

# (1 John) - Living with Assurance



- Do you ever worry about whether or not you would go to heaven if you were to die?
- Some people think that no one can know for certain they are going to heaven. We will have to wait till we die to find out. We can only hope to go to heaven. Do you think this way?

The epistle of 1 John is often called the book of assurance. The word “know” is used over thirty times in the five short chapters of this book. The epistle of 1 John explains several ways that we can know for sure that we have eternal life and are headed for heaven. God does not want you to live in doubt of your salvation. He wants you to know beyond the shadow of a doubt. *Do you have the assurance of your salvation?*

## Central Lesson:

God wants you to live with **ASSURANCE**, not **DOUBT**.

**Author:** The author of the book is **JOHN**.

John was one of the 12 original disciples of Jesus. He was the brother of James and they had the nickname “*Sons of Thunder*” (Mark 3:17). His life apparently changed radically because he transitioned from being characterized by “Thunder” to becoming the “Apostle of Love.” The theme of love is prominent in his writings. Also, he was known for being the closest to Jesus of all the disciples. He was called the disciple whom Jesus loved (John 21:20, 24). John authored five books in the New Testament—the Gospel of John, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John, and the book of Revelation.

John’s name is not mentioned in the epistle but the writing style, words, and expressions used in the letter are closely similar to the Gospel of John. Also, the early church always attributed the epistle to the Apostle John.

**Date:** Between A.D. **85** and **90** possibly from Ephesus after writing the Gospel of John.

**Key Verse:** 1 John 5: **11** - **13**.

*“11 And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God’s Son does not have life. 13 I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life.”* NLT.

We have a Savior to receive (v.12) and a promise to claim (v.13) to have the assurance of eternal life. Our salvation is not based on what we “believe” but on what we have—Jesus Christ (v.12).

**Key Chapter:** Chapter **2**.

Chapter 2 describes several key truths—Christ our advocate (2:1-2), signs for assurance (2:3-11), and other key concepts for living as a Christ-follower.

**Key Words:** **KNOW** used over 30 times (2:3-5, 11, 18, 20-21, 29; 3:1-2, 5, 10, 14-16, 19, 24; 4:8, 13, 16; 5:2, 13, 15, 18-20). Also, **Fellowship** (1:3, 6-7).

**Outline:** Theologian, Paul N. Benware, wrote: “The book of 1 John is difficult to outline. It is not a tightly reasoned theological treatise, but is more like an informal talk that a pastor might give to his congregation. For this reason, good men widely differ about the outline of this epistle.” (*Survey of the New Testament*, p.289).

The *Life Application Study Bible* outlines the book as:

- I. **God is light (1:1-2:27)**
- II. **God is love (2:28-4:21)**
- III. **God is life (5:1-21)**

**Purpose:** John states five purposes for writing this epistle:

1. That we might have **FELLOWSHIP** with God and His eternal family (1:3).
2. That we might have a complete **JOY** (1:4).
3. That we might not live in continual **SIN** and to tell us about God’s remedy when we do sin (2:1-2).
4. That we might guard against doctrinal **ERROR** and avoid being led astray (2:26 and 3:7). John was battling Gnosticism—the false teaching that Jesus did not have a human body but was only spirit. Also, that salvation is attained through having secret knowledge of the Gnostic teachings. In addition, John was battling immoral living and worldliness in the lives of the Christians. This resulted from the influence of Gnostic teaching.
5. That we might have **ASSURANCE** of our salvation (5:13).

## Principles for Having the Assurance of Salvation

John lists several principles that help us have the assurance of our salvation. Similar to Jeff Foxworthy’s *You Might Be a Redneck*, John is saying, *You Might Be a Christian if...*

1. You have a desire to **obey** God’s commands and seek to live like Jesus (2:3-6; 3:23-24).
2. You have **love** for God’s children (2:9-11; 3:10, 14-19; 4:7-12 4:16).
3. You **love** God more than the world and its pleasures (2:15-17; 5:4-5).
4. You demonstrate **persistence in following Christ** and identify yourself with the Body of Christ (2:18-19, 28).
5. You demonstrate **persistence in believing biblical truth** (2:24-27; 4:6).
6. You unashamedly **acknowledge Jesus** as your Lord and Savior (2:23; 4:15; 5:1).
7. You demonstrate a lifestyle of **continuous righteousness** rather than continuous sin (2:29; 3:6-10; 5:18).

**Note:** John uses the Greek aorist and present verb tenses to make a distinction between “acts” of sin and a “continuous lifestyle” of sin. Christians commit acts of sin but cannot live a “continuous lifestyle” of sin (3:9). Non-Christians live a “continuous lifestyle” of sin.

8. You are **rejected by the world** just as Jesus was rejected (3:1).
9. You sense a **witness of the Holy Spirit** in your heart saying you are a child of God (3:24; 4:13). Also, compare Romans 8:16 *“For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God’s children.”*
10. You **claim God’s promise** of the assurance of salvation (5:11-13).

## Central Lesson: God wants you to live with assurance, not doubt.

► Accept Christ as your Savior. ► As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ.  
► Invite someone to next Sunday’s study. ► Attend a small group. ► Read the Bible this week & journal meaningful verses. ► Pray for friends that need Jesus.