

The Epistle of 1 John - Joy!

Outline

Introduction 1:1-4

	<i>Light</i>	<i>Intro</i> 1:5-7	<i>Faith</i> 1:8-2:2*	<i>Obedience</i> 2:3-6	<i>Love</i> 2:7-11**
Body	<i>Life</i>	2:12-17	2:18-27	2:28-3:10*	3:11-17**
	<i>Knowledge</i>	3:18-24a	3:24b-4:6*	<i>Love</i> 4:7-5:2*	<i>Obedience</i> 5:3-17

Conclusion 5:18-21

The chapter divisions in our Bibles demonstrate a lack of understanding of the structure.

**Major sections end in the middle of a chapter. *Subsections span two chapters.

The epistle of 1 John was written for three purposes. The first reason John, forever the evangelist, wrote this epistle was so non-Christians would believe and be saved.

1 Jn. 5:13. These things I have written to you ... so that you may believe on the name of the Son of God.

The second reason is so we can know who's a Christian and who isn't.

1 Jn. 5:13. These things I have written to you that believe on the name of the Son of God; so that you can know that you have eternal life.

Anyone can claim to be a Christian. But John says there are three tests - the test of faith, of obedience, and of love - so we can know without fail if someone who claims to be a Christian actually is or isn't a Christian.

The statements in 1 John are not requirement-receipt statements, like in his gospel. "He that believes on the Son [requirement] has everlasting life [receipt]," Jn. 3:36. Instead they are test statements. "If we say that we have fellowship with him [claim], and walk in darkness [test], we lie [verdict]," 1 Jn. 1:6. It's like how when we say, "if it has apples, it's an apple tree." We don't mean, "if it has apples [requirement], it becomes an apple tree [receipt];" but rather "if it has apples [test], [we know] it's an apple tree [verdict]."

Why would we want to know if someone's Christian or not? Well, it's useful in selecting elders and in knowing who to partner with in the work of the gospel, etc. But an even greater reason is that if, for example, the reliability of the obedience test is dependent on the certainty that every Christian walks in obedience, then if we know we have believed and been justified, we know we are guaranteed a walk of obedience through the unceasing influence of the indwelling Holy Spirit and because of the influence in our lives of our union with God.

1 Jn. 1:5-6. God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have union with him, and walk in darkness, we lie [and don't have union with him].

This gives us confidence and hope in the battle, because a guaranteed "walk" doesn't mean every "step" is guaranteed, and we can become discouraged when we take some steps in sin, which we certainly will sometimes until the day our bodies are glorified. And this brings us to the third reason John wrote his epistle.

1 Jn. 1:4. These things we write to you so that your joy can be full.

So let's look at the first test, the faith test, or testimony test.

1 Jn. 1:8. All Christians Walk in Faith. If we say that we have no sin [self-righteousness], we deceive ourselves [our claim is false], and the truth is not in us [we're not Christians].

If a person doesn't walk in faith, John says we know he's a non-Christian. If there was a single Christian who didn't walk in faith, we wouldn't be able to tell if a person who didn't walk in faith was a non-Christian or not. So we know all Christians walk in faith. Joy!

1 Jn. 1:9. Only Christians Walk in Faith. If we say that we have union with him [claim to be a Christian], and ... if we agree we're sinners [trust in Messiah's righteousness], he is faithful ... to cleanse us from all unrighteousness [our claim is true, we are Christians].

If a person walks in faith, John says we we know he's a Christian. If there was a single non-Christian who walked in faith, we wouldn't be able to tell if a person who walked in faith was a Christian or not. So we know only Christians walk in faith. This means even famous non-Christians like Gandhi and Mother Teresa didn't walk in faith.

The second test is the obedience test.

1 Jn. 2:4. All Christians Walk in Obedience. He that says, "I know him [claims to be a Christian]," and doesn't keep his commandments, is a liar [isn't a Christian as he claims], and the truth is not in him.

If a person doesn't walk in obedience, John says we know he's a non-Christian. If there was a single Christian who didn't walk in obedience, we wouldn't be able to tell if a person who didn't walk in obedience was a non-Christian or not. So we know all Christians walk in obedience. Joy!

1 Jn. 2:5. Only Christians Walk in Obedience. But whoever keeps his word, truly in him is the love of God perfected [his claim in verse 4 is true, he's a Christian]. Hereby we know that we are in him [we're Christians].

If a person walks in obedience, John says we we know he's a Christian. If there was a single non-Christian who walked in obedience, we wouldn't be able to tell if a person who walked in obedience was a Christian or not. So we know only Christians walk in obedience. This means

even famous non-Christians like Gandhi and Mother Teresa didn't walk in obedience.

