

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

1 John Chapter 5 — Faith, Victory, and Eternal Life in Christ

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

1 John Chapter 5 brings John's first letter to a powerful conclusion.

Throughout this letter, John has emphasized several tests of genuine Christian faith:

Faith in Jesus Christ.

Obedience to God's commands.

Love for other believers.

Separation from the sinful values of the world.

Confidence before God.

The testimony of the Holy Spirit.

Now, in Chapter 5, these themes come together around one great truth:

Eternal life is found in Jesus Christ.

John begins by connecting faith in Christ with the new birth.

He then explains that those who are born of God overcome the world through faith.

He presents the testimony of the water, the blood, and the Spirit concerning Jesus Christ.

He explains that God's testimony concerning His Son is greater than human testimony.

Then John gives one of the clearest statements concerning assurance anywhere in Scripture:

“I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

Christian assurance is not based upon feelings.

It is based upon God's testimony concerning His Son.

John then teaches believers about confidence in prayer, intercession for believers who fall into sin, God's protection from the evil one, and the certainty that Jesus Christ is the true God and eternal life.

Finally, John closes the entire letter with a brief but serious command:

“Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.”

1 John 5 therefore calls believers to:

Believe in Christ.

Walk in obedience.

Overcome the world through faith.

Trust God's testimony.

Know that eternal life is found in Christ.

Pray according to God's will.

Intercede for other believers.

Live differently from the world.

Guard the heart from idols.

I. FAITH IN CHRIST BRINGS NEW BIRTH

1 John 5:1 — “Everyone Who Believes”

“Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. And everyone who loves the Father also loves His children.”

John begins this chapter by connecting faith in Jesus with the new birth.

The person who truly believes that Jesus is the Christ has been:

Born of God.

Christianity is more than adopting a religion.

It involves spiritual birth.

Jesus Christ is at the center of that new birth.

John also immediately connects our relationship with God to our relationship with God's children.

If we love the Father, we should also love those who belong to Him.

Cross References

John 1:12

“But to everyone who received Him and believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.”

1 John 4:7

“Beloved, let us love one another, because love comes from God. Everyone who truly loves has been born of God and knows God.”

1 Peter 1:23

“You have been born again, not from seed that dies, but from seed that cannot perish, through the living and enduring Word of God.”

John joins together three truths:

Faith.

New birth.

Love.

A person who has been born of God believes in Christ and begins to love God's family.

Spiritual Principle

New birth produces a new relationship with God and a new relationship with God's people.

II. LOVE FOR GOD PRODUCES OBEDIENCE

1 John 5:2 — Loving God's Children

“We know that we love God’s children when we love God and obey His commandments.”

John gives an important balance.

Sometimes people define love entirely by emotion.

John does not.

Love for God's people must remain connected to:

Love for God

and

Obedience to God.

Biblical love never requires us to abandon biblical truth.

Cross References

John 14:15

“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

1 John 2:5

“Whoever keeps God's Word demonstrates that God's love is being brought to maturity in that person. This is how we know that we are living in Him.”

John 14:21

“The person who has My commandments and obeys them is the one who loves Me. The one who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and reveal Myself to him.”

John teaches that love and obedience belong together.

Love for God is not merely saying:

“I love God.”

It is living in a way that takes His Word seriously.

1 John 5:3 — His Commandments Are Not Burdensome

“Loving God means keeping His commandments, and His commandments are not burdensome.”

John does not say obedience is always easy.

He says God's commandments are not an unbearable burden.

Why?

Because obedience flows from love.

When a person loves God, obedience is no longer merely a religious duty.

It becomes a response to the God who has loved and saved us.

Cross References

John 14:15

“If you love Me, keep My commandments.”

Deuteronomy 30:11

“This command I am giving you today is not too difficult for you, and it is not beyond your reach.”

Matthew 11:30

“My yoke is easy to carry, and the burden I give is light.”

God's commands are not designed to destroy His people.

They guide us toward:

- Holiness.
- Wisdom.
- Faithfulness.
- Spiritual protection.
- Fellowship with God.

Key Truth

Obedience becomes different when it grows out of love rather than mere obligation.

