

Study Notes For First John (Chapter Five)

I John 5:1 *“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.”*

- The commandment is that we should believe (**I John 3:23**).
- Faith is essential in our relationship with the Lord (**Mark 16:16, John 3:18, John 3:36, John 5:24, John 8:23-24, John 8:31, Acts 8:35-38, Romans 1:16-17, Romans 6:3-8, Romans 10:9-10, and Hebrews 11:6**).
- The Greek word translated “believeth” [πιστεύω] is also translated “to be put in trust” (**I Thessalonians 2:4**). Think on that!
- Belief in Jesus being the Christ (**Mark 8:29, John 11:24-27, and John 20:30-31**).
- Denying Jesus is the Christ (**I John 2:22**).
- “Born of God” (**I John 3:9, I John 4:7, I John 5:4, and I John 5:18**).
- The factors of being born of God (**John 1:12-13, John 3:1-8, I Peter 1:23-25, and I John 2:29**).
- Loving God that begot means you will also love those begotten of Him. Here we are back to brotherly love (**I John 4:20-21**).

I John 5:2 *“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.”*

- The children of God are those that are faithful to Him (**I John 3:8-10**). Those that are separate from evil (**II Corinthians 6:14-7:1**).
- The tie in of faith (**Galatians 3:26-29; cf. Romans 9:8**).
- As we have been studying in this letter, it is the command of God that we have love for our brethren (**I John 2:10, I John 3:11, I John 3:14-18, I John 3:23, etc.; cf. John 13:34-35, John 15:12, and John 15:17**).
- Loving God and loving the brethren are inseparable (**I John 4:20-21**).
- We will discuss obedience in the next verse.

I John 5:3 *“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”*

- Loving God is directly related to obedience to His will (**Exodus 20:6, Deuteronomy 5:10, Deuteronomy 7:9, Deuteronomy 11:13, Deuteronomy 11:22, Deuteronomy 19:9, Deuteronomy 30:16, Joshua 22:5, Daniel 9:4, John 14:15, and John 14:21**).
- His commandments are not grievous [burdensome] (**Matthew 11:28-30, Hebrews 8:10-13, James 1:25, and James 2:12**).

I John 5:4-5 *“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”*

- Again (**I John 5:1**), we see the language of “born of God” as we have and will again in other areas of this letter (**I John 3:9**, **I John 4:7**, and **I John 5:18**).
- Overcoming the world (**I John 2:13-17**).
- Overcoming in the sense of a victorious win (**I Corinthians 9:24-27**, **Philippians 3:14**, **II Timothy 4:6-8**, and **Hebrews 12:1-3**).
- As Jesus neared the end of His physical life on earth, He said He had overcome the world (**John 16:33**).
- The victory (**I Corinthians 15:50-57**).
- Faith brings about the victory (**II Timothy 3:15**, **I Peter 1:5**, and **I Peter 1:9**).
- Faith in Jesus being the Son of God (**John 3:16-18**, **John 3:36**, **John 6:40**, **John 20:30-31**, **Acts 8:35-39**, **I John 3:23**, **I John 5:10**, and **I John 5:13**).

I John 5:6 *“This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.”*

- This verse is confusing to me. I do not have a sure, definite answer at this time. I will give you some thoughts, but please just consider them as thoughts and not conclusions. There may be some things I didn't even think of. Some that I did consider, I chose not to mention because they seem much less likely to be the explanation. What is the fact is that all of this is evidence for Christ to build the confidence of the saints (**I John 5:13**).
- In that he came by water and blood, this could be about physical birth (**Luke 1:31-33**). Both water and blood are in the womb. In light of verse eight, I am not sure this makes sense though.
- Could be in reference to Jesus' death (**John 19:34**).
- Water could be a reference of cleansing as associated of old or new with water (**Leviticus 8:6**, **Leviticus 14:8**, **Leviticus 15:13**, **Ezekiel 36:25**, **Acts 8:36-39**, **Acts 10:47**, and **Hebrews 10:22**).
- Water and blood could be about the sacrifice of Christ (**Hebrews 9:18-28**).
- Water washing in a figurative manner (**Ephesians 5:26**).
- Water could be in reference to Jesus being baptized (**Matthew 3:13-17**).
- Water could be related to promise of the Spirit (**John 7:38-39**). However, the context (**I John 5:8**) draws a difference between the water and the Spirit.
- The Spirit bearing witness (**John 15:26**, **Hebrews 10:15-18**, and **I Peter 1:11**).
- The Spirit is truth (**John 14:16-17** and **John 16:1-13**).
- Verses 7-8 do not explain verse 6 for me. How about for you?

