



# LETTERS OF John

 1 & 2 & 3 John

## The Letters of John | “Love for the Long Haul”

### 1 John 2:3-14

Click [HERE](#) for New Year's Day Vision Message & Notes. → Click [HERE](#) to learn more about "21 Days of Prayer & Fasting."

“If you love me, you will shave your beard.” → Our actions must align with our beliefs! → 1 John 2:3-14

→ How do we really know we are Christian? A genuine and authentic faith begins with a historical and incarnate Christ. He really showed up and we must really show up to follow him in our lives if we want to claim the Truth lives in us, too. And yet, many, in today's world, believe that to be their authentic and true self, they must embrace their sinful nature and follow their temptations. But John challenges that lie. We cannot follow Jesus without obeying his commandments.

→ **How do we know we love God?** → **Bible Project** → To download, [Click here!](#)

→ **Text Background:** John writes to rebut deceptive teaching advocating for compromise. His churches were influenced by [Gnostics](#) who believed “sin” was ignorance of spirit's superiority over matter, thus anything done in the body didn't matter; [Cerinthians](#), a specific form of Gnosticism; and the [Docetists](#) who believed Jesus was only a divine mirage. John challenges our faith through the right view of Jesus (**doctrine**) & keeping His commands/love (**praxis**).

**1 John 2:3-14:** *3 And we can be sure that we know him if we obey his commandments. 4 If someone claims, “I know God,” but doesn't obey God's commandments, that person is a liar and is not living in the truth. 5 But those who obey God's word truly show how completely they love him. That is how we know we are living in him. 6 Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did.*

*7 Dear friends, I am not writing a new commandment for you; rather it is an old one you have had from the very beginning. This old commandment—to love one another—is the same message you heard before. 8 Yet it is also new. Jesus lived the truth of this commandment, and you also are living it. For the darkness is disappearing, and the true light is already shining.*

*9 If anyone claims, “I am living in the light,” but hates a fellow believer, that person is still living in darkness. 10 Anyone who loves a fellow believer is living in the light and does not cause others to stumble. 11 But anyone who hates a fellow believer is still living and walking in darkness. Such a person does not know the way to go, having been blinded by the darkness.*

**Obedience proves we love God.** → Isn't this legalism? → TRUSTING God's wisdom will help us love God more.

- **Legalism:** Dependence on RULES over RELATIONSHIP for salvation. → “I should pray more” vs. “I love to pray”
  - **Three types of Law in Scripture:** A mature follower of Jesus loves God THROUGH their obedience to the Law.
    - **Moral** [ordinances]: 10 Commandments, justice, sexual practices. → Based on God's nature.
    - **Ceremonial** [statutes]: Customs, rituals, festivals → Based on God's desire to separate Israel (holiness).
    - **Civil:** Given for culture & place of Israelites. → Based on cultural responsibilities of moral law, justice.
    - **Jesus words:** in Mt. 7:24 → “Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise...” → Live like Jesus!
  - **Love requires training, not trying!** → Runner → Mt. 22:37-40 → “Love God with all our heart, soul, & mind...”
  - **VISION:** A healthy Mesa Church is a church that is training to Love God through our obedience. → Prayer
- **TRANSITION:** If we love God & obey His commandments, we will be able to love people well.

**Loving each other proves we love God.** → We can't love each other well... If we don't love God with all of our hearts.

- This isn't a new commandment. It goes all the way to the beginning... but now we have a new way of understanding it through Jesus. He loved people perfectly (7-8). → We are called to LOVE people like Jesus loves people. → Rom. 5:8
- **Only love can drive out darkness.** → MLK. Jr. Quote → Rick Warren Quote
- Elizabeth Leland tells the story of Joe Hill (15, developmentally disabled / black in 1935) → Babe / Henry Hill → Marvin / Mattie Letherman (45 years) → Marguerite / Dr. Leary Reid → "We'll take care of you..."
- **VISION:** A healthy Mesa Church is a church that loves people. → Prayer

→ **TRANSITION:** Loving God requires training... and loving each other requires God's love... and the final proof?

*12 I am writing to you who are*

*God's children because your sins have been forgiven through Jesus.  
mature in the faith because you know Christ, who existed from the beginning.  
young in the faith because you have won your battle with the evil one.*

*14 I have written to you who are*

*God's children because you know the Father.  
mature in the faith because you know Christ, who existed from the beginning.  
young in the faith because you are strong. God's word lives in your hearts, and you have won your battle  
with the evil one.*

**Going the distance proves we love God.** → People of every maturity level need encouragement!

- "A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society" by Eugene Peterson (Songs of Ascent)
- John takes a break to encourage his readers... "YOU CAN DO THIS!"
  - An encouragement for NEW believers (12, 14a).
  - An encouragement for MATURE believers (13a, 14b).
  - An encouragement for YOUNG believers (13b, 14c).
- **Come Through Fount:** Robert Robinson (1735-1790): "Oh generation of vipers...(Mt. 3:7)" - G. Whitefield
- "Sir, the streams of mercy are still flowing."

→ **Loving God propels us into a lifetime of living like Jesus.**

**TALK ABOUT IT - Questions to GROW through with family, friends, & myself.**

1. What is the evidence my spouse loves me? Parents? Friends?
2. Why do actions need to align with our beliefs in our lives? What difference does living a consistent life make?
3. What are the 3 "proofs" of love for God from this passage? Which do I struggle with the most?
4. Why is having a vision for a life long relationship with God important to being able to "go the distance?"
5. **PRAYER:** "Father, being our heart to your heart and motivate our action from your love for us."

## QUOTE:

- *"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."* - **MLK Jr.**
- *"Our culture has accepted two huge lies. The first is that if you disagree with someone's lifestyle, you must fear or hate them. The second is that to love someone means you agree with everything they believe, say, or do."* - **Rick Warren**

## ARTICLE LINKS:

- *"9 Signs Your Church is a Breeding Ground for Legalism"* - [Click here!](#)
- *"Hymn History: Come Though Fount"* - [Click here!](#)
- *"EXCLUSIVE Rick Warren: 'Flat Out Wrong' That Muslims, Christians View God the Same"* - [Click here!](#)

## SONG: "Come Though Fount" by Robert Robinson

Come Thou Fount of every blessing  
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;  
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,  
Call for songs of loudest praise  
Teach me some melodious sonnet,  
Sung by flaming tongues above.  
Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,  
Mount of God's unchanging love.

*Here I raise my Ebenezer;  
Hither by Thy help I'm come;  
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,  
Safely to arrive at home.  
Jesus sought me when a stranger,  
Wandering from the fold of God;  
He, to rescue me from danger,  
Interposed His precious blood.*

*O to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I'm constrained to be!  
Let that grace now like a fetter,  
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
Prone to leave the God I love;  
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,  
Seal it for Thy courts above.*

## GRAPHICS / VIDEOS:

- **Bible Project 123 John Graphic:** [Click here!](#)
- **Bible Project Video:** [Click Here for Youtube Separate Browser Window.](#)



- **Bible Project "Biblical Law:** [Click Here for Youtube Separate Browser Window.](#)



**SCRIPTURES: New Living Translation unless otherwise noted.**

- **Matthew 7:24** - *"Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock.*
- **1 John 2:1-2** - *2 My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous. 2 He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world.*
- **Matthew 22:37-40** - *37 Jesus replied, "'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."*
- **John 8:12** - *12 Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."*
- **Romans 5:8** - *But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.*

**MESA CHURCH:** Mesa Church exists to love people into a closer relationship with Jesus!

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