III. FAITH OVERCOMES THE WORLD

1 John 5:4 — “This Is the Victory”

“For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.”

This is one of the great victory verses of Scripture.

John does not say Christians overcome the world through:

Political power.

Wealth.

Human intelligence.

Popularity.

Physical strength.

He says:

“This is the victory...our faith.”

Cross References

John 16:33

“I have told you these things so that you may have peace in Me. In the world you will have trouble, but take courage—I have overcome the world.”

1 John 4:4

“You are from God, dear children, and have overcome those who oppose the truth, because the One who lives in you is greater than the one who is in the world.”

Romans 8:37

“In all these things we are more than conquerors through the One who loved us.”

The world pressures Christians to:

Think like the world.

Live like the world.

Desire what the world desires.

Accept what the world accepts.

But faith gives believers the ability to remain loyal to Christ.

Spiritual Principle

Faith does not remove believers from the battle; faith gives them victory in the battle.

1 John 5:5 — Who Overcomes the World?

“Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.”

John answers his own question.

The overcomer is the person who believes:

Jesus is the Son of God.

Victory is inseparable from Christ.

Cross References

John 20:31

“These things have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life through His name.”

Romans 10:9

“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

1 John 4:15

“Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God remains in God, and God remains in him.”

Christian victory is not positive thinking.

It is not confidence in ourselves.

It is faith in Jesus Christ.

IV. THE WITNESS OF WATER, BLOOD, AND SPIRIT

1 John 5:6 — Jesus Christ Came by Water and Blood

“Jesus Christ is the one who came by water and blood—not by water only, but by water and blood. The Spirit testifies to this, because the Spirit is truth.”

John now speaks about testimony.

Jesus Christ came by:

Water.

Blood.

And the Spirit testifies concerning Him.

Within the framework given in this chapter, the water points to Christ's baptism and the blood points to His sacrificial death.

Jesus' ministry was publicly identified at His baptism and fulfilled through His sacrificial death.

The Holy Spirit bears witness to the truth about Christ.

Cross References

John 19:34

“One of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.”

John 1:33

“I did not know beforehand which One He was, but the One who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The One upon whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’”

John 14:17

“He is the Spirit of truth. The world cannot receive Him because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He remains with you and will live in you.”

The testimony concerning Jesus is not built upon imagination.

His life and ministry were revealed in history.

His baptism was real.

His death was real.

The Spirit's testimony is true.

Important Truth

The gospel is rooted in the real person and real saving work of Jesus Christ.

V. THREE BEAR WITNESS

1 John 5:7 — The Heavenly Witness

“For there are three who bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.”

The Crawford Standard Bible presents three heavenly witnesses:

The Father.

The Word.

The Holy Spirit.

And the verse declares:

“These three are one.”

The Word is the title John uses for Jesus Christ.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit bear unified testimony concerning divine truth.

Cross References

Matthew 28:19

“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

John 10:30

“I and the Father are one.”

2 Corinthians 13:14

“May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.”

The Christian faith recognizes:

The Father.

The Son.

The Holy Spirit.

Not three competing gods.

But one God revealed in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

1 John 5:8 — The Witness on Earth

“And there are three who testify on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.”

John again emphasizes agreement.

The witnesses do not contradict each other.

They agree.

Cross References

John 19:34

“One of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.”

John 5:31

“If I were the only one testifying about Myself, My testimony by itself would not be the only witness.”

John 15:26

“When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father—He will testify about Me.”

The Spirit points to Christ.

The water points to Christ.

The blood points to Christ.

The testimony agrees.

Spiritual Principle

God has not left the identity of Jesus Christ without testimony.

VI. GOD'S TESTIMONY IS GREATER

1 John 5:9 — God Testifies About His Son

“If we accept the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater. This is the testimony God has given about His Son.”

Human testimony can be persuasive.

But God's testimony is greater.

John asks us to consider something obvious:

If people regularly accept human testimony, how much more should they receive God's testimony?

Cross References

John 5:36

“I have testimony greater than John's testimony. The works the Father has given Me to complete—the very works I am doing—testify that the Father sent Me.”

