

Abide pt7

Ryan Abernathy / General

Abide / 1 John 3:19–24

When we are facing the kind of world that we mentioned last week- one that does not react well to the claims of the Gospel, and one in which we are an increasing minority- there is one thing that we need that may well be in very short supply- confidence.

Now we inhabit a world where self confidence and self esteem are all the rage. I have mentioned to you before the rapid expansion of the self help movement in our day and time. Some of the books have gotten to the point where I cannot even mention their titles in the company of small children, because self confidence is more and more becoming associated with belligerence and rage.

So as we look at this passage this morning, I want to say first off, that is not what John or Jesus is calling for. Rage and belligerence are lies we tell ourselves to cover up how afraid we are. They are not signs of confidence but signs of weakness. I am not saying that there is not a time to be righteously angry or a time to be aggressive or a time to raise your voice- there are times for all of that- but rage and belligerence are not examples of any of those actions or positions- they are strength out of control, rather than strength in control. And as Paul points out in Galatians, one of the fruits of the Spirit is self control- so nothing that comes out of losing control is of God.

But back to confidence. Where then should our confidence come from when we are Christians? If it is not self confidence or aggression, where do we draw the needed backbone to stand fast in a world where we are increasingly viewed as the enemy, and where we are called to love the people who label us as such, even when they think we are wrong and do not love us back.

That's the question John is addressing. Let's look at [1 John 3:19-24](#).

Now let's start with verse 19, because it ties back to where we were last week- and the last instruction John gave was to love in deed and truth, not just talk a good game. **So “by this we shall know” is a result of this. When our actions match what we say we believe and are in line with scripture, we can begin to build confidence that we are in right standing with God.**

1, 2, 3 John (2) Live in Confidence (3:19–24)

In this rendering the basis for the assurance that “we are of the truth” is the manifest love and obedience of the foregoing verses. The self-sacrificial, active love previously described offers evidence that one is “of the truth.”

What does that mean to be in right standing with God?

First, to be “of the truth”- this is an odd turn of phrase, but here it refers to the position we have in the Kingdom- we are people who have been made right before God- we have been captured by and changed by the truth of the Gospel

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Used with the definite article, the truth is recognized as that truth which is distinctly God's truth as revealed in Christ and his gospel. As Stott observes: “Truth can only characterize the behavior of those whose very character originates in the truth, so that it is by our loving others ‘in truth’ that we know that we ourselves belong to it

Second, our hearts are “reassured.” But not by any words of ours but BEFORE Him. God, when we go to spend time with Him- in the Word, in prayer, in worship, in study, in meditation, etc **those moments with Him remind us of who we are and whose we are!**

Which is good, because the next verse indicates that we are going to have crisis of confidence from time to time. When our hearts “condemn us”- when we are under conviction.

Look we are all going to stumble into sin, and sometimes the battle against a besetting sin can feel like one long defeat with few wins. And as humans we tend to focus on the negative, the defeats, the failures, way more than the victories. John says, we do not let conviction steal our confidence in what Jesus has and is doing in our lives. **God is able to conquer our sin and He does not tire of forgiving us. His love does not wane.**

In fact, He wants us to come to Him when we do sin, so He can turn our focus from our sin to His salvation, so that we will be able to continue to do good works for the Kingdom rather than waste our focus and energy on sin that He has already paid for.

Do not let sin defeat you TWICE!!!

1, 2, 3 John (2) Live in Confidence (3:19–24)

John identifies those things that may cause our conscience to condemn (kataginōskei) us. When we refuse to love in action and truth (v. 18), God, who is greater than our hearts in kindness and generosity, motivates us to resist the hardness of heart that would refuse to show compassion to those in need (v. 17). Further, the fact that “he knows everything” reminds us “that any meanness of heart ... will not go unnoticed by an omnipotent God. As was the case in Deut 15:7–9, so too here, God knows what his people do, and judges them accordingly.” **God, the final Arbitrator, knows our hearts better than we ourselves.**

God is able to judge because he is all-knowing.⁴⁶ His omniscience strengthens and encourages us, but it also challenges us, for we know that he knows everything and will require an accounting of service done on his behalf

So when our hearts are not condemning us, when we are not falling into sin, we also have confidence in God and that should lead us to ask for big and bold things from Him for His Kingdom! (v21-22)

1, 2, 3 John (2) Live in Confidence (3:19–24)

The term “confidence” (parrēsia) means “boldness,” “a freedom of speech,” and “a frankness such as that a child has in approaching his father.” Although the confidence described in 2:28 is associated with the second coming of Christ, here the word deals with the Christian’s uninhibited, free communion with God in prayer

1, 2, 3 John (2) Live in Confidence (3:19–24)

Our confidence rests in his mercy and love, which have been extended to us.

Notice the caveat on asking and receiving...keeping His commands and doing what pleases Him. This is not suggesting that God is a vending machine. **It is saying that our receiving from Him is directly tied to our asking from Him being in line with His truth and His pleasure- the advancement of His Kingdom.**

1, 2, 3 John (2) Live in Confidence (3:19–24)

It is the continual obeying of God’s commands and the striving to please him that precede our confidence before God in prayer. **Such conduct provides “an objective, moral reason for the divine response; it does not simply depend upon the subjective ground of a worshiper’s clear conscience**

1, 2, 3 John (2) Live in Confidence (3:19–24)

The believer desires to please him and bring glory to him in all manner of life and obedience (1 Cor 10:31). Such an attitude guarantees answers to prayer.

And we give evidence to this in 2 ways- (v23-24)

1, 2, 3 John ((2) Live in Confidence (3:19–24))

Having spoken of the need to obey God’s commands, John now establishes the central command that is a summary of all the mandates. Fundamentally, **there is only one comprehensive command conveyed in a dual form: an explicit belief in the Son, Jesus Christ, and an active love for one another. The two parallel verbs “believe” (pisteusōmen) and “love” (agapōmen) work together to form one primary command.** As Lenski declares, “You cannot believe without loving nor love without believing.” The Christian life demands an essential union between faith and love

First- our faith in Jesus (Gospel presentation here)

1, 2, 3 John (2) Live in Confidence (3:19–24)

The command “to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ” (hina pisteusōmen tō onomati tou huiou Iesou Christou) contains the first occurrence of the verb “believe” in the epistle. While the manuscript evidence is somewhat divided as to whether “believe” is in the past or present tense, John seems to be pointing to the initial act of placing one’s faith in Jesus Christ

Second- our love for one another

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The second facet of this dual command is “to love one another as he commanded us” (kai agapōmen allēlous kathōs edōken entolēn hēmin).

John uses the present tense in his command to love, which reminds his hearers that the practice of Christian love is a daily, continual

expression. Furthermore, the reciprocal pronoun “one another” demands that love must be mutually displayed by members of the family of God. The added words “just as he commanded us” make clear that what is required is in exact conformity to the demands of Jesus (cf. John 13:34; 15:12, 17). To be a child of God is to love one another.

Thus, John insists that both faith and love stand as essential tests for the true child of God. Right belief and right action reveal the authenticity of one’s faith

This is where we find our confidence, our security, our abiding- in seeing how we are reshaped by keeping His commands. **God’s commands lead us to be more like Him and less like us.**

1, 2, 3 John (2) Live in Confidence (3:19–24)

With the words “those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them,” the apostle again introduces a mutual “abiding” relationship for the one who obeys these commands. The one who is characteristically living in obedience experiences a reciprocal fellowship with God. The present tense verb “lives” (menei) indicates a close and permanent relational abiding between the child of God and the heavenly Father

And further, by His Spirit abiding in us- our guide, our comforter, our counselor, our security.