



# First Baptist Church Selmer

HOPE IN THE WORD • WALKING IN CHRIST • 1 JOHN 2:1-14 \* 6/8/2025

## MAIN POINT

Authentic salvation seeks to live a life of obedience to God's Word by abiding in Christ Jesus.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Where is a place you would not want to be in the dark without your cell phone or another flashlight to help you find your way?**

**When light and darkness are both present, which one always wins? Why?**

John uses the analogy of light and darkness again here in Chapter 2 to point out the opposing forces at work in the world. His strong language assures us that personal decisions must be made either for Christ or against Him; we cannot have it both ways. When we are in Christ, we walk in Christlikeness. If we are not Christlike, then we are lying when we say we are in Christ. Today's study will help us understand what it means to abide in Christ.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 JOHN 2:1-6.

*1 "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 He is the propitiation for*

*our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. 3 And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 Whoever says 'I know him' but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, 5 but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: 6 whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked." (ESV)*

**If you take verse 3 out of context, you might think John believed true disciples would never sin again. Is this true? How do you know?**

**What, then, did John mean in verses 3-6?**

John was realistic with his assessment of the Christian faith. He recognized that there was no middle ground with Jesus—there is either darkness or light. To that end, he knew that habitual, unrepentant sin could not characterize a true follower of Jesus. John is not stating that believers will be sinless in their lives but his hope is that believers, based on their obedience to God's Word will sin less!

**How would you respond to someone who believes their faith and behavior have little or no relationship to each other?**

**What does it mean to you that Jesus is your Advocate with the Father? How does this change the way you live and relate to God?**

**How does verse 3 help define what it means to abide in Him (v. 6)?**

The word *"advocate"* means helper, one who is called to come alongside in a time of need. This helper is needed to help us when we do sin. It is impossible, this side of heaven, for anyone to be sinless. But someone can receive help from the Advocate, Christ Jesus, when we do sin.

While it is true that obedience can never merit salvation, those who know Jesus are profoundly changed. They desire above all else to walk the way Jesus walked, so that even when they sin, they are quick to repent and turn again and again to Christ. The good news is that in turning to Christ, they find an Advocate waiting for them.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 JOHN 2:7-11.

*7 "Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. 8 At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing 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 says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. 10 Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. 11 But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes." (ESV)*

**In what way is the truth "Abiding in Christ leads to Christlikeness" both old and new?**

**What are some further pieces of evidence John gives here for one who abides in Christ and walks in Christlikeness?**

**How can John be so definite in his statement that if you hate your brother, you live in darkness?**

The defining mark of a disciple of Jesus is love. Love is not a new idea, but is new by the example in which we are to love. Jesus tells the disciples in John 13:34-35, *"I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

Love is different for believers today because of both the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as well as the depth in which we love as we follow the example set forth by Jesus Himself. In this new command, we see how the love of Jesus is expressed day in and day out through a continual pattern of voluntary self-sacrifice. When we love others, we transfer what we first received from the One who died to save us. As we do, the darkness is continually pushed back in favor of the light.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 JOHN 2:12-14

*12 "I am writing to you, little children,  
because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake.*

*13 I am writing to you, fathers,  
because you know him who is from the beginning.*

*I am writing to you, young men,  
because you have overcome the evil one.*

*I write to you, children,  
because you know the Father.*

*14 I write to you, fathers,  
because you know him who is from the beginning.*

*I write to you, young men,  
because you are strong,  
and the word of God abides in you,  
and you have overcome the evil one." (ESV)*

**What from verses 12-14 is most encouraging to you as you abide in Christ and walk in Christlikeness? Why?**

**Why do you think each group (children, fathers, and young men) is addressed twice?**

C.S. Lewis in the book *"Mere Christianity"* states, "Fallen man is not simply an imperfect creature who needs improvement: he is a rebel who must lay down his arms." John, here in verses 12-14, writes in a way of reminder, *"I am writing,"* the importance of Christian maturity in the faith. The three groups addressed here are not necessarily in terms of gender-specifics, but more than likely addressing three types of people in the church: *new believers, older believers, and maturing believers.*

John reminds the believers of three important truths: First, you are forgiven (v. 12). Second, you know the Father (v. 13-14). And lastly, you are victors in the faith (v. 13-14). This reminder is for believers to see that despite any attack from the *"evil one"* (Satan), there is assurance in Christ that their sins have been paid in full, and they will overcome!

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**In what sense do believers already have victory over this world and the tactics of Satan?**

**How can a renewed commitment to follow in obedience to God's Word lead us to where we need to go?**

**Which must come first in your life—abiding in Christ or Christlikeness? What implications does this have on your life?**

## PRAYER

Thank God for sending Jesus, your light and Advocate. Invite Him to show you more clearly this week what it means to walk in His light.

# COMMENTARY

## | 1 JOHN 2:1-14

2:1-2. Jesus' death was not the end of His ministry but the move to a new phase. Now He serves as our advocate (or helper) and mediator at the Father's right hand. Jesus' perfect obedience and sacrificial death satisfied God's just demand for sin to be punished (propitiation). But His punishment was for others, not for Himself. The phrase for those of the whole world does not mean the salvation of all people. It does mean that, in keeping with God's promise to bless all the nations through Abraham and his descendants (Gen 12:3), Jesus' saving death extends the offer of salvation to all nations.

2:3-4. John taught an understanding of Christian faith that includes profound assurance, not just the "maybe" of spiritual optimism. The words His commands mean the same thing as "His word" in verse 5 and Jesus' example in verse 6 ("just as He walked"). The true follower of Jesus is not just a talker but a doer (James 1:22).

2:7. Dear friends is literally "Beloved." This was a favorite term of address for John (3:2,21; 4:1,7,11). It is a reminder that Christians are what they are—"beloved"—because God has loved them (4:10). The love command was intensified and perfected in its expression by Jesus. Yet it is old, rooted in God's love and His commands in the OT (Lev 19:18; Deut 6:5).

2:8. God is light (1:5), and Christ has come into the world. This means the gloom of present evil and sin is giving way as the true light is already shining.

2:9-11. Relationships with fellow believers are key indicators of whether one is walking in the light or in darkness. "Walks", here and elsewhere in 1 John, is a metaphor for the course of a person's life.

2:12-14. While 1 John lacks a formal personal address in its opening lines, the author used two terms of endearment in these verses ("little children", v. 12; "children", v. 14). Then he included all readers with the inclusive terms fathers and young men. The One who is from the beginning could refer to either the Father or the Son. They share the attribute of eternality (Jn 1:1; 17:5). Believers are strong not in themselves but because of the One in whom they have placed their trust. God's word refers to the saving gospel message that Christ brought, now embodied in the Bible.