

# Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, September 11, 2013 – First Baptist Church Buda  
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

## A SURE THING... ASSURANCE

### A Blueprint for Assurance... What's Love God To Do With It – Part 2

*1 John 5:13, 1 John 2:1-11, 1 John 3:11-24, 1 John 4:7-21, 1 John 5:1-5, Various*

Our key passage for this study has been 1 John 5:13, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." John is convinced that the people he is writing to have believed. However, he is still writing so that they may know that they have eternal life. They must have had trouble with doubts. You see our key passage reminds us that God desires that we have assurance, but yet acknowledges that you may struggle with questions of assurance sometimes.

One of the reason the apostle John wrote his first letter was to help people who may lack assurance of their salvation and help them do something about it. Why do so many Christian's lack assurance? What about the thousands stuck in spiritual limbo or a spiritual state of flux because they can't grow past their spiritual beginning? Dr. John MacArthur give eight basic reasons people may lack assurance:

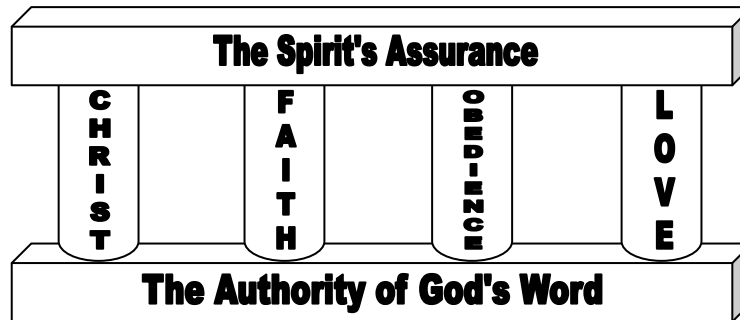
### **8 Reasons People Lack Assurance: (Dr. John MacArthur)**

- 1. Strong Preaching** – Some lack assurance because they are under strong preaching on God's holy standard. Such preaching forces people to see their sinfulness and acknowledge that the holiness of God calls them to a lofty standard of living. Now, that kind of preaching is both biblical and necessary. I want to emphasize that before going on to develop this point, but it is also woefully rare. Unfortunately a consistent call to righteousness may also unsettle some Christians – particularly those who are frequently succumbing to temptation.
- 2. Guilt** – Some Christians lack assurance because they have difficulty accepting the concept of forgiveness. They are often tyrannized by their emotions and feel they are too bad or what they have done is too bad to really be forgiven. There may be several reasons for that; for one thing sometimes our conscience speaks against forgiveness. The only thing your conscience know about is guilt and conviction. It (*the conscience*) knows nothing of grace and mercy. Second, holiness and justice speak against forgiveness in a sense. They (*holiness and justice*) focus on sin and know nothing of excusing it. Be warned, Satan is the accuser of those who belong to Christ. He will do all he can to obscure the love and graciousness of God and keep you doubting.
- 3. Ignorance** – Many people lack assurance because they do not understand that salvation is an utterly divine, totally sovereign operation. Assurance is built on the historical reality of what Jesus Christ accomplished... in other word, the finished work of Christ. Let me say it like

this is a person is not biblically grounded and doctrinally sound they may struggle with assurance because they don't understand what the Bible says and teaches.