The third and last test is the love test.

1 Jn. 2:9. All Christians Walk in Love. He that says he is in the light [claims to be a Christian], and hates his brother, is in darkness [isn't a Christian] even until now.

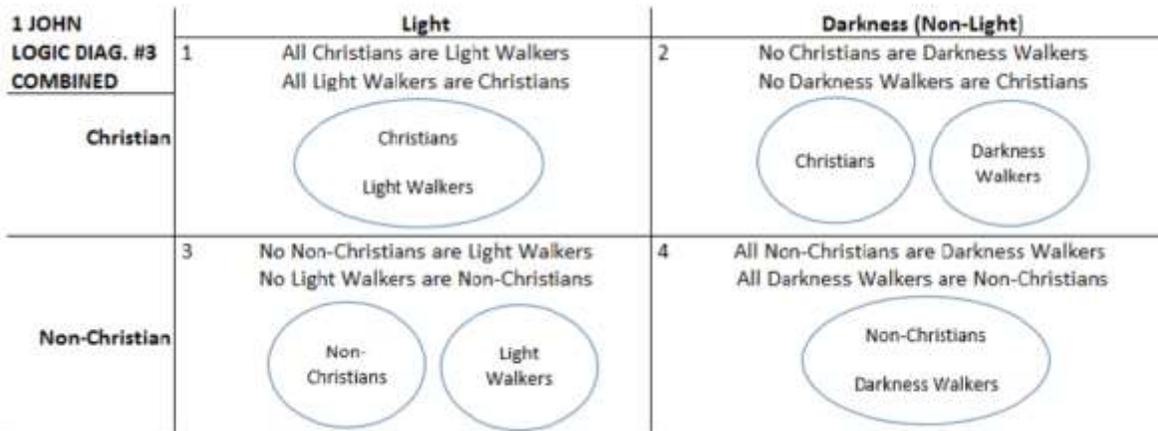
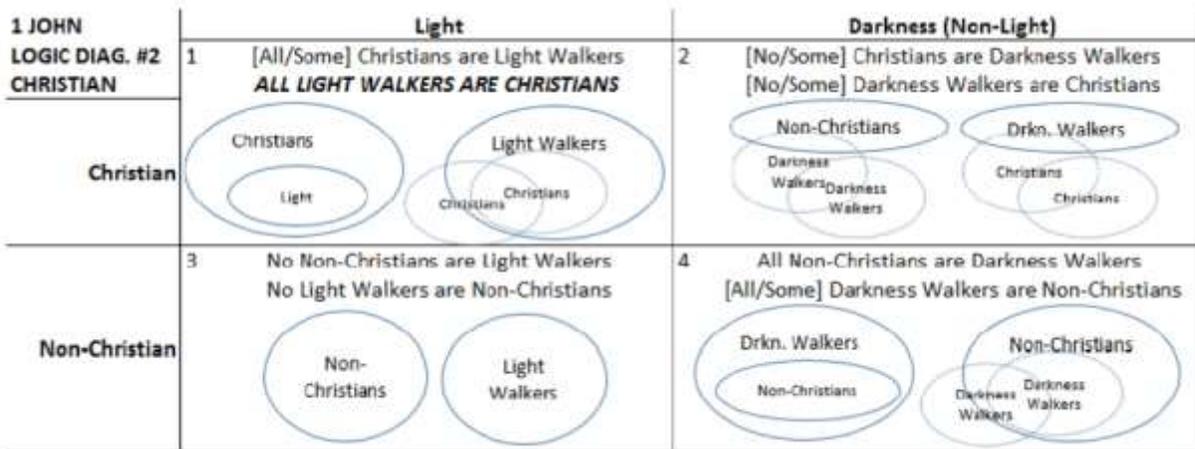
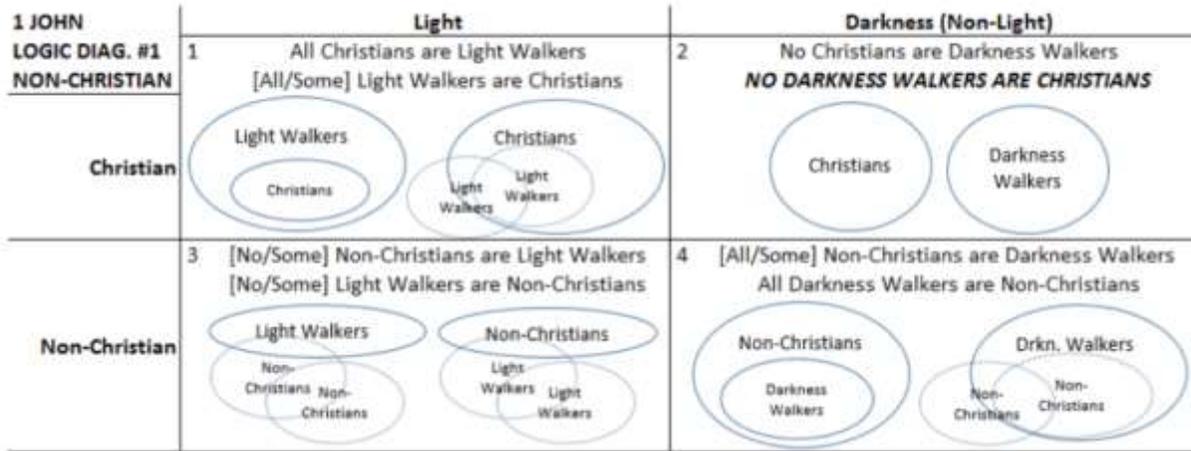
If a person doesn't walk in love, John says we know he's a non-Christian. If there was a single Christian who didn't walk in love, we wouldn't be able to tell if a person who didn't walk in love was a non-Christian or not. So we know all Christians walk in love. Joy!

