

1 John 3:21 Commentary

PREVIOUS

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FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND HIS CHILDREN

Click chart to enlarge

Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
Another Overview Chart - [1 John](#) - [Charles Swindoll](#)

BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP		BEHAVIOR OF FELLOWSHIP	
Conditions of Fellowship	Cautions of Fellowship	Fellowship Characteristics	Fellowship Consequences
Meaning of Fellowship 1 Jn 1:1-2:27		Manifestations of Fellowship 1 Jn 2:28-5:21	
Abiding in God's Light		Abiding in God's Love	
Written in Ephesus			
circa 90 AD			
From Talk Thru the Bible			

STUDY GUIDE

1 JOHN 3

What is this? On the photograph of the Observation Worksheet for this chapter you will find handwritten 5W/H questions (Who?

What? Where? When? Why? How?) on each verse to help you either personally study or lead a discussion on this chapter. The questions are generally very simple and are stated in such a way as to stimulate you to observe the text to discern the answer. As a reminder, given the truth that your ultimate Teacher is the Holy Spirit, begin your time with God with prayer such as Psalm 119:12+ "Blessed are You, O LORD; Teach me Your statutes." (you can vary it with similar prayers - Ps 119:18, 26, 33, 64, 66, 68, 108, 124, 135, 171, etc) The questions are generally highlighted in yellow and the answers in green. Some questions have no answers and are left to your observations and the illuminating/teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. Some qualifying thoughts - (1) Use "As is" - these are handwritten and will include mistakes I made, etc. (2) They may not be the best question for a given verse and my guess is that on some verses you will think of a far superior 5W/H question and/or many other questions.

Dr Howard Hendricks once gave an assignment to his seminary students to list as many observations as they could from Acts 1:8. He said "So far they've come up with more than 600 different ones! Imagine what fun you could have with 600 observations on this passage. Would you like to see Scripture with eyes like that?" (P. 63 [Living by the Book](#) - borrow) With practice you can! And needless to say, you will likely make many more observations and related questions than I recorded on the pages below and in fact I pray that the Spirit would indeed lead you to discover a veritable treasure chest of observations and questions! In Jesus' Name. Amen

Why am I doing this? **Mortimer Adler** among others helped me develop a questioning mindset as I read, seeking to read actively rather than passively. Over the years I have discovered that as I have practiced reading with a 5W/H questioning mindset, it has yielded more accurate interpretation and the good fruit of meditation. In other words, consciously interacting with the inspired Holy Word of God and the illuminating Holy Spirit has honed my ability to meditate on the Scripture, and my prayer is that this tool will have the same impact in your spiritual life. The benefits of meditation are literally priceless in regard to their value in this life and in the life to come (cf discipline yourself for godliness in 1Ti 4:8+.) For some of the benefits - see Joshua 1:8+ and Psalm 1:2-3+. It will take diligence and mental effort to develop an "inductive" ([especially an "observational"](#)), interrogative mindset as you read God's Word, but it bears repeating that the benefits in this life and the rewards in the next will make it more than worth the effort you invest! Dear Christian reader let me encourage you to strongly consider learning the skills of [inductive Bible study](#) and spending the rest of your life practicing them on the Scriptures and living them out in your daily walk with Christ.

Although Mortimer Adler's advice is from a secular perspective, his words are worth pondering...

Strictly, all reading is active. What we call passive is simply less active. Reading is better or worse according as it is more or less active. And one reader is better than another in proportion as he is capable of a greater range of activity in reading. (Adler's classic book [How to Read a Book is free online](#))

[John Piper](#) adds that "Insight or understanding is the product of intensive, headache-producing meditation on two or three verses and how they fit together. This kind of reflection and rumination is provoked by asking questions of the text. And you cannot do it if you hurry. Therefore, we must resist the deceptive urge to carve notches in our bibliographic gun. Take two hours to ask ten questions of Galatians 2:20+ and you will gain one hundred times the insight you would have attained by reading thirty pages of the New Testament or any other book. Slow down. Query. Ponder. Chew.... (John Dewey rightly said) "People only truly think when they are confronted with a problem. Without some kind of dilemma to stimulate thought, behavior becomes habitual rather than thoughtful."

"Asking questions is the key to understanding."

--Jonathan Edwards

That said, below are the [5W/H questions](#) for each verse in this chapter (click page to enlarge). This is not neatly typed but is handwritten and was used for leading a class discussion on this chapter, so you are welcome to use it in this "as is" condition...

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1 John 3:21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God:

Greek Agapetoi ean e kardia hemon me kataginoske (3SPAS) parrhesian echomen (1PPAI) pros ton theon

KJV 1 John 3:21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

BGT 1 John 3:21 αγαπητο , ν καρδ α [μ ν] μ καταγιν σκ , παρρησ αν χομεν πρ ς τ ν θε ν

NET 1 John 3:21 Dear friends, if our conscience does not condemn us, we have confidence in the presence of God,

CSB 1 John 3:21 Dear friends, if our conscience doesn't condemn us, we have confidence before God

ESV 1 John 3:21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;

NIV 1 John 3:21 Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God

NLT 1 John 3:21 Dear friends, if we don't feel guilty, we can come to God with bold confidence.

NRS 1 John 3:21 Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God;

NJB 1 John 3:21 My dear friends, if our own feelings do not condemn us, we can be fearless before God,

NAB 1 John 3:21 Beloved, if (our) hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence in God

YLT 1 John 3:21 Beloved, if our heart may not condemn us, we have boldness toward God,

MIT 1 John 3:21 Loved ones, if our heart does not condemn us, we have boldness before God.

GWN 1 John 3:21 Dear friends, if our conscience doesn't condemn us, we can boldly look to God

BBE 1 John 3:21 My loved ones, if our heart does not say that we have done wrong, we have no fear before him;

RSV 1 John 3:21 Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God;

NKJ 1 John 3:21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.