I John 5:7 *“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”*

- Thankfully, this verse is clear because of other Scriptures (**Matthew 28:19**, **John 15:26**, **Galatians 4:6**, **Ephesians 1:17**, and **I Peter 1:2**).
- Three in Heaven that bear record [testify; bear witness] (**John 8:14**, **John 8:18**, and **John 15:26**).
- Think about why Jesus cannot just bear witness of Himself (**John 5:31-39**).
- To the point of them being one, consider how Jesus while in the flesh on earth said He and the Father are one (**John 10:30**).
- Being one doesn't mean inseparable in some literal, physical manner (i.e. **Ephesians 5:28-31**).
- Being one doesn't mean inseparable minds or actions either (i.e. **Romans 12:4-5** and **I Corinthians 12:12; 12:20; 12:27**).
- The language is the same as the one body [church] (**Ephesians 4:4-6**).
- Verse eight gives us the one being about agreement. Thus, we are talking about the unification of God if we hold to that contextual point. Jesus prayed for oneness of His followers such as He has with the Father (**John 17:20-23**).

I John 5:8 *“And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.”*

- Me, being unsure what the contextual reference to the water and blood is, this verse too is confusing. Is it in reference to the physical body? Well, remember the Spirit is that which beareth witness. So the three being tied together do not fit very well, at least to me, in a physical manner.
- There were witnesses on earth that might fit into these things, but I am not sure how (**John 1:6-7**, **Acts 4:33**, **Acts 10:43**, **I John 1:1-2**, and **Revelation 1:1-2**).
- Is there some tie to the witnessing being to Creation wherein the Father, Son, and Spirit were all involved (**Genesis 1:1**, **Genesis 1:2**, **John 1:1-3**, etc.)? Hmm... (**Acts 17:16-31** and **Romans 1:18-20**).
- As addressed in verse 7, there is agreement. Without agreement, whatever does not work well together (**Amos 3:3**).

I John 5:9 *“If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.”*

- Whether in the courts of law of men or even the court under the Law of Moses, the words of trustworthy witnesses matter (**Deuteronomy 17:6**, **Deuteronomy 19:15**, **Matthew 18:15-17**, **II Corinthians 13:1-2**, **I Timothy 5:19**, and **Hebrews 10:28**).
- Consider Jesus' argument (**John 8:17-19**).
- The witness of God is greater because of who He is (**Deuteronomy 32:4**, **II Samuel 7:28**, **Psalms 71:19**, **Jeremiah 10:10**, **I Corinthians 1:9**, and **Titus 1:2**).

- The Father did testify of His Son (**Matthew 3:13-17, Matthew 17:1-5, and II Peter 1:16-18**).
- Even indirectly, God gave witness (**Hebrews 2:1-4**).

I John 5:10 *“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.”*

- He that believeth (**I John 5:1, I John 5:5, and I John 5:13**; cf. **Mark 16:15-16, John 1:12, John 3:15-18, John 3:36, John 5:24, John 6:29, John 6:47, John 8:30-32, Acts 4:4, Acts 8:25-39, etc.**).
- There are multiple things to consider with this passage regarding the “witness [evidence given (judicially or generally): - record, report, testimony,, etc.]. in himself.” Think back to **I John 5:9** here. The faithful have the testimony of God within us by the fact that His word dwells in us (**Colossians 3:16**). That is concerning the “record that God gave of His Son.”
- There is also and such is contextually accurate; the work of the Holy Spirit (**I John 4:13**) among first century Christians (**John 7:39, Acts 2:36-41, Acts 8:5-24, Acts 19:1-7, Romans 8:16, I Corinthians 12:3-11, Ephesians 1:13-14, and Galatians 3:1-5**).
- There is also the figurative indwelling of God (**I John 4:13-16**; cf. **Ephesians 3:17**).
- Also contextually, the very next verse (**I John 5:11**) speaks of “the record” which is the same Greek word [μαρτυρία] translated as “witness” in this verse. We will talk more about that when we look at verse 11.
- If you do not believe God’s word, you are calling Him a liar. Think here about false witnesses (**Proverbs 12:17, Proverbs 14:5, and I Corinthians 15:13-15**).

