



Finer Grounds Bible Study

1, 2, & 3 John Lesson 11: 1 John 5:1-12

Read 1 John 5:1-3

A love of God transforms us. The first characteristic of those transformed by a love of Christ is this: those that love God, love each other. John wants to make sure he drives this point home: obedient belief in Jesus' authority makes us God's children, God's children love the Father, and those that love the Father love all others who love the Father (v.1). When we give our lives over in obedience to God, we are born into a loving family of believers.

The beauty of being God's children isn't just in that we have a relationship with the Father, but also in that we get to enjoy a beautiful fellowship with all others who have a relationship with the Father here on this earth. The love we have for each other is to be like that people generally have towards their brothers and sisters—genuine, natural, and affectionate (1 Peter 1:22, 23).

When we truly love God, we will also keep His commandments. As John states, we can know that we have the proper love for God and others when we are obedient to His commandments (vv.2-3). Not only that, but we can only know that we truly love others when we are holding ourselves to God's standard of love (v.2). God's idea of love and man's idea of love are so different that we must hold ourselves to God's standard in order to love fully. God defines what true love is—and commands us to love one another truly. This is how we can know that we love others when we keep His commandments.

“When” here means “whenever; every time; on every occasion”—meaning that every time we love God and keep His commandments, we can be sure that we are loving in the right way. Whenever we are actively exercising love towards God, we know that we are truly loving our brethren.

We know we love God correctly when we are being obedient to His commandments—and His commandments are not too difficult (“grievous”: heavy; violent; weighty) for us to keep (v.3). While God's commands may sometimes seem difficult, God's law is a law of liberty (James 2:12). Often it feels like a burden when either there is some misunderstanding (Matthew 23:4) or we are acting out of obligation instead of love—this is why we must turn from being motivated by fear to being motivated by love (4:17-18). Jesus promises that His “yoke is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

The burden with Christ is lighter because:

- When we are in the world, we don't know where we are going (Proverbs 4:19; 1 John 2:11)
- Jesus gives us direction (John 8:12)



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- He gives us freedom from sin (1 John 1:7; Romans 6:16, 17)
- He gives us freedom from the guilt of sin (1 Peter 3:16)
- He transforms us from servants to sons (Galatians 4:7)
- He gives us strength in our weaknesses (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)
- He gives us everything we need (Philippians 4:13)
- He lets us cast our cares upon Him (1 Peter 5:7)
- Any suffering we undergo because of our faith pales in comparison to the glory we shall receive (2 Corinthians 4:17)

What are some ways we can cultivate an affectionate love for our church family?

How would treating the church like your family change:

- **The way you treat them?**

- **The way you look at opportunities to worship and fellowship with them?**

- **How you would catch up with them between worship times?**

- **How you would feel if you didn't see one of them for a while?**

Love as God sees it is not the same as we often see it. What do we need to be doing to make sure we are showing love in the way that God desires?

God's commandments are not too difficult or too many.

- **Why is this an important reminder?**

- **What would the nature of God be if He made commandments that we couldn't keep?**

- **What does this verse tell us about what God is like?**

Make a list of all the things you are free from since you have come to Christ and reflect upon how your burden really is lighter.



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Read 1 John 5:4-5

It is guaranteed that absolutely every child of God will overcome the world (vv.4-5). “Whosoever” here means “any; every; all; as many as”—there is room for all who will come to be covered by the blood of Christ and gain victory. We overcome the world by becoming the children of God—the world has already been overcome, we simply become partakers in the victory (John 16:33).

Notice in the KJV that we have the handy “-eth” in “overcometh”. When we are walking in the light of Christ, we continually overcome. There is enough victory in Christ for every mistake, every moment, every day of our lives until eternity. We need only to walk in Him. As long as we walk in the light and love like Christ did, nothing can take our victory away from us (Romans 8:35-37).

“Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” (v.5). The question is rhetorical—no one enjoys victory outside of Christ. Our active faith in Christ leads us through life victoriously towards a triumphant end. In Christ, we have victory now and we have victory waiting. What a comforting thought.

Consider what we have learnt so far in 1 John:

- **What does being born of God involve?**

- **What does belief involve?**

- **How does it do us good to reflect on the fact that victory is already ours?**

Read 1 John 5:6-12

It is difficult to say what this passage would have meant to its original audience—but what this seems to be addressing is some of the false teachings of the Gnostics, some of which were:

- Jesus did not come in the flesh
- He didn’t die on the cross
- He only became the son of God at His baptism (He was a man before that)
- While some of the meaning may be lost to us, what is clear to us from this passage is that:
- Jesus is the son of God
- Jesus came in the flesh
- God is the authority in all things, not man

A correct in belief in Jesus’ identity is essential to salvation.

