

# A Study through 1 John: Chapter 5

## INTRODUCTION.

- A. In chapter 1, we saw the importance of remaining in fellowship with the heavenly Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.
- B. In chapter 2, we saw:
  - 1. The means through which we can receive the forgiveness of our sins,
  - 2. As well as the warnings and instructions toward maintaining fellowship God and abiding in Him.
- C. In chapter 3, we saw . . .
  - 1. What it means to be children of God,
  - 2. As well the importance of loving our fellow brethren in Christ in order to maintain our fellowship with our Lord and Savior.
- D. In chapter 4, we saw . . .
  - 1. the apostle John's warnings against false teachers,
  - 2. as well his continuing admonition to love one another.
- E. In chapter 5, we will see . . .
  - 1. Being born of God allows a person to overcome the world.
  - 2. God's testimony regarding His Son.
  - 3. thoughts regarding eternal life, overcoming sin, and keeping oneself from idols

## I. CHAPTER FIVE.

- A. Being born of God allows one to overcome the world. (1 John 5:1-5)
  - 1. A Christian is "*born of God*" because he acted upon his belief and conviction that "*Jesus is the Christ.*" (vs 5:1a)
    - a. While John is emphasizing belief due to the context of his letter, we recognize belief alone does not result in one being "*born of God.*"
    - b. In order for one to be "*born of God*" that one must be

*“born again . . . through the word of God.”* (1 Peter 1:22-23)

- c. Being *“born again”* requires one to fully believe and submit to the word of God.
2. A person who loves God will also love Jesus Christ. (vs 5:1b)
  - a. As we pointed out earlier, John’s teaching was refuting the Gnostic teachers. As a result, a person must love Jesus Christ the Son of God in order to truly love God.
  - b. Jesus stated, *“He who hates Me hates My Father also.”* (John 15:23) This truth would be true during His life on this earth and after His ascension into heaven.
3. One who loves God, who believes *“Jesus is the Christ,”* and obeys God’s commands will also love all of God’s offspring. (vs 5:2)
4. Keeping God’s commandments is so closely associated with loving God that the two are considered by John to be the same. As a result, we must recognize God’s commandments, just as His love, are not burdensome. God’s commandments are for our betterment and our spiritual wellbeing. (vs 5:3)
5. One who is born of God overcomes the world. (vs 5:4)
  - a. This faith, this conviction of truth enables one to overcome:
    - 1) The doubt of the world.
    - 2) The guilt of sin.
    - 3) The lusts of the flesh.
    - 4) The pride of life.
    - 5) The unrighteousness of the world.
  - b. Consider the encouraging word of the apostle Paul as seen in Romans 8:35-37. (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:57)
6. Who is the one who has overcome the world? It is the person who truly believes *“Jesus is the Son of God.”* (vs 5:5)

- a. Believing that Jesus is the Son of God gives a person conviction to overcome the world and its accompanying temptations.
- B. God's testimony concerning His Son. (1 John 5:6-13)
1. We believe Jesus is the Son of God because He "*came by water and blood*" and because the Holy Spirit "*bears witness.*" (vs 5:6)
    - a. The first part of this verse has proven difficult for scholars. There are two key explanations regarding the reference to "water" and "blood."
      - 1) First: The water was the baptism of Christ and the blood was His death when His blood was shed on the cross. This explanation could be preferable since John wrote, "*not only by water, but by water and blood*" thus indicating the two were separate events or occurrences.
      - 2) Second: The water and blood which flowed from Jesus' side when the soldiers shoved a spear in His side.
      - 3) While John is not clear as to what he meant, either of the aforementioned explanations can be viewed as valid.
    - b. The fact that Jesus came "*by water and blood*" is a direct reference to His dwelling on earth in the flesh.
    - c. This testimony of the Son of God living in the flesh is the testimony of the Holy Spirit. John wrote, "*And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.*" (cf. John 16:13)
  2. We believe Jesus is the Son of God because "*the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit*" bear witness in heaven. (vs 5:7)
    - a. This verse clearly acknowledges the existence and the

agreement of *“the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit.”* This verse also teaches the eternal truth of these three being one.

