

Lesson Six: 1 John 5¹

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him.

1. Again we see that faith (belief) is what brings about the new birth. He who believes that Jesus is the Messiah is born of God. We who have been born of God love each other (who are children born of Him).

Thus, the incarnation is in view here. But this belief is not a mere intellectual assent to the fact of the incarnation, but a heart acceptance of all that it implied in its purpose, the substitutionary death of the Incarnate One for sinners, thus making a way of salvation in which God could bestow mercy on the basis of justice satisfied. That person, John says, and he uses the perfect tense here, has been born of God and as a result is a child of God. -Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament - Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament - Volume 2.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

2. The evidence that we love God's children is that we love Him and keep His commandments.

1 John 3:22-23

Whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. ²³ This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.

3. We show our love FOR God by keeping His commandments. His commandments are not burdensome. They are light.

1 John 3:22-23

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Matthew 11:28-30

"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. ³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

What a commandment! To love others as Christ has loved us is the whole fulfilling of the Law (Romans 13:8-10). The writer of Hebrews expressed a similar thing in Hebrews 8:8-13. Those verses speak of a new covenant. Hebrews 8:13 says, "In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old

¹ Main text Scripture is from New American Standard Bible (NASB)

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is ready to vanish away.” So, following this same reasoning, if a new covenant made the first covenant old and ready to vanish away, then likewise, a new commandment made the first ones old and ready to vanish away. We are not to be living our lives by the old commandments but by this new commandment that Jesus gave here. Following this one command will fulfill all the righteousness of the Old Testament commandments (Matthew 22:36-40). This isn’t a command about loving God. This is a command to love others as Christ has loved us (see my note at John 15:12). There is a difference. See 1 John 4:19. As John mentioned in 1 John 2:7-8, this isn’t really a new commandment, and then again it is (see my notes at those verses). The New Testament law of love controls people’s actions from the inside, while the O.T. Law controlled people’s actions from the outside. There is a big difference. Jesus’ statement, “as I have loved you,” is pregnant with meaning. Jesus loved as no man had ever loved before. We are to do it as He did. We are incapable of this on our own. We can’t give away what we don’t have. We have to receive this love from God before we can let Him flow this love through us to others. The old commandments (for instance, the big ten in Exodus 20:3-17) were how we were to love God and how He would respond to us. This new commandment is about how we are to respond to the love God has already shown us (1 John 4:10). The Law commandments were done in order to obtain God’s love. The N.T. law is in response to God’s love. What a difference! Andrew Wommack’s Living Commentary.

4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. 5 Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

The verb is in the present tense, "is constantly overcoming the world." It is a habit of life with the saint to gain victory over the world. Wuest

4. Since we are born of God, we overcome the world. Our faith is how we overcome the world.
5. The one who overcomes the world are all those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God—all believers. Our identity is that we are overcomers. We are not trying to overcome. We are already overcomers because we believe. Let’s walk with that understanding.

Philemon 1:6 NKJV

That the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

Philemon 1:6 HCSB

I pray that your participation in the faith may become effective through knowing every good thing that is in us for the glory of Christ.

The more we know and acknowledge every good thing in us, the more we live as overcomers (because faith comes to us as we learn of His grace toward us).

Romans 10:15-17

And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:

*“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace,
Who bring GLAD TIDINGS OF GOOD THINGS!”*

¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our report?” ¹⁷ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by THE WORD OF GOD.

6 This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. 7 For there are three that testify: 8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

6. Some believe that the “water” mentioned here refers to his birth and the “blood” refers to His death. Others maintain that the water refers to his baptism.
7. All three testify that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh and died in the flesh.
8. The three who testify to this truth are the Spirit, the water, and the blood.
Amplified: For there are three witnesses: 8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three are in agreement [their testimony is perfectly consistent].

9 If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son.

10 The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son.

9. We believe what men tell us. Therefore, how much more should we receive God’s testimony, that Jesus is His Son.
10. Believers know that Jesus is God’s Son. Those who don’t believe God’s testimony about His Son are calling God a liar.

11 And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

11. What is the testimony that God gives concerning His Son? It is this: God has given us eternal life through His Son.

In order to fully understand what eternal life is, it is helpful to understand what it is not. Eternal life is not living forever. Everyone lives forever in either heaven or hell. Also, eternal life is not living forever in the blessings of heaven as opposed to being tormented in hell. John 3:36 and 5:24 show that eternal life is a present-tense possession of the believer. -Andrew Wommack's Living Commentary.

John 17:3 NKJV

And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

12. John makes this point perfectly clear. If we have the Son, we have eternal life. If we do not have the Son, we do not have eternal life.

John 3:16-18

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

¹⁸ "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

John 10:7-9

Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. ⁹ I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

John 10:10 AMP

The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance [to the full, till it overflows].

