



Certain Desires

1 John 2:12-17 (NIV)

Third in an 8-part series titled: *Are You Certain?*
Pastor Matt Friend – April 22 & 25, 2021

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– **OUTLINE** –

Today's Big Idea:

Children of God desire the things of God.

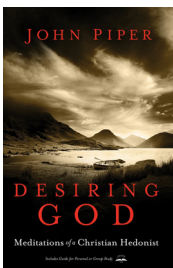
Today's Takeaways:

#1 – Believe the gospel and be baptized!

Sign up for our next [Baptism Sunday here](#).

#2 – Be encouraged!

Resource Recommendation



Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist

By John Piper



Certain Desires

1 John 2:12-17 (NIV)

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– NOTES –

Introduction:

Today we continue our 8-week series, “Are You Certain?” For 8 weeks we’re studying the book of 1 John. (This isn’t the Gospel of John toward the front of New Testament, but the smaller book toward end.)

The book of 1 John is all about *assurance*. One of his primary goals is to give genuine believers assurance that all of our sins have been forgiven (past, present, and future); that God the Father completely accepts and approves of us through the merits of Jesus; that we really are going to be with Jesus when we die; and that this salvation is eternal, secure, and “un-losable.”

Toward the end of the letter, John writes, “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:13).

Assurance of salvation must not be confused with salvation itself. A person can be saved in Christ without having assurance of salvation. Equally, one can have a false/incorrect assurance of salvation without truly being saved.

Therefore, God wants us to have the assurance of real salvation. In this book, the Spirit makes an ironclad case for how you can know—*that you know*—that you know you are a genuine Jesus-follower. This book lays out irrefutable evidence that’s not based on a religious experience you had, a feeling you felt, or a prayer you prayed.

In this short letter, John identifies 8 signs/evidences/proofs that you are (or are not) a child of God. Perhaps you’ve asked, “How can I know for sure if I’m really a Christian? How can I have assurance



of my salvation?” Each piece in this series connects like an 8-piece puzzle.

So far in this series we’ve examined two pieces of the puzzle that provide assurance of salvation: a relationship with Jesus ([1:1-4](#)), and a desire to turn away from sin ([1:5-2:2](#)). Today’s message, this third piece of our 8-piece puzzle is entitled “Certain Desires.” We’ll look at how God gives new desires to those who are truly His. If you have these new desires, you can be encouraged by today’s message! If not, you can turn and trust Jesus as Lord and Savior to give you these new desires.

Today’s Big Idea:

Children of God desire the things of God.

Think About It:

We could also say it this way:

- Genuine children of God desire the things of God.
- True children of God desire the things of God.
- Children of God love the things of God.
- If you love the things of God you are likely a child of God.
- Genuine Christians love God more than anything in this world.
- Genuine Christians desire the things of God more than the things of this world.
- You can have assurance of salvation if you desire to follow Jesus more than anything else in this world.
- If you desire the things of God you are likely a child of God.
- Our desires reveal our direction.
- Our new desires reveal our new direction.
- Our ultimate desires reveal our ultimate destination.



Does this mean that we (as Jesus-followers) never experience temporary relapses? No. We heard last week that Christians still sin. We still experience temptation, and, unfortunately, we sometimes still make poor, selfish choices. Thankfully, however, that's not the overall direction of our lives. The new direction of our lives is to desire God and the things of God.

What are “the things of God”? John describes them in the following verses...

Highlights from the Text:

1 John 2:12 —

- Like Jesus ([John 13:33](#)), John refers to all Christians as “dear children.” Literally, it means that we are the “born ones” ([1 John 2:1, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21](#)).
- Jesus even separated humanity into two categories: children of God and children of Satan ([John 8:39-44](#)).
- John reminds us here that our sins have been forgiven on account of Jesus’ name ([Psalm 32:1-2; 86:5; 103:12; 130:3-4; Isaiah 1:18-19; 43:25; 44:22; Matthew 26:28; Luke 1:77; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 10:43; 13:38-39; 26:18; Ephesians 1:7; 4:32; Colossians 1:14; 2:13-14; 1 John 1:7](#)).
- Genuine Christians have a deep desire for (and sincere appreciation of) forgiveness.