4. **Uncertainty** – Some Christians lack assurance because they don't know the exact time of their salvation. They can't remember when they started believing. Some can't remember ever not believing. Because they can't pinpoint the exact moment, they doubt whether the moment actually occurred. But if you didn't know the date of your birth, you wouldn't wonder whether you were alive! Far too much has been made of isolating the moment by some formula, whether it be praying a prayer, signing a card, raising a hand, or walking an aisle. Many Christians, especially those raised in a Christian environment, can't identify the exact moment or procedure they followed when they were saved. K They don't know when it happened but their heart and life confirm that it did. It is important to remember that we are not saved by a procedure we followed, a formula that we heard, or a date we write on a piece of paper, but rather we are saved by a life changing encounter with Jesus Christ.
5. **Temptation** – Another reason many Christians lack assurance is they feel the pull of the flesh (the carnal nature which still exists) from time to time and they wonder whether they really have a new nature. As Christians who dwell in this fallen world, we are new creations incarcerated in still very human flesh and blood. In fact scripture says, we *“groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for... the redemption of our body”* at our Lord's return, when it *“will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (Romans 8:23, 21)*. Just because we are tempted and sometimes trip up into sin by temptation doesn't mean you are not a Christian.
6. **Trials** – Some Christians become spiritually unstable, lacking assurance because they can't see the hand of God in their trials. They say things like “How could God love me and let me go through this? How could He take my loved one from me like this? How could He not hear my prayer and heal me or my loved on or deliver me from this? Where is God when I need Him?” People who think like that not only sentence themselves to doubt but also miss what is actually the strongest source of assurance... proven faith. Never think that just because you are a Christian you will not face trials, and many of them quite severe.
7. **Fleshly Living** – One of the most important ways the Holy Spirit ministers to believers is by assuring them of their salvation. A believer who is not living by the Spirit's power gives up that important ministry. If you grieve or quench the Spirit by walking in the flesh, you short circuit His ministries to you, and you will lack assurance as a result. You also open the door for the enemy, who is the accuser, to question the reality of your faith in Christ.
8. **Disobedience** - Perhaps the most obvious reason for lacking assurance is disobedience, because assurance is the reward for obedience. The writer of Hebrews made that strong connection in **Hebrews 10:22** when he said, *“Let us draw near with a sincere (genuine) faith in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.”* It's been well said that those who persist in low levels of obedience cannot enjoy high degrees of assurance. **Dr. John MacArthur** says, *“To live in sin is to live in doubt.”* And the great preacher, **Charles Haddon Spurgeon**, who many said was plagued often with doubt said, *“Whenever I feel that I have sinned, and desire to overcome that sin for the future, the devil at the same time comes to me and whispers, ‘How can you be a pardoned person and accepted with God while you sin in this way?’ If I listen to this I drop into despondency, and if I continue in that state I should fall into despair...”*

Take a look at the diagram of our “Blueprint for Assurance” again and notice where we have been so far in our study, where we are and where we are headed. This study, based on the apostle John’s letter of 1 John, has explored the six elements that make up this blue print for assurance that includes, the foundation, the supporting columns and the capstone of assurance... the blueprint for assurance. Here is what the blueprint looks like again and the six element’s this study covers:



#### **6 ELEMENTS IN THE BLUEPRINT FOR ASSURANCE:**

- 1. The Foundation for Assurance = The Authority of God’s Word**
- 2. Supporting Column 1 = Christ’s Finished Work**
- 3. Support Column 2 = Your Faith in Christ**
- 4. Support Column 3 = Your Obedience to Christ**
- 5. Support Column 4 = Your Love for Other Christians**
- 6. Supported Structure = The Spirit’s Assurance**

Years ago the R&B singer, Tina Turner, sang out the question, “What’s Love God To Do With it?” The song was about what “love” really confirms in a relationship. In this world we throw the word “love” around pretty loosely, and at times it can be pretty shallow. In that sense for someone to say “I love you!” or “If you love me you will...” it may not confirm the stability of a relationship at all. But the truth is genuine love, real love should confirm a genuine relationship... one that is characterized by deep commitment and an unconditional love that says, “No matter what you do, I’m going to keep loving you!” and “I’ll never let you go!” When we speak of “love” for a Christian, we are speaking of the kind of love that the apostle Paul describes in “The Great Love Chapter,” 1 Corinthians 13, where the word translated there as “love” (or “charity”) is the Greek word “agape”... the highest form of love in the Greek language. It literally refers to “divine love” or “God love”... the kind of love that God has for us. It is a love that loves unconditionally... asking for nothing in return... a love that says, “No matter what you do, I’m going to keep loving you. It is the kind of love that God demonstrated to us through Jesus Christ and His willingness to die on cross and give up His life for us. Paul said it this way in **Romans 5:8, “<sup>8</sup> But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”** God’s demonstration of His love for us is a picture of the kind of love that we, as believers are to possess for Him but also for one another... unconditional, agape love. So in answer to the question, “What’s love got to do with it?,” for a Christian it has everything to do with it. Love is a sure sign that one is a Christian, and therefore may become a great help in experiencing assurance of one’s salvation.

