



LIFEgroup Study Guide

May 2 - June 20

LIFEgroup Study Guide

This study guide follows along with LBF Church's current Sunday message series, and is intended to be a supplement in your daily passionate pursuit of Jesus.

- *Watch last Sunday's message video:*
[www.lbf.church/messages]

Is your group stumped? Did you come to a question that you feel needs clarification? Our church is always ready to help you understand God's word. Contact Pastor Dan with your questions.

- *Contact Pastor Dan:*
danfranklin@lbfchurch.com

Lesson 9: The Test of Love

1 John 3:11-18 • Pg. 5-7 • May 2

Lesson 10: Listen to Your Heart?

1 John 3:19-24 • Pg. 8-10 • May 9

Lesson 11: Who's Teaching You?

1 John 4:1-6 • Pg. 11-13 • May 16

Lesson 12: The Greatest Love

1 John 4:7-12 • Pg. 14-16 • May 23

Lesson 13: Love Made Complete

1 John 4:13-21 • Pg. 17-19 • May 30

Lesson 14: The Test of Faith

1 John 5:1-5 • Pg. 20-22 • June 6

Lesson 15: It's Who You Know

1 John 5:6-12 • Pg. 23-25 • June 13

Lesson 16: Confident Prayers

1 John 5:13-17 • Pg. 26-28 • June 20

1 JOHN THAT'S HOW YOU KNOW

The Test of Love

Lesson 9 • May 2 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

Love is the evidence that we belong to Jesus.

Getting Started

1. What is some evidence that a person belongs to a family?

2. What are some ways people try to demonstrate their love for someone else?

Explanation of the Passage

Read 1 John 3:11-18.

11 For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. 12 Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's

were righteous. 13 Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. 15 Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him. 16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. 17 If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? 18 Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

In the passage John unveils the second test for his readers. He already gave the test of obedience (2:3-6), and later on he will give the test of faith (5:1-5). Here he gives the test of love. The basic idea is that true believers are identified by their love for others, and if this love is not present, no one should have assurance that they are a believer in Jesus.

After announcing love as a core Christian command, John brings up the illustration of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4). Cain is a negative example because he murdered his brother. John is calling believers not just to a general love for all people (although other passages call for this), but to a specific love for

Christian brothers and sisters. Any professing believer who hates a fellow believer resembles Cain. Hate is associated with murder, as Jesus himself pointed out (Matthew 5:21-22). Anyone who is marked by hate (which is spiritual murder) is not demonstrating the fruit of being brought from death to life. Therefore, if we are looking to discern who has eternal life, we would conclude that someone marked by hate does not have eternal life.

John then sets Jesus up as the positive example of love. He did not just claim to love others, but he laid down his life for them. He was willing to sacrifice—to die—out of love for others. John points out that if we, as believers, have the ability to provide practical care for fellow believers who are in need, but we choose not to, we should not claim that we love that person. Love should be visible. Love should be discernible. As John concludes, believers are called to love not just with our words, but with our actions and in truth.

Digging In

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. Verse 12 reminds us what love toward each other is not. Read Hebrews 11:4 and Genesis 4:1-7. Based on these Scriptures, what do you think was at the heart of Cain's anger?

5. Why do you think John connects Cain murdering Abel (verse 12) with the world hating us (verse 13)?

6. According to verses 14-15, what does love (or lack of love) tell us about a person? What is your reaction to John's strong words in these verses?

7. In verses 16-17, what examples does John give to illustrate what it looks like to love others?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. In verse 15, do you think John is saying that a murderer cannot receive forgiveness and eternal life? Why or why not?

Remembering the Theme

9. According to verses 14-15, the presence of love for others is how we know that we have passed from death to life. What are some practical ways that believers can be identified by love?

Taking It To Heart

10. In verse 13-14, John contrasts our position in this world with the reality of who we are with God. We are said to have “passed from death to life.” How can this truth comfort us if the “world hates us”?

11. Pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal specific people that you have “loved with words or speech” but also need to love “with actions and in truth”. Who has God brought to mind?

12. Read James 2:14-26. Why do you think the kind of love John and James talk about is more difficult than just saying, “I have faith in Jesus?”

1 JOHN THAT'S HOW YOU KNOW

Listen to Your Heart?

Lesson 10 • May 9 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

We know that we belong to God, not based on our feelings, but on our faith.

