

Love in Action

1 John 5: Victorious in Love

Lesson 5

1 John 5:1–21

In a nutshell ~

If you were composing a letter to leave behind as a guide to help others know and understand what really matters, you would choose your words very carefully. Neatly tucked inside the closing chapter of John's epistle we find the words that were most important to him—those containing the key to abundance here and now as well as in the hereafter: *begotten, overcome, victory, eternal life, assurance, confidence, answered prayer and freedom*—all words that convey a sense of permanence. John's desire at the end of his life was to leave those who would follow after him a solid foundation on which to build and rest their faith in God.

Open your Bible and lesson each day by beginning with a word of prayer.

Read 1 John 5:1–21.

John has spelled out clearly how to recognize the characteristics that are the basis for determining whether or not someone is a true Christian.

1. Let's briefly recap by taking a look back at what the chapters in 1 John previously taught us about the birthmarks of a believer. Using the references below, finish the following: *Everyone who is born of God . . .*

a. 2:29 –

b. 3:9 –

c. 4:7 –

2. Here in chapter 5, John completes the picture, brushing on the finishing strokes by explaining how to be victorious in our Christian faith. From the verses below, how does John complete his thought pattern about *everyone who is born of God*?

a. 5:1 –

b. 5:4 –

c. 5:18 –

3. According to John's statements here in chapter 5, how do we know that we love God's children? v. 2

- a. What is the true test of a believer's love for God? v. 3
- b. Look up the definition of the word *burdensome*. What does John mean when he says that God's commandments are not burdensome? v. 3
- c. Look back to the statements made about this by Jesus in the Upper Room in John 14:15 and 21. What, again, is the promise for the one who obeys Him?

John, like Jesus, inseparably linked *love* together with *obedience*. John adds the emphasis that obedience to God is possible because His commands are not a burden to those that love Him.

Selah ~

Realizing that your love for God is directly equivalent to the degree of your obedience to Him, how much would you say that you love Him right now? Please share your thoughts.

4. Who does John say will win the battle against the world? vv. 4–5

- a. In John 16:33, what does John add that is key to our ability to overcome?

Though the ultimate battle has been won *in Christ*, daily each conflict must be lived out on the battlefield! The way to overcome and claim victory is by renewing your faith through the Holy Spirit's power indwelling you. Will you do it now and praise Him for making it possible for you to overcome?

Key Verse ~ (Memory verse) **1 John 5:13**

"These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God."

Review this verse often throughout the week. Write it out a couple of times in the space provided to help you commit it to memory. By week's end, try to notice *how* and *where* you are able to put it into practice. Note your results.

Blessed Assurance

Read 1 John 5:6–21 for review.

The Apostle John understood that a wrong interpretation of the truth would have lasting negative consequences for the believers. His goal was to help them learn to discern and live for that which is based upon truth. The singular thread that wove together John's letter was the truth that eternal life is in Jesus Christ alone. *"This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth"* (v. 6).

1. Who are the three who bear witness to this in heaven? These three are one. v. 7
 - a. Who are the three who bear witness on earth? These three agree as one. v. 8

These verses have to do with three phases of Jesus' life when He was manifested as the Son of God in Human form: at His baptism (*the water*), His death (*the blood*), and His resurrection (*the Spirit*). Each of these testified to the fact that the man Jesus was the divine Son of God.

John makes the point (v. 9) that because the people of his day believed human testimony when it was validated by two or three witnesses, then surely they could believe the three-fold witness of God, since He was behind all three. Together they testified that Jesus is the Christ.

Up close ~

In the Gospel of John, Jesus responded to those who questioned Him by indicating He had *five* very reliable witnesses; who or what were they in each of the following verses?

a. John 5:31–32, and 37

b. John 5:33–35

c. John 5:36

d. John 5:39

2. According to 1 John 5:10, what does John declare about the one who believes in the Son of God?

a. What about those who do not believe?

b. What truth does John make clear for everyone in verse 12?

