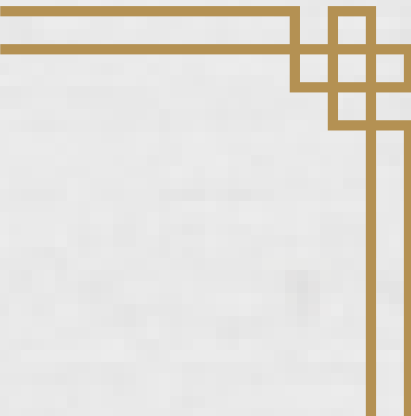
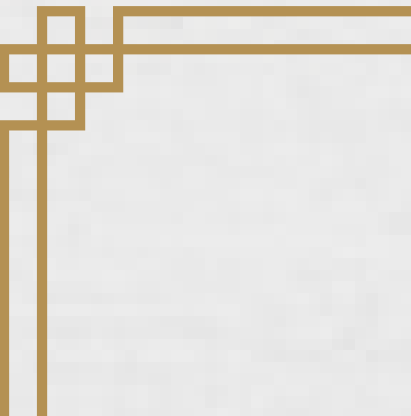
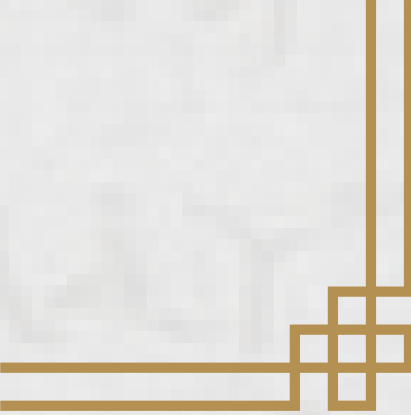
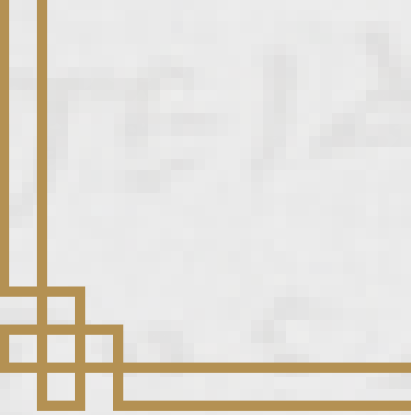




1 John

An Exegetical Series

**1 John 2:12-14: Reassurance and
Confidence in the Faith**



Summary of 1 John 2:7-11

“When we do not love, John says, we sin. Although there may, and should, be specific, recognizable acts of love for others, John presents the challenge of loving constantly and consistently in every relationship and interaction. In our every act either we are loving others or we are sinning against them. We are either relating to them rightly as God would want us to or we are not. When we do not love others by doing right by them, we become a stumbling block to their relationship with God. When our example or our words influence others away from obedience to God in Christ, we are in that moment part of the darkness that Christ came to dispel...

Summary of 1 John 2:7-11

To habitually live in such a way is to walk in darkness, to be in a place where God is absent from one's life. And because light is needed to sustain life, to live in word and deed contrary to God's revealed will can mean only death. Each time we fail to love there is something that dies a little, whether it be a relationship, our own integrity and wholeness, or our fellowship with God."

Karen H. Jobes, *1, 2, & 3 John*, ed. Clinton E. Arnold, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 99.

Opening Question

Have you ever left a sermon, Bible study, or conversation feeling deeply challenged, wondering if you were doing enough as a Christian—or even questioning where you stood with God? What made you feel that way?

Or

Have you ever read a passage of Scripture that challenged you so deeply that, instead of being encouraged to grow, you wondered whether you were even a genuine believer?

Oops! I missed Something Important...

- * Before we get into it the next passage...Confession time...I missed one crazy important contextual detail happening in John's audience—there was a church split (1 John 2:18-23)!
- * This passage is where we get the well known declaration, “They went out from us, but they did not belong to us; for if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us...” (1 John 2:19)
- * But, in context, this was a time of crisis because the church saw many people leave and John describes these people as “antichrists” (1 John 2:18)

Oops! I missed Something Important...

- * In context, John's strong contrasts have been to help the church navigate, in essence, who was right in the split!
- * Have you ever experienced a church split?
- * What thoughts did you walk away with through it all? What did you think about those who left, if you stayed, or those who stayed when you left?

The Connection Point

How does 1 John 2:12-14 Connect to the Immediate Context of 1 John 2:7-11 and to the whole letter?

- ▶ There is much that has been said up to this point!
- ▶ John has contrasted those who are in the darkness and those who are in the light, the revealed Son of God, Jesus Christ who cleanses us from sin when we, by faith, confess our sin and receive forgiveness
- ▶ The spiritual evidence of this profession shows itself in a variety of ways that challenge the us significantly!

The Connection From 1 John 2:7-11

In context!

- ▶ Those who are considered antichrists (2:18) are those who are negatively addressed throughout the letter so far
- ▶ **Those** who say we have no sin, or we have fellowship with him, or we have not sinned...or we have come to know him...
- ▶ **This is contrasted by John's audience:** If we walk in the light...if we confess our sin...If we keep his commands...If we love our brother and sister

The Connection From 1 John 2:7-11

For Us!