ASV 1 John 3:21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, we have boldness toward God;

Wuest - Divinely loved ones, if our hearts are not condemning us, a fearless confidence we constantly have facing God the Father ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

- 1Jn 2:28 1Jn 4:17 Job 22:26 27:6 Ps 7:3-5 101:2 1Co 4:4 2Co 1:12 1Ti 2:8 Heb 4:16 Heb 10:22
- [1 John 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries.

Related Passages:

1 John 2:28+ And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, **we may have confidence** and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

1 John 4:17+ By this, love is perfected with us, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

Hebrews 4:16+ Let us therefore draw near with **confidence** to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 10:22+ let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

AMAZING GRACE: WE CAN HAVE CONFIDENCE BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD!

Beloved ([agapetos](#)), if ([3rd class condition](#)) **our heart** ([kardia](#)) **does not condemn** ([kataginosko](#) - present tense) **us, we have** (present tense - continually have) **confidence** ([parrhesia](#)) **before** ([pros](#)) **God** - As discussed in 1Jn 3:20, the **heart** ([kardia](#)) refers to our conscience. John includes himself (**our**). John is describing in essence a clear conscience which gives us complete confidence before God's throne of grace and know our prayers will be answered (1Jn 3:22).

*Few things keep people from genuine prayer to their heavenly Father
more than unconfessed sin and a resulting guilty conscience.*

-- Charles Swindoll

John presents an a fortiori argument: "If before God we can persuade conscience to acquit us, when it upbraids us, much more may **we** have assurance before Him, when it does *not* do so" ([Plummer, The Epistles of S. John, p. 89](#)).

Bob Utley - This is a THIRD CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE. Christians still struggle with sin and self (cf. 1Jn 2:1; 5:16–17). They still face temptations and act inappropriately in specific situations. Often their conscience condemns them. As a Methodist

hymn (unknown title and author) states:

"And none, O Lord, has perfect rest,
For none is wholly free from sin;
And they who faint would serve Thee best
Are conscious most of wrong within."

A knowledge of the gospel, a sweet fellowship with Jesus, a yieldedness to the Spirit's leading and the Father's omniscience calm our hearts of dust!

Glenn Barker has an excellent summary of 1 John 3:21 - Christians are called to fellowship with God (1:3; 2:24). But if they are guilt-ridden and conscience-stricken, rather than seeking that fellowship or enjoying it, they will flee the presence of God. They will be unable to abide in Him or claim their position as "His children." Nor will they dare seek answers to prayer that He alone can provide. On the other hand, those who have His peace in their hearts will have "confidence" ([parrhesia](#)) not only at His appearing (1Jn 2:28+) but in the ordinary here-and-now relationship to the Father especially as it involves prayer. (Borrow [The Expositor's Bible Commentary page 1098](#))

Sam Storms - the assurance of salvation (1Jn 3:19-20+) issues in a confident and fruitful prayer life for those who are obedient - 1Jn 3:21-23... Simply put, as long as doubt or misgiving reigns in our hearts, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to boldly approach God in prayer. However, if we will but set our hearts at rest in the ways John has prescribed (1Jn 3:19-20), then we shall be able to approach the Lord with boldness, a boldness that is expressed in making requests of him (1Jn 3:21). ([First John 3:10b-24](#))

David Allen - 1 John 3:19, 20 functions as the reason for 1Jn 3:21, 22. There are two reasons that assure us we are truly believers. The first is our awareness of the love God has placed in us (1Jn 3:19a). The second is our awareness of the grace of God that accepts our humanness because Christ knows our motives (1Jn 3:20b). On this basis, God is greater than our conscience, and there is no need for fear and trepidation when we approach God. (SEE [1-3 John: Fellowship in God's Family](#)).

John MacArthur - Doubt ceases when believers are walking in faithfulness and obedience, because the heart does not condemn so that insecurity and fear give way to confidence before God. Such assurance causes believers to enter God's presence with certainty (Eph. 3:12+; Heb. 10:19+; cf. 2Cor. 3:4+; 1Ti 3:13), so that whatever they ask in prayer they will receive from Him. (See [1-3 John - Volume 5 - Page 145](#))

Adrian Rogers - 1 John 3:21 says "Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence (boldness) before God." Let's give an example. You and your wife are having a horrendous argument and you're both filled with bitterness and hostility and you're saying all kinds of horrid things and then you discover your baby is sick and has a high fever. You say, Well, we need to pray, and you and your husband get down on your knees to pray. Don't you feel silly? I mean, don't you feel silly? You know exactly what you've got to do first. What? Honey, I'm sorry, forgive me, God have mercy on us. Why? You can't pray ("have confidence" or boldness before God) with that hostility in your heart? Why? Because your heart condemns you and you have no confidence toward God. ([Sermon](#))

Hiebert - Although the negative (mē) with the present subjunctive could mean "does not condemn us as an ongoing condition" because the heart has had no misgiving about our moral state, John seems clearly to mean that it "**ceases to condemn us**" because the charge of conscience against us has been resolved before God. Although every believer experiences occasions when his conscience for some reason condemns him, the present tense implies that such need not be the characteristic experience of the believer. Concerning such a life free from an accusing conscience Westcott remarks, "It does not imply a claim to sinlessness, nor yet an insensibility to the heinousness of sin, but the action of a living faith which retains a real sense of fellowship with God, and this carries with it confidence and peace."

CONFIDENCE AT THE THRONE OF GRACE

We have (present tense - continually have) **confidence** ([parrhesia](#)) **before** ([pros](#)) **God** - In 1Jn 2:28+ he had referred to the confidence we could have at the time of Christ's return. Now John is saying we can have free and continual communion with the Most High God! The writer of Hebrews describes this confidence in an exhortation - "Let us therefore (because of Jesus our High Priest - Heb 4:14-15+) draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need." (Heb 4:16+)

John MacArthur - confidence before God. Love banishes self-condemnation. When a Christian recognizes in his life the manifestation of love in deeds and actions, it results in confidence about his relationship with God (Borrow [MacArthur Study Bible page 1970](#))

Earlier John had written "And now, little children, **abide** in Him, so that (term of purpose) when He appears, we may have **confidence** (boldness = **parrhesia**) and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming." (1Jn 2:28+)

Ulrich Zwingli - Our confidence in Christ does not make us lazy, negligent, or careless, but on the contrary it awakens us, urges us on, and makes us active in living righteous lives and doing good. There is no self-confidence to compare with this.

