

1 John

Lesson 6

Chapter 5:1-12

Leader Guide

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Faith in the Son of God

Lesson 6, 1 John 5:1-12

Prayers

Introduction

John, the last living apostle and eyewitness of Jesus, focuses on teaching new believers about Jesus Christ and reassuring them of their faith. He writes to assure their faith is genuine, even amid false teachers (and perhaps even their own). Some of their teachers rejected the gospel's simple truth for a religion of "gnosis," meaning worship of knowledge and mystical revelation. John writes that real faith is demonstrated in the life of a believer by four behaviors:

1. We obey Jesus' commands not to sin but, at the same time, recognize that we have sinned and need to confess our sins and look to Jesus as the atoning sacrifice for our sins.
2. We love God and love others; all the scriptures revolve around this greatest command.
3. We reject the craving for materialism and sensual lust.
4. We recognize and reject false teachings about Jesus Christ.

In his closing comments in chapter 5, John focuses on teaching new believers about Jesus Christ and reassuring them of their faith.

Read 1 John 5:1-5

^{1Jn 5:1} Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves his child as well. ^{1Jn 5:2} This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. ^{1Jn 5:3} This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, ^{1Jn 5:4} for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. ^{1Jn 5:5} Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

Discuss

1. Verses 1. What truth about Jesus does John want new Christians to know?
Jesus is the Son of God.
2. How might false teachers, and many people today, contradict this simple truth about Jesus?
 - a. **Jesus was just a man**
 - b. **Jesus did not exist**
 - c. **We are all sons of God**
 - d. **Some other teachings were that Jesus was only a spirit, not a flesh and blood person.**
3. Verse 1 b. What is the result of believing in Christ?

We love God and love his children too – other believers. John writes of agape love – love that is an act of will, not a feeling. Love that seeks the best for the other person regardless of their actions or feeling toward you.

4. Verse 2. In verse 1, John's emphasis was on everyone who loves God, loves his children. In verse 2, John changes the focus; everyone who loves his brother, God's children, loves God. Why do you think he expressed himself this way?

Throughout John's letter, he encouraged believers to love one another with agape love. Perhaps there was a pressing need or persecution. Or maybe they were simply like Peter and thought that Christian love was Phileos love – being kind to one another if they were kind to you rather than the sacrificial love of agape love.

5. Verses 3 -5 can be challenging to understand because we often dwell on our failures and feel that obedience to God's commands is burdensome – and impossible! John is saying something genuinely profound here because the focus is not on us. Overcoming the world is a common theme found in John's writings. Refer to the following verses and discuss the only way believers overcome the world.
- John 16:33 “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”
 - 1 John 4:4 You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.
 - 1 John 5:4 for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.
 - 1 John 5:5 Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God

We look to Christ – he is our righteous who overcame sin and death for us. We are declared righteous before God when we believe Christ saves us. Our righteousness is accomplished entirely by Christ. Even when our faith is weak and broken, Christ's love for us supersedes our faith – God loved us first and loves us last. – Now go and do not sin.

Read 1 John 5:6-12

^{1Jn 5:6} This is the one who came by water and blood —Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. ^{1Jn 5:7} For there are three that testify: ^{1Jn 5:8} the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. ^{1Jn 5:9} We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. ^{1Jn 5:10} Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. ^{1Jn 5:11} And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ^{1Jn 5:12} He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

6. In verse 8, John states that three testify for Jesus Christ; the Spirit, water (of baptism), and the blood (of Christ). Why was it necessary to his readers that John state at least three testimonies?

Three testimonies were considered valid in Jewish law.

7. John gives five other testimonies that Jesus is the Christ, Son of Man and Son of God. See John 5:31- 47 and list the other testimonies:

John 5:33-35 **John the Baptist.**

John 5:36 **Jesus' work to do the will of his Father**

John 5:37 **God's own testimony**

John 5:39 **Scriptures [all the law and the prophets]**

John 5:46 **Law of Moses**

8. Verse 9. How does John weigh the importance of his testimony?

John says his testimony true, but God's testimony is more important since it is from God.

9. How does John's reference to the "water" testify that Jesus is the Christ? See John 1:32-34 and Luke 3:21-22.

- a. John 1:32-34. Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. ³³And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One."

