



CALVARY
TUSCALOOSA

TEACHING PLAN
NOVEMBER 22, 2020



THIS IS HOW YOU KNOW: SECURE IN JESUS

1 JOHN 4:17-21; 5:1-21

NOVEMBER 22, 2020

TEACHING PLAN

PREPARATION

- > Spend the week reading through and studying 1 John 4:17-21; 5:1-21. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools (such as a concordance or Bible dictionary) to enhance your preparation.
- > Determine which discussion points and questions will work best with your group.
- > Pray for your pastors, the upcoming group meeting, your teaching, your group members, and their receptivity to the study.

HIGHLIGHTS

TAKEAWAY: God has assured us of eternity in Christ.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT: Our assurance of eternity informs how we live, pray, and speak truth to those around us.

GOSPEL CONNECTION: We can rest in the finished work of Christ, who has made a place for us with Him in eternity.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.

- 1 Are you a risk taker? Or would you rather be sure about the outcome before you begin?
- 2 If you can, share an example.

In this final section of 1 John, we learn that the things we know continue to dominate the conversation. Seven times the word “know” appears. Christianity is not an “I hope so” or “I think so” faith. It is an “I know so” faith because what has been revealed in the Bible was given to us by God, a God who speaks and a God who speaks only truth. As John brought this letter to close, what is it, in particular, that God wanted every child of His to know?

1. That we can have eternal life.
2. That God answers Prayer.
3. That there is victory over sin.
4. We can know what is true.
5. We can know that we belong to God.

ALTERNATE INTRODUCTION

Who is someone in your life you have grown to love more and more over time—a best friend, a mentor, a spouse, or someone else?

What has made your love and affection for that person increase?

Up to this point, our emphasis has been on loving one another as Christians; but now we turn to a deeper—and more important—topic: the believer’s love for the Father. We cannot love others if we don’t have the love of our Father. We must first love God with all our hearts; then we can love others.

God wants to perfect in us His love for us and our love for Him. The word perfect carries the idea of maturity and completeness. The Christian life is to be a daily experience of growth in the love of God. This involves our coming to know God in a much deeper way as we grow in relationship with Him.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Notes:

> Have a volunteer read 1 John 4:17-21; 5:1-5.

In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. 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 If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. ²¹ And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

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 This is love for God: to obey 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 he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

Love is perfected, according to John, by abiding in God and He in us. That is how we grow in maturity in Christ—by remaining with Him. John gave two markers of what that kind of perfected love looks like. The first is confidence for eternity. When we abide in God, we don't have to live in fear. We can rest easy in His presence. We will consider the second marker in verses 19-21.

- How is love perfected, according to the text?
Whose love is perfected?

-
- How does love give us confidence for eternity, even while in this world?

Notes:

- What are some ways we are prone to let fear rule our lives more than confidence in Christ?

The second marker of a love for God that is growing and being perfected is love for others. Since we are freed from fear, we can love others in light of our love for God. John made it explicitly clear and simple: We love because God first loved us.

- What are some other reasons we might want to love others? What motivation might we have outside of God's love for us?
- How do you struggle most to love others? Is there a particular group, circumstance, or action that is particularly unlovable to you? How might you be relying on your flesh to love others instead of relying on God's love for you?

It can be easy, when talking about love, to remain in the realm of emotions. We often talk about love in the context of how it makes us feel. That isn't entirely wrong or bad, but love isn't limited to a feeling we have. Love has to lead us to action. John made clear that if we truly love God, then we will obey Him with our lives. This was one of his three tests of faith that he described throughout this first letter. Love, belief, and obedience are the markers of a true believer.

Our obedience isn't possible in our own power, though. We can't scrounge up enough love for God within ourselves. It is the love of Christ that compels—the love of the One who overcame the world! In our obedience, we also overcome the things of this world through the power of Christ.

- In what ways does it sometimes feel overwhelming and burdensome to follow God's commands?

Notes:

- How is our love for God tied directly to our obedience of God?