I John 5:11 *“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”*

- The witness, the record, the testimony is eternal life through Christ (**Matthew 25:31-46, John 6:26-27, John 6:40, John 12:44-50, Romans 5:21, Romans 6:22-23, II Thessalonians 2:16, I John 5:13, I John 5:20, and Jude 1:21**).

I John 5:12 *“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”*

- We basically talked about these things already in this letter (**I John 2:23**).
- Salvation, eternal life, and a relationship with the Father; cannot happen apart from Christ (**Matthew 11:27-30, John 5:23, John 10:1-18, John 14:6, Acts 4:10-12, I Thessalonians 5:9, I Timothy 2:1-6, II Timothy 3:15, Hebrews 9:27-28, and I Peter 3:18**).

I John 5:13 *“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”*

- Obviously, there is not just one reason this letter was written (**I John 1:3-4, I John 2:1, I John 2:26-28**, etc.).
- They were believers in the name of the Son of God (**John 1:12, John 20:30-31, Acts 4:10-12, Acts 8:35-39**, and **I John 3:23**).
- The intent of this statement in the immediate context is to bolster their confidence in their having eternal life (**John 3:14-15, John 10:28, John 17:1-3, Romans 2:7, I Timothy 6:12**, and **I John 2:25**).
- That knowledge and confidence aids in the continued belief in the name of the Son of God as life is through Christ (**Romans 5:21, Romans 6:23**, and **Jude 1:21**).
- Again, remember what was said two sentences ago (**I John 5:11**).

I John 5:14-15 *“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”*

- This epistle already addresses confidence and the relation to such regarding their prayers (**I John 3:20-22**).
- Faithful Christians ought to know that we can come boldly [confidently] before God through Christ (**Ephesians 3:11-12, Hebrews 4:14-16**, and **Hebrews 10:19-23**).
- Christians should be confident in our relationship with the Lord (**Hebrews 10:35-39** and **I John 2:28**).
- The key is that whatever is asked must be according to His will, thus not our own desires (**James 4:3**) even if motives are pure (**II Corinthians 12:1-10**).
- As we know, prayer to God is a privilege reserved for those that are obedient to His will (**Proverbs 15:29, Proverbs 28:9, Isaiah 1:1-20, Isaiah 59:1-3, Micah 3:1-4, John 9:31**, and **I Peter 3:12**).
- In principle, it is as Jesus said to His disciples (**Matthew 7:7-11**).

I John 5:16 *“If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.”*

- This passage leaves an honest student of the Scriptures with several things to consider. Keep verse 17 in mind closely.
- THIS COULD BE in relation to **Matthew 18:15-35**. In such a case, you choose what to pursue in regard to a personal matter that is a not a transgression of God’s law.
- This could be a matter related to an offense to one’s conscience (**Romans 14:1-15:7, I Corinthians 8:1-13**, and **I Corinthians 10:23-33**).

- Sin that leads to death (**Romans 6:23, Romans 7:5, Luke 15:11-32, and I Timothy 5:6**).
- Not praying for those in such a case (**Jeremiah 7:13-16, Jeremiah 11:14, and Jeremiah 14:11-12**).
- There were those that went out from them (**I John 2:19**). In some such cases saints try to restore the erring (**Galatians 6:1-2 or James 5:16; 5:19-20**). This text may be make some clarifications related to this. There are other times wherein the instruction restricts Christians from trying to restore the erring (**Romans 16:17-18 and Titus 3:9-11**). Maybe that is the reference point.