Getting Started

1. In what areas of your life do you lack confidence and assurance?

2. If a person is doubting whether or not they are truly a believer in Jesus, what would you advise them to do?

Explanation of the Passage

Read 1 John 3:19-24.

19 This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence:

20 If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

21 Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God 22 and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. 23 And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. 24 The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

The passage in this lesson comes on the heels of John identifying love—not just a feeling, but love manifested through sacrificial actions—as the core Christian command. In verse 19 of our passage he says that this love, of which he previously spoke, is also the core evidence that believers “belong to the truth”. We know that we are part of the family of God because of the fruit of love in our lives. While this is not the only evidence, it is a core one. This matches up with what John will say later on in chapter 4, verse 7: “Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.”

In fact, John assures believers that the fruit of love in their lives is a better barometer for where they stand with God than the emotions they feel about their standing with God. John says that the fruit of

obedience in our lives will set our hearts at ease (literally, “persuade our hearts”) any time our hearts condemn us. Our internal voice may tell us that we stand condemned before God, but God is not subject to the whims of our emotions. He is greater than our hearts and he knows everything. So, as believers, we seek to convince our hearts to live in the assurance that we have as new creations. When we do live in this assurance, John says that we will have confidence before God in prayer and that we will receive what we ask. Implied in this promise is that what we are asking for is God’s provision, strength, and wisdom as we live out his will in our lives. He will not hold out on us as we look to follow him.

John ends by reminding us that God’s commands are (1) that we place our faith in Jesus and (2) that we love one another. When we keep these commands we walk in step with Jesus. And not only do we walk in step with him, but he is in us through his Spirit (which John will explain in greater detail in the following passage).

Digging In

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you heard the sermon, share something significant that you remember.

4. John begins verse 19 by saying, “This is how we know.” The “this” refers back to what he said in verses 16-18. In light of this, how will we know that we belong to the truth?

5. John warns that our hearts may condemn us, but this doesn’t mean that we actually stand condemned before God. What are some reasons why a Christian may feel internal anxiety and doubtfulness about knowing their standing with God?

6. Verses 21-22 talk about the confidence believers can have in prayer. What are some requests you can be confident that God will grant and you will “receive from him”?

7. Focus on verses 23-24. What do you see as the connection between our faith in Jesus and our love for one another?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. Sometimes a person might doubt that they “belong to the truth” because they don’t, in fact, belong to the truth. How can you discern the difference between a believer who needs reassurance and an unbeliever who would be harmed by false assurance?

Keeping the Theme in Mind

9. In this passage, John clearly wants believers to know that they belong to God. What benefits do you experience if you truly know where you stand with God?

Taking It To Heart

10. In this passage, John tells believers that their obedience is a better barometer than their feelings when it comes to knowing their standing with God. What does your obedience say about how important God is in your life?

11. The next time you find that you have internal anxiety over whether or not you belong to God, what do you plan to do in response?

1 JOHN THAT'S HOW YOU KNOW

Who's Teaching You?

Lesson 11 • May 16 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

The key mark of true Christian teaching is that it tells the truth about Jesus.

Getting Started

1. What are some ways that people receive messages and teachings in our current culture?

2. What are some ways that you test to see whether or not something you've heard is the truth?

Explanation of the Passage

Read 1 John 4:1-6.

1 Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2

This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. 4 You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. 5 They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. 6 We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

The opening verse of this chapter suggests that John's readers were tending to accept uncritically any teaching that claimed to be inspired. Paul's writings give similar warning not to disregard prophecy but to both test everything and weigh carefully what we hear (1 Thess. 5:19 -22, 1 Cor. 14:29-33). In verse two of this passage, John provides the reader with a criterion for testing different messages. That criterion here is the prophet's doctrine on who Jesus Christ is. The hypostatic union is the core teaching that Jesus was both fully human and fully God. Previously, in John's gospel, he focused on defending the deity of Jesus. Verse 2 specifically mentions that a denial of Jesus' humanity that was being taught. Craig

Keener, in his IVP Background Commentary on the New Testament, states that it was likely because of a docetic heresy that was being taught at the time which stated that Jesus was not actually human and did not die physically. The words in verse 3 are strong but rightfully so. One commentator puts it this way: “Behind every prophet is a spirit, and behind every spirit is either God or the devil” (John Stott). The Holy Spirit indwelling the believer is greater than Satan, who speaks error through the false prophets. Verses 4-6 say that this truth should be applied to every dimension of spiritual warfare. In other words, don’t believe everything you hear. Test the spirits.

