

Lesson 24 – 1 John

3:23-24

John in this passage is summarizing the immediately preceding section and transitioning to what is to come in the following chapters.

John clarifies and distills the tests of assurance

To this point, we have discussed the three legs of the “stool” of assurance:

- Obedience to God’s commands
- Belief in the person and work of Christ
- Love for others

In this passage, John goes so far as to combine these three legs into one by using one to include or subsume the others

Does this mean that our salvation is a result of our work in doing these things?

Remember, we are discussing the assurance of salvation, not its accomplishment!

Salvation is an independent work of God whereby He raises dead men and women to life in Christ

Even the act of belief in God is a work from God

Ephesians 2:8 – For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.

John’s Argument: Christians may have assurance if we obey God; to obey God is to believe in Jesus and love others

1. “That we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ”

What’s in a name?

In the context of Scripture, as in many cultures, a name carries tremendous significance concerning the identity and character of the one being named.

This is especially true when scripture talks about God

“His Son”	“Jesus”	“Christ”
Jesus's title as the Son of God highlights his divine nature. He was not simply a good man or a great teacher; he was the fulfillment of God's sovereign plan to have God dwell with man	Jesus's earthly name highlights his humanity and his nature as the Savior of the world (Yeshua - "The Lord is Salvation")	This is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word "Messiah" and emphasizes Jesus's identity as the anointed one promised by God for the redemption of his people

“John uses a dative of personal relationship, which involves a personal commitment of oneself to ‘the name’ of Jesus Christ. It is a personal identification with all that the bearer of ‘the name’ entails.” ... To believe in the name of Jesus Christ is to place one’s faith, one’s trust, in him and all that he is—the Divine Son, the incarnate Deity, the sinless Human, the Messianic Savior, and all other facets of his unique nature and personhood. Belief is acceptance of the entirety of him” – *Daniel Akin, 1,2,3 John*

Belief in Christ’s name is verbally equivalent to belief in his person, and confidence in his work.

2. “And love one another, just as he has commanded us”

For the Christian, to love one another is an embodiment of faith in Jesus, and evidence of faith in Christ as Lord (John 13:34, 15:12, 15:17)

Any and all sin demonstrates a breakdown of both faith in Christ and love for others; sin is functional atheism and narcissism

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This has always been God's command to all mankind, but only after being brought to life can a person actually obey this command

John reemphasizes the reciprocal nature of abiding in God

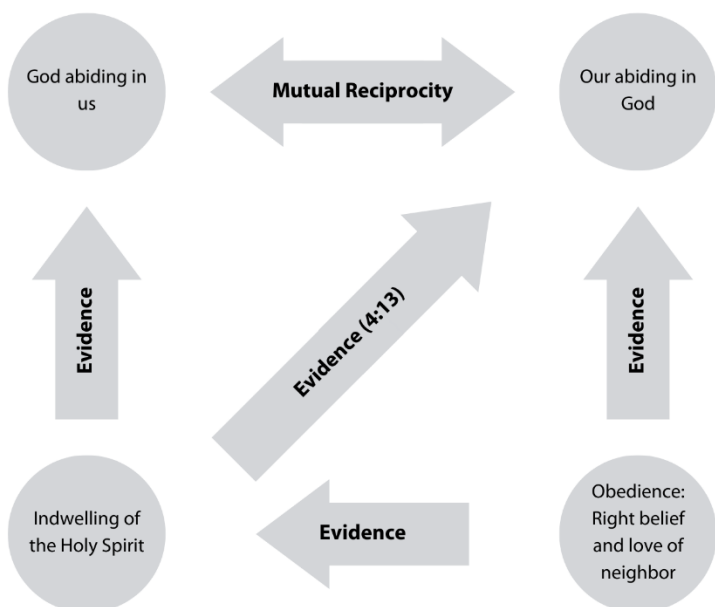
Our mutual abiding relationship with God is both the root and the fruit of our obeying his commands; the means of obeying God's two-fold command is the enlightening (belief) and empowering (love) work of the Holy Spirit

"But this abiding of God in us has as its necessary counterpart our abiding in Him. In this reciprocity of action, priority and causality belong, as always, to God, without whom we can do nothing; yet not so that the human activity is a mere automatic product of the Divine. We can invite or reject the Divine Presence; keep within or avoid the sphere of Divine influence; open or obstruct the channels through which the Divine Life may flow into ours. Hence, "abiding in God" is made a subject of instruction and imperative exhortation. And when the word "abide" is thus used, the idea of persistence or steadfast purpose, which is inherent in it, comes into view. As the abiding of God in us is the persistent and purposeful action by which the Divine nature influences ours, so our abiding in God is the persistent and purposeful submission of ourselves to that action." – *Robert Law, The Tests of Life*

John introduces the person and work of the Holy Spirit

"By this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us"

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The circular nature of assurance and abiding

1. Our abiding in God and God's abiding in us are mutually reciprocal; these two things cannot be separated (1 John 3:24, John 15:5)
2. Obedience to God (belief in the Son & love of others) is outward evidence of our abiding in God (1 John 3:14, 24, John 15:10)
3. The indwelling of the Spirit is inward evidence of God's abiding in us (1 John 3:24, 2 Cor. 1:21-22, Romans 8:16)
4. Obedience to God is evidence of the indwelling of the Spirit (Gal 5:26, 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:18-20)

Next week: How the true Spirit may be discerned