

unfoldingWord® Simplified Text

v92

First John

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1 John

1 *I, John, am writing to you* about *Jesus,* the Word *of God*, the
one who gives life. He existed before there was anything
else. We *apostles* listened to him *as he taught people*. We saw
him personally. We looked at him and touched him. *So we
can testify that he was a real human being.* 2 Because he who
always lives came here to the earth and we saw him, we
are proclaiming him to you clearly. The one who has always
existed, who had been with his Father in heaven, came here
to us. 3 We want you to share life with us, and so we are
proclaiming to you what we saw *Jesus do* and what we heard
Jesus say. *If you believe in him,* you will share life, as we do,
with God our Father and with his Son Jesus the Messiah. 4 I
am writing to you about these things so that *you will recognize
that they are true, and that as a result* we will be completely
joyful together.

5 The message that we heard from Jesus and are proclaiming
to you is this: God always does what is right, and he never, ever
does anything wrong. He is like a pure light in which there
is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we share life with God,
but we live in an evil manner, we are lying. We are not living
truthfully. It is as though we are living in the dark. 7 But if we
live in a pure manner, as God is pure in every way, then we
can share life with each other. This is like living in God's pure
light. Then God forgives all of our sin and accepts us because
his Son Jesus died for us. 8 If we say that we do not commit
sin, we are fooling ourselves. We are refusing to believe the
true things *that God says about us*. 9 But God always does what
he says he will do, and what he does is always right. So if
we admit to him that we have sinned *and reject that sin*, he
will forgive us for our sins and he will free us from *the guilt of*
everything that we have done wrong. 10 *Because God says that
everyone has sinned,* if we say that we have not sinned, we are
speaking as if God were a liar! We are rejecting what God has
said about us!

2 You are as dear to me as though you were my own
children. Therefore, I am writing this to you to keep you
from sinning. But if any of you does sin, *remember that* Jesus
the Messiah, the righteous one, pleads with the Father *and
asks him to forgive us*. 2 Jesus is the one who sacrificed his life
for us so that God could forgive our sins. And this is true not
just of our sins, but of all the sins that all people everywhere
have committed!

3 When we obey what God commands us to do, then we
can be sure that we truly know God. 4 If someone says, "I
know God well," but that person does not obey what God
has commanded, then he is a liar. He is not living according
to God's true message. 5 But if someone obeys what God has
commanded, that person loves God in every way. This is how
we can be sure that we are living closely with God: 6 If anyone
says that he is living closely with God, then he should conduct
his life as Jesus did *when he was here on earth*.

7 Dear friends, I am not writing this to tell you to do
something new. Instead, I am writing this to tell you to do
something that you have known that you should do since you
first believed *in Jesus*. This is *part of* the message that *Jesus
gave to us and that* we have already told to you. 8 However,
if we think about this in another way, I am telling you to do
something new. It is new because the way that the Messiah
lived was new, and the way that you are living is new. That
is because you are ceasing to do evil, and you are doing good
more and more. It is as though you have come out of a dark
place and have begun to live in the light that is from God.
9 Someone might say that he is living in a good way, just as
God wants him to do. That would be like living in light from
God. But if he hates any of his fellow believers, then he is
still living in a bad way, doing what God does not want, like
a person who lives in darkness. 10 But if someone loves his
fellow believers, then he is truly living well, like a person who
is living in light from God. He will not have a reason to do
anything evil *as he would have if he hated a fellow believer*. This
is like a person in daylight who has no reason to trip over
anything. 11 But anyone who hates a fellow believer is living
in a completely wrong way. He does not understand how he
should live, because the wrong things that he is doing are
keeping him from understanding God's way. It is as though he
is walking in darkness and cannot see where to go.

12 I am writing to you, whom I love as though you were my
own children, because God has forgiven your sins because of
what Jesus has done for you. 13 I am writing to you who have
been believers longer than the others. I am writing to you
because you are living closely with *Jesus,* the person who has
always been alive. I am writing to you newer, but steadfast,
believers because Satan, that evil being, has tried to tempt you
to do wrong, but you have successfully resisted him. 14 I have
written to you whom I love as though you were my own little
children because you have a close relationship with God the
Father. I have written to you who have been believers longer
than the others because you have a close relationship with
Jesus, the person who has always been alive. I have written to
you newer, but steadfast, believers because you are spiritually
strong. I have also written to you because you continue to
obey what God commands and because you have successfully
resisted *Satan,* that evil being, when he tried to tempt you to
do wrong.