Guzik - when we are in fellowship with God, and our heart does not condemn us, we know that we can have confidence toward God and our standing with Him. If someone is in true fellowship with God - not deceiving oneself, as mentioned in 1 John 1:6+ - then the assurance that comes to his heart while fellowshiping with God is a precious thing. It is what Paul spoke about in Romans 8:16 - The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

Spurgeon - Other people may condemn us, but that does not matter; they may impute to us wrong motives, and misrepresent us, but that is no concern of ours so long as we have confidence toward God.

Before (pros) God ("facing Godward") - This phrase speaks of the incredible privilege believers have to experience a "face-to-face" relationship with the invisible God.

Beloved (27) (**agapetos** from **agapao** = to love, **agape** = unconditional love borne by Spirit - Gal 5:22) means dear, much loved and is John's tender way of addressing the readers, reminding them of his love for them, especially those who may have been struggling with an accusing conscience (see 1Jn 3:19, 20) **Agapetos** describes the love of another, this love being called out of the "giver's" heart by preciousness of the recipient of the love (the "beloved"). Agapetos is used only of Christians as united with God and with each other in love.

Vincent reasons that given the fact that John refers to them as beloved would suggest that this is addressed directly to those who are of the truth (1Jn 3:19), who are loving in deed not word (1Jn 3:18)

AGAPETOS IN JOHN'S WRITINGS - 1 Jn. 2:7; 1 Jn. 3:2; 1 Jn. 3:21; 1 Jn. 4:1; 1 Jn. 4:7; 1 Jn. 4:11; 3 Jn. 1:1; 3 Jn. 1:2; 3 Jn. 1:5; 3 Jn. 1:11

Condemn (2607) (**kataginosko** from **katá** = against + **ginosko** = know) literally means to know against (to know something against one) and then to find fault with, to blame, to condemn (to determine or judge to be utterly wrong or guilty).

KATAGINOSKO - 3V - Gal. 2:11; 1 Jn. 3:20; 1 Jn. 3:21

Confidence (boldness) (3954) (**parrhesia** from **pás** = all + **rhesis** = speech, act of speaking) is literally all speech or speaking all things and thereby conveys the idea of freedom to say all. The basic idea in the word is freedom of speech, when the word flowed freely. It is that attitude of openness that stems from freedom and lack of fear ("shaking" fear - godly, reverential fear is always appropriate). Greeks used parrhesia of those with the right to speak openly in the assembly. Speaking with plainness, openness and confidence (Acts 2:29). "It describes the privilege of coming before someone of importance, power, and authority and feeling free to express whatever is on one's mind." (MacArthur)

Glenn Barker - "The word (**parrhesia**) rendered **confidence** stood in ancient Greece for the most valued right of a citizen of a free state, the right to 'speak his mind' ... unhampered by fear or shame." (citing Dodd)

Parrhesia - "This was a high privilege in the Greek world. It originally meant the right of a full citizen of a democracy to speak in the citizens' assembly. Later it came to mean freedom to speak with frankness and courage. Thus, in 1Jn 2:28+ and 1Jn 3:21, confidence is the right to speak frankly and boldly to Christ at His second coming and to God even now in prayer." (Hinckley)

PARRHESIA - 31V - Mk. 8:32; Jn. 7:4; Jn. 7:13; Jn. 7:26; Jn. 10:24; Jn. 11:14; Jn. 11:54; Jn. 16:25; Jn. 16:29; Jn. 18:20; Acts 2:29; Acts 4:13; Acts 4:29; Acts 4:31; Acts 28:31; 2 Co. 3:12; 2 Co. 7:4; Eph. 3:12; Eph. 6:19; Phil. 1:20; Col. 2:15; 1 Tim. 3:13; Phlm. 1:8; Heb. 3:6; Heb. 4:16; Heb. 10:19; Heb. 10:35; 1 Jn. 2:28; 1 Jn. 3:21; 1 Jn. 4:17; 1 Jn. 5:14

ILLUSTRATION - There was a certain minister who meant a great deal to me when I was a young preacher. I always loved to hear him pray because he prayed with assurance. He did not pray to God willy-nilly, shilly-shally, mollycoddle -- he went to God with great assurance. I always wanted to be on that man's prayer list. I had a feeling that whenever he began to pray, whatever the Lord was doing, He would say, "Wait a minute. I'm going to listen to My child down there. He's praying, and he knows what he is talking about." I wanted to be on that man's prayer list. I even prayed that he would put me on his prayer list, but I didn't ask him to because I felt that it wouldn't be as effective as if he volunteered it. He knew I was pastor of a church and had a great opportunity, and one day he said to me, "Vernon, I'm praying for you." Oh boy, that was a great day! May I say to you, it is wonderful to have assurance when we pray. "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." (SEE [Thru the Bible Vol. 56: The Epistles 1](#))

Timothy Peck - All of us go through times of doubt in the spiritual journey, seasons where it seems like we don't really know God like we thought we did. It's a normal part of the spiritual journey for us to struggle with doubts about our faith, doubts about whether we're truly following Jesus Christ or not. If you've struggled with those kinds of doubts, that's probably a pretty good indication that you are following Jesus, because people who don't follow Jesus Christ really aren't all that concerned about it.

These seasons of doubt cause our hearts to condemn us, our feelings accuse us of not being Christians, of being failures, of not measuring up, especially when we hear sermons like today's call to walk with each other in love. God's invitation to love so radically impacts us and we realize how far short we fall, and often our hearts become anxious and even condemning, and we wonder if we truly know Christ the way we thought we did. So John wants us to put that struggle in proper perspective, that it's not whether our feelings are at rest or whether our feelings condemn us that determines whether or not we're on this spiritual journey, but it's whether God has received us through our faith in Jesus Christ.

