

Believer, You Are Forgiven

Toby DeHay / Bridgeway Church / Nov 30, 2025

1 John / Identity / 1 John 2:12–17

1 John 2:12–17 ESV

¹² I am writing to you, little children,

because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake.

¹³ I am writing to you, fathers,

because you know him who is from the beginning.

I am writing to you, young men,

because you have overcome the evil one.

I write to you, children,

because you know the Father.

¹⁴ I write to you, fathers,

because you know him who is from the beginning.

I write to you, young men,

because you are strong,

and the word of God abides in you,
and you have overcome the evil one.

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

Overview/Intro

Last week's main idea; "If you are in the light, walk in the light."

This week John uses this section of scripture to solidify the *walking in the light* language.

In chapter 2, John reminded believers how and why they are different:

1 John 2:3 ESV

³ And **by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.**

1 John 2:10 ESV

¹⁰ **Whoever loves his brother abides in the light**, and in him there is no cause for stumbling.

Church, if you've experienced the pull from the Holy Spirit toward God and if you've repented from your sin and believed the Good News of the gospel, you are in the light.

Today, John helps us drill even further down regarding our identity as believers.

Main Idea:

Believer, you abide in the Light. Love and Obey the Father.

Main Principles:

1. **Believer, You Are Forgiven!**
2. **Believer, Don't Love the World!**

Illustration of Encouragement

“Dad” videos:

There are two types.

The first are mostly comedic and poke fun at the way dad gets mad that you didn't hold the flashlight right, can't tell the difference between an adjustable wrench and channel lock pliers, and are frustrated that you mowed the yard with the left side tires half inflated.

The second is how I think of John loving his kids. DadAdviceFromBo are some of the best.

Bo does a 3 minute video for people who didn't have a dad or maybe their dad wasn't handy.

He shows you how to change a flat tire.

He teaches young men how to tie a tie.

He even did one encouraging young guys to stop overthinking everything. He said, “repeat this with me, analysis is paralysis.”

Bo always ends the titles of his videos with, “Love Dad.”

As we get into today's text, I want you to see God's love for you as a child of His.

Believer, You Are Forgiven!

Audience, Devices to Deliver his point, Reasons for Writing, WHO YOU ARE

Audience

I believe that John is writing, not to three different groups of people, but one group (little children) and he is stylistically highlighting the other two (Fathers and Young Men) so that we get the point.

Little Children

Let's see the precedent for using this phrase in from our Lord: (The humble and repentant in [Matt. 11:25](#) and the disciples as he is preparing them for His act of love and obedience on the cross in [John 13:33](#)). 13 times in 1 John

Matthew 11:25 ESV

²⁵ At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to **little children**;

John 13:33 ESV

³³ **Little children**, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.'

Fathers

There is only one other place in the NT where believers are called "Fathers."

1 Timothy 5:1 ESV

¹ Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers,

Here, Paul is encouraging Timothy how to pastorally care for older men, not those who are more mature in the faith.

If this is the case, I'm comfortable with applying the same idea here, since there are no indications toward labeling these older men as more mature.

Young Men

In the NT, this word for "young men" is only found here and in 2:14 and 9 other times in the NT. Each of the 9 times they indicate those who are physically younger.

So John isn't talking to 3 groups of people, but really, one group and breaking it down to those who are older and younger.

The entirety of the church - including the older men and women as well as younger men and women.

Stylistic/Literary Help

We also see some stylistic clues that John uses to hammer home his point - Believer, You Are Forgiven.

Same word, different meaning

The word for "child" changes from *teknon* to *paidion*. (12 & 13)

The first is of a child to a parent and the second is a child under the discipline of a parent.

You have both the ideas of kinship and subordination.

A Change in tense (Past: 12-13a to Aorist: 13b-14)

(I am writing/I write) Authors often used a tense change to highlight what they are saying.

Repetition

(see PNG of [1 John 2:12-14](#) with handwritten notes)

“Because...”

Band of Brothers, Episode 9 “Why We Fight”

The men of Easy Company are now in Germany, aware that the Germans are surrendering by the thousands and that the war is winding down. With more time to reflect, some of the men are wondering if it was all worth it and begin to question whether the sacrifices they and their absent colleagues have made were worth it. That question is answered when they come across a concentration camp and they see first hand the atrocities committed by the Nazis. ([garykmcd IMDB](#))

Reasons

Because...

Your sins are forgiven for His name's sake ([1 John 2:12](#))

I like the NET Bible translation of this verse a little better:

The NET Bible Chapter 2

2:12 I am writing to you, little children, that **your sins have been forgiven because of his name.**

Your sins are forgiven, not because of what you've done.

Not because of your family name.

Not because of your position.

They are forgiven because of His name.

you know Him who is from the beginning ([1 John 2:13](#))

Jesus is the Alpha and Omega. The Beginning and the End.

John's gospel says, [John 1:1-3](#)

John 1:1–3 ESV

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² **He was in the beginning with God.** ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

You have overcome the evil one ([1 John 2:13b](#))

Why have you “overcome the evil one?”

Because God Himself abides in you and He has victory over the evil one!