Matthew 3:17

“A voice from heaven said, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’”

John 8:18

“I testify about Myself, and the Father who sent Me also testifies about Me.”

God testified concerning Christ.

At His baptism.

Through His works.

Through Scripture.

Through the Spirit.

Through His resurrection.

The question is not whether God has spoken.

The question is whether we will believe Him.

1 John 5:10 — Believing God's Record

“Whoever believes in the Son of God has this testimony within them. Whoever does not believe God has made Him a liar, because they do not believe the record God gave about His Son.”

John uses very strong language.

Rejecting God's testimony about Christ is not neutral.

John says the unbeliever effectively accuses God of lying.

Cross References

John 3:33

“Whoever accepts His testimony has confirmed that God is true.”

Romans 3:4

“Certainly not! Let God be true even if every human being proves false.”

John 3:36

“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life. Whoever rejects the Son will not see life, but God's judgment remains upon that person.”

God's testimony requires a response.

We either:

Believe God

or

Reject what God has said.

There is no neutral position concerning Jesus Christ.

VII. ETERNAL LIFE IS IN THE SON

1 John 5:11 — God's Gift of Eternal Life

“And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.”

John now states God's testimony plainly.

God has given:

Eternal life.

And where is that life found?

In His Son.

Cross References

John 3:16

“God loved the world so greatly that He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.”

John 17:3

“This is eternal life: that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You sent.”

John 1:4

“In Him was life, and that life was the light of humanity.”

Eternal life is not merely endless existence.

It is life in relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Key Truth

Eternal life is not found in religion—it is found in the Son of God.

1 John 5:12 — “Whoever Has the Son Has Life”

“Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

John could hardly be more direct.

There are two conditions:

Has the Son — Has life.

Does not have the Son — Does not have life.

Cross References

John 3:36

“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever refuses to believe the Son will not see life.”

John 14:6

“Jesus said, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”

John 11:25

“Jesus said, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me will live even though he dies.’”

Christianity does not teach that eternal life is found through many independent paths.

John places eternal life in one place:

Jesus Christ.

VIII. YOU CAN KNOW YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE

1 John 5:13 — Assurance of Salvation

“I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

This is one of the great assurance verses of the Bible.

John does not say:

“So that you may hope.”

“So that you may guess.”

“So that you may wonder.”

He says:

“So that you may know.”

Cross References

John 20:31

“These things are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in His name.”

John 3:36

“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.”

1 John 1:2

“The Life appeared, and we have seen Him. We testify and announce to you the eternal Life who was with the Father and was revealed to us.”

God does not intend His children to live every day in uncertainty about whether eternal life exists.

Assurance rests upon:

God's promise.

God's testimony.

Faith in God's Son.

The evidence of spiritual life described throughout 1 John.

Important Truth

Christian assurance rests upon God's Word rather than changing emotions.

IX. CONFIDENCE IN PRAYER

1 John 5:14 — Asking According to God's Will

“And this is the confidence we have before Him: if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”

John moves from confidence concerning eternal life to confidence in prayer.

Notice the condition:

“According to His will.”

Prayer is not a way of forcing God to carry out our will.

Prayer brings our desires into submission to His will.

Cross References

John 14:13

“Whatever you ask in My name, I will do so that the Father may be glorified through the Son.”

Matthew 21:22

“If you believe, you will receive what you ask for in prayer.”

Hebrews 4:16

“Therefore, let us come boldly to the throne of grace so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us when we need it.”

Biblical prayer includes:

Faith.

Submission.

Confidence.

Dependence.

A desire for God's glory.

Spiritual Principle

Strong prayer does not try to bend God's will toward ours; it seeks to bring our will into agreement with His.

1 John 5:15 — Confidence That God Hears

“And if we know He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have what we have asked of Him.”

John's confidence is built upon the character of God.

God hears prayers offered according to His will.

Cross References

Mark 11:24

“Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that God has heard you, and trust Him concerning the answer.”

John 16:23

“Whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give according to His purpose.”