## WHAT KIND OF LOVE SUPPORTS ASSURANCE?

The world's view of love can be very skewed. As a matter of fact, the world's idea of love, or at least the one we see most often display and conveyed by the world does have an impact, but not the one we would desire. The way the world looks at love and sets about expressing it often leads to pain, heartache and often abuse... and is often today not seen as very secure or assuring.

The world's view of love – List some words that you would say describe the way the world views love:

<u>lust</u>	<u>infatuation</u>	<u>a fleeting feeling</u>
<u>strong like</u>	<u>love at first sight</u>	<u>passion</u>
<u>emotional bond</u>	<u>sex</u>	<u>fluctuating feeling</u>

*\*The world says things like, "If you really loved me you would...", or "I just don't feel in love with you anymore...", or will express this feeling for things like, "I love hot dogs, baseball and apple pie!" The world's love often is a very fluctuating and fleeting thing... very fickle, on again off again kind of emotion. Perhaps that is why, in this world love, seems to so often fail... marriages fall apart, and relationships fail. This kind of love seems less than "authentic" because if so often fails and falls short.*

### The New Testament worlds view of love:

#### 4 Kind of Love in Greek:

1. **Eros = Marital/Sexual Love** – Love between a husband and wife. We get our English word "erotic" love from this word because it refers to sex and the sexual relationship that exist between husband and wife.
2. **Storge = Family Love** - Refers to love in the family relationship... love between a parent and child, or between brothers and sister, family kin, etc.
3. **Philia = Friend/Brotherly Love** - Love that exists between friends. This Greek word literally means "brotherly love" and is the word for which the U.S. city of Philadelphia gets its name. The city of Philadelphia is also called "The City of Brotherly Love."
4. **Agape = Unconditional love**

***NOTE: While each of these are legitimate expressions of love in marriage, within a family, and among friends if they are not motivated out of authentic agape love they will fall short of really having the kind of life changing impact we are talking about.***

## WHAT DOES LOVE THAT CAN GIVE ASSURANCE LOOK LIKE?

Unfortunately "love" as it is defined in this world can be a very uncertain and shaky thing. I may be very fragile. Family that seem deeply committed to one other and dissolve, disintegrate and fall apart. Relationship, even deeply intimate ones at one time, and fail. Deep lasting friendships can suddenly find themselves on the outs. In this world the idea of love often doesn't seem very secure. So if "love" can somehow become a support to our assurance what does that look like?

**KEY STATEMENT: Authentic love that is secure and assured looks like God's agape love!**

**3 Characteristics of God's Love:** God's love has many facets or characteristics, but listen as the following three familiar verses are read (or quoted) and see if you can't name 3 of those characteristics based on these three verses or passages.

1. **God's love is giving (John 3:16)** - *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*
2. **God's love is sacrificial (Roman 5:8)** - *"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*
3. **God's love is unending (Romans 8:37-39)** - *"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup> neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

If authentic love and an accurate picture of it can most clearly be seen in Jesus, we must ask ourselves what does that look like so that we may imitate it. Paul essentially addresses this in **Ephesians 5:1-2**. Listen to his words, *"<sup>1</sup>Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. <sup>2</sup> And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma."* Do you see it? We are to be imitators of God's divine love exhibited in Jesus Christ. We need look no further than Jesus to see what an "authentic" love that can make a difference looks like:

**Characteristics of the Love Jesus Exhibited:**

1. **A love for enemies – Matthew 5:43-48,** *"<sup>43</sup> 'You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' <sup>44</sup> But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, <sup>45</sup> that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. <sup>46</sup> For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup> And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? <sup>48</sup> Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."*
2. **A love for the disenfranchised – Matthew 9:35-38,** *"<sup>35</sup> Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. <sup>36</sup> But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary<sup>[b]</sup> and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. <sup>37</sup> Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. <sup>38</sup> Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."*
3. **A love for those in need – Matthew 20:29-34,** *"<sup>29</sup> Now as they went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. <sup>30</sup> And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!" <sup>31</sup> Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!" <sup>32</sup> So Jesus stood still and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?" <sup>33</sup> They said to Him, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened." <sup>34</sup> So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him."*