Digging In

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. John tells believers to “test every spirit.” How can you cultivate a healthy skepticism that will keep you from being easily deceived?

5. John warns against a heresy that said that Jesus was not truly a physical man. Why is it so important to insist that he was? Read Hebrews 2:14-18 for help.

6. Verse 4 is a very popular and often-quoted verse. How has your understanding of it improved as you now have read the verse in its full context?

7. What do you think are some marks of a worldly “viewpoint” (verse 5)?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. John says, “Every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of antichrist.” What does this mean about what we can—and cannot—learn from people who aren’t believers in Jesus?

Remembering the Theme

9. John places greater importance on what a teacher says about Jesus than on whether or not they have good practical advice to dispense. Why do you think this is the case?

Taking It To Heart

10. Give an example of a false teaching that you might be vulnerable to believe.

11. This passage obviously applies to testing the teachers that minister to us in a church service. How can we continue to 'test the spirits' when we leave service?

1 JOHN THAT'S HOW YOU KNOW

The Greatest Love

Lesson 12 • May 23 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

God is the one and only source of love.

Getting Started

1. What are some of the things people turn to in order to experience love?

2. Do you think a non-Christian can love another person in the same way that a Christian can? Explain your answer.

Explanation of the Passage

Read 1 John 4:7-12.

7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live

through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

Love is mentioned thirteen times in these six short verses and over 40 times total in the letter of 1 John. Love is very important to John because it is at the center of the Christian faith. In Matthew 22:36-40, Jesus identified the two greatest commandments as loving God and loving our neighbor. Here, John explains why love is at the center of what God commands us to do: it is because God himself is love. When John says, "God is love," he means that God is always loving, even as he is always wise, always righteous, always holy, always good, and always everything else that makes up his character. He does not switch back and forth between being loving and holy, but he is always all of his characteristics at the same time.

God's great love for us led him to send his Son to be born as a human and die on our behalf. We are the ones who sinned and brought all of the consequences of sin upon ourselves, upon this world, and upon our relationship with God. Even so, God did not stop loving us after we sinned, but instead he was the one

who offered a sacrifice in order to save us from our sins and bring us into a close, personal relationship with himself. This is the greatest act of love that has ever been done by anyone.

Since God has shown his love to us in this powerful way, he also commands that we show love to others. He does not command us to do something without also equipping us to do it, though. All people have the capacity to love others, in at least a limited sense, because we are all made in the image of God. Those who have been born again are able to demonstrate his love in greater and greater degrees as the Holy Spirit works to conform them into the likeness of Christ. God commands us to love others as a way of making himself visible to the watching world. People cannot see God, but they can see evidence of him at work in the lives of his children when they love one another. Loving others is one way we can share the message of Christ with those who do not yet know him.

Digging In

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. How is the world's understanding of "love" similar to and different from the biblical picture of love?

5. Have you ever experienced a time when you felt the love of God in a significant way? If so, share about that experience.

6. How does it change your perspective on showing love to others to know that God showed his love to us through a far more costly action than what he is calling us to do for others (verses 9-11)?

7. What are some specific ways that people in our church could show love to one another in order to display God's love to our community?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. John says that God sending Christ to die in our place is a demonstration of God's love, but some people charge God with being unloving because he saved us in this way. They say it is not loving to require an innocent person to die in the place of those who are guilty. Read John 17:20-26. How does that passage help us respond to anyone who makes this claim?

Remembering the Theme

9. Verse 7 says that everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Does that mean we can assume that all of the kind and loving people we know are saved,

even if we do not see any other evidence in their lives of belief and trust in Christ? Explain your answer.

Taking It To Heart

10. Do you regularly take time to reflect on and enjoy the love God has for you? If so, share with your LIFE group how you do that. If not, commit to setting aside time this week to do so.

11. What is one way you can share God's love with someone else this week?

1 JOHN THAT'S HOW YOU KNOW

Love Made Complete

Lesson 13 • May 30 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

The mark of loving God is loving others.

Getting Started

1. What are some things that can make it difficult to love others?

2. Who has served as a good example in your life of what it means to love others? How has this person showed love to others?

