

Read – 2v1- 17 – Five marks of a true Christian

First Mark – A saved sinner (v1-2)

In chapter 2v1-2 in following on from the previous chapter John points out that a true Christian, although saved from sin and now possessing the power not to sin, is not without sin (1v8).

If a person does sin what help is available to him/her? (See also Rom 8v33-34 'Intercedes,' 1 Tim 2v5 'Mediator,' Heb 7v25 'Intercessor,' Heb 9v24 'Our High Priest')

Whose sin did Christ 'atone' for (pay the penalty of death for)? v2

Second Mark – Obedient (v3-6)

When people we know say one thing yet do another, which do you think reveals the truth about them – what they say or what they do? Why?

According to verses 3-5, how can we tell if we know Christ? (See John 14v15; 15v10, Rev 12v7; 14v12)

What are we if we claim to keep Christ's commands but actually do not? (Titus 1v10; 16)

v6 - What is our standard for 'walking' (living) as Christians in our daily lives? (1 Peter 2v21-23)

Third Mark – Loving (v7-11)

What command is John referring to in v7? How can it be old and new at the same time? (Leviticus 19v18, John 13v34-35) What gives this command a sense of newness since Christ's coming?

How would you define 'love' and 'hate'? Can you think of someone in your life with a particular ability to love? In what specific ways have you see this gift demonstrated?

What makes a Christians love distinctive? (Matthew 5v43-48)

Fourth Mark – Growing (v12-14)

In verses 12-14 John is writing to believers of different ages – and he is speaking here about Christian growth (John refers to those new in the faith as 'children' – and he describes the fact that when we first become Christians we come to know the father and receive forgiveness for our sin ... then as we get to know Christ better and grow in our relationship with him, we become increasingly victorious over sin)

What stage are you at in your spiritual life? Is this maturity level appropriate compared to the amount of time you've known Christ? Are you growing in your Christian life? What's the next step in your growth?

Fifth Mark – Not worldly (v15-17)

According to these verses what do you think John means by the "world"?

In what ways does God love the world and not love the world? (John 3v16, Zechariah 8v17) Think for a moment about how Jesus himself lived in the world but was not of it.

What makes the world so alluring and attractive to us? What motivation does John give us to keep us from avoiding loving the world improperly? How do we keep that at the forefront of our minds on a daily basis?

Read – 2v18-26 – Warning about Antichrists

According to v18-27 what characterises the Antichrist and antichrists? What is their main evil activity?

What kind of heresy are they trying to spread? Why does John care so much about warning about heresy? Today are we aware of the false teaching that currently exists, and do we warn others about it enough?

What two resources keep us from being led astray? How do we maintain these two things in our lives?

Prayer Points – Pray that God would keep changing our hearts to love others. Pray that we would also be able to discern the truth and be strong against those who promote false teaching. Pray for mid-week groups and their leaders. For those who are ill and are finding life difficult at this time. gmr