

1 John 4:12-17

(John 15)

“Blessed Assurance”

A common struggle that believers can wrestle with is that of “assurance”. & We’ve touched on this topic along the way, people will at times wonder what kind of compromise they can get away with & still make it to heaven... But you need to understand, that’s a dangerous road (at best) to travel down... *My mentality shouldn’t be one of seeking out how much sin I can entertain & still be safe, but rather, “How close to Christ can I draw while I’m in this world”?* I can offer no assurance to the individual who is constantly looking to *engage* in or *entertain* some type of sin. However, I *can* offer assurance (on the authority of scripture) to the one who is consistently drawing near *to* & abiding *in* Christ. *Therein lies the safety zone.* – Let’s look together at the words of Jesus in Jn 15 (Vs 1-11).

You see? Jesus says that if we abide (live) in Him & His word lives in us, there will be fruit (manifest evidence in our lives) that comes of it.

John has spent significant time informing us of different ways by which we can *know* that we’re saved, that we’re children of God. (He’s spoken of what it means to walk in the light as He is in the light, he’s spoken of the evidence of a righteous life, of rendering obedience to the Word of God. *He’s spoken of the Holy Spirit bearing witness w/our spirit. He’s spoken of our love for the body of Christ). God doesn’t want you (as His child) to wrestle w/uncertainty. He wants you confident in His promise to you personally, aware of how that spills out into your life practically so that you can rest in assurance. Today, Jn ties even more assurance to this principle of abiding.*

Vs 12

He’s saying, “No one has seen *God*, but manifest evidence *of God* does exist, & God does reveal Himself in the believer’s life.” Of course, when he says, “No one has seen God at any time” he’s speaking of God the Father.

We know that God the *Son* (J.C.) lived, breathed, walked *amongst* & ministered *to* mankind. We read in Jn’s gospel, *No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.*¹ That is, He has *expounded* Him, explained Him, revealed Him to us. Paul wrote of Jesus in the book of Colossians, *“He is the image of the invisible God.”*² When writing of God the Father to Timothy, he said, *“Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”*³

¹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Jn 1:18–19]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Col 1:15]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [1 Ti 1:17]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Let's recall that Jesus told us that God is Spirit, He's intangible, invisible. No one has seen God at any time... No one has seen the Holy Spirit, though at times He would manifest perhaps in the form of a dove, or in flames of fire, but no one has seen the Holy Spirit. No one has seen the Father.

Perhaps you recall when Moses was crying out to God & he said, "Please, show me your glory..." & God said, "I'll make My goodness pass before you & you can see My afterglow because I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious..." & We read, **"But He said, 'You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.'"**⁴In our finite, sinful & frail frame, if we were to look upon God in the fullness of His holiness, we couldn't take it, we'd be overwhelmed, our hearts would fail us.

So, how then does God reveal Himself to others today? God is invisible, Jesus is no longer on the earth? Where's the revelation, the manifestation of who He is? – In the lives of His children & how they demonstrate His love to one another.

You see the manifest evidence of God living in us (abiding in us) is in our *love* for one another. Remember Vs 7? "Love (agape) is of God." Vs 8? "God is love." Therefore, * the greatest evidence of God's presence in us & work among us is self-sacrificing, others oriented, serving one another... love. – 1st God's love is *experienced in us*, then it is *expressed through us*.

Listen, it's important that we get this right because if not we're liable to drift in an unfruitful direction. Some people think that the greatest evidence of God being at work somewhere or in someone is *power* (miracles/manifestations). Others think perhaps it's *passion*, so people are always being pumped up & emotions run high... Some think it's found in *popularity & big crowds*... But think this through. There were times when Jesus would move in great power. Yet there were other times where He did nothing that invoked power but allowed Himself to be rejected or removed. – There were times when people were incredibly passionate about being around Him, other times He didn't inspire passion at all. – Sometimes He was *incredibly popular*, other times He wasn't popular at all. In fact, people would literally walk away from Him... However, there was *never* a time when Jesus lacked *in* or moved apart *from* – Love. Wherever Jesus was moving, whatever Jesus was doing, love was constant. The unyielding, unwavering evidence of God's presence & God's work is love. *

⁴ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Ex 33:20). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

* Galatians 5, yes? “But the fruit of the Spirit (the evidence of the Spirit) is *power...*” Is that what it says? “But the fruit of the Spirit is popularity.” “The Fruit of the Spirit is raw *passion...*” “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love,*”⁵

& Of course, this is where we segue over to 1st Cor 13, right? It’s a Ch that may as well be entitled, “Love is everything.” Doesn’t matter what I do, how noble it is, how spiritual it seems, if it’s lacking love, it profits me nothing... Love is patient, love is kind, doesn’t envy, isn’t proud or arrogant, it doesn’t behave rudely, doesn’t seek its own. Love isn’t provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things... Love never fails. – & So abide, faith, hope & love, these 3. But the *greatest* of these... is love. *

* “If we love one another, God abides in us, & His love has been *perfected* in us.” This word “perfected” doesn’t mean “perfect” in the sense that we ascribe when we use the word “perfect”. Think of the word, “Mature” or “complete”. He’s saying that God’s love has accomplished (or completed) the fullness of its purpose in us when we love one another.

When you grow in God’s love to the point whereby rather than talk about each other, or bicker & fight w/one another, character assassinate or put down one another. Plant seeds of doubt or disillusionment about another but instead you build up one another. You encourage, serve & sacrifice for one another... The love of God says, “Mission accomplished.” God’s love has at that point served His purpose in your life.