You see, God is greater than our feelings, he is bigger than our emotions of doubt or assurance, and what God thinks carries more weight than what I'm feeling at the moment. So how do we set our hearts at ease? By remembering that our assurance doesn't rely on our emotions but on God and then by pressing forward to obey God's commands. John sums up God's commands in the words 'believe' and 'love.' The order is vitally important, that we first trust our lives to Jesus Christ, we place our faith in him to forgive our sins and to bring us into a relationship with God built on grace. Then once we do that, we launch on a spiritual journey of loving other followers of Christ, to walk together on this journey we're on. Believing comes first, then belonging. We first establish a personal relationship with God through belief in Jesus Christ, and then we find ourselves on this journey the bible calls church, of walking this journey together." ([Walking With Others sermon, by Timothy Peck](#))

George Mueller - The promise of today's text (1 John 3:13–24) carries two important conditions—"if our heart condemn us not" (1Jn 3:21), and if "we keep His commandments" (1Jn 3:22). In other words, when we are in the center of God's will and have a clear conscience, the resources of heaven are at our disposal. The following incident vividly illustrates this truth:

The captain of an ocean steamer tells that on one occasion his ship was engulfed in a dense fog off the coast of Newfoundland. It was Wednesday evening and the captain had been on the bridge for 24 hours when he was startled by someone tapping on his shoulder. He turned and saw one of his passengers—George Mueller.

"Captain," said Mueller, "I must be in Quebec on Saturday afternoon."

"That's impossible!" replied the captain. "I'm helpless!"

Mueller suggested, "Let's go down to the chart room and pray."

The captain thought he had a lunatic on board. "Do you know how dense the fog is?" he asked.

"No," came the reply, "my eye is not on the density of the fog, but on the living God who controls every circumstance of my life." Once in the chart room, Mueller got down on his knees and prayed, "O Lord, if it is consistent with Thy will, please remove this fog in 5 minutes. Thou knowest the engagement Thou didst make for me in Quebec for Saturday. I believe it is Thy will." Within a matter of minutes the fog lifted.

ASK AND IT WILL BE DONE - Andrew Murray

Dear friends, if our conscience is clear, we can come to God with bold confidence. 1 JOHN 3:21

Think for a moment of the men of prayer in scripture and see in them lives that could pray in power. Abraham was an intercessor. What gave him such boldness? He knew that God had called him away from his home and people to walk with Him so that all nations might be blessed in him. He knew that he had obeyed and forsaken all for God. Implicit obedience, to the very sacrifice of his son, was the law of his life. He did what God asked, so he dared to trust God to do what he asked.

Moses was an intercessor. He, too, had forsaken all for God and lived at God's disposal. Often it is written of him that he did what the Lord commanded. No wonder he was very bold. His heart was right with God. He knew God would hear him.

We only pray the way we live. God longs to prove Himself the faithful God and mighty helper of His people. He waits to answer praying hearts wholly turned from the world and to Himself.

The branch that abides in Christ the heavenly Vine will bear fruit in the salvation of others. Such people may dare ask what they will—and it shall be done.

THOU HAST PROVED MINE HEART

"Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God", 1 John 3:21.

THE LORD warned against the “leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy”, Luke 12:1. The prayers of the Pharisees were a pretence; they loved to be seen by men. They honoured God with their lips only; their heart was far from Him. The Lord severely condemned these self-righteous hypocrites, Matt. 6:5; 15:8; 23:27–28; Luke 18:9.

David’s prayer was both righteous and sincere. It came “not out of feigned lips”, Ps 17:1. In asserting the righteousness of his cause, Ps 17:2–4, he was not guilty of self-righteousness like the Pharisee in the parable, Luke 18:10. He was attesting his honesty of heart and steadfastness of purpose. The words, “thou hast tried me, and findest nothing”, Ps 17:3 R.V., were not a boastful claim to faultlessness. His appeal for help lest his feet should slip, Ps 17:5, and the requests that he makes in Ps 17:6–8, are proof of this.

David’s confidence in prayer sprang from self-examination in the presence of God. In the stillness of the night when the conscience is not easily silenced, he exposed himself to Him who searched his heart, v. 3; cf. Ps. 139:1, 23, 24. He knew that if he regarded iniquity in his heart, the Lord would not hear his prayer, Ps. 66:18. Out of his own personal experience, David passed on this wise counsel to his son Solomon, 1 Chron. 28:9.

We, no less than David, need to pray, “Search me, O God”; when we sing the following lines, do we really mean them?

“Search all my thoughts, the secret springs,
The motives that control;
The chambers where polluted things
Hold empire o’er the soul.”

Our prayers will be more effective if we submit to the discipline of self-examination before Him who searches the heart, Jer. 17:10; 1 Cor. 11:28, 31. The two-edged sword of the Word of God is the means the Spirit uses to search us. It pierces, cuts, judges and exposes us before “him with whom we have to do”, Heb. 4:12–13. When we awake in Christ’s likeness, Ps. 17:15, heart-searching will no longer be needed.

Bill Bright - Claiming Forgiveness [Promises: A Daily Guide to Supernatural Living - Page 189](#)

“But, dearly loved friends, if our consciences are clear, we can come to the Lord with perfect assurance and trust, and get whatever we ask for because we are obeying him and doing the things that please him.” 1 JOHN 3:21, 22

What a marvelous promise—unfortunately, a promise which few Christians are able to claim. Why? Because they do not have a clear conscience in regard to their sin and when they come to God, they cannot come with confidence that He will hear and answer them. As God’s Word reminds us in Psalm 66:15, if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. How wonderful to know that whatever sins have been committed, the shedding of Christ’s blood and His death on the cross have paid the penalty for them all. If we confess our sin of pride, lust, jealousy, gossip, dishonesty, greed, whatever it may be, we can by faith claim His forgiveness. Remember that, if we agree with God concerning our sin, if we recognize that Christ’s death on the cross has indeed paid the penalty for that sin, and if we repent or change our attitude, which results in a change of our action, we can know that we are forgiven. However, if there is no change of attitude and action, obviously there has been no true confession and therefore no forgiveness and cleansing.

