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World Bible Translation Center
P.O. Box 820648
Fort Worth, Texas 76182, USA
Telephone: 1-817-595-1664
Toll-Free in US: 1-888-54-BIBLE
E-Mail: info@wbtc.com
World Bible Translation Center's Web site: <http://www.wbtc.com>

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1 John

1 We tell you now about something that has existed (*lived*) since before the world began:

This we heard,
we saw with our own eyes,
we watched,
we touched with our hands.

We write to you about the Word (*Christ*) that gives life. ²That Life was shown to us. We saw it. We can give proof about it. Now we tell you about that Life. It is Life that continues forever. This is the Life that was with God the Father. God showed this Life to us. ³Now we tell you the things that we have seen and heard. Why? Because we want you to have fellowship* together with us. The fellowship we share together is with God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴We write these things to you so that you can be full of joy with us.

God Forgives Our Sins

⁵We heard the true teaching from God. Now we tell it to you: God is light* (*goodness*). In God there is no darkness (*sin*). ⁶So if we say that we have fellowship* with God, but we continue living in darkness (*sin*), then we are liars—we don't follow the truth. ⁷God is in the light (*goodness*). We should live in the light, too. If we live in the light, then we share fellowship with each other. And when we live in the light, the blood (*death*) of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. (Jesus is God's Son.)

⁸If we say that we have no sin, we are fooling ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

fellowship Associating with people and sharing things together with them. Christians share love, joy, sorrow, faith, and other things with each other and with God.

light This word is used to show what God is like. It means goodness or truth.

⁹But if we confess (*admit*) our sins, then God will forgive our sins. We can trust God to do this. God does what is right. God will make us clean from all the wrong things we have done.

¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, then we are saying that God is a liar—we don't accept God's true teaching.

Jesus Is Our Helper

2 My dear children, I write this letter to you so that you will not sin. But if any person sins, we have Jesus Christ to help us. He is the righteous (*good*) One. Jesus defends us before God the Father. ²Jesus is the way our sins are taken away. And Jesus is the way that all people can have their sins taken away, too.

³If we obey what God has told us to do, then we are sure that we truly know God. ⁴A person says, "I know God!" But if that person does not obey God's commands, then that person is a liar. The truth is not in him. ⁵But when a person obeys God's teaching, then God's love has truly arrived at its goal in that person. This is how we know that we are following God: ⁶If a person says that he lives in God, then he must live like Jesus lived.

Jesus Told Us to Love Other People

⁷My dear friends, I am not writing a new command to you. It is the same command you have had since the beginning. This command is the teaching you have already heard. ⁸But also I write this command to you as a new command. This command is true; you can see its truth in Jesus and in yourselves. The darkness (*sin*) is passing away and the true light is already shining.

⁹A person says, "I am in the light.*" But if that person hates his brother or sister, in

Christ, then he is still in the darkness (*sin*).
¹⁰The person that loves his brothers and sisters lives in the light, and there is nothing in that person that will make him do wrong. ¹¹But the person who hates his brother or sister is in darkness. He lives in darkness. That person does not know where he is going. Why? Because the darkness has made him blind.

¹² I write to you, dear children,
 because your sins are forgiven
 through Christ.

¹³ I write to you, fathers,
 because you know the One who existed
 (*lived*) from the beginning.

I write to you, young people,
 because you have defeated the
 Evil One (*the devil*).

¹⁴ I write to you, children,
 because you know the Father.

I write to you, fathers,
 because you know the One who existed
 (*lived*) from the beginning.

I write to you, young people,
 because you are strong;
 the word of God lives in you,
 and you have defeated the Evil One.

¹⁵Don't love this evil world or the things in it. If a person loves the world, the love of the Father (*God*) is not in that person. ¹⁶These are the *evil* things in the world:

Wanting things to please our sinful selves,
 Wanting the sinful things we see,
 Being too proud of the things we have.

But none of those things come from the Father (*God*). All of those things come from the world. ¹⁷The world is passing away. And all the things that people want in the world are passing away. But the person who does what God wants lives forever.

Don't Follow the Enemies of Christ

¹⁸My dear children, the end is near! You have heard that the Enemy of Christ* is coming. And now many enemies of Christ are already here. So we know that the end is near. ¹⁹Those enemies of Christ were in our group.

But they left us. They did not really belong with us. If they were really part of our group, then they would have stayed with us. But they left. This shows that none of them really belonged with us.

²⁰You have the gift* that the Holy One (*God or Christ*) gave you. So you all know *the truth*. ²¹Why do I write to you? Do I write because you don't know the truth? No! I write this letter because you do know the truth. And you know that no lie comes from the truth.

