

The Power of God's Testimony

1 John 5:6-12

My experience as an apologist and minister has shown me that the real reason most people reject Christianity is not for lack of evidence. The proof from external sources regarding the truth of the biblical account is too overwhelming. No, the real issue is a moral one. The person not reconciled to God in Christ and living in disobedience does not want Scripture's claim that God has a full and final claim on his life to be true. He wants to get rid of the book as fast as he can.

This is where the internal witness of the Spirit comes in. Only those whom God the Holy Spirit has regenerated will submit to Scripture as His inerrant [without error] and infallible [unfailing, trustworthy] Word. The Holy Spirit does not give us a new argument for the truth of the Bible, but He confirms in our hearts the truth of Scripture as it is displayed in both the internal marks of Scripture (harmony and majesty of its contents) and the external marks of Scripture (historical accuracy). Objective proofs for the Bible are many and compelling, but they cannot force people to believe against their wills. Sinners are only persuaded to receive the Bible as God's Word as the Holy Spirit changes their hearts and assures them that they can trust and rely on what Scripture says. R.C. Sproul

The validity of a person's testimony concerning the truth of the matter they are testifying to is based on their trustworthiness. If their testimony is brought into question because they are deemed untrustworthy, then what they say cannot be taken seriously. Jesus said many times that His testimony about Himself as the Son of God is true because God the Father and the Holy Spirit say that it is true, therefore His testimony must be taken seriously. Our acceptance of God's testimony about His Son will determine in many ways our willingness to trust and obey Him. Even when we have the testimony of the Spirit in our hearts, we must still be willing to believe, accept, and obey what He has revealed us to be true about Jesus. (Psalm 119:129-135)

5:6-8 John addresses those who struggle with believing God's testimony about His Son. The false teachers of his day (the Gnostics) could not accept the fact that the man Jesus was himself God incarnate. They said that "Jesus was only a man and remained so until his baptism. At that time, they maintained, the Messiah (the Son of God) descended on the human Jesus, but left him before his suffering on the cross—so that it was only the man Jesus who died... This truth is extremely important, because, if Jesus died only as a man, his sacrificial atonement (2:2, 4:10) would not have been sufficient to take away the guilt of human sin." (NIV ft. note)

- A prerequisite to believing God's testimony about His Son is believing that He exists. He bears witness of His existence in two ways: 1. General revelation, which is given to us through what He has created, 2. Special revelation, which is given to us through His inspired inerrant Word, the Bible.

(general revelation) Rom. 1:18-20 *The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.*

(special revelation) 2 Tim. 3:16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

- We know that God exists through the testimony of His living Word and through creation. We know that Jesus exists as God incarnate through the testimony of His ministry while on earth. And we know that God the Holy Spirit exists through the testimony of Jesus' empowerment to do all the miracles, signs and wonders he exhibited as evidence that He truly was and is the Son of God.

John 5:31 If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not true.

According to Jewish legal procedure, a person could not testify alone on their own behalf—a creative liar could make up just about anything. Nor could a single witness establish facts. Rather, in a courtroom setting, two or three witnesses were required (Deuteronomy 17:6; Numbers 35:30). Later in this Gospel, Jesus will make the point that some facts only He can testify about (John 8:14). In this context, however, the claims He is making can be verified by normal means, and so it's reasonable to provide evidence.

This passage is extremely important in discussions of biblical faith. Jesus makes no appeal to "blind faith." He does not tell the Pharisees to believe "because I said so." Nor does He dismiss the need for evidence. Rather, He provides reasons why faith in His message is reasonable. Jesus will fulfill the normal human requirements of evidence, by giving three separate lines of evidence to prove His claims.

These three categories are human testimony, in the form of John the Baptist (John 5:33); observations, in the form of Jesus' miracles (John 5:36); and Scripture (John 5:39). Jesus will use these arguments to complete His response to Jewish authorities persecuting Him for claiming to be equal with God (John 5:18). bibleref.com

Duet. 17:6 6 On the testimony of two or three witnesses a person is to be put to death, but no one is to be put to death on the testimony of only one witness.

Numbers 35:30 30 "Anyone who kills a person is to be put to death as a murderer only on the testimony of witnesses. But no one is to be put to death on the testimony of only one witness.

John 8:14 Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going.

John 5:33 33 "You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth.

John 5:36 "I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to finish—the very works that I am doing—testify that the Father has sent me.

John 5:39 You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

John 5:18 18 For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

- Of all the false teachings about Jesus that has ever existed, none have been able to invalidate the testimony of the gospel. In fact, millions if not billions have come to believe upon Christ for salvation, and will continue to do so, until the end of Christ's millennial reign on earth.
- In **1 Jn. 5:6-8** John explains that the power of the gospel is testified to in three ways.
 1. By the testimony of the Spirit
 2. By the testimony of the water
 3. By the testimony of the blood

➤ **The testimony of the Spirit** was seen when He descended upon Jesus at His baptism.

Mark 1:9-11 *9 At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."*

Ps. 2:7 *I will proclaim the Lord's decree: He said to me, "You are my son; today I have become your father."*

- The power of the Spirit's testimony not only continued throughout Jesus' ministry, but it was also given by Jesus to all who would come to know Him.

Mark 1:7-8 *7 And this was his message: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. 8 I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."*

Acts 2:1-4 *When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

Rom. 8:9 *You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.*

Eph. 1:13 *In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,*

➤ **The testimony of the water** was witnessed when Jesus' was baptized.

When Jesus was baptized, He was not baptized in repentance for His own sin (He had none), but because He wanted to completely identify with sinful humanity. When He came by water, it was His way of saying, "I am one of you." Guzik

➤ **The testimony of the blood** was seen at Christ's crucifixion. It was an historical event that secured the salvation of those redeemed by His blood.

Heb. 9:22 *Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.*

Eph. 1:7-8 *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding...*

5:9-10 *“Men and women accept the witness of other human beings every day of their lives. Otherwise they would not be able to sign a contract, write a check, pay a bill, buy a ticket, ride a bus, or do any of the other thousands of things that constitute daily living. Well then, says John, why should they not believe God, whose word alone is absolutely trustworthy?” Boice*

- Unbelievers might wonder where our conviction to follow Christ and His ways comes from, yet we instinctively know that the testimony of the triune God is written on our hearts.

Vs. 10 John does not hesitate to call someone a liar, which is a serious accusation. This is the third time he has done so in reference to those who claim to know Christ. The two other times are in reference to those who call Jesus and God a liar.

1 Jn. 1:10 *If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

1 Jn. 2:4 *Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him,*

1 Jn. 2:22 *Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.*

1 Jn. 4:20 *If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.*

Prov. 6:16-19 *There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a person who stirs up conflict in the community.*

“Such rejection of God’s testimony over time can lead to a place where a person is permanently hardened against God, to the place where they may be one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, as Jesus warned in Mark 3:28-29. What hope can there be for the one who persists in hearing what God says, and calling Him a liar?” Guzik

Mark 3:28-29 *28 Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, 29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin.”*

5:11-12 To reject the gospel not only calls God a liar, but it also seals the eternal fate of those who feel they know better than God’s testimony about their need for a Savior.

- God’s testimony about His Son, though profound, is broken down into two parts:

1. Eternal life is given through His son Jesus Christ. There is no other way to receive it.

John 14:6 *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

2. It is an either-or proposition. Either we choose eternal life through belief in the gospel, or we don’t. The onus is on the one making the choice.

John 20:31 *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*