

Lesson 7

Small Group Discussion

1 John 5:1-21



Context of the Chapter

The Apostle John finishes chapter five with a summary of what he has already discussed. These truths include the importance of believing on the Biblical Person of Jesus Christ, loving one another, and turning from sin. However, this chapter has a great focus on a prior truth John has discussed: overcoming in Christ. The believer is promised that they have the power to overcome the world and their sin by having faith in Jesus. This chapter also contains further promises of assurance and confidence for the one who obeys Christ and loves his brother.

Questions/Sermon Study

1 John 5:1-5

The Apostle John continues to emphasize that faith in Christ is the only way to life. Faith in Christ is seen in that we obey what He has commanded us. However, this Scripture points out that faith in Christ leads not only to obedience but also joyful obedience.

1. Do you find obeying God to be a joyful experience? Or does it seem burdensome? God promises us that if we walk by faith, that while obedience may not be easy, it will not be burdensome.
 - **John 14:15** - *Obedience that is rooted in love is not burdensome but is a joy*
2. We also see the promise that we will have the power to overcome the world through our faith in Christ. Do you seem to have power over your sin? Or does your sin seem to have power over you?
 - **Romans 1:1-12**

1 John 5:6-12

The Apostle John is making a critical point of confirming the truth of Jesus Christ in this passage. He rests His case on the concept of “testimony.” In Jewish law it was required that there be two or three witnesses in order for an accusation to be considered lawful. In this case, John is saying there are three that witness that Jesus Christ came in the flesh as the Son of God.

- I. The first witness is the Water: This is representative of the baptism of Christ. Jesus was baptized in order to identify with His mission, to save sinners. On the cross Jesus would identify as a sinner so that we could identify as righteous through Him. Before Jesus went to the cross, he identified as a “sinner” through baptism, that He was coming to take our place. He was without sin, but coming to take the punishment for sinners. God “witnessed” by saying “This is my beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased.”

- II. The second witness is the blood. This is in reference to Christ's identification with sinners on the cross. Through the blood of Christ spilled on our behalf, the Father witnessed to the world His love for mankind and His hatred of evil. The spilling of blood "witnessed" that Christ was in the flesh, and through His resurrection witnessed that He was from God.
- III. The final witness is the Spirit. Now notice we have seen the Father witness, the Son witness through His physical life and death, and now we are going to have the third person of the Trinity witness. The Holy Spirit witnessed of Christ through the gifts of the Spirit (**Hebrew 2:1-4**), and through be the agent of revelation to the believer (**John 14:25-26**). Through these two main ministries the Spirit testifies that Jesus Christ is the Son of God sent by the Father.

The Scripture concludes with an obvious statement. We believe men if there are two or three witnesses, how much more should we believe God has He witnesses through three "Persons," the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He who does not believe the witness of God is condemned, and he who does believe His witness will be saved in Christ.

3. This is a snapshot of how the Trinity works together. Do you find the Trinity confusing? Does this Scripture help to see how God works within Himself in different ways to provide for us a complete picture of His character and plan?

1 John 5:13-15

The Gospel of **John 20:31** states, "but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." This is the "purpose statement of the Gospel of John. The Apostle John does something similar as he states in **1 John 5:13** that he has written these things that we may know, that we may have assurance of our salvation.

4. When John says I have written "these things" what does he mean?
 - *He means all that he has written in the book of 1 John. This book is truly a self reflection test to see whether or not we are in the faith. In John's time many people were being deceived and led astray, so he was writing a letter of clarity. Through this letter of clarity the church could self reflect on their own salvation, spot false Christians, and defend themselves against false teachers.*
 - *This also contains the assurance of God hearing our prayers when we are walking in faith. As we trust in Christ, God shapes and molds our heart so that our desires are in accord with His. Through this life of obedience the disciple of Christ develops an effective prayer life.*
5. As you have read and studied 1 John have you found peace and confidence in your salvation in Christ? Or have you felt challenged on what true faith is? *Maybe you have considered the possibility that you have not had a genuine faith in comparison to the standard the Apostle John (through the Holy Spirit) gave the early church.*

1 John 5:16-17

A truly challenging Scripture to interpret. There are two main interpretations to this Scripture:

- I. First, is that "sin that leads to death" refers to any sin by an unbeliever. Before salvation, all of our sin is leading us to death. For a person without the Holy Spirit, praying to stop sinning is ineffective, for they do not have the power to stop sinning. Therefore, the Apostle John may be encouraging the church that those who have walked away from the faith (false christians or false teachers) are beyond prayer to "stop their sinful actions." Instead, perhaps the church could pray that their soul would be saved rather than that their sin would stop.

- II. A second interpretation of this passage may be that the “sin that leads to death” refers to habitual sin that leads to a person’s life literally ending. This happened in **Acts 5:1-11**, possibly alluded to in **1 Corinthians 5:5** and **1 Corinthians 11:30**. This would be an exhortation to the church and a warning that those who continue to sin without conscience towards God, especially those who know the truth, may be in danger of the swift judgment of God. Peter did not intercede for Ananias and Sapphira, but instead stepped aside for God’s judgment. In the same way, the Apostle John is saying that when people (especially those who are false believers/teachers) continue in rebellious sin, there may be a time that God pronounces judgment and takes their life. No type of intercession in this case will stop God’s judgment.

Either way there is a warning in this Scripture that God will not be mocked, and those who are wolves in sheep’s clothing may be under strict, severe, and sudden judgment. The church is to let God deal with this type of sin. However, the church should always provide routes of restoration to those caught in sin and help provide a way out. An individual's response to that help may be the answer to whether their sin will lead to their death, or if they will receive the grace of God to change them.

6. This is a challenging Scripture. What is your take away or interpretation? Have you heard another take on this Scripture?

1 John 5:18-21

The Apostle John concludes with three key themes of the entire letter.

- I. You cannot say you are a Christ follower and continue to live a life of habitual sin.
 - II. God’s love and power will protect and deliver His children from the world, devil, and sin.
 - III. Following God in the current world we live in will be a constant battle, but we have hope and assurance of overcoming and eternal life through Jesus Christ.
7. Do you feel like you have implemented and understood these three main themes of the book of 1 John?

Discipleship Focus & Challenge

At Mitchell Berean, we are a church on mission to raise up disciple-makers who share the Gospel where we live, work and play.

A disciple’s heart posture is to be a lifelong follower, student, example, and teacher of Jesus Christ.

Luke 9:23 - Follower

John 15:1-8 - Student

John 13:34-35 - Example

Matthew 28:18-20 - Teacher

Fall Campaign Challenge #7 - Be a follower!

There is great hope that as we follow Christ we will experience His power to overcome this world. This starts with a choice in each one of our hearts, will we fully follow Christ? Jesus says in **Luke 9:23** that if we wish to follow Him, we will deny ourselves and pick up our cross daily and come after Him. Have you made that choice to give up all and follow Jesus? Have you experienced the overcoming power of Jesus Christ? If you have, this week's challenge is to tell one person who may not know the story of God's love transforming you. Tell them of the hope and freedom you have found in Christ.

If you have not experienced God's transformational love, this week's challenge is to really consider where your faith is at. Do you have a genuine faith that the book of 1 John describes? Jesus is not withholding His power from you, we withhold His power when we do not receive the gift He has given. This oftentimes looks like living for ourselves rather than truly living for Jesus. Choose this day whom you will serve.

Memorize: 1 John 4:7-8

Dear friends,
let us continue to love one another,
for love comes from God.
Anyone who loves
is a child of God and knows God.
But anyone who does not love
does not know God, for God is love.

1 John 4:7-8