

“God’s Perfect Love” (1 John 2:1-6)

A My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.

B And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of* the whole world.

C By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

C' The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

B' but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected.

A' By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

Analysis of Text: The literary structure of the text appears to be a six-part chiasm (A, B, C, C', B', A'). Seeking not to sin [not to violate God’s commandments], means walking the way Jesus walked (A and A'). Both C and C' refer to keeping God’s commandments, C from a positive and C' from a negative perspective.

One of the big questions in the text is the meaning of “the love of God” (b'). Do these words refer to our love for God or to God’s love for us? I favor the latter meaning for two reasons. First, our love for God is never perfected in this life. Second, the propitiation and advocacy of Jesus Christ are God’s love directed toward us and in us (Rom. 5:8, 1 John 4:10). The Holy Spirit applies this demonstrated love to our hearts (Rom. 5:5). If the love of God is perfected in us, Christ’s propitiation and advocacy reaches its goal in us to begin inner transformation resulting in outer change.

In 1 John 1:1-4, John takes the position of one of the apostles who heard, saw, and touched our Lord. He uses “we” and “you.” In verses 5-10, John changes places and becomes one of the “we” about whom he speaks. Now, in 1 John 1:2-6, John tenderly speaks as a father to his children.

Main Point of the Text

1. What is the text about?

Answer: Seeking to walk like Christ by following God’s commandments and not sinning.

2. What does seeking to walk like Christ by following God’s commandments and not sinning indicate?

Answer: That God’s love in Christ, our propitiation and advocate, has reached its goal and that we know Him.

3. Main Point of the Text: Seeking to walk like Christ by following God’s commandments and not sinning indicates that God’s love in Christ, our propitiation and advocate, has reached its goal and that we know Him.

Main Lesson of the Text:

If you seek to walk like Christ by following God’s commandments and not sinning, then God’s love in Christ, your propitiation and advocate, has reached its goal in you and you know Him.

Food for Thought: Understanding the text as described fits in quite nicely with John’s overall purpose in First John (1 John 5:13). These verses therefore show you another facet of John’s argument nurturing your assurance of salvation. You must seek to live like Christ, follow His commandments, and shun sin. This form of spontaneous living is evidence that Christ is indeed your Propitiation and Advocate and that God’s love in Christ has reached its goal of working change within you. When you do sin, you seek forgiveness and remember Christ is your Propitiation and Advocate. You remember that Christ’s sacrifice covers your sin and absorbs God’s wrath for your sin. You remember that Christ confesses you before His Father in heaven (Matt. 10:32). He Tells His Father, “Yes Father, I died for (Your Name); he/she is one of Mine.” The more you know and deeply understand these things, the more you will grow in your assurance of salvation.