



“Confident Hearts”

1 John 3:19-24

Perfect Love: The Book of 1 John

I. Introduction

Throughout his first epistle, John has been identifying *three tests of salvation* – ways of knowing if we have an authentic relationship with God: (1) the moral test of obedience; (2) the relational test of love; (3) the doctrinal test of faith.

What happens when a genuine Christian fails one of the tests? How can we maintain assurance of salvation when our lives fall short of God’s perfect standard?

II. A Condemning Heart

Assurance #1 – Loving One Another

Verse 19 – “We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him...”

“By this” refers to the believer’s practical acts of love mentioned in the previous verses. For example, verse 17: *“Little children, let’s not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.”*

Don’t focus on your failures. Focus on the ways God has given you genuine love for other believers and moved you to act on their behalf.

Note: your relationship with others affects your relationship with God. If you want a joyful assurance of salvation, get right with other people. Address any unresolved conflicts in your life.

Assurance #2 – God’s Greatness

Verse 20 – “in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things. “

“Heart” (Greek: *kardia*) – our truest, deepest self; who we are on the inside (1Sam 16:7). Includes our thoughts, emotions, will and conscience.

Believers must recognize the difference between conviction & condemnation:

- Conviction is positive. Condemnation is negative.
- Conviction says you did something wrong. Condemnation says there’s something wrong with you.
- Conviction leads to repentance, healing & restoration. Condemnation leads to shame, discouragement & hopelessness.

III. A Confident Heart

Verse 21 – “Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God...”

Assurance #3 – Answered Prayer

Verse 22 – “and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.”

Notice the conditions. This promise assumes we desire to keep God’s commandments and do the things that are pleasing to him (cf. 1Jn 5:14).

Verse 23 – “This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.”

- God’s twofold command: believe and love.
- Faith toward God and love toward man sum up a Christian’s obligations (cf. Gal. 5:6; Jn 6:29).

Assurance #4 – The Holy Spirit

Verse 24 – “The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Have you ever struggled with doubts about your salvation? If so, what has helped give you assurance that you are truly saved?
2. As a believer, when you sin, how do you discern the difference between conviction and condemnation?
3. How does loving one another help give us assurance of salvation?
4. What does John mean in verse 20 when he says, “God is greater than our heart?”
5. Try to give an example of a time when God answered your prayer and it resulted in greater confidence in your salvation.