If you have truly confessed your sins, you can come now into the presence of God with great joy and a clear conscience and have perfect assurance and trust that whatever you ask for, you will receive because you are praying according to the will and the Word of God.

Bible Reading: 1 John 3:18–24

Action Point: I will keep my heart and motives pure through the practice of Spiritual Breathing. When I do, I can come into God’s presence with a clear conscience and expect to receive answers to my prayers

Related Resources:

- [How can I get a clear conscience? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What does it mean to have a good conscience](#)

1 JOHN 3:21, KJV Rev 12:10-11

It is only when our heart condemns us not that we have boldness toward God. The adversary knows this, and so is the “accuser of our brothers” seeking to bring the believer into condemnation before God.

Decision on the part of the believer is necessary here, and a knowledge of the power of the blood of the Lamb. Let the believer remember that the Lord Christ is a faithful witness, and will faithfully tell his possessed ones the moment they are out of accord with His will.

He is always definite in His dealings with His children, and the soul in the fellowship with Him quickly knows when He speaks with the still small voice of conscience; then it must at once obey, and claim the cleansing of the precious blood.

The condemnation of the evil one is usually vague, and should be met by the believer claiming the constant cleansing of the blood; whilst doubtful things must be dealt with by a committal to the Lord, and trust that He will remove what comes from the accuser, and deepen and renew all that comes from Himself. The breastplate of righteousness will then be kept upon the heart to protect it from the enemy. JESSIE PENN-LEWIS

A W Tozer - CONFIDENCE IN GOD [Mornings with Tozer: Daily Devotional Readings - Page 36](#)

If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. 1 John 3:21

This is surely one of the great realizations that can come to us in the Christian life—we can put our complete confidence in the God who has revealed Himself to us!

It was a gracious day in my early Christian experience when I realized that it was not in God's character to pounce upon me in judgment. He knows that we are dust, and as our God He is loving and patient towards us.

If it were true that the Lord would put the Christian on the shelf every time he failed or blundered or did something wrong, I would have been a piece of statuary by this time!

It is surely true that God will bring judgment when judgment is necessary, but the Scriptures say that judgment is God's strange work. Where there is a lifetime of rebellion, hardened unbelief and love of sin, judgment will come.

But God watches over us for spiritual growth and maturity, trying to teach us the necessity for fully trusting Him and coming to the place of complete distrust of ourselves. We have met God and can now say with Paul, "That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (2 Corinthians 4:7).

How to Be Confident in God - Russell Spray

Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God" (1 John 3:21).

I. Through Forgiveness

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins ..." (1 John 1:9).

- A. Unforgiven sin is accompanied by guilt. Those who lack God's forgiveness cannot be confident in Him.
- B. Forgiveness is received by confession. When we repent and believe, we can be confident in God. Guilt disappears (Mark 11:25).

II. Through Freedom

"... where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3:17).

- A. Many believers do not possess the fullness of the Spirit. They are not totally committed, and are limited by doubts and resentments.
- B. The Holy Spirit brings freedom. His abiding Presence banishes bondage, frees us from Satanic entrapments, and increases confidence (Gal. 5:1).

III. Through Fervor

"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord" (Rom. 12:11).

- A. Those with selfish motives are slothful about God's work. Their distorted purpose brings failure and defeat.
- B. Christians should find delight in serving the Lord. As they fervently work, witness, and win for Him, their confidence grows.

IV. Through Faith

"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith ..." (Heb. 10:22).

- A. Many displease God and disappoint themselves because of their lack of faith (Heb. 11:6).
 - B. Faith—confidence—is the means by which we open ourselves up to God. It is also the way to be victorious in Christ (1 John 5:4).
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Spurgeon - What is the verdict? (Sermon - [What is the Verdict?](#))

'Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.' 1 John 3:21

The question to be decided is a very weighty one. What is that question, do you think? I do not think it is the question, 'Am I perfect?' because we can solve that without holding a formal court. The question is not, 'Am I absolutely free from sin?' for, 'if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.' The question is this: 'Am I sincere in the truth? Is my religion true and am I true in my profession of it?' Next, 'Does love rule in my nature?' All this chapter [1 John 3] deals with love and teaches us that the possession of love is the supreme test of our state. Note the fourteenth verse: 'We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.' The enquiry is, 'Do I love God? Do I love my brother also? Is my spirit that of love? If not, I am not a child of God.' Then the next question is, 'Do I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?' In the verses which succeed my text this is put as a great test, that we believe in Jesus Christ. Faith is the main question for conscience to decide, together with the following one, 'Do I also keep his commandments? Do I obey God? Do I seek to be holy as Jesus is holy? Or am I living in known sin and tolerating that in myself which does not and cannot please God?' The verse that follows my text puts it, 'we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight' and the question is, 'Do we not only try to keep the commandments, but do we do so because it is pleasing to God? Is it my master-motive to please God? Do I want to be an Enoch, who "had this testimony, that he pleased God"? Do I keep his commandments and labour to please him?' These are the questions to be tried in the court of conscience, and never was there a weightier issue.

NOTHING BETWEEN - [play this hymn](#) (borrow [Amazing Grace by Kenneth Osbeck - page 232](#))

Words and music by Charles A. Tindley, 1851–1933

If our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from Him anything we ask,
because we obey His commands and do what pleases Him. (1 John 3:21, 22)

Born to slave parents and separated from them when only five years of age, Charles Tindley was a most remarkable individual. He learned to read and write on his own at the age of 17, attended night school, completed seminary training through correspondence, and was ordained to the Methodist ministry. While attending evening school, young Tindley supported himself as the janitor of the Calvary Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. In 1902, Charles Tindley was called to pastor this prestigious church where he had once been the janitor. The Calvary Methodist Church prospered greatly under his leadership. Eventually several larger sanctuaries had to be built to accommodate the crowds of all races that came to hear this humble preacher. In 1924, in spite of Tindley's protests, the new church building was renamed the Tindley Temple Methodist Church.