Let’s break this down. John states that Jesus Christ came in both water and blood and that it is the Spirit testifies to this fact (v. 6-8). I believe that the “water” is symbolic of Jesus’ baptism, and the “blood” is either referring either to Jesus flesh and blood or His death on the cross (both things the Gnostics believed falsely about). Jesus is both Christ and man—and when the Spirit



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descended upon Him at His baptism, the Spirit was testifying to the fact that the Son of God had come in the flesh (Matthew 3:16, 17).

Jesus (the Word), along with the Father and the Spirit, testifies of the fact that He is Who He says He is (v. 7). There are some differences in translations here—as some of the original texts leave out verse 7, leaving two possibilities:

- it is meant to be there and the Godhead testifies together as one that Jesus Christ came in the flesh
- it is not meant to be there

Whether or not this statement belongs here, there are other scriptures that support this idea that the Godhead agrees and testifies to the humanity and deity of Jesus Christ:

- Jesus testifies of Himself: John 8:18, 58; 10:30
- The Father testifies of the Son: Matthew 3:17; John 5:37; 8:18; 12:28
- The Spirit testifies of the Son: Matthew 3:16; John 1:33; 15:26

Likewise, three things bear witness here on earth – the Spirit, the water, and the blood (v. 8). “Spirit” here could mean: 1) the Spirit’s appearance at His baptism; 2) the miracles He performed through the Spirit; 3) the prophecy surrounding Him; or 4) the inspired witnesses that surrounded Him (John the Baptizer, Simon, Anna, the Apostles, etc.). All these were witnesses to His deity and humanity. Whatever was specifically meant, all things agree and testify to Jesus’ claims to the Godhead.

This is all important for us to reflect on, because belief in the fact that Jesus came in the flesh and is the Son of God is necessary if we want to receive eternal life (vv.9-12). God is the ultimate authority in all things—not man—and He is the one that Has verified His Son (vv.9-10; see also Matthew 3:17; 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35). The church that John was writing to had to realize this: no matter what men were saying, Jesus was who God said He was—and they needed to check everything they heard from men against the word of God (v.9).

Not only this, but Christians are living proof that Jesus is the Son of God: “Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself” (v.10a). When we believe in Jesus and embody His teachings, our changed behavior and conduct becomes further evidence that Jesus Christ is more than a mere man. Through us, the world can and should see Jesus. On the flip side, when we do not believe in the deity or humanity of Jesus, we accuse God of being a liar (v.10b)—and God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). No matter what men say, God will always be proven to be right (Romans 3:4)—we simply need to choose to be on His side and we, too, will be right with Him.

John says again is writing these things to his audience because life eternal is only found through belief and obedience in the Son of God (vv.11, 12). Understanding the identity of Christ is essential to the faith of a Christian. If Christ is the cornerstone of our faith (Ephesians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:6), then any misunderstandings about His identity could cause real problems in our thinking. God chose for eternal life to be given to us through Jesus (John 1:1, 2; 10:10; 14:6). This is



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why it is so very important that we know exactly who He is.

Consider Jesus' humanity, and the fact that He walked on this earth for 33 years.

- What does it mean for us that He was a human for a full 33 years?

- What kind of things would He have experienced?

- What does this tell us about the ability to live pure and sinless in the world?

Consider the verses that show God testifying to Jesus' identity as His Son (Matthew 3:17; 17:5; John 5:37; 8:18; 12:28; 2 Peter 1:7).

- What do these tell us about Jesus?

- What do these tell us about God?

Consider how John cares a lot about defending the identity of Jesus.

- Why do you think it matters so much that we have a correct view of Jesus?

- What does this tell us about the importance of understanding His identity?

- How can we seek to understand it better?

Often teaching today (especially for women) centers around us finding out about our identity.

- What does the huge focus on Jesus identity tell us about how much we should focus on Him and Who He is rather than discovering who we are?

- Is it possible we could gain more strength, confidence, joy, and self-esteem from knowing about Him than knowing about ourselves?



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- Through us, the world sees Jesus—
what responsibility does this give us?

- How can we better communicate to
young men and women about their
identity in Christ?

If we don't believe correctly about Jesus, we
are essentially accusing God of lies.

- What can we do to avoid being guilty
of this?

- What does this tell us about the
connection between right
understanding and obedience?
