



## Daily Devotionals

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### 1 JOHN 3:19-24 LIVING IN LOVE

*<sup>19</sup> This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence <sup>20</sup> whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.*

*<sup>21</sup> Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God <sup>22</sup> and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. <sup>23</sup> And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. <sup>24</sup> Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.*

Our hearts are fearful because they cannot know the truth. The worldly lover is always tormented by doubts. Does she even know I exist? Is he just stringing me along? Will this relationship last? Is it right? What did she mean by that? Is he seeing someone else? She loves me - she loves me not. The questions and doubts are seemingly endless when it comes to our natural love. How can we be sure?

Without some absolute point of reference assurance is impossible. When the ancient mariners looked to the skies for direction they quickly learned that there were reliable and unreliable referents above them. The stars were regular in their motion and you could predict where they should be at any given time, therefore that knowledge allowed the traveler to navigate based on his position relative to them. However, there were other bright objects in the sky that seemed to wander irregularly through the night. They became known as "planets" and were believed to have an evil influence because their irregularity brought doubt and misguidance rather than assurance. The most reliable referent for navigation is the one that is most stable. Thus, in the northern hemisphere the North Star was always used for sighting.

As we navigate our way through this life, especially in our spiritual blindness, we need some reliable referent if we are to stay the course. Our hearts are like the planets, wandering here and there sowing doubts in their path. But as the North Star over rules the directional doubts cast by the planets, our faith in God over rules our wandering hearts. Furthermore, a faith-based knowledge of God demonstrates the true nature of our hearts, and therefore, reveals them not as inherently evil but as entities to be brought under the control of our faith so that they might function for our good and that of the kingdom. Once more, doubt has its focus on the individual while faith has its focus on God. We can only love another person fully when that self-giving is informed and empowered by faith in God.

Our faith is a gift from God through his Spirit, but it is increasingly realized through experience. The more we live according to his will the more we see the reliability of his commands and the closer we live in relationship to him. It is through obedience that we become conformed to God's will, which is to "live in him."

**Lord, through your Holy Spirit, bring my unruly heart under your control. Turn my eyes from my own heart-driven insecurities and to the eternal truth of who you are and what you would have me to be. Empower me to live under the guidance of your gracious will and grow in my knowledge of you and how your will is the perfect path for my life. Allow me to grow closer in my relationship to you through obedience to your will, so that divine assurance may cast out my human doubts. Amen.**

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