

# 1 John 5 Notes

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## ***Consequences Of Fellowship (5:1-21)***

- Love for brethren (5:1-3).
  - In this final chapter, the author focuses on the relationship of the three fundamental elements so important to him in the knowledge of God: faith, love, and obedience. In John, faith requires not only that something is held true, but that someone has entered into one's life.
  - The argument in vs. 1 parallels 4:19. Even as we love only because God first loved us, so also our belief is possibly only because we have first been "born of God." Whoever loves one's ancestor will also love those similarly born, even one's brothers and sisters.
  - Even as one cannot love God without loving His children, so also it is impossible to truly love the children of God without loving God also. This truism must always remain front and center in the mind of a Christian.
  - The connection between love for God and obedience protects us against thinking of love for God as "emotional feelings" about God. Love requires action. It requires laying down one's life as being one's own possession and taking up a new life in response to a Lord and Master.
  - To the natural man the will of God is strange; the requirements for righteousness, foreign and hard. Even the law of love is a burden. But when we trust in God's Son, then His yoke becomes gentle and the burden light (Matthew 11:30). We who have been born of God have within us a desire and a yearning for the Father. Seeking and hungering after righteousness becomes our joy. Living the life of love becomes our delight.
- Victory over the world (5:4-5).
  - Our being born of God is God's act on our behalf, through which He moves to overcome the world. What is in view is the act by which human beings are translated out of the kingdom of death into the kingdom of life. By faith we now have access to what was once accomplished by and through the appearance of Jesus on earth.
  - The confession with which the victory is linked is again the confession that "Jesus is the Son of God" (cf. 2:2-4:15). This is where the author began; it is also where he will end. Every single tenet of belief in God and of knowledge about Him depends on obedient confession and commitment that Jesus is the eternal life that was with the Father (1:2).

- Verification of Christ's credentials (5:6-12).
  - Jesus came not just by water, but by blood as well. The Father did not, as the false teachers whom John was combating insisted, affirm Jesus at His baptism, but not at His death. However, the Father bore witness (the root of the English word "martyr") at both. The "water" has reference to baptism and the "blood" has reference to His death on the cross. The way we have access to the death of Jesus is through His blood, which is accessed through baptism.
  - The Spirit bore witness historically in Jesus' baptism by coming down from heaven as a dove and remaining on Him (John 1:32). At Jesus' death on the cross, God gave striking evidence to Jesus in the miraculous events surrounding His crucifixion (Matthew 27:45-46, 51-53).
  - The KJV and the NKJV insert the so-called *comma Johanneum* between vss. 7-8. It reads, "in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth." Though what it teaches is true, the added passage itself is spurious. The passage is absent from every known Greek manuscript except eight (all of which date from the Middle Ages). Four of the eight manuscripts contain the passage as a variant reading written in the margin as a later addition to the manuscript.
  - The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth in that He is true and, therefore, the source and revealer of divine truth. However, the witness is not limited to the Spirit but includes the witness of the Father. His witness is greater than the witness of a human being because of the nature of the one who gives it and of its greater trustworthiness (John 5:36-37). The fact that the crucified Jesus is God's own Son is clearly set forth. Those who believe this testimony receive the Father's own witness in their hearts that they are right to trust in Christ.
  - The consequence of accepting this testimony from God is the fulfillment of the promise John made in 1:2 to bear witness and to testify to that "eternal life" that was with the Father and has now appeared to us in the Son. Eternal life is present in His Son. Those who have the Son have this life. Those who are without the Son are without life. There are only two possible responses: to believe God's testimony, or to reject it.
- Assurance of eternal life (5:13).
  - Vs. 13 makes the transition from the main argument to the epilogue. It reminds us of John 20:31 where the author said he had written his gospel so that his readers might believe in Jesus and receive eternal life in His name.

- The first letter of John is addressed to those who have accepted this belief but still need assurance that through this name they have indeed received eternal life.
- Guidance in prayer (5:14-17).
  - The "confidence" we have with Christ applies not only in the future at His coming and of judgment but also in the present and especially in the avenue of prayer. "Hearth" does not mean simply to be listened to but to be heard favorably (John 11:41-42). The expectation, of course, is linked to our asking according to His will.
  - In vs. 15, John states that the "confidence" for approaching God and asking Him anything is absolute. That our petition is answered is not dependent on whether or not we have personally observed the answer. Some answers to prayer are recognized immediately, some are answered in the negative, and some answers are not recognized until later.
  - If love requires the willingness to lay down one's life for a Christian (3:16), then certainly it follows that if one sees a brother commit sin, such a person will intercede for him in prayer. John says that all unrighteousness is sin. A "sin not unto death" is one of which someone repents. A "sin unto death" is one where the person who commits it refuses to repent. He is rebellious and obstinate toward God.
- Freedom from a life of sin (5:18-21).
  - John concludes by stating three certainties that characterize his position over against the false teachers: (1) We know that anyone born of God does not continue in sin (vs. 18); (2) We know that we are the children of God (vs. 19); and (3) We know that the Son of God has come and has given us definite knowledge about Himself (vs. 20).
  - John begins with the coming of the Word of life (1:1-4); now he closes with the certainty that the Son of God has come. The gospel is not theoretical or abstract; it is rooted in the practical truth that God became man in the person of Jesus Christ.
  - John closes on an affectionate note and with a final admonition. "Little children" reminds his readers of his genuine commitment to them. The danger of idolatry was especially serious in Ephesus (where John likely wrote this letter). The word rendered "idols" means "an image, specter, or shade -- as of the dead; then any image or figure which would represent anything, particularly anything invisible; and hence anything designed to represent God." The true God is opposed to the false gods, the idols. An idol is man's conception of God. God made man in His image; now men make gods in their own image. Though few in our contemporary culture

worship physical idols, idolatry is widespread nonetheless. Anything that people elevate above God is an idol of the heart (cf. 2 Corinthians 10:5).