

1st John 2:28 Abiding Relationship Produces Confidence

28 Now, little children, remain in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not draw back from Him in shame at His coming.

And Now, Little Children

If these members of the churches of Asia Minor, present day Turkey, are acting as Children of God, they will be abiding. These two truths are interconnected. We cannot truly be living as a Child of God without having fellowship with Him.

Remain in Him

It's important to understand abiding in Christ. Jesus points out the necessity of remaining in fellowship with Him, abiding in Him, in John 15:4-5; 8-10. We have fellowship with Jesus through obedience to Him, abiding in His love. We see in John 15:11: **11 These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full** that it is fellowship, abiding, remaining in Jesus in obedience that gives us full joy, complete Joy. And, as we have fellowship with God, and fellowship with one another, then as John reminds us in 1 John 1:4 **4 These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.** If want to have the joy of the Lord, we must abide, remain in Him, in obedience. In 1 John 2:6 **6 the one who says that he remains in Him ought, himself also, walk just as He walked.** This fellowship with Jesus, fellowship with God is based on loving Jesus and following His Word.

Remaining close to Him in an abiding relationship means that we can discern the Truth, and see the tricks of the enemy, before we step into a trap.

Truly abiding in Jesus means that we have a desire to know Him better and to get closer to Him in relationship, and to allow His presence and His Word to influence us. Jesus' words are at the forefront of our mind as we live out our life, we have, more and more, the mind of Christ, so we are influenced by Him, and desire to become more like Him. It's abiding in Him that allows us to do this. Romans 8:29 emphasizes knowing Jesus, and Him knowing us in relationship in order to be like Him. **29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters;**

And as John reminded us in 1 John 2:24 **24 As for you, see that what you heard from the beginning remains in you.** Then it is of first importance to understand who Jesus is. Jesus, qualified by His Humanity as a kinsman-redeemer, and qualified by His deity as the perfect lamb of God, without spot or blemish, who died on the cross as Messiah and redeemer, and was raised from the dead as proof that God accepted His sacrifice.

so that when He appears, we may have confidence

How will Jesus appear? Suddenly! (1 Cor 15:51-52). John is focusing in this passage on how we will respond to His sudden presence. We will react to being suddenly in the presence of Jesus in one of two ways: we will have confidence, knowing that we have been abiding in Him, living our lives in Him, or we will draw back from Him in shame.

Confidence at His Coming

John includes himself here, saying that "we may have confidence". In 1 John 4:15 John describes this abiding relationship with Jesus in this way: **Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in him, and he in God. 16 We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him. 17 By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, we also are in this world.** And, how do we express love for Jesus? In obedience to His Word, by making Him the Lord of our Lives. We're acting like Jesus, while we're in the world. John is talking about how the believer will feel at the time he or she meets Jesus at His return. John wants them to have courage and boldness when they meet Jesus, but also a sense of calm assurance. And this confidence in Christ is built over time in experiencing relationship with Him. This faith is strengthened by the experience of enduring in our walk with Christ through many fiery trials. We see this in Hebrews 4 :14-

16 4 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let's hold firmly to our confession. **15** For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things just as we are, yet without sin. **16** Therefore let's approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace for help at the time of our need. This confidence is built on our trust of Jesus' advocacy for us, as our Great High Priest, who comes before God on our behalf. This boldness we have in approaching God's throne of grace to receive mercy is because of what Jesus has accomplished on our behalf, not because we're such a good person ourselves. We know that we do not need to fear any bad outcome of approaching the Throne, because we are In Christ, and living our life for Him, covered by His righteousness. This is what gives us the calm assurance of Children approaching their Father.

The author of Hebrews contrasts meeting Jesus one day in confidence, based on knowing in our heart of hearts that we've been keeping the faith, with the shame of those who have faltered in their walk of faith (see Hebrews 10:32-34. What came of this suffering for Christ?! Confidence in their relationship, their fellowship with Jesus. It's that very suffering in our identification with Jesus that our flesh so wants to avoid that builds our confidence and endurance in our relationship with Him! Hebrews 10:35-36 **35**

Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

And, in Hebrews 10:37-39, the author looks at the effect of the way that we live our life, whether for ourselves, or In Christ, walking with Him, saying: **37 For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay. 38 But My righteous one will live by faith; And if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him.** It's by a life lived in faith, lived for Jesus that we have the confidence in our fellowship with Christ. Our confidence will not be in ourselves on that day, but be based on the experience of our personal relationship with Jesus, knowing that we have trusted Him before we've left Earth.

Shrinking Back in Shame

"and not shrink back in shame from Him at His appearing." The opposite of confidence is embarrassment. Back in John 1:5-6, John talks about self-deception regarding our walk with Christ, saying **5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;** John's letting us know that God is holy, and anything that falls short of that holiness will be made manifest in the light of God's glory, and any lie, even if it's a lie we've been telling ourselves, will be immediately exposed, to our shame when we appear before Jesus. Any trust that we've been putting in ourselves, any self-confidence of somehow earning a right to be there, any self-righteousness will be immediately exposed, to our shame.

Every believer, including John, will have one of two responses to Jesus when they stand in His presence for the first time: the believer either will be joyous and delighted in His presence or will be looking for somewhere to hide in humiliation, and no place will be found.

It's not just making some acknowledgement, in agreement that Jesus is Lord, but actually following Him, walking as He walked, doing the Will of Our Father in Heaven, as His children that matters. It's the fruit motivated by the power of the Holy Spirit that counts, and that can only come through abiding relationship with Jesus.