Charles Tindley expresses a concern in this hymn for many of the practices and attitudes that must be rejected if Christians are to be pleasing to their Lord. The hymn reminds us that we must watch out for those allurements and temptations that can easily disrupt our spiritual courses: "Delusive dreams, sinful-worldly pleasures, habits, pride, self or friends." The Bible teaches that we are not to be conformed to this world but should know the transforming power of a spiritually renewed mind (Romans 12:1, 2).

Nothing between my soul and the Savior, naught of this world's delusive dream:
I have renounced all sinful pleasure—Jesus is mine! There's nothing between.
Nothing between, like worldly pleasure! Habits of life, tho harmless they seem,
must not my heart from Him ever sever—He is my all! There's nothing between.
Nothing between, like pride or station: Self or friends shall not intervene;
tho it may cost me much tribulation, I am resolved! There's nothing between.
Nothing between, e'en many hard trials, tho the whole world against me convene;
watching with prayer and much self denial—Triumph at last, with nothing between!

Chorus:

Nothing between my soul and the Savior, so that His blessed face may be seen.
Nothing preventing the least of His favor: Keep the way clear! Let nothing between.

For Today: Psalm 51:10; 2 Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 13:6; 1 John 3:18–24

Reflect on this truth: "The price of spiritual power is a purity of heart." Ask God to reveal anything that might hinder His flow of power in your life.

Adrian Rogers - The Bible says, in 1 John 3, verse 21, "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." (1 John 3:21)

Now, listen. The root of faith is the Word of God, but the requirement of faith is that you come out of that land of idolatry; you leave it. God brought us out, that he might bring us in. I mean, many people say, "Well, I just doubt my salvation. I'm not sure I'm saved. I have doubt about my salvation. I have doubt. I have doubt." And you talk to them about their theology and so forth, and they'll nod

their head, but they still have their doubts. If you stay there long enough, you'll find out that that person that has that doubt has sin in his or her life: idols that they've not forsaken, things that they're doing. What right would you have to have absolute assurance if you're living with sin in your heart and in your life? And if you're having trouble with faith, try repentance—if you're having trouble with faith.

- Excerpt from sermon [How to Mend a Broken Faith - scroll down to page 484](#)

Daily Light on the Daily Path - We know that we have passed out of death into life.

"Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life."—Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

It is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.—By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him. . . . Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God.—We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

You were dead in the trespasses and sins. . . . [God] made us alive together with Christ.—He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.

1 John 3:14; John 5:24; 1 John 5:12; 2 Cor. 1:21–22; 1 John 3:19, 21; 1 John 5:19; Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 1:13

Confidence, Not Condemnation 1 John 3:21 - Spirit Filled Life Daily Devotional

Carefully observe that this text ... speaks to those who are called "beloved."... It is a very sweet and endearing title, but it evidently in this case belongs only to those who are of the family of grace: these alone can remain uncondemned of their hearts, and live in confidence towards God....

As soon as we become children we are freed from the condemning power of the law; we are not under the principle and motive of the law of works, but yet we are not without law unto Christ. We come under the sacred regulations which rule the household of God. We are dealt with not as mere subjects are ruled by a king, but as children are governed by a father. We come from under the law which was promulgated with thunders and lightnings, and the sound of a trumpet waxing exceeding loud and long, and we listen to the gentle voice of the man Christ Jesus.... there is a rule and discipline devised by love, and carried out with infinite compassion. Upon our obedience to that discipline our peace and prosperity depend. If we so live that our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. (SOCS)

Greg Laurie - HOW GOD USES GUILT

Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. (1 John 3:21)

Columnist Ann Landers once made this statement about guilt: "One of the most painful, self-mutilating, time and energy consuming exercises in the human experience is guilt. It can ruin your day or your week or your life if you let it." Landers concluded, "Remember, guilt is a pollutant and we don't need any more of it in the world."

But I have to disagree with Ann Landers on that point. I think guilt has an important part to play in our lives. I think God can use guilt. Guilt can remind us that we have crossed the line, that we have done something wrong. And God can work with guilt in the human conscience to bring us to our senses.

The word "conscience" is a combination of Latin words that mean "to know" and "together." In fact, the Greek word for conscience is found more than thirty times in the New Testament and means "co-knowledge," "knowing together with you," or "knowledge together with oneself." That is, conscience knows our inner motives and our true thoughts.

The Hebrew word for "conscience" is usually translated "heart" in the Old Testament. So when we read in the Old Testament about having a tender heart toward God, it is speaking of having a sensitive conscience. When read about being upright in heart, it is speaking of having a pure conscience. This is not to equate the conscience with the voice of God, because our conscience can, at times, be wrong. That is why you must saturate your heart and mind with the Word of God to essentially educate it. And when your conscience is educated by the Word of God, it can, in fact, serve an important purpose.

A W Tozer - Does God Always Answer Prayer? [The Best of A. W. Tozer Book Two](#)

Contrary to popular opinion, the cultivation of a psychology of uncritical belief is not an unqualified good, and if carried too far it may be a positive evil. The whole world has been booby-trapped by the devil, and the deadliest trap of all is the religious one. Error never looks so innocent as when it is found in the sanctuary.

One field where harmless-looking but deadly traps appear in great profusion is the field of prayer. There are more sweet notions about prayer than could be contained in a large book, all of them wrong and all highly injurious to the souls of men.

I think of one such false notion that is found often in pleasant places consorting smilingly with other notions of unquestionable orthodoxy. It is that God always answers prayer.

This error appears among the saints as a kind of all-purpose philosophic therapy to prevent any disappointed Christian from suffering too great a shock when it becomes evident to him that his prayer expectations are not being fulfilled. It is explained that God always answers prayer, either by saying Yes or by saying No, or by substituting something else for the desired favor.

Now, it would be hard to invent a neater trick than this to save face for the petitioner whose requests have been rejected for nonobedience. Thus when a prayer is not answered he has but to smile brightly and explain, "God said No." It is all so very comfortable. His wobbly faith is saved from confusion and his conscience is permitted to lie undisturbed. But I wonder if it is honest.

