 13:18–30; 14:29–30; 16:1–4, 33
 - B. Epistle: 1Jo 1:5–10 → 2:9–11 → 2:15–17, 18–23 → 3:4–15 → 4:1–6, 18 → 5:4–5, 18
(Inner conflict; hatred among believers; the world; false teachers; sinfulness; deceiving spirits; fear; the world)

3. **Power for Purity by Cleansing: 1:7 and 9**
 - A. Gospel: Joh 13:8; 15:2–3
 - B. Epistle: 1Jo 1:7 → 1:9 → 2:1–2 → 3:3 → 4:10–11 → 5:16–17
(Confession; Christ’s intercession; purification; perfected love)

4. **Primary Commandment—Love: 2:3–5, 7–11**
 - A. Gospel: Joh 13:34–35; 14:21–23; 15:9–14
 - B. Epistle: 1Jo 2:3–5 → 2:7–10 → 2:15–17 → 3:10–11, 14–17 (cf. Joh 13:17) → 4:7–20 → 5:1–3
(This love is produced by the Spirit, and is active in nature.)

5. **Provision of the Holy Spirit: 2:27**
 - A. Gospel: Joh 14:16–18, 15:26–27, 16:7–15. (The Spirit of Truth)
 - B. Epistle: 1Jo 2:27 → 3:24 → 4:2 → 4:13 → 5:6–8
(Our anointing/indwelling; assurance; guide; witness)

6. **Power of the Word: 1:5**
 - A. Gospel: Joh 13:34; 14:6, 10, 24; 15:3, 7; 16:1, 13
Note: Three times in the “Upper Room,” Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit as “*the Spirit of Truth*” (Joh 14:17; 15:26; 16:13).
 - B. Epistle: 1Jo 1:5 → 1:7 → 2:1, 3, 5, → 2:10 → 2:14 → 2:21 → 2:27 → 3:24 → 5:11–13
(The Apostles’ message: our Light; His Word; commandments; true teaching; the witness of God)

7. **Purpose of Oneness/Unity: 1:3 (Fellowship)**
 - A. Gospel: Joh 17:20–23 (Jesus’ high priestly prayer for all believers)
 - B. Epistle: 1Jo 1:3 → 2:27–28 → 3:24 → 4:12, 16 → 5:20
(Oneness with God; unity among believers the result of sustained fellowship with God; harmony with God the objective of reconciliation; the basis for all peace and harmony in every other relationship)

A Categorical Walkthrough of 1 John

1. The Four Beginnings of 1 John:

- A. The beginning of eternity past (1:1; 2:13 cf. Joh 1:1)
- B. The beginning of Satan's revolt (3:8 cf. Joh 8:44)
- C. The beginning of the Church Age (2:7)
- D. The beginning of their salvation (2:24; 3:11)

Note: To this can be added three others:

- E. The beginning of creation (Gen 1:1 with Heb 1:1)
- F. The beginning of human history (Isa 64:4 with Mar 10:6)
- G. The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Mar 1:1; Luk 1:2; 1 Jo 1:1)

2. Thirteen Synonyms for "Fellowship" in the Book (1:3, 6)

- A. Walk in the light (1:7)
- B. Keep His commandments (2:3, 3:24); keep His Word (2:5)
- C. Know Him (2:4)
- D. In Him (2:5, 27–28; 3:6)
- E. Abide in Him (2:6)
- F. Walk as He walked (2:6)
- G. Abide in the light (2:10)
- H. His Word abiding in you (2:24)
- I. Purify yourself (3:3)
- J. Practice righteousness (3:7)
- K. Eternal life abiding in Him (3:15)
- L. Love of God abides in you (3:17)
- M. Love one another/His love perfected in us (2:5, 10; 3:23; 4:10–12)

3. The Dangers of Deception in the Book (1:6ff)

- A. Deception of self (1:6, 8, 10; 2:4, 9, 11)
- B. Deception by the world (2:15–17)
- C. Deception by false teachers/doctrines (2:18–23, 26)
- D. Deception by lying spirits (demons) (4:1–6).