4. **A love that was willing to be empty of self – Philippians 2:1-8,** *“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, <sup>2</sup> fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. <sup>3</sup> Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. <sup>5</sup> Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, <sup>7</sup> but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”*
5. **A love that was willing to die for others - John 15:13,** *“<sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”*
6. **A love that transcends words - 1 John 3:16-18,** *“<sup>16</sup> By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. <sup>17</sup> But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him. <sup>18</sup> My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.”*
7. **A love that never lets go – Romans 8:35-39,** *“<sup>35</sup> Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup> As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” <sup>37</sup> Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, <sup>39</sup> 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.”*
8. **A love that never fails – 1 Corinthians 13:8 & 13,** *“<sup>8</sup> Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away... <sup>13</sup> And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”* **And Ephesians 3:17-19,** *“<sup>17</sup> that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup> may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— <sup>19</sup> to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”*

#### **HOW DOES LOVE SUPPORT MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR ASSRAUNCE? FOUR PRINCIPLES OF LOVE (1 Corinthians 13)**

Paul teaches us what it means to say “I love you.” His counsel fits any situation involving another person... mate, neighbor, boss, or family member. It even involves the casual stranger you may come across in your daily path. This text does not cry out to be analyzed or dissected; it merely needs to be dispensed. To pick it apart would ruin it. As you read the words that Paul wrote, keep in mind an obvious statement written across the entire thirteenth chapter:

***“If I do not relate to other in love, I do not relate to others at all!” –Dr. Charles Swindoll***

*“<sup>d</sup> Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains,*

*but have not love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup> And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. <sup>4</sup> Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; <sup>5</sup> does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; <sup>6</sup> does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; <sup>7</sup> bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. <sup>8</sup> Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. <sup>9</sup> For we know in part and we prophesy in part. <sup>10</sup> But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. <sup>11</sup> When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. <sup>12</sup> For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. <sup>13</sup> And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”-1 Corinthians 13 (NKJV)*

Let's now look at the principles of love that can be derived from this passage.

#### **4 Principles of Love from the Love Chapter:**

- 1. Love is essential, not optional (vv.1-3)** – Congregations need love. Pastors need a love relationship with their flocks. Husbands and wives, parents and children, bosses and employees, fellow members of the Christian faith all need to be loved and to express love. Remove love and life is reduced to a grinding, irksome, friction-filled list of demands, requirements, and sterile assignments. We're not to simply think about loving... we are to actively and aggressively express it!
- 2. Love is demonstrated, not an inclination (vv.4-5a)** – Indifference may not be illegal, but it is immoral. To turn away in apathy when we see someone else in need shows irresponsible behavior. Paul describes love as an exhibition which at times includes restraint of natural tendencies. In the text we are told that love is patient, kind, lacking in jealousy, refusing to brag or display arrogance. It does not act unbecomingly. Love is a reaching experience that expresses itself in giving to others.
- 3. Love is a magnet that draws people together and never separates (vv.4-8a)** – Love has drawing power. We find Christians separated from each other and their relationships impaired, we know that love's bridge has been torn down. Paul continues his instruction by saying that love “does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered.” When our relationships break down, neither positive thinking nor human manipulation can rescue them: only love can. God's love, Christ's love flowing through His children. What does love say that draws people together and makes such a difference? Five things that we'll call “Love's ABC's”:

#### **Love's ABC's... 5 Things Loves Does That Make a Difference:**

- (1) Love says, “I accept you as you are.” –**
- (2) Love says, “I believe you are valuable.” –**
- (3) Love says, “I care when you hurt.” –**
- (4) Love says, “I desire what is best for you.” –**
- (5) Love says, “I erase all offenses.” -**

4. **Love is a long-term investment, not a quick-return loan (vv.7-8, 13)** – “Love is patient... endures... never fails... abides...” Love has roots, tentacles that reach so tightly around the other person that nothing can loosen that grip.