- b. However, we must note that most of the modern translations omit the phrase, “For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.” Consider the ESV reading, *“This is he who came by water and blood--Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.”* (1 John 5:6, ESV)
- c. In all of the early manuscripts, the reference to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is absent. It is also absent in most of the earlier later manuscripts. This passage does not show up in authoritative manuscripts until Erasmus’ Greek New Testament. According to sources, Erasmus was hesitant to include this phrase due to the lack of evidence to support its inclusion. However, bowing to pressure, Erasmus included the phrase in his third edition of his Greek New Testament. From this point on, it was included in the King James Version.
- d. It is conjectured that the phrase was included in the margins of earlier translations, added by the translator. Then, at some point, it was included in a handful of copies.
- e. Some scholars also point out the phrase breaks up John’s point of Jesus coming by water and blood and the testimony of the water, the blood, and the Holy Spirit.

- f. Let us consider briefly the English Standard Version's reading 1 John 5:6-8.
3. We believe Jesus is the Son of God because "*the Spirit, the water, and the blood*" bear witness on earth. (vs 5:8)
  - a. As verse 6 stated, Jesus came by water and by blood. Verse 8 ties the testimony of the water and the blood with the testimony of the Holy Spirit.
4. We believe Jesus is the Son of God because of "*the witness of God which He has testified of His Son.*" (vs 5:9; John 8:17-18)
  - a. God bore testimony to Jesus being His Son through miraculous works. (John 10:37-38; Hebrews 2:3-4)
5. We believe Jesus is the Son of God because the testimony of the word abides within us. (vs 5:10)
  - a. Our faith in God comes by "*hearing the word of God.*" (Romans 10:17)
  - b. When a person obeys the truth of God's word, that person is born again "*through the word of God.*" (1 Peter 1:22-23)
  - c. As long as the word of truth abides in a person, that person will continue to believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God. (cf. 1 John 2:14)
  - d. If a person does not believe the testimony of God and the Spirit found within the written word, then that person views God's testimony as being a lie.
6. We believe Jesus is the Son of God because God "*has given us eternal life . . . in His Son.*" (vs 5:11)
  - a. We believe God's promise that eternal life is found within His Son. (Romans 5:21; 6:23; Jude 1:20-21)
7. We believe Jesus is the Son of God because he "*who has the Son has life.*" (vs 5:12)
  - a. This eternal life, which comes through the Son, is that

- which Jesus promised. (John 5:24)
- b. Paul reminds us that if we have *“been crucified with Christ,”* then Christ lives in us and the life we live, we live by faith. (Galatians 2:20)
8. It was John’s purpose to remind the brethren of eternal life in Jesus Christ and to encourage them to continue to believe in the *“name of the Son of God.”* (vs 5:13)
- C. John closes this letter with thoughts regarding eternal life, overcoming sin, and keeping oneself from idols. (1 John 5:14-21)
1. John also reminds the Christians of their confidence in God to hear their prayers. (vs 5:14)
    - a. As we saw in our study of 1 John 3, if we keep the commands of God, then we can have confidence that *“whatever we ask we receive from Him.”* (1 John 3:22)
    - b. In 1 John 5:14, John offers the clarification *“if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”*
    - c. We must make certain our prayers of supplication and intercession are offered with the understanding that God’s will be done in all things. We must not be selfish and self-centered in our requests. Consider the example of Jesus. (Luke 22:42)
  2. If God hears our prayers, then He hears our petitions. (vs 5:15)
    - a. John clarified in verse 14, saying, *“that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”* This is an important clarification in understanding John’s statement in verse 15. *“Whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions”* refers to those petitions which are in accordance to God’s will.
    - b. Verse 15 does not guarantee God will grant every petition. Our confidence is God will grant every petition according to His will.