The mature Christian will be marked by – the abiding presence of God’s love toward others. *

Vs 13-14

Again, notice the assurance that John is giving us. “By this *we know* that we abide in Him, & He in us...” We don’t “guess”, we don’t “hope” or waver in uncertainty. *We know. We genuinely experience* the abiding/living presence of God (us living in Him, Him living in us) #1 Because His love is present in us & #2 Because He has given us of His Spirit.

Ladies and Gentlemen: You don’t want to wait till you stand before Him to find out if God abides in you! You need to know *now*, you need to be assured *now* & you can be! When you abide in Him (& He abides in you, it’s called a relationship) His love is experienced in you & then goes to work through you & He gives to you of His Spirit.

Now, the way that line is phrase, “He has given us of His Spirit” is kind of interesting.

⁵ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Ga 5:22). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

John could simply be referring to the fact that the Holy Spirit is God's gift to you. When you give your life to Christ, God seals you w/His Spirit until the day of redemption.

Or John could be referencing the evidence of the gifts of the Spirit that God gives you, "He has given us out of His Spirit." Out of His Spirit, He has given you the gift of helps, or giving, or teaching, administrations (on & on it goes) for the edifying & building up of the body of Christ. – Or he may be referencing the love that is drawn upon from the Spirit of God in your life. As Paul told the Romans, "...the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us."⁶ Any/all of the above are true... Also, we know (as mentioned earlier) that God's Spirit bears witness w/our spirit that we are the children of God. Again, Romans Ch 8, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,"⁷

What I'm wanting you to see is the assurance you have, & all the evidence that God gives you so that you can be confident in your status as His child.

Yes, God is invisible. But when He's at work in our lives, there's very tangible (very visible) evidence (there's fruit that comes of it).

"And we have seen & testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world." Few things here. John is continuing to mount of evidence of the invisible God. No one has seen God, but *we have seen* the Son & testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.

* The mission of Jesus was not to simply be a great Teacher, giving insight, understanding & application to the Word of God (though He did that like none other in the history of the world). The mission of Jesus wasn't simply to be an example of what godly living looks like & how we could honor God & reach others through the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives (though He did that like none other in the history of mankind). His mission, the purpose of His coming is found in these words, "the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world." Jesus said, "...for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."⁸ Ladies & Gentlemen, the world didn't need a teacher (though we would benefit from His teachings immeasurably). The world didn't need an example (though He would live in such a way as to inspire countless millions to strive to emulate genuine godliness by the grace of God). What the world needed (ultimately, truly) was a Savior! So God sent His Son into the world *not to condemn the world*, but that the world through Him might be saved...

⁶ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ro 5:5). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁷ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ro 8:16). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁸ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Lk 19:10). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

For God so *loved the world* that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. *

BTW, I trust that you picked up on the fact that the Triunity of God is involved in your salvation. In Vs 13 we have the work of the Spirit, in Vs 14 we see the Father & the Son.

Vs 15

Back in Vs 2 John mentioned the critical need to confess the *humanity* of Jesus (that He has come in the flesh). Here we find the need to confess the *Deity* of Jesus (that He is the Son of God). Both are essential.

This word “confesses” is the same word we developed back in Vs 2. But here Jn is speaking w/in the context of assurance. * The assurance that God lives in you is tied to your confession of J.C. as the Son of God. That you say the same things about Jesus as does God the Father, you are in agreement w/Him. **It’s not that you simply state the facts. You can state a fact that you don’t agree with. But a *confession* of J.C. is to say that you agree w/God. You place the fullness of your weight & your trust in who Jesus is, fully God, fully Man, the Savior of the world...**

The Bible says, **“if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”**⁹

Listen, if your faith in Christ is genuine, you’ll speak up about believing in Jesus. What is found in the well of the heart spills out from the bucket of the mouth. Jesus said this, **“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.”**¹⁰

Here’s the point, there’s no such thing as a “closet Christian”. Doesn’t mean you’re a preacher, but you’ll readily/openly confess J.C. It’s manifest evidence that you are connected to that you abide (live) in God. *

Vs 16

Fellowship w/God is found in the love of God. John says we have known, that is, we have *experienced* the love that God has for us, & we have *believed* (that is, trusted in) the love that God has for us.

⁹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Ro 10:9-10]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.
¹⁰ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Mt 10:32-33]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

* Quick question. Do you believe, do you trust (have confidence) in the love that God has for you? I think it's easy for most of us to say, "Yes, I know that God loves me. I trust that God loves me."

Perhaps a better question would be, what would it take for you to stop believing that God loves you? Do you believe God loves you so long as things are relatively comfortable &/or seemingly safe for you? But if you lost your job, then you lost your house, your marriage disintegrated... would you still believe God loves you? You're stricken w/an illness for which there is no cure. Are you still persuaded of the love of God? You certainly aren't feeling it, do you still believe it? Have confidence in it? ... What would it take?

I'll give you one final section of scripture **(Close)**. Paul came to this conclusion. *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: 'For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.' Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*¹¹ It's imperative that you maintain this conviction. There is *nothing* that will persuade you, that will convince you that God doesn't love you. For God demonstrated His love for us in that when we were still sinners, Christ died for us. *

* God is love, & to abide in love is to abide in God & God in you. You see, your relationship w/God isn't a legal relationship based upon what you do for God. It's a loving relationship based upon what He's done for you. The grace He's given you, the love He's bestowed & lavished upon you, in the Person of His Son who has loved you & given Himself for you. *

Prayer points:

God thank You for Your love. Thank You for the assurance that You have given us that we *know* you, live *in* you, belong *to* you & have been saved *by* You.

If you don't have that assurance. You have never confessed that Jesus is the Son of God, not really, not truly. You've maybe gone to church, but the idea of believing on the Lord J.C. to the saving of your soul has somehow alluded you. Do it today. For if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, & believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

¹¹ *The New King James Version*, (1982). [Ro 8:35-39]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.