Matthew 18:19

“If two of you agree on earth concerning something that is in harmony with God's will, My Father in heaven will hear their request.”

Prayer is not merely speaking into the air.

God hears His people.

That does not mean every prayer is answered:

In the way we expect.

At the time we expect.

According to our preferred method.

But believers can trust that God hears and answers according to His perfect will.

X. PRAYER FOR A BELIEVER WHO SINS

1 John 5:16 — Interceding for One Another

“If anyone sees a fellow believer commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray, and God will give life to the one who commits sin not leading to death. There is a sin that leads to death; I am not saying that you should pray for that.”

This is one of the more difficult statements in John's letter.

But the primary instruction is very clear:

When we see another believer fall into sin, our response should include:

Prayer.

John does not encourage gossip.

He does not encourage spiritual pride.

He calls for intercession.

Cross References

James 5:16

“Confess your wrongs to one another and pray for one another so that you may be restored. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”

James 5:15

“The prayer offered in faith will bring restoration to the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up. If he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.”

Matthew 12:31

“Every kind of sin and blasphemy may be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.”

John distinguishes between sin that does not lead to death and sin that leads to death.

The verse reminds us that sin is serious.

But it also reminds us that believers should care deeply about the spiritual condition of one another.

Application

When another Christian struggles, ask:

Do I gossip about him?

Do I condemn him?

Do I secretly enjoy his failure?

Or:

Do I pray for him?

1 John 5:17 — All Wrongdoing Is Sin

“All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death.”

John refuses to minimize sin.

He says:

All wrongdoing is sin.

Cross References

1 John 3:4

“Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness, because sin is lawlessness.”

Romans 14:23

“Whatever does not come from faith is sin.”

James 4:17

“If someone knows the right thing to do but refuses to do it, that person sins.”

We sometimes create categories that allow us to excuse certain sins.

John reminds us:

Wrongdoing is sin.

Sin should never be treated casually.

Spiritual Principle

Grace should never make us careless about sin; grace should make us desire holiness.

XI. GOD KEEPS HIS CHILDREN

1 John 5:18 — Protected From the Evil One

“We know that anyone born of God does not continue in sin; the One who was born of God keeps them safe, and the evil one cannot touch them.”

John again describes the person who has been born of God.

He does not say Christians never sin.

John has already taught that believers sometimes sin and need confession.

He is speaking about continuing in sin as the settled pattern of life.

A person born of God cannot be comfortable making sin his permanent way of living.

Cross References

1 John 3:9

“No one born of God continues living in sin as the settled practice of life, because God's life remains in him.”

John 17:15

“I am not asking You to take them out of the world, but to protect them from the evil one.”

Jude 1:24

“God is able to keep you from falling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy.”

The believer's security ultimately depends upon God.

God guards His people.

God preserves His people.

God gives strength against the evil one.

Key Truth

The Christian's hope is not merely that he can hold on to God, but that God is able to hold on to him.

XII. WE BELONG TO GOD

1 John 5:19 — A World Under the Evil One

“We know that we belong to God, and the whole world is under the control of the evil one.”

John draws a clear distinction.

Believers belong to God.

The rebellious world system lies under the influence of the evil one.

Cross References

John 17:14

“I have given them Your Word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world.”

2 Corinthians 4:4

“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.”

John 12:31

“Now judgment has come upon this world, and the ruler of this world will be driven out.”

This explains why Christians often find themselves moving against the direction of the culture.

The believer belongs to a different kingdom.

Application

Christians live in the world.

But Christians should not allow the world to determine:

What we believe.

What we worship.

What we value.

What we call right and wrong.

Who we are.

We belong to God.

XIII. JESUS CHRIST IS TRUE GOD AND ETERNAL LIFE

1 John 5:20 — “We Know”

“We know also 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—His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.”

John approaches the end of his letter with certainty.

Notice how often he says:

“We know.”

The Christian faith is not built upon uncertainty.

John declares:

The Son of God has come.

He has given us understanding.

We can know the true God.

We are in His Son Jesus Christ.

And John concludes:

“He is the true God and eternal life.”

Cross References

John 17:3

“This is eternal life: that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You sent.”