John 1 records two events that testify that Jesus is the Christ. The first is the testimony of John the Baptist, who was told by God that the Holy Spirit would descend on God's Chosen One. The second is the Holy Spirit, as a dove, descended on Jesus during his baptism.

- b. Luke 3:21-22. When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened ²²and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

Luke includes the testimony of God during Jesus' baptism "You are my Son, whom I love; with you, I am well pleased."

10. How does the "blood" testify that Jesus is the Christ? See John 1:29, Luke 23:44-45, Matthew 27:50-54.

- a. John 1:29. The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

Jesus was the Lamb of God – God's perfect sacrifice for the sin of the world. One sacrifice for all sin for all time. God was never approached in the Old Testament without an animal sacrifice for his people's sins – whether at the tent of the tabernacle or the temple or before the Ark of the Covenant that was covered with the atonement cover and washed in blood.

- b. Luke 23:44-45. It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, ⁴⁵for the sun stopped shining.

There were miraculous signs of nature testifying that Jesus was God on a cross.

- c. Matthew 27:50-54. And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. ⁵¹At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth

shook, the rocks split ⁵² and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. ⁵³ They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people. ⁵⁴ When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!"

In addition to the miraculous natural signs of the torn temple curtain and earthquake, bodies were raised from the dead to give testimony that Jesus was the Christ. Even the Roman centurion understood it.

11. The testimony of the water and the blood in John 5:7 also reminds us to reflect on the benefits of our baptism. Discuss what the water of baptism means to you in the following scriptures:

- a. John 3:3-8 Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."

⁴ "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"

⁵ Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

⁷ You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' ⁸ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

John 3:5-8, John 3 teaches that we must be spiritually born again to enter the kingdom of God. We receive God's Spirit through baptism.

- b. **1 Peter 3:21**, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

1 Peter 3:21 We are saved through baptism by washing away guilt and by uniting us with Jesus' resurrection.

- c. Colossians 2:11-13: Your whole self—ruled by the flesh—was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³ When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins.

Colossians 2:11-13 Our baptism and faith unite us with Christ. We are dead to a past life of spiritual sin through our union with Christ's death and raised to a new life in Christ. Our sins are forgiven through his blood on the cross, which canceled God's judgment that we are guilty of sin.

- d. ^{Eph 4:22} You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ^{Eph 4:23} to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ^{Eph 4:24} and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Ephesians 4:22 is an essential verse in Luther's teaching on baptism. Luther taught that baptism is for the forgiveness of sins; it rescues us from death and the devil and gives eternal salvation and spiritual rebirth by the Holy Spirit to all who believe. Baptism is to be remembered daily by contrition for our sins and repentance.

12. In John 14:25-27, the NIV refers to the Holy Spirit as our Advocate. Other translations of the same verse refer to the Holy Spirit as our Helper (ESV), Comforter (King James), Counselor (Christian Standard Bible), or Paraclete (Douay-Rheims Bible). Refer to the following verses and summarize how the Holy Spirit guides your life.

- a. **John 14:25-27** "All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶ But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

We shouldn't be spiritually troubled or afraid because we have God's Spirit to teach us to understand His word.

- b. John 16:13: But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

John 16:13: The Holy Spirit guides us to understand God's truth.

- c. Romans 8:26: In the same way the Spirit also comes to help us, weak as we are. For we do not know how we ought to pray; the Spirit himself pleads with God for us in groans that words cannot express.

Romans 8:26: The Holy Spirit intercedes for us in prayer

- d. 1 Corinthians 12:7: The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all.

1 Corinthians 12:7: The Holy Spirit gives us gifts that we use for the benefit of others.

- e. Galatians 5:22-23: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5:22-23: The Holy Spirit brings the love of God into our lives, love, joy, and peace

- f. 2 Thessalonians 2:13: We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as first fruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.

2 Thessalonians 2:13: The Holy Spirit sanctifies us

Closing Prayer, from Psalm 136:1, 25; 147:9–11

Dear Heavenly Father,

We give you thanks for you are good, and Your love endures forever. Your pleasure is not in our strength but in those who put their hope in Your unfailing love.

Thank you, Lord God, for all Your benefits, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. We ask for your guidance and wisdom through your Holy Spirit as we go through this week. Amen.