Explanation of the Passage

Read 1 John 4:13-21.

13 This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. 15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and

they in God. 16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. 17 This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. 18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. 19 We love because he first loved us. 20 Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. 21 And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

This lesson's passage builds on the ideas that were presented in the last lesson. The emphasis this time is on the effects that God's love has in our lives. First, experiencing God's love gives us confidence that we will be allowed to spend eternity in God's presence. We experience God's love as the Holy Spirit lives in us individually and makes his dwelling among the body of Christ. He enables us to live in an intimate, loving relationship with God. The Holy Spirit is only given to those who place their faith in Jesus. So, if we are aware of the Holy Spirit's presence and work in our lives, we can be confident that we have been saved and will not face the future judgment.

One of the other effects that God's love has in our lives is that it leads us to love other people. Love is not just a feeling, but expresses itself in actions. When we love others, we act in loving ways toward them. When we truly experience God's love, his love changes us and then flows through us to others. We can see evidence of our relationship with God through a change in how we relate to others. It is sometimes easy for someone to say they love God, but since we do not interact with him in the same way that we interact with other people on a daily basis, it can be difficult to know for sure if that love is sincere. That is why one of the evidences we can look for to support our belief that we truly love God is to look for a change in our attitude over time towards others. As the Holy Spirit works in our lives, he builds in us the fruit of the Spirit, including love (Gal. 5:22-23). We are not passive participants in this process, though. We must choose to be led by the promptings of the Holy Spirit and make a conscious decision to show love to others. This is why John and Jesus both speak of loving others as a commandment. It is something we have a choice whether or not to do, but those of us who have been changed by the love of God will choose over time to love others, just as God desires us to do.

Digging In

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. Even though we know in our minds that God loves

us, sometimes we do not feel as if he does. How can we "rely on the love God has for us" during those times when we do not feel his love?

5. Verses 17-19 tell us that Christians no longer need to fear God's punishment for sin because we are recipients of his love. Why do you think some Christians still lack confidence of their salvation and standing with God, even when they have experienced his love and grace in the past?

6. Our country currently seems to be focused on hate, discrimination, and division between people. How can believers set an example of what it means to love others in the midst of our current social situation?

7. What are some things we can do to grow in our love for other people?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. If we are saved by grace through faith in Christ, then why does this passage teach that we are liars if we say we love God but we do not act lovingly towards others? What is the relationship between faith and works in our salvation and Christian life?

Remembering the Theme

9. Verse 13 tells us one of the ways we can know that we have been saved is through the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. What are some of the evidences we can look for to know that the Holy Spirit is living in us?

Taking It To Heart

10. Is there something keeping you from showing love to someone in particular? If so, what can you do to try to overcome that obstacle or barrier?

11. What is one loving action you can do for someone you know this week?

1 JOHN THAT'S HOW YOU KNOW

The Test of Faith

Lesson 14 • June 6 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

We belong to God through our faith in Jesus.

Getting Started

1. What are some popular misconceptions of who Jesus is?

2. What important truths about Jesus Christ would you want to share with someone who didn't know Him?

Explanation of the Passage

Read 1 John 5:1-5.

1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. 2 This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. 3 In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not

burdensome, 4 for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

Throughout this letter, John has given different tests for his readers to discern whether or not they are really believers in Jesus. In 1 John 2:3-6 he gave the test of obedience. In 1 John 3:11-18 he gave the test of love. Now, in the passage for this lesson, he gives the test of faith. Faith is belief. To believe is to practice faith. Faith is not an irrational belief, but rather a belief that is based on uncertain evidence. We have faith that a man walked on the moon even though an argument can be made that the moon landing was staged. We have faith that George Washington was the first president of the United States, even though we have never seen him personally and we have no video of him. Faith is not believing the impossible, but believing things that are not 100% proven.

John spells out in this passage that everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ (the promised Messiah from the Old Testament Jewish prophecies) is born of God. Later on he says the victory that overcomes the world is our faith. We don't get into the family of God through ritual, but through believing and embracing Jesus. We don't simply believe that

he existed. We believe that he is Lord and that he has died for our sins and rose from the grave on our behalf.

Buried in the middle of this passage on faith is a discussion of love. It is easy to say that we believe something, so John wants to point out that faith should bring with it some evidence. We know that we believe in Jesus when we walk in obedience to God's commands, and God's core command is to love others. Loving others is not what gets us into God's family; loving others is what identifies us as his children.