15 Do not desire to be like people who do not honor God.
Do not desire the things that they want to have. If anyone
desires to be like those people, *he is proving that* he does not
love God the Father. 16 *I say that such a person does not love
God the Father* because the way that ungodly people live is not
the way that God our Father teaches us to live. They want to
fulfill their physical desires. They want to get for themselves
the things that they see. They boast about all of the things
that they own. All of these things come from the selfish and
ungodly way of thinking. 17 The people who do not honor God
will disappear, along with all of the things that they desire.
But the people who do what God wants them to do will live
forever!

18 You who are as dear to me as though you were my own
children, *I want you to know that* this is the time just before
Jesus returns to earth. You have already heard that a person is
coming who will strongly oppose the Messiah. In fact, many

people like that, who are against the true Messiah, are already here. Because of this, we know that it is that time. 19 These people refused to remain in our congregations. However, they never really belonged with us in the first place. After all, if they had belonged with us, they would not have left us. But *when they left us,* then we clearly saw that none of them had actually joined with us. 20 But as for you, the Holy Messiah has given you his Spirit. As a result, you all know *what is true*. 21 I am not writing this letter to you because you do not know the true things *that God has told us*, but because you do know them. You also know enough to recognize and reject every lie that is not one of the true things *that God has told us*. 22 The worst liars are the ones who deny that Jesus is the Messiah. All who do that are against the Messiah. They are refusing to believe both in God the Father and in Jesus his Son. 23 Those who refuse to acknowledge that Jesus is God's Son are in no way joined with God the Father. But those who acknowledge that Jesus is God's Son are also joined with God the Father. 24 Here is what you must do*, unlike those people who deny Jesus*. You must continue to believe and live by the truth about Jesus the Messiah that you first heard. If you continue to believe and live by the truth about Jesus the Messiah that you first heard, then you will continue to share life with Jesus the Son and God the Father. 25 And what Jesus promised us is that God will enable us to live forever!

26 I am writing this letter to you to warn you about people who want to deceive you *about Jesus*. 27 Here is what you should do *about those people who are trying to deceive you*. God's Spirit, whom you received from Jesus, continues to live in you. So you do not need anyone else to be your teacher. God's Spirit is teaching you everything *that you need to know*. He always teaches the truth and never says anything that is false. So continue to live in the way that he has taught you and continue to live closely with Jesus.

28 Now, my dear ones, *I urge you to* continue to live closely with Jesus. That way, when he comes back again, we will be confident *that he will accept us*. *If we do that,* we will not be ashamed to stand before him when he returns. 29 You know that God always does what is right. Because of that, you also know that all those who continue doing what is right are the ones who have become God's spiritual children.

3 Think about how much God our Father loves us! He says that we are his children. In a spiritual sense, this is completely true. That is why people who are unbelievers do not understand us. It is because they have not understood who God is*, and we are like him just as children are like their parents*. 2 Dear friends, at present we are God's spiritual children. He has not yet shown us what we will be *in the future*. *However,* we know that when Jesus comes back again, we will become like him because we will see him as he truly is. 3 So all those who confidently expect to see Jesus as he truly is make themselves free from sin because Jesus himself is free from sin. 4 But everyone who continues to sin is refusing to obey God's laws, because that is what sinning is; it is refusing to obey God's laws. 5 You know that Jesus came in order to make us free from our sins. *You know* also *that* he himself never sinned. 6 Those who share life with Jesus are the ones who do not continue sinning. But all those who continue to sin are the ones who have not understood who Jesus is and they do not really know him. 7 So I urge you who are very dear to me not to let anyone deceive you *by telling you that it is all right to sin*. If you continue doing what is right, that will please God, just as Jesus always does what pleases God. 8 But anyone who continues to sin is behaving like the devil, because the devil has always been sinning, ever since the world began. The very reason that God's Son became a human being was to undo this work of the devil *that kept people continually sinning*. 9 People do not continue sinning if they have become spiritual children of God because God has made them to be like him. They cannot continually sin, because they are God's spiritual children. 10 People who belong to God are clearly different from people who belong to the devil. Those who do not do what is right do not belong to God. Those who do not love their fellow believers also do not belong to God.