> Have a volunteer read 1 John 5:6-12.

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 man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. ¹⁰ Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has 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 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

John continued in His confirmation of Jesus' identity—the Son of God. His description of Jesus' coming in verse 6 may seem a bit odd at first reading. John declared that Jesus “came by water and blood.” He even emphasized that it wasn't just by the water He came, but also by blood.

- What did John mean in saying that Jesus came by both water and blood? Why would that have been an important thing to emphasize?

- Why is it important that we as Jesus' followers hold to His identity as both God and man?

Notes:

John brought the blood, water, and Spirit together to testify to Jesus being the Son of God. This is one of the markers of the Spirit—to confirm Jesus as the Son of God in the flesh (1 John 4:2). Before His death, Jesus reminded His followers that He would send the Holy Spirit to bear witness about Himself (John 16:12-15). Jesus' baptism, crucifixion, and Spirit all cry out in confirmation that He really is the Son of God—historically and eternally. The Spirit, of course, is the greatest witness, but is bolstered by the water and blood.

- What is the significance of there being multiple witnesses to the reality of Jesus' identity and not just one or John's words alone?
- What are some false beliefs people have about who Jesus was/is? Why is our belief about Jesus so critical to our faith?

John's effort to go to any lengths to affirm the identity of Jesus was worthwhile. Apart from the Son, we have no access to the Father. Without the Son of God, we have no life with God.

- How do our own lives function as a testimony to God? What happens if we don't testify to the Son of God?
- How is God calling you to testify about Jesus now? How will you respond?

> Have a volunteer read 1 John 5:13-21.

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 anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him 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 he should pray about that. 17 All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death. 18 We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him. 19 We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. 20 We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true—even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. 21 Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.

NOTES:

Everything that John had written in his letter had a clear purpose. His warnings against false teachers, his assurances of the love of God, and everything in between were all to confirm that for those who believe, they would have eternal life in Christ.

- Why would the believers in John's community need a reminder of eternal assurance? How does that kind of assurance inform how we live daily?
- How does assurance of our eternity inform our prayer life?

John also knew believers constantly need to be reminded of the truth when it comes to sin. It is easy to look at our lives and sin patterns and become disheartened. Even as we are following Jesus, we can find ourselves trapped in old ways. And while we will never be fully freed from sin until we are with Christ in eternity, we can walk in victory over our sin by the power of Christ.

Notes:

- What should our response be to a brother or sister stuck in sin? Is this in line with how you typically respond? Explain.
- How can we experience victory over sin in this life?

John's final reminders get to the core of what it means to be a child of God. We know that He is the source of all truth, and we belong to Him. This is only possible through Christ, who has made a way for us to see and walk in the truth. Only by His blood are we made right with God, belonging to Him forever, secured for eternity.

- Why were these reminders vital for believers?
- Why do you think John ended his letter with an abrupt command against idols?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Notes:

- 1 Do you ever doubt your eternal security in Christ? What causes that doubt? If you are in Christ, what truth do you need to remember and claim in this season?
- 2 Do you pray according to God's will, knowing He hears and answers you? What makes you doubt that reality? What keeps you from praying in this way?
- 3 Are there any idols you are putting up in the place of Christ? How are those incongruent with the Christian life if we truly believe we belong to God?

PRAY

Take some time in prayer to remember and proclaim the truth over your life. Remember how God has rescued you and thank Him for it. Remember that He sees you and hears you. Remember that sin no longer has a hold you. Pray for daily victory over those areas of weakness. Remember that He is on the throne and repent of the idols you have tried to put in His place.

FOLLOW UP

Midway through this week, send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following information:

Notes:

- > Questions to consider as they continue to reflect on what they learned this week:
 - What evidence is there that your love for God is increasing and deepening? What is fostering or hindering that?
 - What might need to be changed in your spiritual practices to allow you to abide with Him?

- > A note of encouragement, following up on any specific prayer requests mentioned during your group gathering.

- > The challenge to memorize 1 John 5:13.

