Confident before God

As we believe in Jesus (doctrinal test) and love one another (moral test), the Holy Spirit confirms to us that we are God's children. The Spirit gives us the internal confirmation that God is with us and in us in the best possible sense. In Romans 8:16 Paul wrote that "the Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God." And so as God's children, we can be confident before God. Sometimes, however, this is not what we feel. Sometimes we do have doubts and our hearts condemn us. But John wants us to have confidence before God and be reassured that we are loved and wanted as his children. Today's passage explains that such assurance is the byproduct of what we believe and how we behave.

Read 1 John 3:19-24

1. What stood out to you in this passage? If you heard the sermon, what is something significant that you remember?

2. John begins verse 19 by saying, "This is how we know." "This" refers back to what he said in verses 16-18. In light of this, how do we know that we belong to the truth?

3. John says that at times our hearts may condemn us (v. 20), but this doesn't mean that we actually stand condemned before God. What are some reasons why a Christian may feel doubt about their standing with God at times?

4. What is John saying when he says that in times when our hearts condemn us that God is greater than our hearts and knows everything (v. 20)?

5. How does confidence before God influence our prayer life (vv. 21-22)?

6. How does John summarize what it means to keep God's commandment (v. 23)?

7. In this passage, John clearly wants believers to know that they belong to God. He wants us to be confident before God. What benefits do you experience if you truly know where you stand with God?