- ▶ While we are not in a church split where it seems clear that those who leave are not Christian, the challenge is universal!
- ▶ We do live in a church era wherein people make spiritual claims of “faith” but their profession is actually not genuine and it will show itself somehow
- ▶ For us, the letter is a reflection point for our own profession and its genuineness—we can use this letter as a good litmus test, as it were, among other things!

The Connection From 1 John 2:7-11

By the time we get to 1 John 2:12-14...

- ▶ John makes a clear shift. Simply reading the text up to this point is striking!
- ▶ John goes from this contrast of those who are in the light vs. those in the darkness to, “I am writing to you...I have written to you,” and so on.
- ▶ While this is a sudden shift, it is a purposeful shift that is actually a beautiful encouragement both for the church who received the letter and us who get to read it over and over again!

Key Identifiers in 1 John 2:12-14

Three Textual Identifiers We Need to Work through:

1. The use of the vocative—Children, fathers, and young men. We want to know what these titles mean and what purpose they serve
2. The purpose of “I write” to “I have written” (CSB—the KJV/NASB do the same). NOTE: The ESV/NIV moves from “I am writing” to “I write.”
3. The meaning of the use of “ὅτι” or “because/that” throughout each statement/affirmation

The Vocative Designations

Children, Fathers, Young Men

- ▶ Is John a misogynist?! Why doesn't he include women here?!
- ▶ We've seen "children" before (1 John 2:1 and John 13:33 — This refers to the whole audience John writes to or all believers)
- ▶ This same idea is used as when John says, "Dear friends," or "beloved," (1 John 2:7)
- ▶ Here, "Children" is not being used differently

The Vocative Designations

Children, Fathers, Young Men

- ▶ **Fathers**, while used in the Greek to refer to older men or a group of older men (**Acts 7:2**), is most likely a metaphorical or figurative term addressing those who are older/mature in the Christian faith
- ▶ **Young men** is the seemingly controversial designation here—Does this exclude women entirely?
- ▶ No—What is being said here is also a cultural metaphor referring to those in the stage of completing their full maturity in spiritual understanding

The Vocative Designations

Children, Fathers, Young Men

- ▶ In other words, John is addressing believers in all stages of their faith—children, while referring to all believers seems to refer to those who have just stepped into their faith; Fathers are those mature in their faith; Young men are those who are in the fuller process of maturing in their faith
- ▶ The affirmations here, address all Christians no matter where they are in the maturity of their faith!

I Write/I Have Written

Why the difference in the translations?

- ▶ ESV/NIV see repetition, essentially
- ▶ CSB/NASB/KJV sees a tense shift—that is, they see John literally saying, I write these to you now and then I have written in a **wholistic, complete sense**
- ▶ The CSB/NASB/KJV understand John to be, as it were, stepping back from his letter and saying, “All of these things I have written to you,” in terms of **completion and confidence**

Because/That, the Greek “ὅτι”

The Declaration of Confidence—Putting it All Together

- ▶ The declaration is one of observed fact, in context, from John to his audience—in other words, he is confidently declaring what he believes about his audience!
- ▶ Putting it together, we see this:
 - All believers in all stages of faith are being addressed
 - John himself holistically writes to them with pure confidence in what he is saying to them

John is Confident, and So Am I!

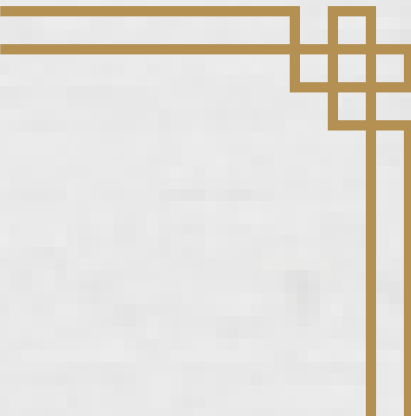
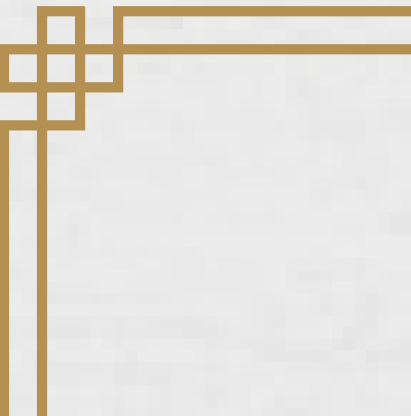
The Substance of What John is Saying:

- ▶ He believes these Christians, his audience, in all stages of their lives, have truly come to know Christ and is giving them confidence of their profession of faith in Christ and the Gospel
- ▶ Children have been forgiving; fathers know Christ; young men are maturing by defeating the Evil One—Satan, in their walk.
- ▶ John is sure of this—confident!

John is Confident, and So Am I!

The Substance of What John is Saying:

- ▶ This encouragement is timely—especially the challenge of the no-middle-ground reality about loving the brothers and sisters (1 John 2:9-11) could cause one to say, “Does John think we don’t love enough? Does he think we don’t truly believe in Jesus or confess sin?”
- ▶ Here, John is giving the confidence he has in his audience—and it is the confidence I give to you! Rest in the fact that, by your faithful profession, you know Christ and are in Christ!



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