I John 5:17 *“All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.”*

- This verse brings me back in thought to the point of **Matthew 18:15-35**. In such cases, you might have erred against me by something such as wearing your shoes in my house when I asked you to remove them. I can be offended or I can be gracious. Or, as also discussed in the notes on verse 16, it could be related to one’s conscience being offended and the choice to make such an issue or not.
- When it comes to sin as in the breaking of God’s word (**I John 3:4**), there are no areas wherein we decide right from wrong. Transgression and unrighteousness are essentially the same. Transgression (**I John 3:4**) [ἀνομία; Strong’s # 458] is defined as: “From G459; illegality, that is, violation of law or (generally) wickedness: - iniquity, X transgress (-ion of) the law, unrighteousness.” That fits that translation of the term as it is often translated “iniquity” or “unrighteousness” (**Matthew 7:23, Matthew 13:41, Matthew 23:28, Matthew 24:12, Romans 4:7, Romans 6:19, II Corinthians 6:14, II Thessalonians 2:7, Titus 2:14, Hebrews 1:9, Hebrews 8:12, and Hebrews 10:17**). The Greek word [ἀδικία; Strong’s # 93] translated here as “unrighteousness” is translated, among other words, as “iniquity” (**Luke 13:27, Acts 1:18, Acts 8:23, I Corinthians 13:6, II Timothy 2:19, and James 3:6**).
- In relation to unrighteousness, sin against God; the sin not unto death would be the sin confessed and repented of (**Psalms 32:5, Proverbs 28:13, Nehemiah 9:1-3, Matthew 3:1-6, and I John 1:8-2:2**).
- To say that someone can sin, as in transgress the law of God and be okay in such as state is to deny clear teaching throughout the Scriptures (**Ezekiel 18:1-32, Luke 13:1-5, Acts 8:18-24, and James 1:13-16**). So, we can be certain this verse is NOT teaching that!
- More clarification is coming in verse 18.

I John 5:18 *“We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.”*

- Lest there be confusion from what John just penned, here is some clarification. Those born of God do not sin (**I John 2:1-2 and I John**

- 2:29-3:10**). So, the previous passages of Scripture were not authorizing certain sins. The Scriptures clearly declare that Christians are expected not to sin at all (**John 5:14, John 8:1-11, Romans 6:1-2, I Corinthians 15:34, James 1:13-16, II Timothy 2:19, and I Peter 4:1-5**).
- Being “*born of God*” (**John 1:12-13, John 3:1-5, James 1:18, and I Peter 1:18-25**).
 - The word “keepeth”, when you do a word study, you find means to “*observe all things*” (**Matthew 28:20**), keep the sayings of Jesus (**John 8:51**), keep His commandments, His words (**John 14:15; 14:21-23; 15:20**), etc.
 - This responsibility is to each individual “*himself*” (**I Timothy 5:22, James 1:27, and I John 2:3-6**).
 - By a person obeying the Lord, keeping Himself faithful, the wicked one cannot touch him (**I John 2:13-14**; cf. **Psalms 34:13, Psalms 119:101, Proverbs 4:14-16, Mark 14:38, I Corinthians 16:13, Ephesians 5:6-11, I Timothy 5:22, I Peter 2:11, and I Peter 5:8-9**).

I John 5:19 “*And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.*”

- Herein is a clear contrast. There are two sides. God’s side or the other. The Lord draws clear lines of distinction (**John 15:19, John 17:14-16, Colossians 2:4-8, James 4:4, I John 2:15-17, and I John 4:5**).

I John 5:20 “*And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.*”

- The knowledge that Christ came in the flesh was not only from the Scriptures, but also at that time among those who had seen Jesus with their own eyes (**Luke 24:36-41, Acts 1:1-3, I John 1:1-3, and I John 4:14**).
- Remember, part of the aim in this epistle is to counter the “*antichrists*” (**I John 2:18; 2:22; 4:3**). The antichrists denied Jesus came in the flesh (**II John 1:7**).
- We know Jesus came because of the Scriptures and the evidences contained therein (**Acts 2:32, Acts 3:15, Acts 4:33, Acts 10:39-43, I Corinthians 15:1-8, and Revelation 1:1-9**).
- He is true (**John 1:17, John 14:6, and Revelation 3:7**).
- Saints are in Him (**John 14:20, John 15:1-5, Romans 12:4-5, II Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 3:26-29, and I John 2:24**).
- Jesus is the true God (**Isaiah 9:6, Matthew 1:21-23, John 8:56-58, John 10:30-33, John 20:28-31, Acts 20:28, Romans 9:1-5, Titus 2:13, and Hebrews 1:8-12**).
- Jesus is eternal life (**John 3:14-15, Romans 5:21, Romans 6:23, I John 5:13, and Jude 1:21**).

I John 5:21 *“Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.”*

- **Leviticus 26:30, Deuteronomy 5:7-9, Deuteronomy 11:16-17, Psalms 106:36-41, Acts 15:20, I Corinthians 6:9-10, I Corinthians 10:14, Galatians 5:19-21, Colossians 3:5, and Revelation 21:8**