

**Second Baptist Church of Doylestown**  
**Bible Study Notes**  
**11-15-17**

7

**1 John 5**

**Faith in the Incarnate Son of God - Verses 1-12**

<sup>1</sup> Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. <sup>2</sup> This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. <sup>3</sup> In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, <sup>4</sup> for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. <sup>5</sup> Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> For there are three that testify: <sup>8</sup> the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. <sup>9</sup> We accept human testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup> Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

**5:1-2** When we become Christians, we become part of God's family, with fellow believers as our brothers and sisters. It is God who determines who the other family members are, not us. We are simply called to accept and love them. How well do you treat your fellow family members?

**5:3-4** Jesus never promised that obeying him would be easy. But the hard work and self-discipline of serving Christ is no burden to those who love him. And if our load starts to feel heavy, we can always trust Christ to help us bear it (see Matthew 11:28-30).

**5:6-8** At this time, there was a false teaching in circulation that said Jesus was "the Christ" only between his baptism and his death—that is, he was merely human until he was baptized, at which time "the Christ" then descended upon him but then later left him before his death on the cross. But if Jesus died only as a man, he could not have taken upon himself the sins of the world, and Christianity would be an empty religion. Only an act of God could take away the punishment that we deserve for our sin.

**5:7-9** The Gospels twice record God's clear declaration that Jesus was his Son—at Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3:16-17), and at his transfiguration (Matthew 17:5).

**5:12** Whoever believes in God's Son has eternal life. He is all you need. You don't need to wait for eternal life because it begins the moment you believe. You don't need to work for it because it is already yours. You don't need to worry about it because you have been given eternal life by God himself—and it is guaranteed.

### **Concluding Affirmations - Verses 13-21**

<sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. <sup>15</sup> And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death. <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.

**5:13** Some people hope that they will receive eternal life. John says we can know we have it. Our certainty is based on God's promise that he has given us eternal life through his Son. This is true whether you feel close to God or far away from him. Eternal life is not based on feelings but on facts. You can know that you have eternal life if you believe God's truth. If you aren't sure that you are a Christian, ask yourself: "Have I honestly committed my life to him as my Savior and Lord?" If so, you know by faith that you are indeed a child of God.

**5:14-15** The emphasis here is on God's will, not our will. When we communicate with God, we don't demand what we want; rather we discuss with him what he wants for us. If we align our prayers to his will, he will listen; and we can be certain that if he listens, he will give us a definite answer. Start praying with confidence!

**5:16-17** Commentators differ widely in their thoughts about what this sin that leads to death is and whether the death it causes is physical or spiritual. Paul wrote that some Christians had died because they took Communion "in an unworthy manner" (1 Corinthians 11:27-30), and Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead when they lied to God (Acts 5:1-11). Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit results in spiritual death (Mark 3:29), and the book of Hebrews describes the spiritual death of the person who turns against Christ (Hebrews

6:4-6). John was probably referring to the people who had left the Christian fellowship and joined the antichrists. By rejecting the only way of salvation, these people were putting themselves out of reach of prayer. In most cases, however, even if we knew what the terrible sin was, we would have no sure way of knowing whether a certain person had committed it. Therefore, we should continue praying for our loved ones and for our Christian brothers and sisters, leaving the judgment up to God. Note that John says, "I am not saying that you should pray about that," rather than, "You cannot pray for them." He recognized the lack of certainty.

**5:18-19** Christians commit sins, of course, but they ask God to forgive them, and then they continue serving him. God has freed believers from their slavery to Satan, and he keeps them safe from Satan's continued attacks. The rest of the world does not have the Christian's freedom to obey God. Unless they come to Christ in faith, they have no choice but to obey Satan. There is no middle ground; people either belong to God and obey him, or they live under Satan's control.

**5:21** An idol is anything that substitutes for the true faith, anything that denies Christ's full deity and humanity, any human idea that claims to be more authoritative than the Bible, any loyalty that replaces God at the center of our lives.

**5:21** John presents a clear picture of Christ. What we think about Jesus Christ is central to our teaching, preaching, and living. Jesus is the God-man, fully God and fully human at the same time. He came to earth to die in our place for our sins. Through faith in him, we are given eternal life and the power to do his will. What is your answer to the most important question you could ever ask: "Who is Jesus Christ?"