

1 John 5:13-17

That You May Know

“There are multitudes today who have accepted Christ as personal Savior but who would have difficulty answering the question, ‘Are you saved?’ They might reply, ‘I hope so.’ ‘do you have assurance of eternal life?’ They might reply, ‘No. I don’t believe any person has the right to say he has eternal life. We must wait until we stand in judgment, only then will we know if we have eternal life.’ What a tragedy that they do not rest in the promise of God that the one who receives Christ has eternal life the moment he believes. Failure to realize this has nothing to do with our eternal destiny, but it certainly affects our stay here on earth.

If one lives in fear and uncertainty, he cannot enter into the peace of God. What a comfort it is to know that the moment we accept Christ as personal Savior, God shares His eternal life with us, as we become His partner. God has nothing to give us in eternity that we do not possess this very moment other than the experience of glory itself.” J. Dwight Pentecost

Colossians 1:21-23 *22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— 23 if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.*

The theme of 1 John is **Assurance of Our Salvation**.

- John tells us that there are three things that give evidence of our faith and assure us of being born again.
 1. **Love** for God and for one another.
 2. **Obedience** to God’s commands (obedience is an expression of love for God and it’s an expression of love toward one another).
 3. **Faith**, which is necessary for our salvation and in knowing and trusting Jesus Christ throughout the course of our life.
- It is having a biblical understanding of who Jesus is, why he came, what he accomplished for mankind on the cross and why it is necessary for men and women to repent of their sins and put their trust in him for the gift of eternal life.

5:13 “**These things**” encompasses the whole letter of 1 John. **“that you may know”** “The verb translated “know” (*oida*) is found in 1 John a total of fifteen times. Almost half those occurrences are concentrated in this final section.” Swindoll

- It is vitally important for God’s children to know that they have eternal life. Assurance of salvation means that we believe God to be true to His Word concerning our eternal destiny. It takes at face value the fact that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, that we have been justified by faith and declared not guilty for our sin, that God’s wrath against our sin has been satisfied by His Son’s sacrifice for it (propitiation), that we are reconciled with God through faith, and that we are seen as holy and blameless in his sight (Eph.1:4; Col. 1:22). To doubt any of those wonderful truths about our salvation means to live in a seemingly constant subjective state of doubt, anxiety, fear, and guilt.

Isa. 26:3 You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.

Rom. 5:1 Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.

Rom. 8:28-30 28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Romans 5:10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

5:14-21 John's closing remarks are known as a **postscript**, meaning that they are additional thoughts he adds to his letter to compliment what he has already written.

5:14-17 John addresses **two things** concerning prayer: **1.** Having confidence in prayer, and **2.** The necessity of intercessory prayer for others. Each includes a promise, followed by a qualification or condition.

- Verse 14 contains the word "**confidence**."
- Twice in 1 John it has been used of a believer having confidence before God in the final judgment (**2:28**; **4:17**) and twice in reference to prayer (**5:14** and **3:21-22**).
- **Confidence** (*parrēsia*) from its use in the Bible, means - *free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance. Strong's Concordance*
- It means that we should not fear that God won't hear us when we pray. Originally the word meant **freedom of speech**. In time it came to mean confidence. With God we have freedom of speech.
- He is always more eager to hear than we are to pray. In fact, he is waiting for us to come to Him in prayer. We don't have to force our way into his presence or compel him to pay attention.
- He promises to hear us. The present, active, indicative tense of the verb "**hear**," means that the second we come to him in prayer, he hears us. It's an immediate thing. **Present** means that it is happening right now, "*it's occurring in actual time*" the second we're before him. **Active** means that the person "*is the subject as the doer or performer of the action.*" In other words, it is God who is doing the listening. **Indicative** means that it is happening or that it will happen, it's guaranteed to happen because God said so.

5:15 But there's a condition or qualification that we must understand! And perhaps this is what confuses us at times. In order for God to answer prayer it must be in accordance with his will.

- We are **not to presume** that God will give us just anything that we might happen to pray for. The Lord makes that very clear. He wants us to pray according to what he desires for us, our families, our church, and our friends. He wants us to pray for what an all-wise, infinite, and holy God desires for us.

“According to these verses prayer is not so much getting God to pay attention to our request as it is getting our requests in line with his perfect and desirable will for us. It is learning to think God’s thoughts after him and to desire his desires.” Boice

- There is a false teaching that unfortunately is widespread among charismatic believers called the *word faith movement*, a.k.a. *name it, and claim it*. It states that our words have power, which in turn obligates God to fulfill what is prayed for. John’s teaching about prayer refutes it.

