

Structure of First John 1:6 to 2:11

<p>①</p> <p>Beginning Inclusio Sin and Walking in Darkness or Light Common Ideas: walking / light / darkness / fellowship</p> <p>1:6 If we say, “We have fellowship with ‘God’,” and yet are walking in the darkness, then we are lying and not living by the truth. 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as ‘God’ Himself is in the light, then we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.</p>		
<p>②</p> <p style="text-align: center;">False Claim & Counter Sin and Confession</p> <p>1:8 If we say, “We have no sin,” then we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 1:9 If we confess our sins, because ‘God’ is faithful and righteous, He forgives us of our sins and cleanses us from all unrighteousness. 1:10 If we say, “We have not sinned,” we make ‘God’ the liar and His word is not in us.</p>	<p>④ Hinge Verse</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">2:3 Now the way we know that we know ‘God’ is if we keep His commandments.</p>	<p>⑤</p> <p style="text-align: center;">False Claim & Counter Knowing God and Keeping His Commandments</p> <p>2:4 The one who says, “I know Him,” while not keeping His commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in this person. 2:5 But whoever keeps ‘Christ’s’ word, truly in this person their love of God has reached a state of maturity. This is how we know that we are in ‘God’. 2:6 The one who says, “I abide in ‘God’,” should himself walk in the same way as ‘Jesus’ walked.</p>
<p>③</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Personal Encouragement Regarding Sin</p> <p>2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you do not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate in the presence of the Father – the righteous Jesus Christ. 2:2 And He is the placater of God’s wrath for our sins, and not only for our sins, but also for the whole world.</p>		<p>⑥</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Personal Encouragement Regarding Commandments</p> <p>2:7 Beloved, what I am writing to you is not a new commandment, but an old commandment which you have possessed from the beginning. This old commandment is the message which you have heard all along. 2:8 And yet, what I am writing to you is a new commandment. It is truly expressed in ‘Jesus Christ’ and in you, because the darkness is fading away and the light, the Real Light, is already shining.</p>
<p>⑦</p> <p>Ending Inclusio The Love Commandment and Walking in Darkness of Light Common Ideas: walking / light / darkness / fellowship</p> <p>2:9 The one who says, “I am in the light,” and yet hates his fellow believer, is still in the darkness. 2:10 The one who loves his fellow believer abides in the light and there is nothing in him to cause others to stumble. 2:11 But the one who hates his fellow believer is in the darkness and is walking in the darkness. He does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.</p>		

First John 1:6 to 2:11 exhibits a high degree of literary structure. It is built around an inclusio, which is a literary device where similar material is placed at the beginning and ending of a section, creating a bracket or envelope structure. The inclusio material is like the two slices of bread in a sandwich.

The inclusio sections ❶ and ❷ share the common ideas of walking, light, darkness, and fellowship. They also both begin with a statement of what someone says.

The verses between the inclusios are organized into two parallel subdivisions ❷/❸ and ❹/❺ with identical elements, connected by a hinge verse ❹. Each subdivision begins with a false claim and counter (1:8-10 / 2:4-6) and ends with a note of personal encouragement (2:1-2 / 2:7-8). Note that the parallel elements ❷ and ❹ begin and end with a statement of what someone says, which function as inclusios for each element. The parallel elements ❸ and ❺ begin with an affectionate address to “*my little children*” and “*beloved*” and the statement “*I am writing*” (underlined above), and end with a statement about Jesus Christ.

❶/❷/❸ form a unit connected by the topic of sin. Note also the use of the phrase “*if we say*” three times. There are also five Third Class Condition clauses (“if...then” clauses) grouped at the beginning of the unit – a pair in the inclusion ❶, and a triplet in the false claim/counter ❷ (see underlined “if” phrases above).

❹/❺/❷ form a unit connected by the topic of the love commandment. Note also the use of the phrase “*the one who says*” three times.