11 *You should recognize this because* the message that you heard when you first believed in Jesus is that we should love each other. 12 We should not hate others as *Adam's son* Cain did. He belonged to *Satan,* that evil being. Cain murdered his *younger* brother *Abel*. I will tell you why he did that. It was because Cain behaved in an evil way, and *he hated his younger brother because* his younger brother behaved in the right way. 13 Therefore, my fellow believers, you should not be amazed when unbelievers hate you. 14 We love our fellow believers, and this assures us that God has made us spiritually alive. But if someone does not love *other believers*, then that person is still spiritually dead. 15 Anyone who hates one of his fellow believers is doing something just as bad as murdering him. And you know that someone who murders another person is not living in the new way that God enables us to live. 16 Jesus taught us how to truly love each other when he willingly died for us. For our part, we should also be willing to do anything for our fellow believers, even die for them. 17 Many of us have the things that are necessary for life in this world. But suppose that we become aware that a fellow believer does not have what he needs. Suppose also that we refuse to provide for him. Then we are not loving him the way that God taught us to love *people*. 18 You who are as dear to me as though you were my own children, let us not *merely* say that we love *each other*. Let us love *each other* genuinely by helping *each other*.

19–20 By doing that, we can know that we belong to God, who is the source of everything that is true. When we are in God's presence, we may feel that we do not belong to God because of our sins. When that happens, we can reassure ourselves that we truly do belong to him. This is because God is more trustworthy than our feelings and he knows everything about us*, including that we have trusted in him*. 21 Dear friends, when we feel that God does not condemn us *for having sinned*, then we can pray confidently to God. 22 We find that when we pray confidently to God and ask for something, he gives it to us. *We pray confidently like this* because *as people who belong to him,* we do what he commands us to do, and we do what pleases him. 23 I will tell you what God commands us to do. We must trust in his Son, Jesus the Messiah. We must also love each other just as Jesus commanded us to do. 24 The people who do what God commands share life with God, and God shares life with them. I will tell you how we can be sure that God is sharing life with us. We can be sure of that because we have God's Spirit, whom he gave to us.

4 Dear friends, there are many people who have a false
message, and they are going around teaching it to others.
So do not trust every teacher. Instead, think carefully about
what each teacher says and decide whether it came from God's
Spirit *or from a different spirit*. 2 I will tell you how to know if
someone is teaching truth that comes from the Spirit of God *or
if he is not*. Those who affirm that Jesus the Messiah came from
God and became a human like us are teaching a message that
is from God. 3 But those who do not affirm *that* Jesus *became
a real human being* are not teaching a message from God. They
are teachers who oppose the Messiah. You have heard that
people like that will be coming *among us*. Even now they are
already here.

4 As for you who are as dear to me as though you were my
own children, you belong to God, and you have rejected what
those people teach. You have done this because God, who
enables you to do what he wants, is more powerful than the
devil, who motivates everyone who does not honor God. 5 As
for those people who are teaching what is false, they think and
live in ways that do not honor God. That is why what they say
also does not honor God, and that is why other people who
do not honor God believe what they say. 6 As for us, God has
sent us. Whoever truly knows God believes and obeys what
we teach. Whoever does not belong to God does not believe
or obey what we teach. By observing who believes us and
who does not, we are able to distinguish between people who
teach true messages from God's Spirit and people who teach
false messages that are from the devil.

7 Dear friends, we must love each other. This is what God
wants for us, and it is because he loves *us* that we can love
others. Those who love *their fellow believers* have become God's
spiritual children and know God well. 8 God's character is to
love *people*. So whoever does not love *others* does not truly
know God. 9 I will tell you how God has shown us that he loves
us. He sent his only Son to this earth so that his Son would
enable us to live eternally because of what he did for us. 10 I
will tell you what loving *someone* really means. Our efforts to
love God do not define what it means to love *someone*. No,
God himself did that by loving us so much that he sent his
Son to offer himself as a sacrifice in our place. When Jesus did
that, God could forgive the sins of people who trust in Jesus
instead of punishing them. 11 Dear friends, since God loves us
like that, we certainly ought to love each other!