To receive an answer to prayer as the Bible uses the term and as Christians have understood it historically, two elements must be present: (1) A clear-cut request made to God for a specific favor. (2) A clear-cut granting of that favor by God in answer to the request. There must be no semantic twisting, no changing of labels, no altering of the map during the journey to help the embarrassed tourist to find himself.

When we go to God with a request that He modify the existing situation for us, that is, that He answer prayer, there are two conditions that we must meet: (1) We must pray in the will of God and (2) we must be on what old-fashioned Christians often call "praying ground"; that is, we must be living lives pleasing to God.

It is futile to beg God to act contrary to His revealed purposes. To pray with confidence the petitioner must be certain that his request falls within the broad will of God for His people.

The second condition is also vitally important. God has not placed Himself under obligation to honor the requests of worldly, carnal or disobedient Christians. He hears and answers the prayers only of those who walk in His way. "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.... If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (1 John 3:21, 22; John 15:7).

God wants us to pray and He wants to answer our prayers, but He makes our use of prayer as a privilege to commingle with His use of prayer as a discipline. To receive answers to prayer we must meet God's terms. If we neglect His commandments our petitions will not be honored. He will alter situations only at the request of obedient and humble souls.

The God-always-answers-prayer sophistry leaves the praying man without discipline. By the exercise of this bit of smooth casuistry he ignores the necessity to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, and actually takes God's flat refusal to answer his prayer as the very answer itself. Of course such a man will not grow in holiness; he will never learn how to wrestle and wait; he will never know correction; he will not hear the voice of God calling him forward; he will never arrive at the place where he is morally and spiritually fit to have his prayers answered. His wrong philosophy has ruined him.

That is why I turn aside to expose the bit of bad theology upon which his bad philosophy is founded. The man who accepts it never knows where he stands; he never knows whether or not he has true faith, for if his request is not granted he avoids the implication by the simple dodge of declaring that God switched the whole thing around and gave him something else. He will not allow himself to shoot at a target, so he cannot tell how good or how bad a marksman he is.

Of certain persons James says plainly: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts," From that brief sentence we may learn that God refuses some requests because they who make them are not morally worthy to receive the answer. But this means nothing to the one who has been seduced into the belief that God always answers prayer. When such a man asks and receives not he passes his hand over the hat and comes up with the answer in some other form. One thing he clings to with great tenacity: God never turns anyone away, but invariably grants every request.

The truth is that God always answers the prayer that accords with His will as revealed in the Scriptures, provided the one who prays is obedient and trustful. Further than this we dare not go.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones - CONFIDENCE IN PRAYER 1 JOHN 3:21 [Walking with God Day by Day: 365 Daily Devotional Selections](#)

This matter of "confidence" is absolutely vital to true prevailing prayer. Let me remind you how the Scripture puts it. Have you noticed that the word boldness is used in connection with prayer in the Scriptures? You often find it in the epistle to the Hebrews: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (4:16); or again, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Hebrews 10:19); or, "let us draw near

with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (Hebrews 10:22). Or consider what Paul says in Ephesians 3: “. . . in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by . . . faith” (verse 12). That is the way to pray; if our petitions are to be of any value, we must have boldness and assurance and confidence in our access.

How is this to be obtained? Well, it seems to me that we are here dealing with the answer, and it is a question of sonship. The consciousness of our sonship and the assurance of our sonship is to be determined by our love of the brethren. It works like this: If I am truly loving the brethren, then I remember that I am a child of God. Therefore, when I am before God in prayer I argue like this: “I must think of God now not as my Judge but as my Father.” John goes on to remind us of that in 1 John chapter 4. I do not come to God, therefore, in a spirit of fear, because “fear hath torment” (1 John 4:18). So, assured of my sonship, I know that God delights in me, that God indeed is much more ready to bless me than I am to ask to be blessed.

I must think of God now not as my Judge but as my Father.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones - ASSURANCE IN PRAYER 1 JOHN 3:21-22 [Walking with God Day by Day: 365 Daily Devotional Selections](#)

Over and above my confidence is my right of access; I must have assurance with regard to my petitions.

James puts it like this: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God . . .” But notice this: “But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord” (James 1:5-7). If you are uncertain, doubtful, or hesitant and lacking assurance in your petition, you will not get your request, says James. Listen to the psalmist in Psalm 66:18: “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” If I go to God with a double mind, holding on to my sin and knowing that I am living a wrong life, I will not have confidence in my prayer. “God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things” (1 John 3:20); if I am condemning myself and know I am wrong, how much more so must God.

Now I think that our Lord Himself has answered this question in John’s Gospel. He put it like this: “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:7). Or again: “I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (John 15:16).

If I am keeping God’s commandments, then I can be certain that my life is being controlled by the Holy Spirit, and therefore I know that any petitions and desires I may have were created in me by the Holy Spirit.

If I go to God holding on to my sin and knowing that I am living a wrong life, I will not have confidence in my prayer.

Wayne Grudem - Pursuing Personal Holiness. If we want to truly draw near to God in worship, it is important to strive for personal holiness. The author of Hebrews reminds believers to strive for “the holiness without which no one will see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14), and Jesus says that it is the “pure in heart” who shall “see God” (Matt. 5:8)—a promise that is fulfilled partially in this life and completely in the age to come. Specifically in connection with prayer, John says, “If our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God” (1 John 3:21), but this principle certainly applies to worship as well, as we have boldness to come into God’s presence to offer him praise. James indicates a similar concern when, immediately after saying, “Draw near to God and he will draw near to you,” he adds, “Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded” (James 4:8). ([See page 888 in pdf of Systematic Theology](#))

Oswald Chambers - Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.—1 John 3:21[Devotions for a Deeper Life: A Daily Devotional - Page 160](#)

TOO MANY PEOPLE SUPPOSE THAT if they clean up their dealings with others, they will be right with God! But a reformed person is as much condemned as before. And it is not getting right with men, but with God, that leads to eternal life.

