

John's First Letter

¹ We declare to you that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we watched, and our hands have touched, concerning the Word of life.

² The life was revealed, and we have seen, and testify, and declare to you this eternal life which was with the Father and was revealed to us.

³ That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you may also have fellowship with us. Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.* ⁴ We write these things to you so that your joy may be full.

⁵ This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you: that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him, but walk in darkness, we lie and don't do what is true. ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say that we don't sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth isn't in us. ⁹ If we admit to our sins, He is faithful and with righteous justice forgives us our sins and cleanses us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we claim that we haven't sinned, we call Him a liar, and His word isn't in us.

* **1:3** "Christ" (Greek) and "Messiah" (Hebrew) both mean "Anointed One."

2

¹ My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you won't sin. If anyone sins, we have an Intercessor* with the Father, the righteous Jesus Christ. ² He Himself is the atoning sacrifice for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. ³ This is how we know that we have come to know Him: if we keep His commandments. ⁴ The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and doesn't keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth isn't in him. ⁵ But whoever keeps His word has the sincere love† of God truly perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him: ⁶ whoever claims to live in Jesus ought to walk in the same way He walked.

⁷ Brothers and sisters, I'm not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you have heard. ⁸ Yet, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining. ⁹ Whoever claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister, is still in darkness. ¹⁰ Whoever sincerely loves his brothers and sisters lives in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. ¹¹ But whoever hates a brother or sister is in darkness and walks

* **2:1** The Greek word for Counselor (Paraklete) also means Counselor, Comforter, Helper, Advocate, and Strengthener. † **2:5** "sincere love" is used to translate "agape" (the Greek word for the strongest kind of love).

in darkness, and doesn't know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

¹² I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for His name's sake.

¹³ I write to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning.

I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.

I write to you, little children, because you have known the Father.

¹⁴ I have written to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning.

I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.

¹⁵ Don't sincerely love the world or the things in the world. If anyone sincerely loves the world, the sincere love of the Father isn't in him. ¹⁶ For everything that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - isn't the Father's, but is the world's. ¹⁷ The world and its lusts are passing away, but whoever does the will of God stays forever.

¹⁸ Little children, we are in the end times. As you have heard the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. By this we know that we are in the end times. ¹⁹ They went out from us, but they didn't belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have continued with us. Instead, they went out so that it might be revealed that none of them belonged to us. ²⁰ But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know the truth. ²¹ I write to you,

not because you don't know the truth, but because you do know it, and because you know that no lie belongs to the truth. ²² Who is a liar? Whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Whoever denies the Father and the Son is an antichrist. ²³ Whoever denies the Son doesn't have the Father either. Whoever acknowledges the Son also has the Father.

²⁴ Therefore, let that which you heard from the beginning live in you. If what you heard from the beginning lives in you, you also will live in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵ This is the promise that He has promised to us - eternal life.

²⁶ I have written these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. ²⁷ As for you, the anointing that you received from Him lives in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you. Yet as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and not a lie; just as it has taught you, you live in Him. ²⁸ Now, little children, live in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. ²⁹ If you know that He is righteous, then know that everyone who also practices righteousness is born of Him.

3

¹ See how great a sincere love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God! Because the world didn't know Him, it doesn't know us. ² Beloved, now we are children of God, and it hasn't yet appeared what we will be. We know that when He appears we will be

like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. ³ Everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. ⁴ Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness. Sin is lawlessness. ⁵ You know that He appeared to take away sins. There is no sin in Him. ⁶ No one who lives in Him sins. No one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. ⁷ Little children, don't let anybody deceive you. The one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. ⁸ The one who practices sin is the Devil's, because the Devil* has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the Devil. ⁹ No one who is born of God practices sin, because God's seed lives in him. He can't continue to sin, because he is born of God. ¹⁰ By this the children of God and the children of the Devil are obvious: anyone who doesn't practice righteousness is not God's, and neither is anyone who doesn't sincerely love his brother or sister.

¹¹ For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should sincerely love one another. ¹² Don't be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one, and killed his brother. Why did he kill him? Because Cain's deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.

