

Dear Heavenly Father,

### **Praise**

John said, “In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” ( 1 John 4:9–10). I praise you today for loving me so much that you sent your only Son to die for me! Jesus has turned away your righteous wrath and cleansed me from all sin. Praise the Lord!

### **Today in Your Word**

Today you shared with me the letters of John. I especially appreciated 1 John because of its straightforward teaching on what it means to be a genuine disciple of Christ. John knew there were false teachers and antichrists in the church (1 John 2:18, 26), and he wrote this letter to reaffirm the truth which his readers already knew (1 John 2:21). John reminded them that false teachers and antichrists can be recognized by what they say and how they live. A false teacher will say they have fellowship with you, but they will walk in darkness (1 John 1:6). They will say, “I know him,” but they will not keep your commands (1 John 2:4). They will say, “I love God,” but they will hate their brother (1 John 4:20). They will also deny that Jesus is the Messiah, they will say Jesus is not fully human, they will love the world, and they will make a practice of sinning (1 John 2:15, 22; 3:7–8; 4:2). This means that I must examine the lives of those who claim to be disciples of Christ. If they profess faith but practice sin, they are false. If they love in word but hate in deed, they are false. If they claim to love you but love the world, they are false. If they teach that you don’t care about sin, they are false. It’s my duty to test the claims of those who talk the talk and make sure they walk the walk. John also told his readers how to recognize a genuine disciple of Christ. A true disciple will walk in the light and accept the cleansing blood of Christ (1 John 1:7). They will confess and repent of their sins, and seek your forgiveness (1 John 1:9). They will keep your commands and love their brother (1 John 2:5, 10). They will *not* make a practice of sinning, but will instead hate the world and love the light (1 John 3:6, 9). They will overcome Satan, do your will, confess Jesus as the Messiah, proclaim Jesus to be the Son of God, and purify themselves from the pollution of the world (1 John 2:13, 23; 3:3). Above all, their life will be characterized by love, for “whoever loves has been born of God and knows God” (1 John 4:7). Love is the defining mark of a true disciple, and John wanted his readers to understand that true love always expresses itself in obedience. He said, “This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments” (1 John 5:3). This means that I love you by obeying your Word. When I obey your Word, I love my brother, for you commanded me to love, not just in word, but also in deed (1 John 3:18; 5:2). Obedience then gives me the assurance of salvation, for “by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments” (1 John 2:3). Thus love leads to obedience, and obedience leads to assurance, and assurance leads to more love. What a wonderful way to know that I am truly your child!

### **Reflection**

John said, “If anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him?” (1 John 3:17). What a convicting question! Do I say that I love my brother, yet refuse to give him a helping hand? (cf. James 2:14–17). Do I love in word only, or also “in deed and in truth”? (1 John 3:18).

### **Request**

Father, it’s easy to say that I love you and love others, but the proof is in the doing. I ask that you would help me today to love you by obeying your commands and to love others by taking action to meet their needs.

### **Thanksgiving**

Thank you for the assurance that comes from a life of full surrender to your will. When I keep your commands, I abide in you and you in me, and I know that you abide in me by the Spirit whom you have given me (1 John 3:24).

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

*Suggested Hymn: “[What Manner of Love](#)” – Daniel S. Warner.*

*Meditation Verse: 3 John 1:4.*