²²So who is the liar? It is the person that says Jesus is not the Christ.* A person that says Jesus is not the Christ is the enemy of Christ. That person does not believe in the Father (*God*) or in his Son (*Christ*). ²³If a person does not believe in the Son, then he does not have the Father. But the person who accepts the Son has the Father, too.

²⁴Be sure that you continue to follow the teaching that you heard from the beginning. If you continue in that teaching, then you will stay in the Son (*Christ*) and in the Father (*God*). ²⁵And this is what the Son promised to us—life forever.

²⁶I am writing this letter about those people who are trying to lead you into the wrong way.

²⁷Christ gave you a special gift.* You still have this gift in you. So you don't need any person to teach you. The gift he gave you teaches you about everything. This gift is true. It is not false. So continue to live in Christ, like his gift taught you.

²⁸Yes, my dear children, live in him. If we do this, we can be without fear (*have confidence*) on the day when Christ comes back. We will not need to hide and be ashamed when he comes.

²⁹You know that Christ is righteous (*good*). So you know that all people who do what is right (*good*) are God's children.

We Are God's Children

3 The Father (*God*) has loved us so much! This shows how much he loved us: We are called children of God. And we really are God's children. But the people in the world (*people who don't believe*) don't understand that

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

gift Literally, "anointing." This might mean the Holy Spirit. Or it might mean teaching or truth as in verse 24.

we are God's children, because they have not known him (*God*). ²Dear friends, now we are children of God. We have not yet been shown what we will be in the future. But we know that when Christ comes again, we will be like him. We will see him like he really is. ³Christ is pure. And every person who has this hope in Christ keeps himself pure like Christ.

⁴When a person sins, he breaks [God's] law. Yes, sinning is the same as living against [God's] law. ⁵You know that Christ came to take away people's sins. There is no sin in Christ. ⁶So the person who lives in Christ does not continue to sin. If a person continues to sin, he has never really understood Christ and has never known Christ.

⁷Dear children, don't let any person lead you into the wrong way. Christ is righteous (*good*). To be good like Christ, a person must do what is right (*good*). ⁸The devil has been sinning since the beginning. The person who continues to sin belongs to the devil. The Son of God (*Christ*) came for this: to destroy the devil's work.

⁹When God makes a person his child, that person does not continue to sin. Why? Because the new life God gave that person* stays in him. So that person is not able to continue sinning. Why? Because he has become a child of God. ¹⁰So we can see who God's children are. Also, we can know who the children of the devil are. The people who don't do what is right are not children of God. And the person who does not love his brothers and sisters [in Christ] is not a child of God.

We Must Love One Another

¹¹This is the teaching you have heard from the beginning: We must love each other.

¹²Don't be like Cain.* Cain belonged to the Evil One (*the devil*). Cain killed his brother [Abel*]. But why did Cain kill his brother? Because the things Cain did were evil, and the things his brother [Abel] did were good.

¹³Brothers and sisters, don't be surprised when the people of this world hate you. ¹⁴We know that we have left death (*sin*) and have

come into life. We know this because we love our brothers and sisters [in Christ]. The person who does not love is still in death. ¹⁵Every person who hates his brother or sister is a murderer.* And you know that no murderer has eternal life in him. ¹⁶This is how we know what real love is: Jesus gave his life for us. So we should give our lives for our brothers and sisters [in Christ]. ¹⁷Suppose a believer is rich enough to have all the things he needs. He sees his brother [in Christ] who is poor and does not have the things he needs. What if the believer who has things does not help the poor brother? Then the believer who has the things he needs does not have God's love in his heart. ¹⁸My children, our love should not be only words and talk. No! Our love must be true love. We should show our love by the things we do.

¹⁹⁻²⁰That is the way we know that we belong to the way of truth. And when our hearts make us feel guilty, we can still have peace before God. Why? Because God is greater than our heart (*conscience*). God knows everything.

²¹My dear friends, if we don't feel that we are doing wrong, then we can be without fear (*have confidence*) when we come to God. ²²And God gives us the things we ask for. We receive these things because we obey God's commands and we do the things that please God. ²³This is what God commands: that we believe in his Son Jesus Christ and that we love each other. This is what he commanded. ²⁴The person who obeys God's commands lives in God. And God lives in that person. How do we know that God lives in us? We know because of the Spirit* that God gave us.

John Warns Against False Teachers

4 My dear friends, many false prophets* are in the world now. So don't believe every spirit. But test the spirits to see if they are from

Every person ... murderer If a person hates his brother in Christ, then in his mind he has killed his brother. Jesus taught his followers about this sin. Read Mt. 5:21-26.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

false prophets People who say they speak for God but do not really speak God's truth.

the new life God gave that person Literally, "his seed."

Cain, Abel Sons of Adam and Eve. Cain was jealous of Abel and killed him. Read Gen. 4:1-16.