“John wants us to know that we can receive what we ask for through prayer. We need to be careful here because John frames this statement in a certain theological and biblical context. Pray is not wishful thinking, hoping against hope, dreaming big, or desiring to fulfill the longing of the flesh. God’s not a heavenly genie who operates at our beck and call, and prayer isn’t the Christian method of rubbing the lamp to get God’s attention. We must never fall into the unspiritual and dangerous trap of regarding prayer as a convenient method for imposing our will on God or bending His will to our wants. Rather, prayer is a means of submitting our will to His. So, every true prayer is a variation of the theme, ‘Not my will, but Yours be done’ (Luke 22:42).

In all cases, God holds the outcome of the prayer in His hands and answers it according to His plan and purpose—always for His glory and our good. Remember Hebrews 4:16: ‘Let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace.’ We don’t come groveling, pleading, begging, or bargaining [or demanding]. Entering His presence boldly, but with proper humility, we acknowledge that He has the power to give us what we ask... but also the right to answer however He pleases. And we know that however He answers—‘Yes,’ ‘No,’ ‘Wait,’ or ‘Here’s something better’—He’s going to work everything out for our good, not for harm (Rom. 8:28)... So, we approach Him with confidence according to His will. Not our will, His will...

Because we can’t always know what God’s will might be or what answer He has in store for us in His own time, we need to be careful about expecting God to do things just because we ask Him. God never promised to make us rich. Or to move in our boss’s heart to give us a promotion. Or to heal us of our bodily infirmities. Or to take away this or that particular trial or tribulation. Because God does not explicitly reveal His will in these matters, we would overstep our bounds to ‘claim’ them [name it and claim it false teaching] as answered according to our own will. Never promise somebody else that their prayers or your prayers will bring about something God has not specifically promised.”
Chuck Swindoll

5:16-17 Intercessory prayer is key to having a spiritually healthy church. When a church is healthy, it heals quickly from anything that could cause it to become sickly. It is important to pray for the spiritual well-being of others so that they too may reap the blessings that flow from godly living.

Ephesians 6:18 *And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and request. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.* (Context of spiritual warfare and putting on the full armor of God).

5:16 We are to pray for the spiritual well-being of believers whose lives have become entangled in sin.

- The encouragement here is that God will hear **and give life** to those who have fallen into habitual, unrepentant sin.

Grk. Zōē - *life real and genuine, a life active and vigorous, devoted to God, blessed, in the portion even in this world of those who put their trust in Christ, but after the resurrection to be consummated by new accessions (among them a more perfect body), and to last forever.* Strong’s Concordance

“John promises that God ‘shall give him life for them that sin not unto death.’ John is referring to the life of intimate fellowship that Jesus enjoyed with the Father while He was here among men. The Lord Jesus, who possesses the eternal life of God, had come into the world to demonstrate His life of fellowship with the Father so that men might enter into this same fellowship. John is not referring to the gift of eternal life that will culminate our salvation. John is saying that God will restore the erring believer to the intimacy of fellowship that was marred by sin.” Pentecost

- Sin happens, and when it does, we are to pray that the Lord work in the lives of those blinded by their sin to bring them back to Him through repentance. It is God’s will that we do so.

1 John 1:9-2:2 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us. My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*

- The tense for the verb **to pray, to ask** in verse 16 is not a command (imperative) but is a future active indicative tense meaning that God is the one who will move someone to pray for that person.
- We are also told that there is a **sin that leads to death.**

“What is this sin that is ‘to death’? Apparently, in John’s day and with his readers the phrase was a common one and was well understood, for John does not bother to explain it. But today the key has been lost, and opinion is widely divided in regard to John’s meaning.” Boice

Two views:

1. He’s referring to those who outright reject the gospel... (Without Christ they cannot nor are they capable of holy living). We cannot ask God to forgive them of their sin, that is out of our power to do so. We can pray for their salvation knowing that their refusal to put their faith in Christ will lead to spiritual death and an eternity in hell.

1 Jn. 5:10 *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.*

Matt. 12:31-32 *31 And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. 32 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.*

2. John’s referring to a believer whose unrepentant and progressive sin causes the Lord to take him or her home early.

1 Cor. 11:30-32 *That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment. Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world.*