

Talk is Cheap! (vv. 18-20)

VERSE 18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and

truth (Τεκνία, μὴ ἀγαπῶμεν λόγῳ μηδὲ τῇ γλώσσῃ ἀλλὰ ἐν ἔργῳ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ [*noun voc.nt.p. teknon child + neg me + pres.act.subj.1p. agapao love + noun loc.m.s. logos word + conj. mede nor + d.a.w/noun loc.f.s. glossa tongue + conj alla but + prep en + noun loc.nt.s. ergon deed + conj kai + noun loc.f.s. aletheia truth*]).

VERSE 19 We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart

before Him ([Καὶ] ἐν τούτῳ γνωσόμεθα ὅτι ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐσμέν, καὶ ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πείσομεν τὴν καρδίαν ἡμῶν [*conj kai + prep en + pro.demonst.instr.nt.s. houtos “by this” + fut.dep.ind.1p. ginosko know + conj hoti + prep ek + d.a.w/noun gen.m.s. aletheia truth + pres.act.ind.1p. eimi + conj kai + prep emprosthen before + pro.gen.m.s. autos “Him” + fut.act.ind.1p. peitho persuade, convince; “assure” + d.a.w/noun acc.f.s. kardia + pro.gen.m.p. ego*]).

VERSE 20 in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart

and knows all things (ὅτι ἐὰν καταγινώσκῃ ἡμῶν ἡ καρδία, ὅτι μείζων ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς τῆς καρδίας ἡμῶν καὶ γινώσκει πάντα [*conj hoti for + part ean if; “whatever” + pres.act.subj.3s. kataginosko condemn + pro.gen.m.p. ego + d.a.w/noun nom.f.s. kardia + conj hoti for + adj.compar.nom.m.s. meizon greater + pres.act.ind.3s. eimi + d.a.w/noun nom.m.s. theos + d.a.w/noun gen.f.s. kardia + pro.gen.m.p. ego + conj kai + pres.act.ind.3s. ginosko + adj.acc.nt.p. pas*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 18-20

1. John encourages his “little children” to love one another not just by words but “by deed and truth.”
2. In Jam. 2:15-16 we have a negative example of words minus the appropriate response.
3. Any application where we assist a fellow believer in need must be according to “truth.”
4. Action with honor is what is in view here.

5. Helping a believer in need is an indication that “we are of the truth.”
6. The future tense of “know” looks ahead to an opportunity to make some sacrifice to help another believer in need.
7. This reassurance is yet another indicator that a believer is actively participating in the truth.
8. The prepositional phrase “by this” refers back to verse 18 (cf. 2:3, 5; 3:10, 16; 4:2, 6, 9, 13, 17; 5:2).
9. “By this we know” producing assurance is found in 2:3, 5; 3:19; 4:6, 13; 5:2 of 1st John.
10. In v. 20 the opposite effect of not coming to the aid of another believer in need is presented as a violation of one’s conscience.
11. “Heart” here is a synonym for the conscience.
12. Refusal to apply by a believer who knows what he should do, but does not do the proper thing is to experience a guilty conscience (cf. 1 Sam. 24:5 “And it came about afterward that David’s conscience bothered him because he had cut off the edge of Saul’s robe.”).
13. The good conscience on the part of a believer is to have God’s norms and standards in the soul and act in accordance with those norms (1 Tim. 1:5 “But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”; 19 “keeping faith and a good conscience [Heb. *leb*, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.”; 3:9 “holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.”; Heb. 9:14 “...cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.”).
14. On those occasions when a believer violates the conscience the self-condemnation is not a pleasant experience.
15. It is good to have a conscience that condemns us as it indicates good norms and standards.
16. When we fail to apply like we know we should and experience self-condemnation we are to keep in mind that God perfectly monitors our thoughts and motivations.
17. Nothing is hidden from His scrutiny; even our innermost thoughts (cf. Rev. 2:23).
18. In the life of the positive growing believer this experience of assurance and condemnation is on-going (Rom. 2:5 “in that they (Gentiles) show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts accusing or else defending them.”).
19. We should not play games with God as He “is greater than our heart/conscience and knows all things” (Heb. 4:13 “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”).

Benefits from Application (vv. 21-22)

VERSE 21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God

(Αγαπητοί, ἐὰν ἡ καρδία [ἡμῶν] μὴ καταγινώσκη, παρρησίαν ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν θεόν

[*adj.voc.m.p. agapetos beloved + part ean if + d.a.w/noun nom.f.s. kardia + pro.gen.p. ego + neg me + pres.act.subj.3s. kataginosko condemn + noun acc.f.s. parresia confidence + pres.act.ind.1p. echo have + prep pros before + d.a.w/noun acc.m.s. theos*]);

VERSE 22 and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight (καὶ ὃ ἐὰν αἰτῶμεν

λαμβάνομεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, ὅτι τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ τηροῦμεν καὶ τὰ ἀρεστὰ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ ποιῶμεν
 [conj kai + rel.pro.acc.nt.s. hos + part ean “whatever” + pres.act.subj.1p. aiteo ask +
 pres.act.ind.1p. lambano receive + prep apo from + pro.gen.m.s. autos + conj hoti because +
 d.a.w/noun acc.f.p. entole commandment + pro.gen.m.s. autos + pres.act.ind.1p. tereo keep +
 conj kai + d.a.w/adj.acc.nt.p. arestos pleasing + prep enopion before + pro.gen.m.s. autos +
 pres.act.ind.1p. poieo do]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 21-22

1. When we step up and make the appropriate application and side-step a violated conscience we develop “confidence before God.”
2. Failure to apply tends to undermine one’s confidence.
3. Rebound gets us back where we should be along with putting things behind us.
4. Maintaining the good conscience to the end guarantees confidence at the Bema Seat (2:28).
5. This renewed confidence, says John, produces a dynamic prayer life (v. 22).
6. To the extent that a believer knows and applies the commandments to that degree God will honor our prayers.
7. This prayer promise is for the believer who consistently takes God’s word seriously in all its teachings.
8. Confidence affects the way we approach the throne of grace.
9. Note the connection between effectual prayer (“whatever we ask”) and doing the divine imperatives.
10. If we please God, He will respond appropriately when we call upon Him in prayer.
11. This same formula is found in Jn. 15:7 (“If you abide in Me (FHS), and My words abide in you (resident doctrine in the soul), ask whatever you desire, and it will be done for you.”, 16 “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you bear much fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you.”; 16:23-24).
12. Petition God to reveal to you things that you might not have thought of.
13. Avoid praying according to you lust pattern (wrong content; Jam. 4:3 (“You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your lusts”).
14. Prayer requests are not answered due to lack of faith (Jam. 1:6a “But he must ask in faith without any doubting...”) or simply failing to ask (Jam. 4:2c “You do not have because you do not ask.”).

Maintaining Confidence before God (vv. 23-24)

VERSE 23 This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us (καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐντολὴ αὐτοῦ, ἵνα πιστεύσωμεν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, καθὼς ἔδωκεν ἐντολὴν ἡμῖν [*conj. kai + demon.pro.nom.f.s. houtos this + pres.act.ind.3s. eimi + d.a.w/noun nom.f.s. entole commandment + pro.gen.m.s. autos + conj hina that + aor.act.subj.1p. pisteuo believe + d.a.w/noun loc.nt.s. onoma name + d.a.w/noun gen.m.s. huios son + pro.gen.m.s. autos + noun gen.m.s. Jesus + noun gen.m.s. christos + conj kai + pres.act.subj.1p. agapao love + pro.acc.m.p. allelon one another + conj kathos just as + aor.act.ind.3s. didomi gave + noun acc.f.s. entole + pro.dat.p. ego*]).

VERSE 24 The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him (καὶ ὁ τηρῶν τὰς ἐντολάς αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν αὐτῷ· [*conj. kai + d.a.w/pres.act.part.nom.m.s. tereo keep + d.a.w/noun acc.f.p. entole + pro.gen.m.s. autos + prep en + pro.loc.m.s. autos + pres.act.ind.3s. meno abide + conj. kai + pro.nom.m.s. autos + prep en + pro.loc.m.s. autos*]).

We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us (καὶ ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι μένει ἐν ἡμῖν, ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος οὗ ἡμῖν ἔδωκεν [*conj. kai + prep en + pro.instr.nt.s. houtos this + pres.act.ind.1p. ginosko know + conj hoti that + pres.act.ind.3s. meno + prep en + pro.loc.p. ego + prep ek + d.a.w/noun abl.nt.s. pneuma spirit + rel.pro.abl.nt.s. hos which + pro.dat.p. ego + aor.act.ind.3s. didomi give*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 23-24

1. The path to confidence begins with compliance to the imperative to believe in Christ for salvation (v. 23ab).
2. To believe in God's Son is a commandment for all mankind (Jn. 1:12; 3:15, 16, 18, 36; 5:24; 6:35, 40, 47; 7:38; 11:25-26; Acts 10:43; 16:31; Rom. 1:16; 4:5; 10:4; 1Jn. 5:1, 5, 10).

3. Next comes the imperative to “love one another” (Jn. 13:34; 15:12, 17; 1 Thess. 4:9; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 Jn. 3:11; 4:7, 11, 12; 2 Jn. 1:5).
4. So the first and most important commandment that all who claim to be Christians is to believe in Christ for salvation.
5. It is first in sequence and first in importance.
6. Jesus Christ is the sole object of salvation (Acts 4:12).
7. The second commandment in importance is to love one another.
8. To effectively align ourselves with this commandment we must: (a) consistently use 1 Jn. 1:9; (b) learn how to apply towards one another under a variety of circumstances via GAP; (c) involves both mental attitude and overt actions.
9. For “the one who keeps His commandments” two things are maintained: (1) fellowship as per “abides in Him”; (2) keeping the faith as per “He in him.”
10. How we know this, John says, “is by the Spirit whom He (Christ) has given us.”
11. At a high level of compliance our confidence soars.

END: FIRST JOHN CHAPTER THREE
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