Love does not precede faith. Faith precedes love. When we embrace Jesus by faith, we are born again. When we are born again, God works in us to make us new. He gives us a new heart and fills us with the Holy Spirit. When this happens we are changed and empowered to walk in obedience and love. Faith is our victory, and faith brings the fruit of love and obedience.

Digging In

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. These verses are filled with statements about faith. Read Hebrews 11:1. How is biblical faith more than just believing in a detached way?

5. According to verses 1 and 5, what two truths must

we believe about Jesus Christ? How do you think believing these truths, or not believing them, affects our relationship with God?

6. In verse 3 we are told that love for God is demonstrated by keeping his commands, and that his commands are not burdensome. If they are not burdensome, why do we seem to struggle with them?

7. According to John in verse 4, how is our faith overcoming the world? How does our belief about Jesus connect to our "victory"?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. Jesus is identified as both the "Christ" (Messiah) and the "Son of God." How are these two truths important in our faith?

Remembering the Theme

9. According to verse 2 we can know that we love the children of God by loving God and obeying his commands. How does loving and trusting God empower you to love others?

Taking It To Heart

10. How is it that everyone “born of God” has “overcome the world”? What is our role and what role did Jesus play in the victory we have?

11. What are areas in your life that you struggle with in your walk with God? What commands are burdensome? Pray that God would strengthen your faith that His commands are for our benefit and strengthen our walk with Him.

1 JOHN THAT'S HOW YOU KNOW

It's Who You Know

Lesson 15 • June 13 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

Faith in Jesus is the only pathway into God's family.

Getting Started

1. How many people generally have to tell you the same thing for you to start to believe it is true?

2. Name at least two events in the gospels that displayed Jesus' divinity, and two that displayed his humanity.

Explanation of the Passage

Read 1 John 5:6-12.

6 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. 7 For there are three that testify: 8 the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. 9 We accept human testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it

is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. 10 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. 11 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

There have been three main views in interpreting the passage in this lesson. The reformers, like Luther and Calvin, believed the mentioning of water and blood referred to the sacraments (baptism and communion). Augustine, a medieval theologian, connected the water and blood to the spear piercing Jesus' side at the crucifixion, when both water and blood poured out, proving his death. The commentator John Stott, however, leaned toward a third view that the water was in reference to Jesus' baptism and the blood to his crucifixion, bookending his earthly ministry. Stott went on to state that the phrase 'not only by the water' refuted a common heresy prevalent at the time that Jesus only became the Christ at his baptism.

In Deuteronomy 17:6 and 19:15, we see how important it was to have a minimum of two witness to pass a judicial sentence. In verses 1 John 5:7-8, three witnesses settle the matter. Unlike the false witness at

Jesus' trial (Mark 14:56, 59), all three witness agree, and the third witness is the Holy Spirit. Then in verse 9, John makes a logical connection that if the people have no problem accepting the testimony of men, how much more should they accept the testimony of the Father. The Father testified to Jesus being his beloved Son at both Jesus' baptism (Matt. 3:17, Mk. 1:11, Lk. 3:22) and the transfiguration (Matt.17:5, Mk.9:7, Lk. 9:35). The believers have the testimony in them because they are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, who testifies to the Son. The non-believer calls God a liar by denying the testimony of the Holy Spirit (the Spirit descends on Jesus like a dove (Lk. 3:22), denying the testimony of the Father (baptism and transfiguration), and denying the testimony of the Son ("I and the Father are one" (John 10:30).

In his conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus gave another contrasting two statements that provide more context to the contrasting statements in verses 11-12. Jesus tells Nicodemus that those who believe in him are not condemned but that whoever does not believe in him stands condemned already because they did not believe in the only Son of God (John 3:18). Humanity stood dead in trespasses, spiritually dead already, but faith in Jesus causes regeneration, spiritual rebirth, and eternal life. The contrast here is clear and uncompromising, eternal life is found nowhere else because Jesus is life (Stott 183).

Digging In

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. Of the three views historically regarding the water and blood (as mentioned in the explanation above), which view was most convincing to you, and why?

5. When John says in verse 6, "He did not come by water only, but by water and blood," he seems to be combating false ideas about Jesus. What are some false ideas about Jesus that are promoted today?