You know the Father ([1 John 2:13c](#))

How do we know that we know the Father?

- You keep His commands (2:3)
- You walk in the light (2:7)
- You love fellow believers (2:10)

You are strong and the Word of God abides in you ([1 John 2:14](#))

Not so much your own strength, but because you have Christ in you, you have strength to overcome the evil one.

Brothers and sisters, when we doubt our identity, reread chapter 2 and remember you are forgiven, you are in the light.

Each of us are in a different place in our walk with the Lord.

What steps do you need to make to keep His commands, walk in the light, and love fellow believers?

Believer, Don't Love the World

The first half of this passage brought some encouragement to walk in the light.

The second half reminds us how this practically plays out.

Changing the oil with dad:

First oil change - praising me and encouraging me for the good job I did.

Extra time focusing on the oil filter.

1 John 2:15 ESV

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Verse 15 is the only command seen in these verses.

“Do not love the world or the things in the world...”

John is bringing to light the reality of the spiritual realm.

You’ve been born again into the Kingdom of God - which John argues these people have.

OR, you are, not just living in, but living for the physical world AND the things in it.

The first half of the sermon - Believer, You are Forgiven - provides markers of being born again.

This exhortation, or command in verse 15, is sort of telling them “what not to do,” but in reality it’s saying:

Believer, if the because statements from 12-14 are true - and they are - you simply can’t love the world.

Those who “love” their brother abide in the light. When we love each other well, we are interested in taking care of each other, it’s “other” focused, there is a mental/physical shift from “what’s better for me” to “what’s best for you.”

Here in verse 15, we see the opposite. Love of the world is about self-gratification and pleasure as we will see in a moment.

John isn't presenting an argument of what brings joy vs. what is sinful, it's a warning for those are in the light and a marker to differentiate between those in the light and in the dark.

John isn't saying we as believers won't struggle with sin.

He's already addressed this.

1 John 2:1 [ESV](#)

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.

Notice [1 John 2:15](#)

1 John 2:15 [ESV](#)

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. **If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**

He's saying "if you love the world, you do not love the Father."

John is juxtaposing the love that believers have for the Lord and each other.

Look back at [1 John 2:10](#)

1 John 2:10 [ESV](#)

¹⁰ Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling.

A love for others versus love for oneself.

One is from God and the other is from the evil one.

Notice how John breaks this down in verse 16.

1 John 2:16 [ESV](#)

¹⁶ For all that is in the world—**the desires of the flesh** and the **desires of the eyes and pride of life**—is not from the Father but is from the world.

- Desires of the flesh (or cravings of sinful man).
 - our overall sinful nature.
- John drills down a little here: **desires of the eyes**
 - Sinful cravings of what we see. Maybe a better description is not what we see, but what we linger on or seek to see.
 - We may immediately think of a particular sin, and it's more than this, not less.
 - Our eyes desire things that are not ours, which lead to covetousness and greed.

Exodus 20:17 ESV

¹⁷ “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”

- **And pride of life.** The NET Bible says, “the arrogance produced by material possessions.”)
 - John uses this language again in [1 John 3:17](#)

1 John 3:17 ESV

¹⁷ But 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?

Again, John hammers home, “do you love God and the people of God, or the world?”

John is very clear with his audience.

“If this is you, you are not from the Father, but from the world.”

Verse 17, he reminds his audience of the consequences of loving the world:

1 John 2:17 ESV

¹⁷ **And the world is passing away along with its desires,** but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

My closing question to you is:

“What do you desire?”

Is your overwhelming heart beat to keep His commands, walk in the light, and love fellow believers?

Transition from [1 John 2:17](#) to the Gospel

“[1 John 2:17](#) says, ‘*And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.*’

John shows us a clear contrast. Everything around us—the things we strive for, the things we think will satisfy us—will ultimately fade. But then comes this promise: *whoever does the will of God abides forever.*

That phrase should make us pay attention. What does it actually mean to ‘do the will of God’ in a way that leads to eternal life? John isn’t calling us to try harder or to earn our way to God. He’s pointing us to the one path that truly leads to life.”

Short Gospel Presentation

“The Bible tells us that the will of God, at its core, is that we believe in the One He has sent—Jesus. God knows we are sinners who cannot save ourselves. So in love, He sent Jesus to live the perfect life we could not live, to die in our place, and to rise again so that we could be forgiven and made new.

Eternal life doesn’t come from our effort; it comes from trusting in Jesus—turning from our sin and believing in His finished work. When we put our faith in Him, we are brought into God’s family, forgiven, and given a life that truly lasts. That’s what it means to ‘abide forever.’”

Transition from the Gospel to Communion

“And for those who have trusted in Christ, communion reminds us of exactly how He made that eternal life possible. The bread reminds us of His body broken for us, and the cup reminds us of His blood poured out for our forgiveness.

As we prepare to take communion together, let’s remember what John is urging us toward: not to cling to what is passing away, but to hold tightly to the Savior who gives us everlasting life. Let’s come to the table with grateful hearts, remembering Jesus’ sacrifice and the eternal hope we have because of Him.”