

THAT YOU MAY  
**KNOW**

A STUDY OF FIRST JOHN

“Assurance and  
the Persistence in  
Truth”

**1 John 2:18–27**

## REVIEW

- **1 John 1:1–4 – “Assurance and the Historicity of Christ”**

 *Do you believe that the biblical testimony about Jesus Christ is true?*

- **1 John 1:5–10 – “Assurance and the Confession of Sin”**

 *Are you deeply aware of your sin and do you acknowledge it to God?*

- **1 John 2:1–2 – “Assurance and the Sufficiency of Christ”**

 *Do you believe that the sacrifice of Christ is sufficient for your sin?*

- **1 John 2:3–6 – “Assurance and the Obedience of God’s Commands”**

 *Are you zealous to obey God’s revealed will for your life?*

- **1 John 2:7–11 – “Assurance and the Love of One’s Brother”**

 *Do you give yourself sacrificially for the benefit of other believers?*

- **1 John 2:12–17 – “Assurance and the Hatred of Evil”**

 *Do you loathe the things that are contrary to God and His ways?*

## “Assurance and the Persistence in Truth” – 1 John 2:18–27

“Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not *really* of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but *they went out*, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us. But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. . . .

“As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life. These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you. As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.”



# I. The Characteristic of Our Age

1 John 2:18

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*“ . . . even now many antichrists  
have appeared . . . . ”*

“Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour” (2:18).



- John’s first words in this section are words of *warning*; the threat he describes is one of his primary motivations for writing.
- “Children” – although John’s language is serious, he begins with another address of affection and assurance (see 2:1, 7, 12, 13).
- “The last hour” – bookends the sentence; a unique expression emphasizing to his audience that they exist in the era in which *Christ’s coming is imminent* (see 2:28–3:3).

“Although John avoids any specific statement of time for the return of Christ, he believes it is necessary to stress the urgency of the contemporary scene which clearly manifests eschatological characteristics.”

—D. Edmond Heibert, *Epistles of John*, 107



**“Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour” (2:18).**

- **“Just as you heard”** – John’s warning is not *new*; he repeats what had already been taught by Jesus and His apostles (e.g., Matt 24:4–5, 24–25; 2 Thess 2:1–12; 2 Pet 2:1).
- **“Antichrist”** – language unique to John; ἀντί (*anti*, “instead of/against”) + Χριστός (*Christos*, “Christ”) = “one opposed to Christ.”
  - This one is the same as “the abomination of desolation” (Matt 24:15), “the lawless one” (2 Thess 2:8), “the beast” (Rev 13:1–18).
- **“Is coming”** – this one is *on his way* but *not yet here*.

**“Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour” (2:18).**

- **“Even now many antichrists have appeared”** – in contrast to the *then* is the *now*; in contrast to the *one* is the *many*; see 1 John 4:3; 2 John 7.
- **“From this we know”** – the presence of many opponents fulfilled Christ’s own prophecy (e.g., Matt 24:4–6); they were forerunners, they were foreshadowing the coming of the end.
- **“They were not a previous problem the church had faced and overcome. They were an ever-present danger from the beginning of the church until that day”** (Derickson, *1, 2, & 3 John*, 223).