6. Most of our Bibles will have a note on verse seven that does not appear in the earliest manuscripts. However the passage, even without verse seven, is still very Trinitarian. Why do you think that the idea of the Trinity is so important to the biblical authors?

7. If you have a coworker/ family member /friend that is open to hearing about the Christian faith, how could you use this passage to articulate the gospel message to them?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. Verses 11 – 12 make it clear that eternal life is found by faith in Jesus only. How should we answer people who ask us how we can believe in a good God that condemns to hell good people that do not believe in Jesus?

Remembering the Theme

9. Based on this passage, how can we tell if someone is teaching or professing genuine Christianity?

Taking It To Heart

10. After accepting the truth in the passage that eternal life is only found in the Son of God, how should this impact how seriously we evangelize?

11. Take a moment to consider the degree to which your life reflects the idea that you believe that Jesus is the one and only way to eternal life. What steps of faith would lead your life to more fully reflect this?

1 JOHN THAT'S HOW YOU KNOW

Confident Prayers

Lesson 16 • June 20 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

When we know that we have eternal life, we pray with confidence.

Getting Started

1. What are some words that you would use to describe your prayer life?

2. In what kinds of situations do you think confidence is appropriate?

Explanation of the Passage

Read 1 John 5:13-17.

13 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. 14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

16 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. 17 All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death.

The word “know” is core to the theme of 1 John. And the word “know” is prominent in this passage. John is writing this letter to those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God so that they may know that they have eternal life. John doesn’t want people in perpetual suspense. He wants us to take the test of obedience to see if we are truly living out the reality of Jesus as Lord. He wants us to take the test of love to see if we are truly transformed by God’s love so that we can love others. And John wants us to take the test of faith so that we can see if we have truly placed our trust in Jesus and in his divine identity. When we pass these tests, we can know that we have eternal life.

Part of the fruit of knowing that we have eternal life is that we approach God in confident prayer. Our confidence is not in our own goodness or worthiness, but rather in God’s goodness and grace. We confidently ask God anything that is according to his will and he hears us and grants our requests. This doesn’t mean that we have a blank check from God. But it does mean that when we are seeking to walk

with Jesus, God holds nothing back that will equip and empower us to do so. He freely gives wisdom, power, perspective, spiritual gifts, reassurance, and discipline so that we will be shaped into the image of Jesus.

As John talks about this confidence, he then tells believers to pray for believers who are committing sins. Specifically he says to pray for any believer who is committing a sin that doesn't lead to death. He clarifies that there is a sin that leads to death, and that he is not addressing that subject here. While all sin is wrong, there is sin that doesn't lead to death.

What does John mean here? We get a clue in the fact that when he uses the word "life" in verse 16 ("you should pray and God will give them life") he does not use the Greek word for biological life, but rather the word for spiritual life. So John is not saying that some sins lead to physical death while others don't. He is saying that there is a sin that leads to spiritual death, while other sins—committed by believers—should be matters of prayer and concern rather than for condemnation. The sin that leads to death is almost certainly apostasy. Throughout this letter John has alluded to those who previously confessed Jesus as Lord but have now departed from the faith (1 John 2:19). There is a difference between a person who is struggling with sin and a person who has abandoned Jesus. John says that we should pray for the struggling believer while we should be warned against the person who has abandoned the faith.

Digging In

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you heard the sermon, share something significant that you remember?

4. In verse 13 John says that he wants believers to know that they have eternal life. Why do you think this is so important to John?

5. Verses 14 and 15 address the confidence that we can have in our prayers. What kinds of prayers can you have confidence that God will answer?

6. In verses 16 and 17 John addresses the difference between believers who are struggling with sin and those who have abandoned the faith. How do you think you can tell the difference between the two?

7. John tells us to pray for believers if we see them committing sin. What are some specific ways to pray for a believer who is in this situation?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. In verse 14, John says that we can have confidence that God hears any prayer that is "according to his will." How can you know whether or not you are praying according to God's will?

Remembering the Theme

9. If you know that you have eternal life and are adopted into God's family, how does this change the way that you pray to God?

Taking It To Heart

10. How do you think your prayer life would change if you were fully living in the confidence that you have eternal life?

11. What are some prayers that align with God's will for your life? How can you make these prayers a more consistent part of your life?