John 20:28

“Thomas answered Jesus, ‘My Lord and my God!’”

John 1:14

“The Word became flesh and lived among us. We saw His glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son, full of grace and truth.”

John began his letter by proclaiming the Word of Life.

He ends by proclaiming:

Jesus Christ is the true God and eternal life.

The letter begins with Christ.

The letter ends with Christ.

The Christian life begins with Christ.

The Christian life continues through Christ.

Eternal life is found in Christ.

1 John 5:21 — Keep Yourselves From Idols

“Dear children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.”

John's final statement may seem sudden.

But it perfectly fits the entire letter.

If Jesus Christ is:

The Son of God.

The Savior.

The true God.

Eternal life.

Then nothing else deserves the place that belongs to Him.

Cross References

Exodus 20:3

“You must have no other gods before Me.”

1 Corinthians 10:14

“Therefore, my dear friends, run away from idolatry.”

Colossians 3:5

“Put to death the sinful desires connected with your earthly nature, including sexual immorality, impurity, uncontrolled passion, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry.”

An idol is anything that takes God's rightful place in the heart.

Idols may include:

Money.

Possessions.

Power.

Popularity.

Relationships.

Pleasure.

Success.

Career.

Self.

Even good things can become idols when they take God's place.

John's final command is therefore profoundly appropriate:

Guard your heart.

XIV. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM 1 JOHN 5

1. Faith in Christ Brings New Birth

John begins with faith in Jesus Christ.

The person who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God.

Christianity is not merely an outward religious identity.

It involves inward spiritual life.

Ask Yourself:

Is my confidence in my religion, or is my confidence in Jesus Christ?

2. Faith Overcomes the World

The world constantly pressures believers to compromise.

John says:

“This is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.”

Faith enables Christians to remain loyal to Christ even when the world moves in another direction.

Principle:

Victory is not escaping every battle; victory is remaining faithful to Christ through the battle.

3. Eternal Life Is Found in Christ Alone

John gives us one of the clearest statements in Scripture:

“Whoever has the Son has life.”

Life is not found through religious performance.

It is found in Jesus Christ.

Remember:

If you have Christ, you have life.

4. Christians Can Have Assurance

John says:

“So that you may know that you have eternal life.”

God does not require His children to live in endless uncertainty.

Our assurance rests upon God's testimony concerning His Son.

Principle:

Do not build your assurance upon changing feelings. Build it upon God's unchanging Word.

5. Guard Your Heart From Idols

John ends with:

“Keep yourselves from idols.”

Anything that takes God's place can become an idol.

The Christian must continually guard his heart.

Ask Yourself:

What competes with God for first place in my life?

XV. THE SPIRITUAL PROGRESSION OF 1 JOHN 5

1 John 5 gives us a spiritual progression that summarizes the Christian life.

1. Believe

Jesus is the Christ.

2. Be Born of God

Faith in Christ is connected with spiritual new birth.

3. Love

Those who love the Father should love His children.

4. Obey

Love for God produces obedience.

5. Overcome

Faith gives victory over the world.

6. Receive God's Testimony

God has testified concerning His Son.

7. Receive Life

Eternal life is in Christ.

8. Know

Believers can know that they have eternal life.

9. Pray

Those who know God can approach Him with confidence.

10. Intercede

Believers should pray for one another.

11. Stand

God guards His children from the evil one.

12. Guard Your Heart

Keep yourself from idols.

This is the movement from:

Faith → New Birth → Love → Obedience → Victory → Assurance → Prayer → Perseverance.

XVI. Answers for Personal Study

Question 1

What does 1 John 5 teach about the relationship between faith and the new birth?

John says that everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God (1 John 5:1). Genuine Christian faith centers upon the identity of Jesus Christ.

The new birth is not simply becoming more religious or improving one's behavior. It is the spiritual work of God that produces new life.

That new life begins to show itself through faith, obedience, love for God's people, and victory over the values of the world.

Question 2

How does love for God demonstrate itself according to this chapter?

John connects love for God with obedience.

He says that loving God means keeping His commandments (1 John 5:3).