God. ²This is how you can know God's Spirit.* One spirit says, "I believe that Jesus is the Christ who came to earth and became a man." That Spirit is from God. ³Another spirit refuses to say this about Jesus. That spirit is not from God. This is the spirit of the Enemy of Christ. You have heard that the Enemy of Christ is coming. And now the Enemy of Christ is already in the world.

⁴My dear children, you belong to God. So you have defeated them (*the false teachers*). Why? Because the One (*God*) who is in you is greater than the one (*the devil*) who is in the people of the world. ⁵And those people (*the false teachers*) belong to the world. So the things they say are from the world, too. And the world listens to what they say. ⁶But we are from God. So the people who know God listen to us. But the people who are not from God don't listen to us. That is how we know the Spirit* that is true and the spirit that is false.

Love Comes from God

⁷Dear friends, we should love each other, because love comes from God. The person who loves has become God's child. And so the person who loves knows God. ⁸The person that does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹This is how God showed his love to us: God sent his only Son into the world to give us life through him. ¹⁰True love is God's love for us, not our love for God. God sent his Son to be the way that God takes away our sins.

¹¹That is how much God loved us, dear friends! So we also must love each other. ¹²No person has ever seen God. But if we love each other, then God lives in us. If we love each other, then God's love has reached its goal—it is made perfect in us.

¹³We know that we live in God and God lives in us. We know this because God gave us his Spirit.* ¹⁴We have seen that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. That is what we tell people now. ¹⁵If a person says, "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God," then

God lives in that person. And that person lives in God. ¹⁶And so we know the love that God has for us. And we trust that love.

God is love. The person who lives in love lives in God. And God lives in that person. ¹⁷If God's love is made perfect in us, then we can be without fear on the day when God judges us. We will be without fear, because in this world we are like him (*Christ or God*). ¹⁸Where God's love is, there is no fear. Why? Because God's perfect love takes away fear. It is God's punishment that makes a person fear. So God's love is not made perfect in the person who has fear.

¹⁹We love because God first loved us. ²⁰If a person says, "I love God," but that person hates his brother or sister in Christ, then that person is a liar. That person can see his brother, but he hates him. So that person cannot love God, because he has never seen God! ²¹And he (*God*) gave us this command: The person who loves God must also love his brothers and sisters in Christ.

God's Children Win Against the World

5 The people who believe that Jesus is the Christ* are God's children. The person who loves the Father (*God*) also loves the Father's children. ²How do we know that we love God's children? We know because we love God and we obey his commands. ³Loving God means obeying his commands. And God's commands are not too hard for us. ⁴Why? Because every person that is a child of God has the power to win against the world. ⁵It is our faith that has won the victory against the world. So who is the person that wins against the world? Only the person who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

God Told Us About His Son

⁶Jesus Christ is the One who came. Jesus came with water* and with blood.* Jesus did not come by water only. No, Jesus came by both water and blood. And the Spirit* tells us that this is true. The Spirit is the truth. ⁷So

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

water This probably means the water of Jesus' baptism.

blood This probably means the blood of Jesus' death.

there are three witnesses that tell us about Jesus: ⁸the Spirit, the water, and the blood. These three witnesses agree. ⁹We believe people when they say something is true. But what God says is more important. And this is what God told us: He told us the truth about his own Son. ¹⁰The person who believes in the Son of God has the truth that God told us. The person who does not believe God makes God a liar. Why? Because that person does not believe what God told us about his Son. ¹¹This is what God told us: God has given us eternal life. And this eternal life is in his Son (*Jesus*). ¹²The person who has the Son has true life. But the person who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

We Have Eternal Life Now

¹³I write this letter to you people who believe in the Son of God. I write so that you will know that you have eternal life now. ¹⁴We can come to God with no doubts. This means that when we ask God for things (and those things agree with what God wants for us), then God cares about what we say. ¹⁵God listens to

us every time we ask him. So we know that he gives us the things that we ask from him.

¹⁶Suppose a person sees his brother or sister in Christ sinning (sin that does not lead to eternal death). That person should pray for his brother or sister who is sinning. Then God will give the brother or sister life. I am talking about people whose sin does not lead to eternal death. There is sin that leads to death. I don't mean that a person should pray about that sin. ¹⁷Doing wrong is always sin. But there is sin that does not lead to eternal death.

¹⁸We know that any person who has been made God's child does not continue to sin. The Son of God keeps God's child safe.* The Evil One (*the devil*) cannot hurt that person.

¹⁹We know that we belong to God. But the Evil One (*the devil*) controls the whole world.

²⁰And we know that the Son of God has come. The Son of God has given us understanding. Now we can know God. God is the One who is true. And we live in that true God. We are in his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the true God, and he is eternal life. ²¹So, dear children, keep yourselves away from false gods.

The Son ... safe Literally, "The one who was born from God keeps him safe" or "... keeps himself safe."