

1 John 3:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

Analysis

And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us. John concludes the chapter with the doctrine of mutual indwelling. "He that keepeth his commandments" (ho tērōn tas entolas autou)—habitual obedience, especially to the commandments of verse 23: faith and love. "Dwelleth in him, and he in him" (en autō menei kai autos en autō)—mutual abiding: the believer abides in God, and God abides in the believer. This recalls Jesus's teaching on abiding in the vine (John 15:4-10).

This mutual indwelling is Christianity's heart—intimate, permanent union between God and believer. It's not mystical absorption where individual identity disappears, nor mere external relationship, but real spiritual union where God dwells within believers by His Spirit, and believers dwell in God through faith. Obedience evidences and maintains this abiding relationship (not earning it but demonstrating its reality).

"And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us" (kai en toutō ginōskomen hoti menei en hēmin ek tou pneumatos hou hēmin edōken). The Holy Spirit is the evidence of God's indwelling. His presence, work, and fruit in our lives demonstrate that God abides in us. The Spirit produces the love and obedience described throughout the chapter. This introduces the theme of

testing spirits in chapter 4—not all supernatural experience is from God; we must discern true spiritual work from counterfeits.

Historical Context

The concept of God dwelling with His people permeates Scripture—the tabernacle, temple, Immanuel ("God with us"), and Jesus's incarnation. But the New Testament revelation that God dwells within individual believers by the Holy Spirit was stunning. The temple was no longer a building but believers' bodies (1 Corinthians 6:19) and corporately the church (Ephesians 2:21-22).

This teaching was vital against Gnosticism, which denied God's presence in material reality. John affirms God truly dwells in believers—not an abstract idea but actual divine presence. The Spirit's giving (perfect tense, completed with continuing results) occurred at Pentecost and continues in each believer's conversion, sealing them (Ephesians 1:13) and abiding permanently (John 14:16).

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence in your life demonstrates that God truly abides in you?
2. How does understanding mutual indwelling (you in God, God in you) affect your view of sanctification and prayer?
3. What's the relationship between keeping God's commandments and abiding in Him—which causes which, or are they inseparable?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ὁ	τηρῶν	τὰς	ἐντολὰς	αὐτῷ·	ἐν	αὐτῷ·
And	G3588	he that keepeth	G3588	commandments	he	hereby	he
G2532		G5083		G1785	G846	G1722	G846
μένει	καὶ	αὐτῷ·	ἐν	αὐτῷ·	καὶ	ἐν	τούτῳ
dwelleth	And	he	hereby	he	And	hereby	G5129
G3306	G2532	G846	G1722	G846	G2532	G1722	
γινώσκουμεν	ὅτι	μένει	ἐν	ἡμῖν	ἐκ	τοῦ	πνεύματος
we know	that	dwelleth	hereby	us	by	G3588	the Spirit
G1097	G3754	G3306	G1722	G2254	G1537		G4151
οἷ	ἡμῖν	ἔδωκεν					
which	us	he hath given					
G3739	G2254	G1325					

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 3:16 (Spirit): Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

2 Timothy 1:14 (Spirit): That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.

1 Corinthians 6:19 (Spirit): What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

1 John 2:6 (Parallel theme): He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

1 John 4:7 (Parallel theme): Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

John 17:21 (Parallel theme): That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

1 John 3:22 (Word): And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

2 Corinthians 6:16 (Parallel theme): And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

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