12 No one has ever seen God. Nevertheless, when we love
each other, we can see that God is working in us and that he is
the one who enables us to love others, just as he intended for
us to do. 13 This is how we can be sure that we are sharing life
with God and that God is sharing life with us: He has given
us his own Spirit. 14 We *apostles* have seen God's Son *Jesus on
earth*, and we solemnly tell others that the Father sent him to
save the people in the world *from suffering eternally for their
sins*. 15 So God continues to share life with those who say the
truth about Jesus. They say, "Jesus is the Son of God." And so
they continue to share life with God. 16 We have experienced
how God loves us and we believe that he loves us. Because
God's nature is to love people, those who continue to love
others share life with God, and God shares life with them.
17 When we continue to share life with God, then God has
achieved his purpose in loving us. As a result, when the time
comes for God to judge us, we will be confident *that he will not
condemn us*. This is because we are *loving others as we live* in
this world just as Jesus is. 18 We will not be afraid *of God* if we
truly love him, because those who love *God* completely cannot
be afraid *of him*. We would be afraid only if we thought that
he would punish us. So those who are afraid *of God* have not
completely understood how much he loves them, and they are
not loving *God* completely. 19 We love *God and others* because
God loved us first. 20 People are lying if they say that they love
God but they also hate a fellow believer. After all, we can see
our fellow believers. But we have not seen God. So those who
do not love one of their fellow believers certainly cannot be
loving God, *because it is much easier to love someone whom you
can see than someone whom you cannot see*. 21 Keep in mind that
this is what God has commanded us: If we love him, we must
also love our fellow believers.

5 All those who believe that Jesus is the Messiah are
spiritually children of God. Now, whoever loves anyone
who is a father *certainly* loves his child also. *So if we believe
in Jesus, then we love God, and therefore we should also love his
spiritual children, our fellow believers.* 2 We can be sure that we
do truly love God's spiritual children when we love God and do
what he commands us to do. 3 I am saying this because what
loving God really means is that we do what he commands us
to do. And it is not difficult to do what he commands us to do.
4 Here is the reason why it is not difficult for us to do what God
commands. All of us who have become God's spiritual children
have been able to refuse to do what unbelievers want us to
do. There is one reason why we are stronger than everything
that is against God. It is because we trust in Jesus. 5 I will tell
you who is stronger than everything that is against God: It is
anyone who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

6 Jesus the Messiah is the one who came *to earth from God*,
experiencing both *the* water *of his baptism* and *the* blood *of his
death on the cross*. God showed that he had truly sent Jesus
not only *when John baptized Jesus* in water, but also when
Jesus' blood flowed from his body *when he died*. And God's
Spirit declares *truthfully that Jesus the Messiah did these things*,
because the Spirit is completely truthful. 7 So there are three
ways by which we know *that Jesus is the Messiah who came
from God*. 8 *Those three ways are:* what God's Spirit tells us,
what happened *when John baptized Jesus* in water, and what
happened when *Jesus'* blood flowed *from his body when he died
on the cross*. These three things all tell us the same thing*, that
Jesus came from God*. 9 We rely on what people tell us when
we have to decide about something. But we can certainly rely
much more on what God tells us. So let me tell you what God
has told us about who his Son is. 10 *First, however, let me say
that* those who trust in the Son of God already know that what
God says about him is true. But those who do not believe what
God says are calling him a liar because they have refused to
believe what God has testified about his Son. 11 Now this is
what God has told us *about who his Son is*: "I gave you eternal
life, and my Son is the one who makes this life possible."
12 Those who share life with God's Son *Jesus* have begun to
live forever *with God*. Those who do not share life with God's
Son have not begun to live forever.

13 Because I want you to know that you will live forever,
I have written this letter to you. This is for you who believe
that Jesus is the Son of God. 14 I also want you to know that

we can be very confident that God wants to do what we ask of
him when we pray for what he desires. 15 Since we know that
God wants to give us whatever we ask of him, *if it is what he
desires,* then we also know that God is already giving us what
we ask of him.

16 For example, suppose someone sees one of his fellow
believers sinning in a way that would not separate him from
God eternally. Then he should ask *God to restore the one who is
sinning*. If he does that, then God will bring that person back
into spiritual life with himself. However, I am saying this only
about people who are sinning in a way that would not separate
them from God eternally. There is sin that causes people to
separate from God eternally. I am not saying that you should
pray for people who are sinning in that way. 17 Every wrong
thing that people do is a sin *against God*, but there are some
sins that will not separate a person from God eternally. 18 We
know that everyone who has become God's spiritual son or
daughter does not continually sin. Instead, those who have
God as their spiritual Father are careful to keep themselves
from sinning so that Satan, that evil being, does not harm them
spiritually. 19 We know that we belong to God. We also know
that Satan, that evil being, is controlling all the people who
are unbelievers. 20 We also know that the Son of God has come
among us and has made it possible for us to understand *what
is true*. He did this so that we can truly know the genuine God.
And we are sharing life with the genuine God, *that is,* with his
Son, Jesus the Messiah. Jesus is truly God, and he is the one
who gives us *this new,* eternal life.

21 I say this to you who are as dear to me as though you were
my own children: "Be careful that you never give yourselves
to anything that is a false god."