

Week 2 - John 2:1-6

Sin

“And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says ‘I know him’ but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected.” (John 2:3-5, ESV)

- **2:1** – *“My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”*

Who are the “little children” to whom John is referring?

Jesus ([John 13:33](#)) and Paul ([Galatians 4:19](#)), as well as John, referred to new Christians as “little children.” This is to highlight the fact that the audience were recently born-again Christians ([John 3:1-8](#)), still spiritually maturing in the faith. This term also shows the affection of a much older man toward his fellow Christians.

“**That you may not sin**” does not imply that his readers were living in sin. John wanted them to realize that indulging in sin even once is heinous in the sight of God.

“**But if anyone sins**” recognizes the awful possibility of sin. The conjunction “**but**” implies that John also wanted to make them aware of this sad fact. He was fully aware of human frailty and the seductive power of sin and Satan, and he wanted them to be aware of this as well.

“**We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,**” explains to them, that while he wants them not to sin, he assures them if they do sin, they can look to Jesus Christ, as their advocate with the Father, to intercede for them. An advocate is one who comes along side another person to help in a time of need. As our Advocate, the Lord seeks to bring us to the place where we confess and forsake our sin.

Jesus, our **Advocate** ([paraklétos](#)), approaches the Father for us, defending us from Satan, our **Accuser** ([katégoreó](#)). We first hear of the Accuser in the Book of Job ([Job 1:6-11](#)). But Satan will be removed in the future. In the Book of Revelation, John describes that great day when the **Accuser** is cast out of the divine courtroom (so to speak), writing:

“And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, ‘Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.’” ([Revelation 12:10](#))

Until then, we must maintain our vigilance. Only believers can make this statement, one they should never forget. Our **Advocate** is our Brother, our Bridegroom, our Lord, our King, and our Friend, who sits right at this very moment at the right hand of His Father in heaven. And there Jesus, our “substitutionary” **Advocate**, pleads our cause with the Father.

- **1 John 2:2** - *“He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.”*

What is Sin?

[Hamartia](#), the Greek word translated as sin, literally conveys the idea of missing the mark as an archer misses the “bull’s eye.” Later, *hamartia* came to mean missing or falling short of any goal, standard, or purpose. Spiritually, it means to miss God’s mark. *Hamartia* is a departure from God’s holy, perfect standard of what is right in word or deed (righteous). It is to miss the true purpose and end of our lives, which is the Triune God Himself.

Propitiation (Greek [hilaskomai](#)) - The satisfaction of the righteous demands of God in relation to human sin and its punishment through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ upon the cross, which cancels the penalty of sin and averts the wrath of God.

The word *propitiation* carries the basic idea of appeasement or satisfaction, specifically toward God. Propitiation is a two-part act that involves appeasing the wrath of an offended person and being reconciled to him.

- **1 John 2:3** - *“And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.”*

John is writing to believers to reassure them that their experience with God is genuine. As we often say, “The real deal.” The word “if” makes this a conditional statement because it may or may not be true of individual readers. Each reader will be required to examine themselves to determine if they meet the criteria: “keep His commandments.”

This use of the Greek *ginosko*, “to know,” identifies the conditions of this knowledge. The Gnostics believed in special revelation of knowledge or experience. John is stating that obedience to God’s commandments demonstrates our knowledge of God. What are these commandments?

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” ([Luke 10:27](#))

This may not be true of some who claim, “I know God!” with their lips yet deny Him with their lives (and lifestyle)! This **“if”** is important. We don’t want to be **“iffy”** about our eternal destination! John is introducing a clear marker by which one can discern whether they are genuinely saved – the test of obedience.

This claim of fellowship with God will be evident in the way one lives in the world. Failure to live this way causes people to ask, “How can these ‘Christians’ be so unlike this God they say they know?”

- **1 John 2:4-5** – *“Whoever says ‘I know him’ but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected.”*

Here, John provides the outcome of the two choices provided in the previous verse. The first is failure to be obedient, and the second is for those who are obedient.

God’s truth turns your world upside down. It fills you with a fire of rapture and love for the Living God; it changes everything. That truth always leads to love; it always leads to obedience; it always leads to a transformed life. If that transformed life is not there, that person has never had the truth.

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’” ([Matthew 7:21-23](#))

This is a restatement of [1 John 1:6](#):

“If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”

Holiness is essential. If you are not striving to grow in holiness in the sight of God, you need to examine whether you know Christ as Savior at all. Every blood-bought child of God desires to please the Lord Jesus, who gave Himself on the cross to save us from our sins.

- **1 John 2:6** – “Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.”

To **abide** in the Lord Jesus first is "defined" as walking as Jesus walked. Further, **abides** means to remain, to dwell, to live in, and implies not only one's practice but also one's fellowship, friendship, dependence, harmony, communion, etc.

John again sets up another test criterion: “*Whoever ... ought to walk in the same way.*”

THOUGHT - Do you understand you cannot live the Christian life in your own power? You cannot walk like Jesus by walking alone. You must rely on supernatural power provided by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Jesus received this power at his baptism ([Matthew 3:16](#)) and when he went into the wilderness ([Luke 4:1](#)).

Most Christians do not really understand this vital truth. So many Christians live lives like yo-yos bobbing up and down! Remember that Jesus ascended, and the Spirit descended. The Spirit is your power source.

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” (John 14:26)

1 John Commentary – Precept Austin

https://www.preceptaustin.org/1john_21-6_commentary#2:1

COMPARISON OF THOUGHT AND STYLE IN JOHN'S GOSPEL AND FIRST EPISTLE		
First Epistle of John Chapter 2		Gospel of John
1 John 2:5	Obeying the Word	John 14:23
1 John 2:6, 28	Abiding in Jesus	John 15:4, 7
1 John 2:8; 1 John 3:11	New Commandment	John 13:34
1 John 2:8, 2:10	Light in Darkness	John 1:5, 1:9; 11:10
1 John 2:13-14	Knowing God	John 17:3