1 JOHN 4:17-21

4:17 The “he” in as he is, so also are we could refer to either Jesus or God the Father. If the reference is to Jesus, John was saying that as the Son lived in this world, loved others, and pleased God, so can his followers. If the “he” refers to the Father, John meant that as God dwells with his people and moves them to reflect his love, they have complete confidence in view of the coming judgment.

Notes:

4:18 With the words no fear, John was speaking of the terror of final judgment (v. 17) and eternal punishment. He was not rejecting the healthy “fear of the Lord” that other biblical writers commend (e.g., Pr 1:7).

4:19 Because God first loved us, our wills and affections are transformed so that love replaces our selfishness.

4:20–21 Followers of Christ love God and love others—or they are not true disciples of Christ.

1 JOHN 5:1-21

5:1–21 The previous chapter emphasized love. John affirmed in this chapter that the road to love is paved with faith.

5:1–2 True faith leads to a particular quality and depth of love. To believe is to have been acted upon in a dynamic, transformative way by God. It is to have been born of God. The words also loves the one born of him refers to love for a fellow believer.

5:3 Love for God is not separate from keeping his commands. God’s commands teach his people how to do what God accepts as pleasing (Rm 12:1–2). Knowledge of God transforms the human will,

making what was once a burden light and easy to carry (Mt 11:30).

5:4 Everyone who has been born refers to people transformed and made new through faith.

Notes:

5:5 Confessing Jesus as the Son of God should be understood as including his status as the Christ and that he has come in the flesh. “To believe anything less about Jesus is to believe in somebody who does not have the ability to save us from the power of the godless world” (I. Howard Marshall).

5:6 The words came by water and blood probably refer to Jesus’s baptism and his death. The Spirit ... testifies through John’s witness to the meaning of these events in Jesus’s life. John was present at both the baptism and the crucifixion of Jesus. Moreover, Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to John and other believers to aid their understanding (Jn 16:13).

5:7–8 By speaking of three witnesses, John may have been thinking of Dt 19:15 (also Mt 18:16). The Spirit testifies along with the water (Jesus’s baptism) and the blood (Jesus’s atoning death).

5:9 Both Jewish and Roman law depended on witnesses who bore clear testimony to establish the facts of a legal case.

5:10 By speaking of the testimony God has given, after writing that it is the Spirit who testifies (vv. 6, 8), John affirmed that the Holy Spirit is God.

5:11 John spoke of the testimony that is in the believer (v. 10). Believers have growing conviction of the gift they have received (eternal life) and its source (his Son).

5:12 There is no salvation outside of faith in Christ.

5:13 Assurance was one of John's major goals in writing this epistle.

5:14–15 The deepest answer to prayer is to know that he hears us. To know this is to have what we have asked of him. For believers, prayer seeks communion with the Father more than the acquisition of favors or the satisfaction of desires.

Notes:

5:16 A sin that doesn't lead to death (cp. v. 17) is a sin for which forgiveness is possible (1:9). Sin that leads to death may be the flagrant offenses against God that so much of 1 John warns against. John may have been speaking about apostasy (falling away from Jesus; denying the apostolic truth). John called on his readers to leave these offenses and offenders in God's hands rather than agonizing in prayer about them. "Death" means spiritual death and eternal separation from God.

5:17 As grave as all sin is, and granting that particular evil deeds can bespeak terminal opposition to God, there is also sin that can be overcome through prayer, repentance, and renewed faith resulting in reform and restoration. John's instruction ends on a cautionary and hopeful note.

5:19 We know refers both to apostles like John and to his readers. The whole world is under the sway of Satan, but his reign is fleeting and fading (2:8, 17).

5:20 With the phrase he is the true God, John clearly affirmed the full divinity of Christ.

5:21 This closing verse of the epistle has puzzled interpreters for centuries. Idols may be John's shorthand for all the lies, errors, hate, and rebellion that his letter warned against—in the hope that his readers would satisfy their souls with true knowledge of Christ.