## II. The Characteristics of the Counterfeits

1 John 2:19, 22–23, 26

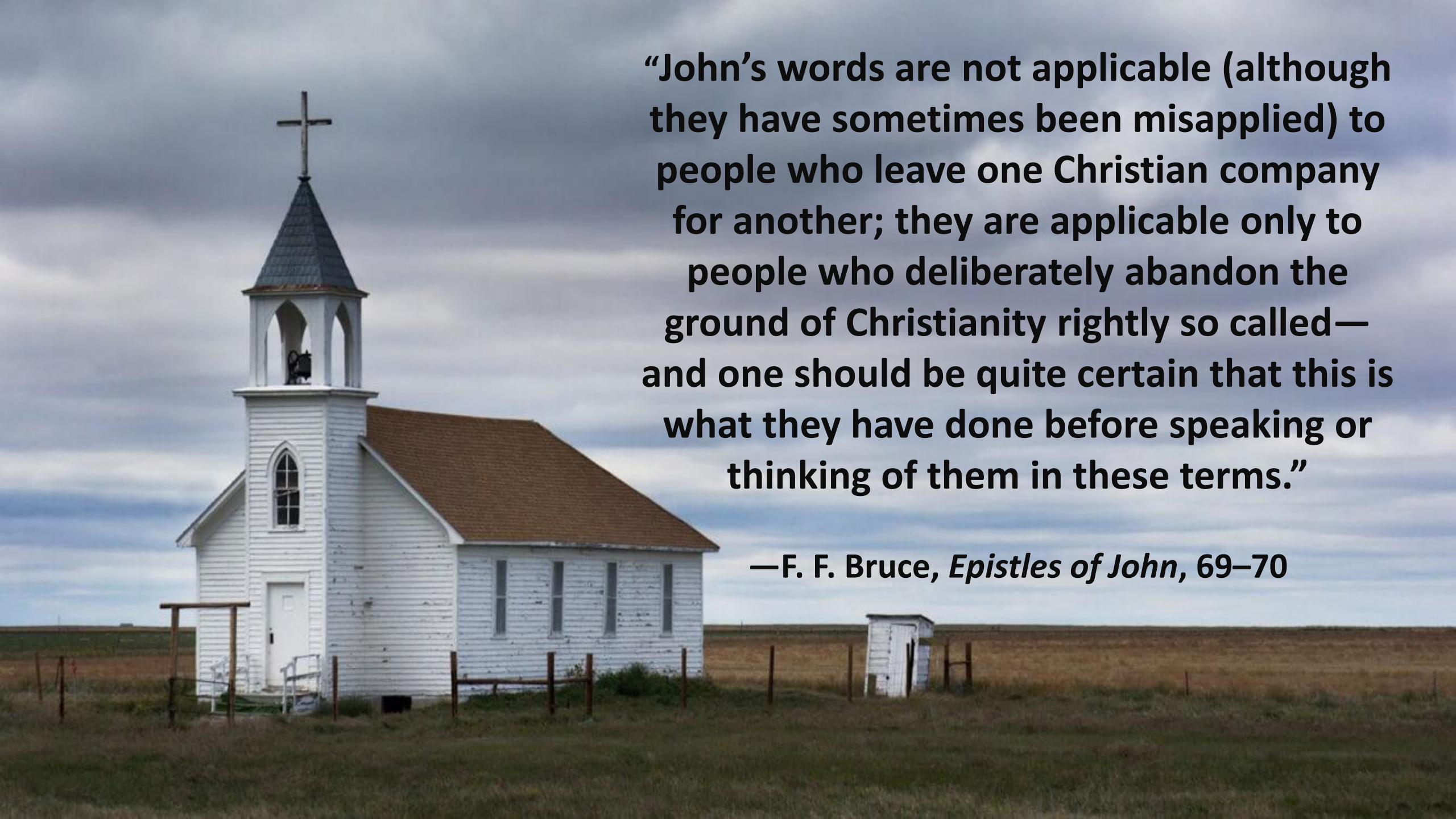
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*“They went out from us, but  
they were not really of us . . . .”*

## A. They abandon the teaching of the apostles.

“They went out from us, but they were not *really* of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but *they went out*, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us” (v. 19).

- “They went out” – a decisive act; a figurative departure—one of the primary evidences of counterfeit faith.
- “From/of us” – emphatic; the same phrase is repeated four times; “with us” also occurs.
- “Us” – the apostles (see 1:1–3), and thus, the teaching they proclaimed.
- Ultimately, this departure was a departure from *apostolic doctrine*.



**“John’s words are not applicable (although they have sometimes been misapplied) to people who leave one Christian company for another; they are applicable only to people who deliberately abandon the ground of Christianity rightly so called—and one should be quite certain that this is what they have done before speaking or thinking of them in these terms.”**

**—F. F. Bruce, *Epistles of John*, 69–70**

**“They went out from us, but they were not *really* of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but *they went out*, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us” (v. 19).**

- **“So that it would be shown . . .”** – their departure proves that they never belonged to the true community of faith.
- Counterfeit faith is often not recognized at the beginning; a strong profession and sacrificial acts of service can conceal the true identity.
- Jesus foretold this in the parable of the wheat and tares (Matt 13:24–30).
- “Continuance is the test of reality” (Bruce, *The Epistles of John*, 69).

**Truth and  
Time**

## B. They reject the person of Jesus.

**“Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also” (vv. 22–23).**

- **“The liar”** – the counterfeit professor who eventually reveals his real identity (see John 8:44, 54–55); his *profession* of faith turns into a *denial*.
- **“Denies”** – “to repudiate, disown”; not an isolated act (e.g., Peter in Matt 26:70, 72) but an ongoing conviction.
- **“That Jesus is the Christ”** – the central issue of Christianity: “Who do you say that I am? . . .” (Matt 16:15–16; also John 20:30–31; Rom 10:9; 1 John 4:3).

**“Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also” (vv. 22–23).**

- John speaks of this denial in greater detail later in 2 John 7.
  - *2<sup>nd</sup> cent. Docetic Gnosticism* – taught that Jesus only appeared to be human but wasn’t truly human in reality.
  - *2<sup>nd</sup> cent. Cerinthian Gnosticism* – taught that the Christ descended on Jesus at His baptism and left Him before His crucifixion.
- **“The antichrist . . . denies”** – present-day antichrists need not be well-known teachers; they only need be those *who deny*.

**“Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.**

**Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also” (vv. 22–23).**

- **“Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father”** – a reference to salvation.
  - **John 14:6** – “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”
  - **John 17:3** – “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”
- You cannot deny the apostolic teaching about Jesus Christ and still claim to know God.

