

Week 7

1 John 5

Read Out Loud: 1 John 5:1-15 (NIV)

¹ Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. ² This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. ³ In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, ⁴ for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. ⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. 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. ⁷ For there are three that testify: ⁸ the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. ⁹ We accept human testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. ¹⁰ Whoever believes in the Son of God accepts this testimony. Whoever does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because they have not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. ¹¹ And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

¹³ I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. ¹⁴ This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

One of the reasons John was writing this letter was to refute a belief that was held by Gnostics. Gnostics believed that there was a special knowledge that led to salvation. They did not believe salvation was through faith in Jesus Christ. They viewed humanity as evil and thus with regards to Jesus, they believed that the 'God person' left Jesus at the cross and returned when Jesus rose again.

Questions for Discussion

? According to this passage, what does it mean to be born of God? (vv. 1-3)

? John tells us that we can know we are loving God's children well by following His commands. What is the connection between following God's commands and loving each other?

? What commands of God sometimes feel burdensome to you? How does that impact your day-to-day life?

? In vs. 3 John says that God's commands are never burdensome. How can we approach following God's commands in a way that does not feel burdensome? How might this involve both a change in behavior and a change in our attitude/heart?

? What does it mean to overcome the world? In what ways is this connected to not being burdened by God's commands? (vs. 4)

? How does belief that Jesus is the Son of God enable us to overcome the world?

There are many views regarding John's reference to "water and blood" (vv. 6-8.) Two views that seem to prevail are:

1. Water and blood refer to Jesus' death on the cross. The only other place that John uses these two words together is to describe Jesus on the cross when He is pierced by the spear (John 19:34). John may be trying to bring attention to the fact that Jesus' death was not an ordinary death, but that there was a greater significance to his death.

2. Water and blood refer to baptism and the cross. When Jesus was baptized (the water) God declared Jesus was His son and the Holy Spirit descended on him. Because he was the Son of God, his death on the cross (the blood) brought us salvation and eternal life. John may be pointing out the significance that not only did the Son of God come to earth, he came to bring us salvation through his death.

? Re-read vv. 9-12. What is the testimony of God?

? Why is it important for Christians—both the original audience and today—to know that they have eternal life? (vs. 13)

? Optional: Re-read vv. 14-15. How can our prayers provide insight into what God's will is?

1 John 5:16-21 (NIV)

¹⁶ If you see any brother or sister commit a sin that does not lead to death, you should pray and God will give them life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that you should pray about that. ¹⁷ All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death. ¹⁸ We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the One who was born of God keeps them safe, and the evil one cannot harm them. ¹⁹ We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. ²⁰ 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 by being in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. ²¹ Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.

? Verse 16 tells us to pray for our brothers and sisters. Why is praying for other people important?

? How does knowing that Jesus protects those who are born of God and that the evil one cannot harm them impact your life? (vs. 18)

? Why do you think John chose to end this letter with another charge to “keep yourselves from idols”?

? How do we keep away from idols, or anything that might keep us from following God’s commands and take His place in our hearts?

For Discussion and Accountability

? In what areas are you struggling to obey God’s commands? What does it look like for you to move towards obedience?

? Is there something in your life that feels burdensome because you are allowing your attitude to be controlled by sin? How can you shift your perspective/actions to approach this situation with the freedom of knowing you have overcome the world?