1 John 2:13 —

- Here John separates Christians into two spiritual stages: the spiritually mature (“fathers”) and the spiritually immature (“young men”). He does the same thing in verse 14 as well as in other parts of the Bible ([1 Corinthians 3:1; Colossians 1:28](#)).
- “Fathers” – This term has nothing to do with one’s gender or age or progeny. In John’s day, it was a term spiritual maturity. God’s mature children can have assurance of their salvation.



- “Young men” – This term refers to those believers (men or women of any age) who are young in their faith. God’s immature children can also have assurance of their salvation.
- All believers—young or old, new or experienced—share in the blessings of the New Covenant ([Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)), which seems to be the Old Testament passage that John has in mind here.
- Genuine believers have a sincere desire to know God and overcome Satan.

1 John 2:14 —

- Genuine Christians have a deep desire for supernatural, spiritual strength.
- From where does this strength come? Continual meditation God’s Word.

1 John 2:15 —

- Essentially, John is urging everyone to choose a lover: either the world or God.
- According to John, genuine Christians have a deep desire to turn away from the world’s temptations.
- “World” doesn’t refer to Planet Earth and its gifts of oceans, mountains, sunrises, sunsets, ice cream, or popcorn. It also doesn’t refer to the people of the world since Jesus told us that “God so loved the world” ([John 3:16](#)).
- Instead, in context, “world” refers to worldly system that is opposed to God in every way ([John 9:39](#); [12:31](#); [14:30](#); [Ephesians 2:2](#); [James 4:4](#); [1 John 2:2](#); [5:19](#)). The ideologies of this world originate with Satan and his demons who seek to sweep up as many people as possible on their way to eternal destruction ([Matthew 13:19, 38](#); [2 Corinthians 2:11](#); [4:4](#); [10:5](#); [11:14](#); [Ephesians 6:11-13](#); [1 Thessalonians 2:18](#); [2 Thessalonians 2:9](#); [Revelation 16:14](#)).



- Genuine Christians will be tempted with sin (and will even succumb to these sinful temptations at times); however, genuine Christians do not cherish the world.
- What are the “things of this world?” Verse 16 explains...

1 John 2:16 —

- The “lust of the flesh” refers to our basest cravings. God created us with good appetites (sex, food, wine, relationships); however, even our best appetites have been stained by sin and must be guarded from (immorality, gluttony, drunkenness/addiction, people-pleasing).
- The “lust of the eyes” refers to our propensity to be captivated by the outward show of things without understanding their real value. Humans have a tendency to forget, “Everything that glitters is not gold.”
- The “pride of life” refers to the arrogance, boastfulness, or false confidence that comes in trusting in the material possessions of life. (The same word for “life” is translated as *material possessions* in [1 John 3:17](#).)
- Jesus experienced these same three temptations (and in the same order) according to [Matthew 4:1-10](#). This event is likely what John had in mind when he wrote this verse.
- Genuine Christians will be tempted with all three (and may even give into all three temptations at times); however, genuine Christians do not ultimately cling to any of the three. True believers are quick to repent and cling to Christ.

1 John 2:17 —

- Genuine Christians understand that the desires and temptations of this world are passing away. (The world is literally in self-destruct mode.)



- Instead, true believers set their hearts on eternal things and desire to do God's will here and now.
- Interestingly, humanity's greatest desire has always been to live forever. God is so good that He wants to fulfill that desire through Christ! (*See also [Psalm 25:10](#); [111:10](#); [Luke 6:46-48](#); [John 8:51](#); [10:27](#); [14:21](#); [15:10](#); [James 1:22-25](#).*)

Today's Takeaways:

#1 – Believe the gospel and be baptized!

Sign up for our next [Baptism Sunday here](#).

#2 – Be encouraged!

Why can genuine Christians be encouraged by these verses? Because...

Children of God desire the things of God.