Sin is more than moral irregularity. It is a disposition to follow one’s own way rather than God’s way.

The Bible says that God condemns those whom the god of this age has blinded so that they do not realize the sinful disposition in their lives. If we deny our sinful disposition, we make God a liar and deceive ourselves.

Prayer Thought: I fully realize the grim consequences of sin. Deliver me, Lord, from my sinfulness.

Spurgeon - “Trying to Believe”? 1 John 3:21

Are you hearing the gospel earnestly? Are you searching the Scriptures for evidence concerning Christ? Or are you just doing nothing but saying, “I am trying to believe?”

Suppose I read an article in the newspaper, and then say, "I am trying to believe it." Well, if I am searching for evidence and questioning others as to whether it is true or not, I speak correctly. But if I merely put the paper away, and sit down, and say, "I will try to believe it," that is absurd. The fact is, you do not believe in Jesus, or you would not say, "I am trying to believe in him." (Sermon [The Lower Courts](#))

*Many people cannot pray in faith
because their hearts condemn them*

Adrian Rogers - First John 3, verse 21 says this: "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." (1 John 3:21) Now, faith and sin are mutually opposing elements. Many people cannot pray in faith because their hearts condemn them. Have you ever had an argument with your wife and then tried to pray without making it right? I have. I felt so stupid trying to pray without first of all going to Joyce and saying, "All right, Joyce, I'm wrong. It was me. Forgive me." Then the ways open to God, you see? But, when our heart condemns us—when we know we're wrong—we can't pray with faith. Faith and sin just don't exist in the same heart. Make a full surrender to God.

Vance Havner - THE SECRET OF CONFIDENCE

Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. 1 John 3:21.

The preceding verse in this passage says that God knows everything. He knows the heart and it is the heart that matters. God knows the inner intent, the real direction of our lives, what in our innermost selves we want to be and do. We may stumble and fall, make mistaken decisions, but He knows the truth about us. We often misjudge others because we do not know their hearts.

What's done we partly may compute
But know not what's resisted.

So we come with confidence and are promised answers to our prayers for God knows when we really seek to know and do His will.

James Smith - The Hindrances (IN PRAYER). We don't speak here of hindrances to praying, but of those things which hinder the answers.

1. **INSINCERITY** (1 John 3:21). It is quite possible to keep up the form of prayer and to be asking great things from God, while the heart is condemning it all.
 2. **WILLFULNESS** (Psa. 66:18). Conscious of iniquity in the heart, but unwilling to confess it. First get reconciled to God about this matter, then bring your petition.
 3. **SELFISHNESS** (Jas. 4:3). Oh, the pride and subtlety of self asking divine things to feed the fires of its lusts. We pray for success that we might be successful. He will not give His glory to another.
 4. **IMPATIENCE** (Psa. 40:1). David says: "I waited patiently and He heard my cry." Don't be a run-away knocker. Have the patience of God. If God can afford to wait so well might we.
 5. **UNBELIEF** (Mark 11:24). This closes the door of expectancy. All things are possible to them that believe. Have faith in God. Believe ye that I am able to do this?
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Adrian Rogers - A Great Confidence

Here's the second legacy of love—not only a good conscience, but a great confidence. Now, notice how one folds into another. Look in verse 19: "And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God" (1 John 3:19–21). Confidence—boldness. First of all, my heart doesn't condemn me, and all of this is in the context of love. When my heart doesn't condemn me, then I have confidence toward God—boldness in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Well," you say, "What good is this confidence?" Well, this confidence, dear friend, that you have with God—this confident heart that comes out of a clean conscience—is what helps you to pray and get your prayers answered. Look again at this passage of scripture. Now, watch this: "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God"—and it's all linked together. Verse 22—"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things [which] are pleasing in his sight" (1 John 3:21–22). Now, what commandments is he talking about? Well, just go down to verse 23—the last part: "That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment" (1 John 3:23). That's what he's talking about.

How do you get your prayers answered? Have a good conscience. What does that do? It gives you a great confidence, and you can come to God and ask in His name and get your prayer answered. Answered prayer is not for rebels; answered prayer is not for those whose hearts are filled with hate. It is not. It is not. It is not. The Bible says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18). That's a prayer promise that we don't like to quote, but that's one of the promises. That's a prayer promise.

Let me illustrate this. Have you ever read over there in 1 Peter chapter 3, where Peter is telling husbands and wives how to dwell together as heirs of the grace of life (1 Peter 3:7)? I like that phrase—"the grace of life." That's kind of like the cherry on top—the grace of life, a happy marriage. "Husbands and wives, dwell together as heirs of the grace of life, that"—and he says—"that prayers to God be not hindered" (1 Peter 3:7).

Now, let me give you a real example of this. You and your wife are having one of those little discussions that can be heard about three blocks away, and you get into it. And hey, look, sometimes Christians can do this—true, true? You look so holy. Christians can do this. I mean, they get their eyes off the Lord, and they get into one of these things. And, they're at one another's throats, and whatever else they're doing. They are not dwelling together as heirs of the grace of life. And then, mother goes in to check the baby, and she comes out; and she's got a frightened look on her face, and it's obvious that the baby is very sick. And, you're both believers, and you know that you need to pray. You feel so silly right now. You say, "We better pray. All right." You can't pray. You feel like fools praying in that atmosphere—that hostility, that venom. But, you know what you do? You say, "Sweetheart, I'm so sorry. I was wrong. I was a fool. Darling, forgive me." She says, "Look, it was my fault, too." And, you hug, kiss, make up. The conscience is clear. The assurance is back. And, you can pray. Isn't that right? But, you cannot pray with a condemning heart. I mean, if you don't have a good conscience, you cannot have a great confidence. And, if you don't have a great confidence, you can't get your prayers answered. It's just that plain. That's what John is talking about; it's very practical. Love—love—gives a good conscience. And, when love gives a good conscience, love gets a great confidence.

- [Click here to access Rogers' full message entitled "The Legacy of Love—1 John 3:11–24"](#)