

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JANUARY 11TH, 2026 // FIRST JOHN

FAITH (1 JOHN 5:1-3) HOW ARE WE BORN OF GOD?

John has mentioned being born of God multiple times and tells us here how one is born of God: **“whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ.”**

- Christ is a messianic title. **A person born of God must believe in Jesus as *their Messiah*** (Savior). This is a personal view of Jesus as *“my Savior”* and not a general view of Jesus as *“the Savior.”*

WE OBEY AS A RESPONSE TO HIS LOVE

John lays out two effects of being born of God. First, those who love the Father **love the Son**. Secondly, those who love the Father **obey His commands**.

- Obviously, when it comes to obeying God's commands, **we are to follow all His commands in response to His love**, but John focuses here on the command to God's children.

LOVING ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

To love our brothers and sisters means to love **all Christians**, not just those of our same race, class, culture, language, or denomination.

- **What is our view of our siblings** in the family of God? **Do we consider those outside of our own circles? Do we pray for our brothers and sisters?**

“HIS COMMANDS ARE NOT A BURDEN”

While communicating the importance of obedience to God's commands, John wants his readers to remember that **God's commands are not a burden on us but a blessing for us**.

- When we know God, we start to see how wise and good His commands are. We see that **they are gifts from Him that show us how to live the best and most fulfilling lives possible**.

OBEDIENCE FROM LOVE, NOT FORCED LEGALISM

John isn't saying that obedience is easy, but **compared to the laws and regulations** the scribes and Pharisees put on people (Matthew 23:4), the requirement **to love God and follow Him is easy and light** (Matthew 11:30).

- Obeying God's commands will not feel like a burden when we love Him because truly loving Him means we want to obey and please Him.

SALVATION BY GRACE, NOT WORKS

The good news is that those born of God are not judged by their ability to adhere to all the rules and regulations since **they are no longer under the law but under grace** (Romans 6:14).

- The law points to sin and reveals our need for grace. Instead of being condemned by the law, **those born of Him are freed from sin's power and empowered by the Holy Spirit**.

TESTIMONY (1 JOHN 5:4-13)

WE TOO ARE VICTORIOUS

John's Gospel recorded Jesus saying, **“Take heart! I have overcome the world”** (John 16:33, NIV). Here John is encouraging us that those born of Him, who is victorious, will also be victorious when we place our faith in Him.

- The key to victory over the pressures and temptations of this life is **a daily faith and trust in Jesus**, not a one-time leap of faith.
- “Look at any Greek lexicon you like, and you will find that the word [faith or believe] does not merely mean to believe, but to **trust, to confide in, to commit to, entrust with**, and so forth; the very marrow of **the meaning of faith is confidence in, reliance upon.**” (Charles Spurgeon)

WE ARE OVERCOMERS IN JESUS

These verses are not meant to cause fear of being saved because we might struggle and fight against our flesh. Instead, they encourage us that despite the struggles **victory has already been won**.

- We won (past) the victory **through our union with Christ**, we win (present) **by our refusal to deny Him but deny our flesh instead**, and we will win (future) **in the world to come** (Revelation 3:21).

“THE ONE WHO CAME BY WATER AND BLOOD”

Some scholars (Augustine) believe this is referring to **the water and blood which flowed from Jesus' side** when he was stabbed with a spear while on the cross (John 19:34).

- Others believe the water is speaking of **Jesus' birth**—being born of the “waters of the womb”—and the blood speaks of **His death**.

DISPELLING A LIE

There was a false Gnostic teacher at this time named Cerinthus, who taught that Jesus became the “Christ” at His baptism but that the “Christ spirit” left Him before the crucifixion.

- John is dispelling this heresy by insisting that Jesus, the Son of God, did not only come by the **water of baptism** and was just as much the Son of God **on the cross**.

THE TESTIMONY OF GOD IS GREATER

The Gnostics presented their own unproven opinions without divine testimony.

- The Holy Spirit, who physically manifested at Jesus' baptism and worked through the apostles to confirm their claims that Jesus was fully God and fully man, now **lives in us and testifies to this belief**, giving us great assurance that it is true.

“AND THIS IS THE TESTIMONY...”

The essential message to humanity is that **the gift of eternal life comes through Jesus Christ and those who believe must continue in that belief**.

- We are to receive the gift of salvation in Jesus and continue to abide in Him. We do not stop once we receive the gospel, but **we continue to be assured and helped by it**, and to **embrace it** over and over again.

CONFIDENCE (1 JOHN 5:14-21)

OUR CONFIDENCE COMES FROM HIM

John wants his readers to have confidence in approaching God in prayer.

- Confidence and pride are two different things. We should approach God with humility, reverence, and thankfulness. It isn't that we do not petition God for the things we need, but if we never thank Him for all He's given us, then it's pretty audacious of us to ask for more.

SIN THAT LEADS TO DEATH?

Is John referring to a particularly bad sin that God will not pardon, like apostasy (the deliberate denial of the Christian faith after supposedly embracing it, Jude 1:4) or blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (the outright rejection of God's grace, Matthew 12:31-32)?

- Some believe John is referring to physical death as a divine consequence for sin (Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 5).

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS?

John doesn't explain exactly what he is referring to when he writes about a **“sin that leads to death,”** leaving a lot of uncertainty.

- So, what do we know? Willful, intentional sin has deadly effects, we are to pray for our brothers and sisters in sin, and all **“unrighteousness is sin,”** even the things that might not “lead to death.”

“WE KNOW...”

John closes out his letter by reminding his readers of the things “we know” in this battle against sin.

- It is essential that we keep our focus on **knowing who we are in Christ** because in Him are the resources needed to be free of habitual sin. When we abide in Him, **we know we are protected from Satan**. We have come to know that **“He is the true God and eternal life.”**

“GUARD YOURSELVES FROM IDOLS”

John's last instruction to this church—to **“guard yourselves from idols”**—is a fitting ending, considering the dangers of many false teachers sharing a false Jesus.

- We have the opportunity to be in a real relationship with the real Jesus, so **we are to avoid things that will choke out or damage our relationship with Him**.

WHAT DO I BELIEVE?

- What we believe will determine our actions, thoughts, and ultimately our eternity.
- Do I believe that Jesus is who He says He is?
- Do I believe that Jesus is greater than anything on this Earth? Even the fleeting pleasures of sin?
- Do I believe that Jesus loves me? Do I love Him back (John 14:15)?

OVERCOMERS IN JESUS CHRIST

- Jesus has overcome the world (false teachings, lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life, threat of hostility), and if we place our faith in Him, we too are overcomers.
- As we grow in our walk with Jesus, we will overcome our spiritual enemies (1 John 2:13-14).
- We overcome because of the blood of Jesus and the word of our testimony (Revelation 12:11).