¹³ Don't be surprised, brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. ¹⁴ We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we sincerely love our brothers and sisters. Whoever doesn't

* **3:8** The meaning of the word "Devil" (Greek diabolou) is "one prone to slander, a false accuser."

sincerely love lives in death. ¹⁵ Whoever hates his brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life living in him.

¹⁶ By this we know God's sincere love, because He laid down His life for us. So we also ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

¹⁷ If someone has this world's goods, and sees a brother in need, and closes up his heart of compassion from him, how does God's sincere love live in him? ¹⁸ My little children, let's not sincerely love just in words or in language, but in deed and in truth. ¹⁹ This is how we will know that we belong to the truth, and how we will assure our hearts before Him ²⁰ whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and He knows all things.

²¹ Beloved, if our hearts don't condemn us, we have confidence before God; ²² and we receive from Him whatever we ask, because we keep His commandments and do the things that please Him. ²³ This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and that we sincerely love one another, just as He commanded us. ²⁴ Whoever keeps His commandments lives in Him, and He lives in that person. This is how we know that He lives in us: by the Spirit He has given us.

4

¹ Beloved, don't believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² This is how you know God's Spirit: every

spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. ³ Every spirit that fails to acknowledge Jesus isn't from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming, and now it is already in the world.

⁴ You are from God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. ⁵ They are from the world, therefore they talk like they are from the world, and the world listens to them.

⁶ We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us. Whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

⁷ Beloved, let us sincerely love one another, for sincere love is from God, and everyone who sincerely loves is born of God and knows God.

⁸ The one who doesn't sincerely love doesn't know God, for God is sincere love. ⁹ The sincere love of God was manifested in us by this, that God has sent His only born Son into the world so that we might live through Him. ¹⁰ In this is sincere love: not that we sincerely loved God, but that He sincerely loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God sincerely loved us like this, we ought to sincerely love one another, too. ¹² No one has ever seen God, but if we sincerely love one another, God lives in us and His sincere love is made complete in us.

¹³ This is how we know that we live in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

¹⁴ We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. ¹⁵ God lives in

whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, and that person lives in God. ¹⁶ We have come to know and have believed the sincere love which God has for us.

God is sincere love. One who lives in sincere love lives in God, and God lives in him. ¹⁷ Sincere love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have confident boldness on the judgment day, because as He is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in sincere love, but perfect, sincere love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment. But whoever fears has not been made perfect in sincere love. ¹⁹ We sincerely love, because He first sincerely loved us. ²⁰ If someone says, "I sincerely love God," and hates his brother or sister, he is a liar. If someone doesn't sincerely love a brother or sister he has seen, how can he sincerely love God whom he hasn't seen? ²¹ This commandment we have from Him: that whoever sincerely loves God must sincerely love his brothers and sisters, too.

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¹ Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. ² This is how we know that we sincerely love the children of God: by sincerely loving God and keeping His commandments. ³ For this is God's sincere love, that we keep His commandments. His commandments aren't burdensome, ⁴ for whatever is born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith. ⁵ Who is the one who overcomes the

world, but one who believes that Jesus is God's Son? ⁶This is He who came by water and blood - Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. ⁷It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that testify, ⁸the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three are in agreement as one. ⁹If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; because this is God's testimony which He has testified about His Son. ¹⁰One who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself. One who doesn't believe God has accused Him of being a liar, because he hasn't believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son. ¹¹This is the witness, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹²Whoever has the Son has life. Whoever doesn't have God's Son doesn't have life.

¹³I have written these things to you who believe in the name of God's Son, so that you may know that you have eternal life. ¹⁴This is the confidence that we have in Him: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. ¹⁵If we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, then we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

¹⁶If you see your brother or sister committing a sin not leading to death, you should ask, and God will, for you, give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a kind of sin leading to death. I don't say that you should make requests for this. ¹⁷All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a kind of sin that doesn't lead to death.

¹⁸We know that anyone who is born of God

doesn't keep sinning, but He who was born of God keeps him. The wicked one doesn't harm or even touch him. ¹⁹ We know that we belong to God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. ²⁰ We know that God's Son has come, and has given us understanding, so that we might know Him who is true. We are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. ²¹ Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

God's Living Word
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Letters into modern English

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