4. The Necessity for Cleansing (1:7, 9)

Three cleansings of the believer; compare Joh 13:10; 15:2, 3—same verb: *katharizo*, "to wash, to cleanse"

- A. The cleansing of salvation (1Co 6:11; Eph 5:26)
- B. The cleansing of fellowship (1Jo 1:7)
- C. The cleansing of confession (1Jo 1:9)

5. The Christian and Sin (2:1–2)

- A. It is a self-deception if the believer says he has no sin (1:6, 8, 10).
- B. Christ came to deliver us from all sin (3:5, 8).
- C. The objective of the spiritual life is to overcome sin (2:1–2).
- D. This is done by confession (1:9); fellowship (1:7); obedience (2:5); the Spirit (2:27); the Word (2:24); and prayer (3:22; 5:14–15).

- E. The new nature of the believer is incapable of sinning (3:9; 5:18).
- F. Therefore, the believer in fellowship cannot sin (3:6 with Gal 5:16).
- G. The believer who sees a brother sinning should pray for his recovery (5:16–17 cf. with Gal 6:1–2).

6. The “Old” and the “New” Commandment (2:7–11)

Compare Joh 13:34–35 with Mat 22:37–39.

- A. The “old” commandment is from Lev 19:18, “*Love your neighbor as yourself.*”
- B. The “new” commandment is “*Love one another as I have loved you*” (Joh 13:34; 15:12 with 1Jo 3:16, 23; 4:11, 12, 21).

7. The Three Stages of Spiritual Development (2:12–14)

(cf. Hodges, p. 94–100 for alternate interpretation)

- A. The “*little child*”: primary focus is forgiveness and the possession of eternal life through relationship with the Father (v 12–13b).
- B. The “*young man*”: primary focus is spiritual victory through strength in the Word (v. 13b, 14b).
- C. The “*fathers*”: primary focus is spiritual intimacy with Christ (vv. 13–14).

8. The Three-Fold Attack of the World (Satan’s System) (2:15–17)

Note: The same three areas of attack seen with Adam and Eve (Gen.3:6); the temptation of Christ (Lk.4:1–13); and here.

- A. “*Lust of the flesh*”—craving of body for self-gratification
- B. “*Lust of the eyes*”—desire to possess, attain more and more
- C. “*Pride of life*”—desire to exalt oneself/boast in self

John’s definition of the “world” (2:15)

1. The whole world lies under the power of Satan (5:19).
2. This world does not know Christ, or His followers (3:1).
3. As a result, the world hates the believer (3:13).
4. The world works according to “*the spirit of the Antichrist*” (4:3).
5. Therefore the world prefers the lie to the truth (4:5).
6. As Jesus overcame the world, so have we, by faith (4:4, 17; 5:4).
7. Jesus came into the world to be its Savior (2:2; 4:9, 14).
8. This world and all that pertains to it is passing away (2:16–17).

9. The Creation of an Eternal Identity (2:17)

“*But he who does the will of God abides forever.*”

- A. This cannot refer to eternal life, which is predicated on faith in Christ, never on obedience or works.
- B. John is presenting the potential of every believer to create out of their life an eternal identity as an “overcomer.”
(See notes on “An Eternal Reputation of Renown” below.)

10. Antichrist and antichrists (2:18–19; 22–23 with 4:1–4)

- A. The “antichrist” will come in the seven-year tribulation following the Rapture of the Church (Dan 9:27; Mat 24:15, 2Th 2:3–6; Rev 13).

- B. The “spirit of antichrist” is alive and working now, the “mystery of iniquity” (2Th 2:7) working through false teachers (2:18–19, 26; 3:7), empowered by lying spirits (4:1–3, cf. 1Ti 4:1–3).
(See “The Antichrist of John’s Epistle” below.)

11. The Seven-Fold Nature of “Abiding” (2:24–28)

- A. The believer abiding in Christ/the Father (2:5–6, 24)
- B. The believer abiding in the light (2:10)
- C. The Word abiding in the believer (2:24)
- D. The Spirit abiding in the believer (2:27)—“confidence”
- E. Eternal life abiding in the believer (3:15) (experiential)
- F. The love of God abiding in the believer (3:17)
- G. Christ abiding in the believer (3:24 with Joh 15:4)

12. The Love of God Being Perfected in Us (3:1–4:21)

Note: This is introduced in 2:5, developed in this section (John’s typical method is to introduce a truth early, then develop later).