The false teachers John wrote to the believers about did not believe *that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son*. This truth is not only a future hope, but also a present reality for every believer. We need not wait for it—we need not work for it; it is rather a gift from God that can be fully experienced NOW! Have you thanked Him lately for His priceless indescribable gift?

The last nine verses of John's wonderful letter are meant to be a summary of the text and an encouragement to all believers to apply what they have read and believed.

3. To whom does John write and for what purpose? v. 13

4. What is the sweet confidence that we as believers have in approaching God?
vv. 14–15

a. If we are sure that He hears us, what are we promised?

Selah ~

The High Priest of the Old Testament was allowed once a year to enter the Holy of Holies on behalf of God's people. Our High Priest—Jesus Christ—tore down the veil separating God from man and is seated at the right hand of the Father, making intercession on our behalf. Read Hebrews 4:14–16 through as you think about prayer.

- a. How does God want you to approach Him in prayer?
- b. What do these verses tell you about your Lord? How would this enable Him to understand *your* petitions?
- c. Personal: Do *you* have the kind of confidence the writer of Hebrews talked about and that John writes about here in 5:14–15? (Please personalize it.)

Praying according to God's will is the key to receiving what we ask of Him. It is important to discuss the matter with Him and to know what the Scriptures say about His will. Most of God's will for our lives is already written on the pages of the Bible. By learning to use His Word to formulate our requests and praying the promises back to Him, we are praying in a way that honors Him, assuring us of our petitions.

Verses 16–17 present an example of the kind of prayer God will answer. Because believers are called to love, we are also called to pray! When we see a Christian brother or sister in sin, we should pray and, as the Lord leads, confront them about their sin. The question is in the difference between sinning in a way that leads to death and sinning in a way that does not. There are differing opinions as to what John's intended meaning is here; therefore, we must examine it in the context of the entire letter. John was writing to the believers to refute the false teachers who denied Jesus' deity and at the same time lived in habitual sin themselves. Since they were living in a continual state of rebellion against God, and at the same time denying who Jesus Christ was, their unrepentant attitude would keep them in a place that was beyond the reach of prayer. We are not called to judge others but to pray for them, and to pray in such a way that God would hear from heaven and answer! The prayer of a righteous person avails much (James 5:16).

5. What does the one born of God *do*—and *not do*? v. 18

The person who makes the deliberate choice *not* to continue in sin is safe—Jesus keeps that one safe. The enemy cannot take away his/her salvation; they are secure in God's grace!

John earlier wrote his Gospel in order that his readers would come to believe in Jesus Christ (John 20:31). He wrote this epistle so that believers might *know* and have assurance of their salvation. Although we may doubt and even falter due to lifestyle choices or our circumstances, John assures us all that we do not need to worry about our salvation! *“These things have I written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life”* (v. 13).

Up close ~

In addition to *knowing* we have eternal life, there are six other instances in chapter 5 where John uses the assuring words “we know.” Find all six and finish the statements (taken from the NKJV).

1. *We know that we love the children of God when* (v. 2) _____

2. *We know that if He hears us* (v. 15) _____

3. *We know that whoever is born of God* (v. 18) _____

4. *We know that we are of God* (v. 19) _____

5. *We know that the Son of God has come* (v. 20) _____

6. *We know Him who* (v. 20) _____

7. Personal: What have you learned through your study that has increased your confidence level in your walk with God? How has this changed your life?

In one final attempt to refute false teaching and rescue those who might be prone to receive it, John closes his letter with an affectionate plea: *“Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen”* (v. 21). It is his last word, his heartfelt entreaty to every believer: keep yourself from anything that would threaten to take God’s place in your heart—anything that vies for your attention and affection. Even aged believers can be tempted, as the old hymn says: *“Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love.”* Our heartfelt prayer should be: *“Take my heart, Lord, take and seal it. Seal it for Thy courts above.”* Will you make the words of this old song your prayer today?

Notes