This does not mean believers earn God's love by obeying Him. Rather, obedience is the response of a heart that has received God's love.

Jesus said the same thing:

“If you love Me, keep My commandments.”

Biblical love therefore includes both affection and obedience.

Question 3

What does it mean that faith overcomes the world?

The world constantly pressures Christians to accept its values, priorities, attitudes, and sinful desires.

John says that the person born of God overcomes this world through faith (1 John 5:4).

This does not mean Christians will never struggle.

It means the world does not have to determine the believer's ultimate direction.

Faith keeps us looking toward Christ.

Faith reminds us that Jesus has already overcome the world.

Faith gives us courage to remain faithful even when obedience becomes difficult.

Question 4

What do the water, blood, and Spirit testify concerning Jesus Christ?

Within the framework of this study, the water points to Christ's baptism, the blood points to His sacrificial death, and the Spirit bears divine testimony concerning Him.

These witnesses agree that Jesus is truly the Christ.

His ministry was not imaginary.

His baptism was real.

His sacrificial death was real.

The Spirit's testimony concerning Him is true.

Together they point believers toward the historical and saving work of Jesus Christ.

Question 5

Why is God's testimony concerning His Son so important?

John says that although people accept human testimony, **God's testimony is greater** (1 John 5:9).

God Himself has testified concerning His Son.

To believe Jesus is therefore to receive God's testimony.

To reject Jesus is to reject what God has said concerning Him.

The Christian's confidence is not merely based upon what other people say about Christ.

It rests upon God's own testimony.

Question 6

Where is eternal life found?

John gives a direct answer:

“This life is in His Son” (1 John 5:11).

Then he says:

“Whoever has the Son has life.”

Eternal life is therefore inseparable from Jesus Christ.

Christianity does not present eternal life as a reward that can be earned independently from Christ.

Life is found in Him.

The person who has Christ has eternal life.

The person who rejects Christ does not possess that life.

Question 7

Can a believer know that he has eternal life?

Yes.

John specifically says that he wrote these things to believers **“so that you may know that you have eternal life”** (1 John 5:13).

This assurance does not mean Christians never examine themselves.

Throughout 1 John, John gives spiritual evidence of genuine faith:

Faith in Christ.

Love for believers.

Obedience.

A changed relationship with sin.

The witness of the Spirit.

But the foundation of assurance is God's promise concerning His Son.

Our emotions change.

God's testimony does not.

Question 8

What does it mean to pray according to God's will?

Praying according to God's will means bringing our requests before God while remaining surrendered to His purposes.

Prayer is not an attempt to control God.

It is a relationship of faith in which believers confidently bring their needs to the Father.

We can pray boldly while also saying:

“Lord, Your will is better than mine.”

The more Scripture shapes our minds, the more our prayers should begin to reflect God's priorities.

Question 9

How should Christians respond when another believer falls into sin?

John says believers should pray.

This is extremely important.

Our first response should not be:

Gossip.

Mockery.

Pride.

Condemnation.

Instead, we should care about restoration.

James 5:16 similarly teaches believers to pray for one another.

This does not mean sin should be ignored.

It means correction should be accompanied by compassion and intercession.

Question 10

What idols might compete with God for first place in a person's life?

An idol is anything that takes the place that properly belongs to God.

Modern idols may not always be carved statues.

They may include:

Money.

Career.

Possessions.

Relationships.

Pleasure.

Recognition.

Entertainment.

Political power.

Success.

Personal comfort.

Even ministry can become wrongly elevated if our identity becomes centered in ministry rather than in Christ.

John ends his letter by warning God's children:

“Keep yourselves from idols.”

Every believer should ask:

“What has the greatest claim upon my heart?”

Personal Application

1 John 5 gives believers a powerful progression:

Faith leads to new birth.

New birth produces love.

Love produces obedience.

Faith gives victory over the world.

God's testimony points us to His Son.

The Son gives eternal life.

Eternal life produces assurance.

Assurance produces confidence in prayer.

Prayer leads us to intercede for others.

God guards His children from the evil one.

Those who belong to God must guard themselves from idols.