- 1) It was not God's will for Jesus' petition regarding the cup passing from Him to be granted. (Luke 22:42)
- 2) It was not God's will for Paul's request regarding his "thorn in the flesh" to be granted. (2 Corinthians 12:7-9)
3. Christians bear a responsibility to pray for their erring brother, however with certain conditions. (vs 5:16)
  - a. Verses 16 and 17 show us an example of what to pray for and an example of a petition we are not to make before God.
  - b. We recognize that the faithful child of God should pray for a sinning or an erring brother, however, John says that we should not pray for a brother who is engaging in "*sin leading to death.*"
    - 1) The death to which John referred is spiritual death or separation from God.
    - 2) Such separation occurs when a person sins and is unwilling to repent. Discuss what type of sin leads to death.
    - 3) If a person is unwilling to repent of a sin, then fellow Christians should not pray for that person. All prayer for the brother would be fruitless unless the brother himself is willing to repent and turn back to God.
    - 4) Consider a couple examples as seen in Hebrews 6:4-6 and 2 Peter 2:20-22.
    - 5) When a person has chosen to walk away from the Lord, we cannot ask the Lord to forgive the brother. We can, like Jesus, pray that God would forgive them if they repented.

4. The apostle John clarified that while all unrighteousness is sin, there is *“sin not leading to death.”* (vs 5:17)
  - a. As we discussed earlier, we have to consider what type of unrighteousness or sin leads to spiritual death? It is the sin which God has not forgiven. Therefore, the *“sin not leading to death”* would be the sin which God has forgiven.
  - b. The person who is guilty of sin must humble themselves before the Lord. It is at that point the Lord will *“lift you up.”* (James 4:7-10)
5. The person who is *“born of God . . . keeps himself”* and the *“wicked one does not touch him.”* (vs 5:18)
  - a. The statement, *“We know that whoever is born of God does not sin,”* is a truth seen in 1 John 3:9.
  - b. The reason why one who *“is born of God does not sin”* is because he *“keeps himself”* and the *“wicked one not touch him.”*
    - 1) The Greek word translated as *“keeps himself”* is *tēreō* and is defined as: “1) to attend to carefully, take care of 1a) to guard 1b) metaphorically to keep, one in the state in which he is 1c) to observe 1d) to reserve: to undergo something.”
    - 2) One who is *“born of God”* keeps a watch so that he might avoid temptations to sin. If he does face a temptation, he, knowing God’s will, will say no to the temptation.
    - 3) Peter, saying something very similar, reminds the saints to be *“vigilant”* or watchful. (1 Peter 5:8-9)
    - 4) The apostle Paul also reminds us there is a way

- of escape for every temptation. (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:13)
- 5) If we do not allow ourselves to be attracted to sin, then we will not give in to sin. (cf. James 1:14-15)
6. Since Christians are “*born of God*” and they keep themselves faithful to God, Christians also keep themselves from the influence of the wicked one. (vs 5:19)
- a. In a manner of speaking, the devil is the ruler of this world. Jesus declares this fact. (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11)
- b. Satan rules this world in that he has influence over this world. He does not control politics or the oil industry. Satan leads me away from the council of God. The devil is both a “murderer” and a liar. (John 8:44) He entices all men to sin.
7. Jesus Christ brought “*an understanding*” which enables people to “*know Him who is true.*” This knowledge and understanding makes fellowship with God possible. (vs 5:20)
- a. Again, the apostle John is illustrating the difference between Christians and the people of the world. Through the word, Jesus has given us the following understanding:
- 1) We “*know Him who is true*”
- 2) We know “*we are in Him who is true.*”
- b. Through Jesus Christ, the son of God, we know the “*true God*” and we also know “*eternal life.*”
8. The apostle John reminds the brethren to keep themselves from the worship of idols. (vs 5:21)
- a. Throughout this epistle, the apostle John has warned the brethren against those teachers who denied Jesus came

in the flesh. The teaching of the Gnostic teachers was a teaching equivalent to idolatry. They were not worshipping the God of Heaven and His Son. These false teachers were worshipping a god and a christ made in their own image and understanding.

- b. John reminds the brethren to keep themselves from such idolatry.

**CONCLUSION.**

- A. As Christians, we must listen to John's admonitions. Let us remember . . .
  - 1. Being born of God, we are able to overcome the world.
  - 2. We must always believe all the testimonies surrounding Jesus Christ.
  - 3. We must always remember to pray in accordance with God's will.
  - 4. Since we of God, let us grow in our knowledge of Jesus Christ and continue to walk in His fellowship.
- B. Let us avoid the teachings of those who stand in opposition to the doctrine of Jesus Christ.