

# 1 John 2:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

## Analysis

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**He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.** John presents the positive contrast to verse 9's warning. "He that loveth his brother" (ho agapōn ton adelphon autou) uses present participle, indicating habitual, ongoing love as lifestyle. This is agapē—self-giving, covenant love modeled on Christ's love, not mere affection or sentiment. "His brother" (ton adelphon) encompasses all fellow believers—the community of faith bound together in Christ.

"Abideth in the light" (en tō phōti menei)—"abideth" (menei) means remains, dwells, continues steadfastly. This person doesn't merely experience the light occasionally but lives in it continuously. Love for brothers both evidences and sustains one's position in the light. Where genuine love exists, there is ongoing fellowship with God and experience of His truth.

"And there is none occasion of stumbling in him" (kai skandalon en autō ouk estin)—skandalon means a trap, snare, or cause of stumbling. This phrase can mean either:

1. there is nothing in this person to cause others to stumble—their loving conduct doesn't provoke offense or lead others into sin; or
2. there is nothing to cause this person himself to stumble—love keeps one from falling into sin.

Likely both are true. Love produces moral clarity, stability, and safety both for oneself and others. The loving person walks securely in light without stumbling and doesn't cause others to stumble.

## Historical Context

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The concept of causing others to stumble (*skandalizō*) was important in Jewish ethics and early Christian teaching. Paul extensively discussed not being a stumbling block to weaker brothers (Romans 14:13-21, 1 Corinthians 8:9-13). Jesus warned severely against causing little ones to stumble (Matthew 18:6). The community of faith was to be characterized by mutual care preventing stumbling.

In the Gnostic crisis, false teachers caused enormous stumbling. Their contempt for ordinary believers, moral license, and doctrinal errors led many astray. They claimed enlightenment yet produced division, confusion, and sin. John's test exposed them: those truly in the light love brothers and don't cause stumbling. The Gnostics failed this test—their teaching and conduct caused widespread stumbling.

The Reformation emphasized both aspects of this verse. Calvin taught that love for believers provides assurance (evidencing one's position in light) and enables sanctification (preventing stumbling into sin). Puritan devotional writers explored how love stabilizes Christian experience—those who love walk in bright confidence, while those who hate struggle in dark uncertainty. Love provides both moral clarity (knowing right from wrong) and moral strength (doing right, avoiding wrong).

## Related Passages

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**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. How does loving fellow believers practically prevent you from stumbling into sin or doctrinal error?
2. In what ways might your attitudes or actions be causing other believers to stumble spiritually?
3. How can you cultivate love for difficult brothers and sisters, knowing that such love evidences and sustains your position in the light?

## Interlinear Text

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ο	ἀγαπῶν	τὸν	ἀδελφὸν	αὐτῷ	ἐν	τῷ	φωτὶ	μένει
G3588	<b>He that loveth</b>	G3588	<b>brother</b>	<b>him</b>	<b>in</b>	G3588	<b>the light</b>	<b>abideth</b>
	G25		G80	G846	G1722		G5457	G3306
καὶ	σκάνδαλον	ἐν	αὐτῷ	οὐκ	ἔστιν.			
<b>and</b>	<b>occasion of stumbling</b>	<b>in</b>	<b>him</b>	<b>none</b>	<b>there is</b>			
G2532	G4625	G1722	G846	G3756	G2076			

## Additional Cross-References

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**1 John 3:14** (Love): We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

**Romans 14:13** (Parallel theme): Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

**Hosea 6:3** (Parallel theme): Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

**2 Peter 1:10** (Parallel theme): Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

**Matthew 13:21** (Parallel theme): Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

**Matthew 18:7** (Parallel theme): Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

**John 8:31** (Parallel theme): Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

**Philippians 1:10** (Parallel theme): That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;

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