The chapter begins with:

Faith in Christ.

And it ends with:

Faithfulness to God.

Everything between those two truths points us toward Jesus.

He is:

The Christ.

The Son of God.

The One testified to by the Spirit.

The source of eternal life.

The true God.

The One who gives victory.

The One who gives assurance.

The One worthy of first place in our hearts.

XVII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“If You Have the Son, You Have Life”

Many people spend their lives searching for life.

They search for it in:

Money.

Possessions.

Success.

Relationships.

Entertainment.

Recognition.

Power.

Religion.

But John brings the search to one conclusion:

“Whoever has the Son has life.”

Life is not ultimately found in what we possess.

Life is found in whom we know.

Jesus Christ is not merely someone who gives eternal life.

He is the source of eternal life.

That changes everything.

If Christ is life, then nothing should compete with Him.

If Christ is life, then the world cannot offer anything greater.

If Christ is life, then obedience is not bondage.

If Christ is life, then faith is victory.

If Christ is life, then death does not have the final word.

If Christ is life, then believers can have assurance.

John therefore closes with exactly the right warning:

“Keep yourselves from idols.”

Why exchange the living Christ for something that cannot give life?

XVIII. FINAL APPLICATION

1 John 5 asks us some of the most important questions a person can answer.

First:

Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ?

Christianity begins with Christ.

Not church membership.

Not religious tradition.

Not good works.

Christ.

Then ask:

Has faith changed the way you live?

John connects genuine faith with:

Love.

Obedience.

Victory over the world.

Then ask:

What testimony are you trusting?

Human opinions change.

Culture changes.

Popular beliefs change.

God's testimony does not change.

God has testified concerning His Son.

Then ask:

Do you know that you have eternal life?

John did not write so believers would spend their lives guessing.

He wrote:

“So that you may know.”

Place your confidence in God's promise.

Then ask:

How is your prayer life?

Do you pray according to God's will?

Do you trust that God hears you?

Do you pray for other believers when they struggle?

Then ask:

What controls your heart?

John's last command is:

“Keep yourselves from idols.”

Anything that takes God's rightful place must be confronted.

Therefore:

Believe in Jesus Christ.

Love God's people.

Obey God's commands.

Walk by faith.

Overcome the world's pressure.

Trust God's testimony.

Rest in eternal life.

Pray confidently.

Intercede faithfully.

Stand against sin.

Trust God's protection.

And keep Jesus Christ first.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for giving us eternal life through Your Son, Jesus Christ.

Thank You that salvation is not based upon our ability to earn Your favor, but upon Your grace and the finished work of Christ.

Strengthen our faith.

Help us believe Your testimony even when the voices of the world speak against Your truth.

Teach us to love Your children.

Help us demonstrate our love for You through obedience.

When the world pressures us to compromise, remind us that our faith is the victory that overcomes the world.

Keep our eyes fixed upon Jesus.

Thank You for the testimony of the Spirit.

Thank You for the sacrifice of Christ.

Thank You that whoever has the Son has life.

Give assurance to those who truly belong to You.

Help us build our confidence upon Your Word rather than upon changing emotions.

Teach us to pray according to Your will.

Give us confidence to approach You with our needs.

Teach us also to pray for brothers and sisters who struggle with sin.

Protect us from spiritual pride.

Give us hearts that seek restoration rather than condemnation.

Guard us from the evil one.

Remind us that we belong to You even while we live in a world influenced by darkness.

Give us wisdom to recognize idols in our lives.

Remove anything that has taken Your rightful place.

May Jesus Christ remain first in our hearts, our families, our churches, and our lives.

May our faith produce obedience.

May our obedience demonstrate love.

May our love point others toward Christ.

And may we live every day with the confidence that eternal life is found in Your Son.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

Key Verse

“I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.” — 1 John 5:13

Central Truth

God gives eternal life through Jesus Christ, and those who truly believe in His Son can live with faith, assurance, victory, obedience, and confidence before God.

1 John 5 in One Sentence

Believe in Jesus Christ, overcome the world through faith, rest confidently in the eternal life God gives through His Son, and guard your heart from anything that would take His place.