- 13 *These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.*

These things I write to you in order that you may know with an absolute knowledge that life you are having, eternal (life), to you who believe on the name of the Son of God. Wuest

13. Who may have confidence that they have eternal life. It is those who believe in Jesus the Son of God.

- 14 *This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.*

And this is the assurance which we are having toward Him, that whatever we keep on asking for ourselves according to His will, He hears us. And if we know with an absolute knowledge that He hears us, whatever we are asking for ourselves, we know with an absolute knowledge that we have the things which we have asked from Him. Wuest

This can be explained by understanding that prayer doesn't make God move. In the New Testament, God has already moved by grace and provided everything we could ever need through the atonement of Christ (see my note at Colossians 2:10). God doesn't respond to our faith; our faith is a positive response to what God has already accomplished. Faith only appropriates what God has already provided through grace (see my note at Mark 11:24). Andrew Wommack's Living Commentary.

14. What a blessed treasure to know that God hears our prayers when spoken according to His will. Thus, it is crucial that we know what the will of God is. If we have an incomplete or twisted view about God's will, we cannot have faith to receive.

Romans 12:2

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Ephesians 5:17

Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

- What we falsely believe can inhibit faith. For example, "God sends or allow evil to bring about good," or "All things happen for a divine purpose," or "Divine healing stopped when the first apostles died," or "God only answers prayers if we are living a spiritually disciplined and holy life" ARE NOT TRUE. If we believe these things, we will not have faith to ask.
- What we do not know can inhibit faith. If we don't know it is the will of God to save us, heal us, and make us successful, we won't have faith to ask.

15. Confidence is "all out spokenness, that is, frankness, bluntness, publicity; by implication assurance: - bold (X -ly, -ness, -ness of speech), confidence, X freely, X openly, X plainly (-ness)."² **When we know what the will of God is, we have boldness to ask. WHATEVER we ask according to His will, we KNOW that we have what we have requested.**

16 If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this. 17 All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not leading to death.

16. Even Wuest, who was able to interpret most of the New Testament says this about verses 16-17:

The present writer³ confesses his utter inability to understand this verse except that the sin unto death is the denial of the incarnation, and that it is committed by an unsaved person who professes to be a Christian. The rest of the verse is an enigma to him, and he will not attempt to offer even a suggestion as to its possible interpretation. -Wuest

- Since throughout his letter, John refers to life and death as spiritual life and death, it is most accurate to assume that John is not saying here that some sins lead to physical death, but that there is a sin that leads to spiritual death, and the clear inference here is that if someone commits this sin that leads to spiritual death, we cannot pray against the consequence (of spiritual death).
- Additionally John, in this very chapter has said that those who believe in Jesus have eternal life, and that those who do not believe do not have life. So, taking the context of this letter and of this chapter, we cannot pray that someone who refuses to believe

² Strongs Concordance

³ "The present writer" is Wuest referring to himself.

will somehow be saved because there is a sin that leads to death, and that sin is refusing to believe in Jesus.

- We have also the external evidence of Christ's own words that eternal life is only found in Him. Other writers agree even to point of referring to the act of choosing to not believe in Jesus as "willful sin". "Willful sin"; therefore, the sin of rejecting Christ, is the sin unto death for there is no other sacrifice that can save us from spiritual death.

Hebrews 10:26-31

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,²⁷ but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.²⁸ Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.²⁹ Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?³⁰ For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people."³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

- The controversy lies in John's use of "his brother" which we rightly assume to mean a fellow believer which revives the age-old debate as to whether or a not a true believer can commit this sin leading to death. Whether this means that the idea of a believer becoming an unbeliever is only hypothetical, or that if a true believer who is capable of forsaking faith in Christ can forfeit (not lose, but surrender) his salvation, is still open for debate. Our conclusion on this topic is that no one who does not believe in Jesus has or will have eternal life. There is no forgiveness for unbelief in Jesus, and thus it is the only sin that brings about death.

17. In this verse John seems to be acknowledging that yes, believers do fall short of perfection. There are sins which do not lead to eternal death.

18 We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him. 19 We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

18. This can be confusing because each one of us, even after we have been born again, has the capability to sin and likely will sin. So, what is John saying? Considering the close context, we believe John is referring to the sin of unbelief. Believers believe. God keeps us. The evil one cannot touch us.

19. The whole world is in the power of the evil one which explains many things, but we believers are of God and remain in the power of God who is good.

20 And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

20. Jesus came. He gave us understanding so that we may know the Father. We are in Him. Knowing Him is eternal life.

21 Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

21. John uses this endearing term to end with an admonition to not involve ourselves with idols having admonished them previously to believe in Jesus and love each other.

Acts 15:28-29

For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: ²⁹ that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.