### **FINAL PERSPECTIVES ON LOVE THAT ASSURES (1 John 4:7-20)**

Toward the end of the New Testament we have some timely words from the Disciple whom Jesus loved, John, on love and its truest expressions... what it looks like and what it does in our life. John’s talking about authentic love and its ability to change us, but not only change us but change our world. Authentic love is like a multi-faceted diamond. If you hold that diamond up and begin to turn it and closely examine it you will soon discover many exquisite qualities and nuances to the gem. Love likewise has many perspectives, nuances and views to add to our lives and those around us. It really can make a difference. Let’s look at these closing thoughts and consider 9 Biblical perspectives on authentic love that assures of in our relationship with Christ.

#### **9 Biblical Perspectives on Authentic Love that Assures:**

1. **Love for the believer is not an option, but is commanded – (v.7)** *“<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.”*
2. **Love is the truest expression of God in our lives – (vv.7-8)** *“<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> He who does not love does not know God, for God is love”.*
3. **Love was shown to us through Jesus Christ – (vv.9-10)** *“<sup>9</sup> In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”*
4. **Love shown to us should also be extended through us – (v.11)** *“<sup>11</sup> Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”*
5. **Love shown through us gives a clear picture to the world and others of who God is - (vv. 12-14)** *“<sup>12</sup> No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. <sup>13</sup> By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.”*
6. **Love ties us closely to God in relationship and gives us hope – (vv.15-17)** *“<sup>15</sup> Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. <sup>16</sup> And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. <sup>17</sup> Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.”*
7. **Love frees us and gives us courage to live in victory – (v.18)** *“<sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.”*
8. **Love, to be authentic, must be God love – (v.19)** *“<sup>19</sup> We love Him because He first loved us.”*
9. **Love spoken is not enough, it must be shown to others – (vv.20-21)** *“<sup>20</sup> If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? <sup>21</sup> And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.”*



**GROUP WORK:** Divide the group into 4 groups have the groups read the assigned passage and explain what John is saying about loves role in assurance.

**Group 1: 1 John 2:1-11**

*"<sup>1</sup>My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. <sup>2</sup>He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. <sup>3</sup>We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. <sup>4</sup>Whoever says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. <sup>5</sup>But if anyone obeys his word, love for God<sup>[c]</sup> is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: <sup>6</sup>Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did. <sup>7</sup>Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. <sup>8</sup>Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining. <sup>9</sup>Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister<sup>[d]</sup> is still in the darkness. <sup>10</sup>Anyone who loves their brother and sister<sup>[e]</sup> lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble. <sup>11</sup>But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them." 1 John 2:1-11 (NIV)*

**Group 2: 1 John 3:11-24**

*"<sup>11</sup>For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. <sup>12</sup>Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. <sup>13</sup>Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters,<sup>[i]</sup> if the world hates you. <sup>14</sup>We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. <sup>15</sup>Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him. <sup>16</sup>This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. <sup>17</sup>If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? <sup>18</sup>Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth. <sup>19</sup>This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: <sup>20</sup>If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. <sup>21</sup>Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God <sup>22</sup>and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. <sup>23</sup>And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. <sup>24</sup>The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us." -1 John 3:11-24 (NIV)*

**Group 3: 1 John 4:7-21**

*"<sup>7</sup>Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup>Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup>This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup>This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. <sup>11</sup>Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup>No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. <sup>13</sup>This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has*

given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup> If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. <sup>16</sup> And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. <sup>17</sup> This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. <sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. <sup>19</sup> We love because he first loved us. <sup>20</sup> Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. <sup>21</sup> And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.” – 1 John 4:7-21 (NIV)

**Group 4: 1 John 5:1-5**

<sup>1</sup> Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. <sup>2</sup> This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. <sup>3</sup> In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, <sup>4</sup> for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. <sup>5</sup> Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.” -1 John 5:1-5 (NIV)

1 John 3:14, 18-19, <sup>14</sup> “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death... <sup>18</sup> My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. <sup>19</sup> And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.” (NJKV)