1 Jn. 2:10. Only Christians Walk in Love. He that loves his brother abides in the light [his claim in verse 9 is true, he's a Christian], and there is no occasion of stumbling in him.

If a person walks in love, John says we know he's a Christian. If there was a single non-Christian who walked in love, we wouldn't be able to tell if a person who walked in love was a Christian or not. So we know only Christians walk in love. This means even famous non-Christians like Gandhi and Mother Teresa didn't walk in love.

1 JOHN OUTLINE: SECTION 1: LIGHT 1:1-2:12

<u>Non-Christian</u>	<u>General Test 1:6</u>	<u>Faith Test 1:8</u>	<u>Obedience Test 2:4</u>	<u>Love Test 2:9</u>
Claim: Christian	if we say we have union	if we say we have no sin	he that saith I know him	he that saith he is in the light
Evidence	and walk in darkness	(if we say we have no sin)	and keepeth not his com.	and hateth his brother
Verdict re Claim	we lie	we deceive ourselves	is a liar	is in darkness
Verdict re Christian	do not the truth: Jn8:44	the truth is not in us: 2Jn1:2	truth is not in him: Jn14:17	even unto now: 1Thes5:4
Implications: See Logic Diag. #1. No Darkness Walkers are Christians (Tares), No Chrs are DrknWkrs (No Carnal Chrs), All Chrs are LgtWkrs (Joy!)				
<u>Christian</u>	<u>General Test 1:7</u>	<u>Faith Test 1:9</u>	<u>Obedience Test 2:5</u>	<u>Love Test 2:10</u>
Claim: Christian	(if we say we have union)	if we confess our sins	(he that saith I know him)	(he that saith he is in the light)
Evidence	if we walk in the light	(if we confess our sins)	whoso keepeth his word	that loveth his brother
Verdict re Claim	we have union	faithful .. to forgive our sins	truly ... love of God (> know)	abideth in the light
Verdict re Christian	cleanses ... all sin: Eph1:17	cleanse ... all unright: Rev1:5	we are in him: 1Jn4:15	none occasion of stumbl: Jn8:12
Implications: See Logic Diag. #2. All Light Walkers are Christians, No Non-Chrs are LgtWkrs (No Ghandis), All Non-Chrs are DrksWkrs				
<u>Non-Christian</u>		<u>Faith Test 1:10</u>	<u>Obedience Test 2:6</u>	<u>Love Test 2:11</u>
Claim: Christian		if we say we have not sinned	he that saith he abideth in him	(he that saith he is in the light)
Evidence		(if we say we have not sinned)	ought ... walk ... as he walked	he that hateth his brother
Verdict re Claim		we make him a liar		is in darkness
Verdict re Christian		his word is not in us: Jn5:38-40		in darkness ... blinded: 2Cor4:4
Implications: See Logic Diag. #3. All Christians and Only Christians are Light Walkers, All Non-Christians and Only Non-Christians are DrksWkrs				



Romans 6-8a. New Master, Husband, and Mind

When Romans 6:2 says, “How will we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?” it doesn’t mean “how can we in good conscience live in sin.” It means it’s not possible. In general, employees obey their masters; though none obey perfectly, and some obey better than others. But when you change employers, for the most part, your daily activities change.