- A. Involves personal purification, as a response of gratitude for the love of God to us (3:1–3)
- B. Involves overcoming sin (3:4–9)
- C. Manifested in love of our brother (3:10–17)
- D. Active love brings assurance before God (3:18–21)—“confidence.”
- E. Results in effective prayer (3:22–24)
- F. Gives discernment of false teaching (4:1–6) regarding the “overcoming life” (v. 4), see notes on IJo 5)
- G. Love to fellow believers is the primary evidence of fellowship with God (4:7–16).
- H. Love perfected in us drives out fear of judgment (4:17–21 cf. 2:28; 3:19–21)—*“boldness.”*

13. The Victorious Nature of the Abiding Life (Chapter 5)

- A. This concept is introduced earlier in 4:4, according to John’s method of planting the seed-thought, then cultivating it.
- B. Overcoming begins with faith in Jesus Christ, and develops as His love is perfected in us (vv. 1–3).
- C. Faith is the key, both in the victory of salvation and in the victory of a life of fellowship and power (vv. 4–5).
(Note: not all who overcome death and Satan are overcomers in their Christian life!)
- D. The sole basis of our faith is the revelation of God through Christ, as contained in His Word (vv. 6–9).
- E. The essence of biblical faith is to believe the message of the Bible, that God has given us eternal life through personal faith in Jesus Christ (vv. 10–12).
- F. The thrust of this epistle is to give the believer assurance of his security in Christ, and to stimulate a life of continued faith—a life of fellowship with God (v. 13).

G. The believer who is “abiding” in Christ will demonstrate love for sinning brothers by joining Christ’s work of intercession in their behalf (Joh 17:11–12, 15; Rom 8:34 and 1Ti 2:1–6).

In this way, we follow the “example” He Himself gave the disciples in the Upper Room (Joh13:12–17).

The Temporal Blessings and Eternal Benefits of Abiding in Christ

1. Continual cleansing and ongoing purification (1:7, 9; 3:3)
2. Perpetuation of the victory of regeneration (2:14, 4:4, 5:4–5)

Three phases of the believers’ victory

- A. The victory of the new birth (2:14, cf. 2Co 4:4; Luk 8:5, 12)
This is a victory over both Satan and the flesh (Col 1:13).
 - B. The victory of spiritual growth via abiding (4:4–6)
This is a victory over the “spirit of antichrist and error.”
 - C. The victory of maturity and consistent abiding (5:4–5)
This is “living by faith” and “abiding” in order to take the victory of the cross in our life and apply it daily.
3. The winning of recognition at the Bema Seat of Christ, thereby creating an eternal personal identity (2:17) (cf. Hodges, pp.104–105)
 4. Consistent abiding in the Word results in unique, intimate relationship with the Father and Son (2:24, cf. Joh 14:21, 23).
 5. Sustained fellowship assures us of boldness/confidence at the Bema Seat (2:28).
 6. Persistence in fellowship results in a continual process of ongoing purification (3:3).
 7. The “new man” is incapable of sin, and while in fellowship, we are free from sin (3:5–6, 9 w/ Eph 4:24; Gal 5:16).
 8. Effective powerful prayer is the hallmark of the child of God who consistently abides in Christ (3:23–24, 5:14–16).
 9. Victory over false teaching through spiritual discernment (4:4–6, cf. 2:26–27)
 10. A personal record of victory in life (5:4–5, 13–16)

An Eternal Reputation of Renown

“But he who does the will of God abides forever.” 1Jo 2:17

1. This verse is not referring to eternal life, which is the common possession of every believer. Rather, it is speaking of the eternal recognition of a victorious life.

There is an eternal permanence to the character and activity of a person who can be identified as one who does the will of God ... spiritual recognition at the judgment seat is an obvious component in the enduring recognition of the obedient Christian throughout eternity.