## C. They seek the corruption of believers.

**“These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you” (v. 26).**

- **“These things”** – the contents of this section, particularly vv. 18–25.
- **“Trying to deceive you”** – “to cause to go astray from a specific way,” as the planets did to sailors who thought they were stars and navigated their ships accordingly.
- The counterfeits not only *departed* and *denied*, they also were known as those who *deceived*.
- Their own destruction is not enough; they often become avid “influencers” for the destruction of others.



### III. The Characteristics of the Redeemed

1 John 2:20–21, 24–25, 27

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*“But you have an anointing  
from the Holy One . . . .”*

## A. They possess spiritual understanding.

**“But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth” (vv. 20–21).**

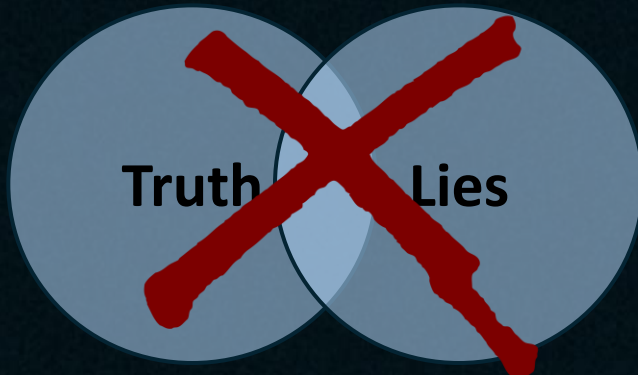
- **“But you have”** – John makes a sharp distinction between the counterfeits (“they”) and his audience (“you”); the crucial difference is in what they *possess*.
- **“An anointing from the Holy One”** – χρῖσμα (*chrisma*), a term used here and in v. 27 but nowhere else in the NT; “Spirit-wrought understanding.”
- “It is the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit that establishes believers in their faith and enables them to understand God’s truth” (Hiebert, 112).



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**“But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth” (vv. 20–21).**

- **“And you all know”** – the result of this enlightenment/illumination; not given to the elite only, but to *all* genuine believers.
- **“The truth”** – the truth about Jesus, that He is “the Christ, the Son of God” (John 20:31); God “in the flesh” (2 John 7); “the Lord . . . whom God raised from the dead” (Rom 10:9).



- **“No lie is of the truth”** – truth never leads to lies and lies can never be blamed on truth; therefore, *liars were never part of the truth.*

## B. They persist in timeless truth.

**“As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life” (vv. 24–25).**

- **“As for you”** – again, John draws an emphatic distinction between the counterfeits (“they”) and his audience (“you”).
- **“Let that abide in you”** – the verb appears three times in v. 24, and once in v. 19; implies more than just *presence*, but *continual influence*.
- **“Which you heard from the beginning”** – apostolic teaching, which was based upon the OT Scriptures and was recorded in the NT.

**“As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life” (vv. 24–25).**

- John introduces an important condition that serves to keep genuine believers on the right path.
  - Exhortations to obedience are part of God’s means of preservation.
- **“If [it] . . . abides in you, you also will abide”** – the continual influence of the truth of God’s Word *preserves* the believer from becoming *deceived*.
- **“In the Son and in the Father”** – the spiritual location of the redeemed; safe and secure; partakers in the life of the Godhead.

“As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. **This is the promise** which He Himself made to us: **eternal life**” (vv. 24–25).

- “**This is the promise . . . eternal life**” – John returns to a precious reminder of God’s grace: a *promise of salvation* that is not based on human effort, but on *simple faith*.
- **John 3:16** – “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”
- **John 10:28–30** – “I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”

## C. They enjoy permanent presence.

**“As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him” (v. 27).**

- **“As for you”** – again, John draws an emphatic distinction.
- **“The anointing”** – the Spirit’s ministry of granting understanding (v. 20).
- **“Abides in you”** – this ministry *makes its permanent home* in all genuine believers.
- **“No need for anyone to teach you”** – not a rejection of the need for *teachers* (see 1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11); a reference to the gospel basics.

**“As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him” (v. 27).**

- **“Teaches you about all things”** – ultimately, it is the Spirit’s ministry to press truth into us to the point of comprehension, certainty, reminder, and application; His work is never in vain (see John 14:26).
- **“Is not a lie”** – the Spirit’s ministry never leads toward error.
- **“You abide in Him”** – the promise of the Spirit’s enduring ministry of truth-teaching does not alleviate personal responsibility to rely upon Him and pursue truth.

# THAT YOU MAY KNOW

A STUDY OF FIRST JOHN

- ✓ Believers are to draw assurance from their ongoing hunger for God's Word.
- ✓ The apostasy of professing believers should not cause us to question the nature of faith, but should alert us to the reality of spurious professions.
- ✓ Praise God for the two vital agents of your preservation, which He gives *graciously*: His Spirit and His Word.
- ✓ Avail yourself of this Word; not only does God command it, but it will keep you from stumbling.