When we died and rose with Messiah by having been put into him at the point of his death, we were legally emancipated from sin who was our previous master, and enslaved instead to God and righteousness. “Being then emancipated from sin, you became the servants of righteousness,” Rom. 6:18. Therefore, it’s impossible for us to live the same way we used to, because now we serve righteousness.

2 Cor. 5:17. If any man is in Messiah, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

We also have a new mind through the indwelling Spirit. We love righteousness, and hate sinning; and our new way of thinking, is the key to sanctification.

Rom. 8:5-6. They that are after the flesh do mind [think about] the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit [think about] the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally [fleshly] minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

The Spirit does not force us to do righteousness, but his influence is so strong and persistent that our general way of life can’t help but change. Our walk changes without fail, even though every step is still subject to our will.

Some Sins Are Impossible for Christians to Continue In

There are some sins it’s impossible for regenerated men to continue in.

1 Cor. 6:9-11. Don’t you know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Don’t be deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified.

Gal. 5:19-21. The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Eph. 5:3-6. Fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it [ideally] not be once named among you [though it’s possible to be infrequently named among us], as becomes saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving

of thanks. For this you know [I hope you know by now], that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Messiah and of God.

Rev. 21:8. The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, will have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. Let no man deceive you with vain words.

Now, if a regenerated man really forces himself, going against his new nature and the indwelling Holy Spirit, it's possible for him to temporarily continue a limited time in some of those things. But either he will feel so bad he will repent, or God will take him home.

1 John 5:16. If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he will ask, and he will give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he should pray for it.

There was a man in Corinth having physical relations with his step-mother. Paul told the Corinthians to stop praying for him, to prohibit him from joining their meetings, and not to eat with him even in private.

1 Cor. 5:4-5, 10. In the name of our Lord Jesus Messiah, when you are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Messiah, to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. ... I have written to you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

If the man had been unregenerate, he could have continued in that sin, and gone on with his life. But since he was a believer, if he didn't repent, God would have taken him home through sickness or accident. "The prayer of faith will save the sick, ... and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him," James 5:15. The man in Corinth stopped having relations with his step-mother; and the congregation welcomed him back.

2 Cor. 2:6-11. Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise [now] you ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one would be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that you would confirm your love toward him. ... To whom you forgive any thing, I forgive also, ... lest Satan would get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Our Works After Justification by Faith Alone

It's really the greatest motivation to godliness, to know it's impossible for us to walk in unrighteousness. We know it makes no sense to invest time and effort to move towards a lifestyle we know is impossible for us to continue in, so we don't even bother going in that direction. However, only the direction of our walk is guaranteed; not each individual step.

There is no spiritual event between justification and glorification for a Christian. "Whom he justified, them he also glorified," Rom. 8:30. Sanctification is a process; not an event. There's no second blessing event that can cause us to walk in perfect righteousness without any sinning. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," 1 Jn. 1:8.

We are guaranteed a minimum of fruit, but the actual amount of fruit depends on our effort. "Good ground ... brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold," Matt. 13:8. "Work out your own salvation [to the max] with fear and trembling. For it is God which works in you [to a guaranteed minimum] both to will and to do of his good pleasure," Phil. 2:12-13.

2 Cor. 13:9. This also we wish, even your perfection.

Look at the amount of effort Paul expended to be perfect, complete, and mature; though he never attained, and though he knew he never would attain until his body was glorified.

Phil. 3:11-15. If by any means I might attain to the [level of perfection of the] resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Messiah Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Messiah Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as [would] be perfect, be thus minded.

Men naturally want to justify themselves by their works. But justification is by faith alone. However, now, after justification, is the time to work! The way to more perfect and fruitful sanctification is not to "let go and let God," but to use the Bible for "the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2), and to motivate yourself to exert more effort. "Watch you, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong! Let all your things be done with charity," 1 Cor. 16:13-14.

The greatest hindrance to Christian sanctification is the false doctrine of "let go and let God," as taught by John Wesley (Christian perfectionism), Phoebe Palmer, William Boardman (higher life), Hannah Whitall Smith, the Keswick Convention, Charles Trumbull (victorious life), and many others.

As Watchman Nee (1903-1972) erroneously taught:

Watchman Nee. From now on I will not do anything, I will not manage anything, and I will not be concerned about anything. From now on I will let go. Brothers and sisters, this is surrendering. This is letting go. [Nee, Overcoming Life, 98.]

But Paul says, "We labor" (2 Cor 5:9).