Zane C. Hodges: *The Epistles of John*, p. 103

2. Every believer will give an account of his life and what he has done with the provisions of God’s grace through Christ (Rom 14:10, 12; 2Co 5:10).
3. All that is done apart from fellowship will be burned, and all that is from abiding will be rewarded (1Co 3:10–15).
4. Those who habitually abide in Christ will have confidence at the Bema Seat and will be recognized by Christ as *“friends”* (1Jo 2:28 w/ Joh 15:8, 14).
5. The believer who lives by faith in persistent abiding will gain the eternal recognition of an *“overcomer”* (1Jo 5:4–5).
(Note: There is the once-for-all overcoming of salvation, but here we are speaking of an overcoming lifestyle.)
6. To the *“overcomer”* will be given many eternal insignia and privileges, such as:
 - A. the right to eat from the tree of life (Rev 2:7);
 - B. he *“shall not be hurt by the second death”* (Rev 2:11);
 - C. the privilege of eating *“hidden manna,”* receiving a *“white stone”* and a *“new name”* (Rev 2:17) (deeper eternal fellowship and personal intimacy with Christ, an eternal identity);
 - D. *“power [rulership] over nations.”* (Rev 2:25) (notice the vast difference from ruling cities and towns, as in the parables to Israel in Luk 19:16–19);
 - E. being *“clothed in white garments,”* name not blotted out *“from the Book of Life”* (Rev 3:5) (This has caused many believers confusion—it is very simple. As opposed to the *“wood, hay, and stubble of a careless life that is burned up,”* i.e., blotted out, this believer’s life is left as an eternal record, that is, he *“abides forever,”* cf. 1Jo 2:17 with 1Co 3:12–15.);
 - F. dedication of an eternal memorial, combined with three new names: God, New Jerusalem, and Jesus’ new name (Rev 3:12 cf. 19:11–13); and
 - G. sharing the throne of Jesus Christ (Rev 3:21).
7. Also included would be the relevant *“crowns”* (1Co 9:25; Phi 4:1; 1Th 2:19; Jam 1:12; Rev 2:10; 2Ti 4:8; 1Pe 5:4)

8. This priority of an eternal identity is what Paul means in Col 3:2–4 when he says, “*Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*”
(That is the “you” that remains after the Bema Seat Judgment.)
9. To “abide forever” is to both have much of your life remain and to enjoy a more intimate fellowship with Christ forever (1Co 3:14, Rev 2:17).

The “Antichrist” of John’s Epistle

1. Only the Apostle John uses the term “antichrist” in the Bible. He uses it in two ways (1Jo 2:18):
 - A. to designate those false teachers who deny that Jesus is the Christ (i.e., the God-man who gives eternal life) (1Jo 2:18–19; 4:3; 2Jo 7); and
 - B. to identify the ultimate “*Antichrist*,” the final false prophet.
(This probably relates more to the second “*beast*” of Rev 13:11–18, though the term fits both equally well.)
2. The term comes from two words: *anti* meaning either “against, or instead of,” and *Christ*, which means “Anointed One.”
3. The “antichrists” of which John speaks are forerunners of the one Antichrist who is coming to deceive the world.
4. The identifying marks of these “*antichrists*” are:
 - A. “*They went out from us*” (1Jo 2:19). Notice the similarity of the language with Act 15:24. See also Paul’s warning in Act 20:30 and his report in Gal 2:4. Originally, these false teachers were identified with the Jerusalem church.
 - B. They “[deny] *that Jesus is the Christ*” (1Jo 2:22) and “*try to deceive*” believers (1Jo 2:26) with a false message, that Jesus did not come in the flesh (1Jo 4:3, 2Jo 7). These were the Docetic Gnostics.
5. It is not necessarily true that all are unbelievers. Some did not “*abide in the doctrine of Christ*,” (2Jo 9). This is true of many modern pastors/professors. John’s phrase “*does not have God*” relates to the source and power of the message.
6. Consider Hymenaeus and Alexander (1Ti 1:20; 2Ti 2:18).