

Confidence Before God

1 John 5:14-21

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1 John 5:6-13 Summary: Describes how Jesus identifies with us, has details about the Trinity and emphasizes eternal security.

Philippians 4:6 – *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.*

Applications from this passage...

- Jesus identified with us in His coming by the water and the blood.
- God Himself is the best witness we have about Jesus Christ... who He was & why he came.
- The Godhead is a Trinity with three co-equal persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We don't need 1 Jn 5:7-8 to prove that.
- Eternal Security is an important biblical doctrine... God wants us to know for sure we're going to heaven.

1 John 5:14-15 – Confidence in prayer.

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

How may we have confidence in God?

In the previous verse...

1 John 5:13 – *to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know you have eternal life.*

Now, for those who *know* they have eternal life, John relates the idea of *confidence in Him* to prayer.

How may we have confidence in prayer?

If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us: In this, we see the secret of *power* in prayer. It is to ask *according to His will*; and once having so asked, to have the assurance that *He hears us*.

What does it mean we should ask *anything* in prayer?

Much prayer fails because it never *asks* for anything.

- God is a loving God, and a generous giver — He wants us to ask anything of Him.
- This is not to imply that anything we ask for will be granted, but anything in the sense that we can and should pray about *everything*.

God cares about our whole life, and nothing is too small or too big to pray about.

Why is it important to ask *according to His will*?

This is part of our growing in our relationship with Him. The more we can conform our will to His, the more effective will be our prayers.

If God's will be done anyway, why do we need to pray about it?

It is easy for us to only be concerned with *our* will before God, and to have a fatalistic view regarding His will ("He will accomplish His will with or without my prayers anyway, won't He?").

- God wants us to be involved in what He's doing.
- It is part of growing in our relationship with Him. God wants us to see and discern His will through His Word, and to pray His will into action.

John 15:7 – *If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.*

When we *abide* in Jesus — living in Him, day by day — then our will becomes more aligned with His will, and then we see answered prayer.

If something is God's will, why doesn't He just do it, apart from our prayers?

Because God has appointed us to work with Him...

2 Corinthians 6:1 – *as workers together with Him.*

God wants us to work with Him, and that means bringing our will and agenda into alignment with His.

- He wants us to care about the things He cares about enough to pray passionately about them.

Why should prayer be much more than just casting wishes to heaven?

It is rooted in understanding God's will and promises according to His Word, and praying those promises into action.

- For each prayer request, we should ask ourselves, "What possible reason do I have to think that God will answer this prayer?"
- We should be able to answer that question from His Word.

Why is God delighted when we pray His promises?

It shows our will aligned with His, our dependence on Him, and that we take His Word seriously.

Is it wrong to ask for something God has not promised?

Not necessarily, but we then realize that we are not coming to God on the basis of a specific promise, and we don't have the confidence to *know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him*.

1 John 5:16-17 – Praying for a sinning brother.

If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death.

What should we do for a fellow Christian who sins?

When we see a brother in sin, John tells us the first thing to do is to *pray* for that person.

- All too often, prayer is the *last* thing we do, or the *smallest* thing we do in regard to our brother having a difficult time.

What will God do in response to prayers for fellow Christians?

God promised to bless the prayer made on behalf of a brother in sin. Perhaps such prayers have special power before God because they are prayers in fulfillment of the command to love the brethren.

What is *sin leading to death*?

- Because John wrote in context of a **brother**, it is wrong to see him meaning a sin leading to **spiritual** death; he probably meant a sin leading to the **physical** death of the believer.
- We have an example of it in 1 Corinthians 11:27-30, where Paul says that among the Christians in Corinth, because of their disgraceful conduct at the Lord's Supper, some had died (*many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep*).

This death came not as a condemning judgment, but as a corrective judgment...

1 Corinthians 11:32 – *But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world*

A believer *can* sin to the point where God brings them home because they have compromised their testimony so significantly.

Why would it be presumptuous to think every case of an untimely death of a believer is due to sin?

Because there are many other reasons such as the fact that we live in a fallen world.

- Our lives are in God's hands, and if *He* sees fit to bring one of His children home, that is fine.

Why wouldn't intercessory prayer be appropriate concerning a *sin leading to death*?

Apparently, when a Christian is being corrected in regard to a *sin leading to death*, there is no point in praying for his recovery or restoration — the situation is in God's hands alone.

What is *sin not leading to death*?

John takes pains to recognize that not *every* sin leads to death in the manner he speaks of, though *all unrighteousness is sin*.

1 John 5:18-19 – Knowing who we are.

We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.

What does it mean that, *whoever is born of God does not sin*?

If we are *born of Him*, we then have the resources to be free from habitual sin.

- John is repeating his idea from 1 John 3:6 – *whoever abides in Him does not sin*.
- The grammar in the original language makes it plain John is speaking of a settled, continued lifestyle of sin.
- John is not teaching here the possibility of sinless perfection.
 - The present tense in the Greek verb implied habit, continuity, unbroken sequence.

What is God's provision for us in spiritual warfare?

He who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him: If we are *born of Him* we then have a protection against the *wicked one*.

- Knowing this gives us godly confidence in spiritual warfare.
- We are kept by Jesus and protected from Satan by Him.

What does it mean the *wicked one does not touch him*?

The word *touch* here has the idea of *to attach one's self to*. John clearly says that Satan, or, by implication one of His demons — cannot attach himself to the one who is *born of Him*.

- The Greek word for *touch* means to lay hold of or to grasp rather than a mere superficial touch
- The only other place where John uses this particular verb for **touch** is in John 20:17, where Jesus tells Mary to *stop clinging to Me*.

How is it that Christians are set off from the world?

If we are *born of Him*, we are no longer *under the sway of the wicked one*, though the *whole world* still is.

- Knowing this means we can be free to be what we are in Jesus and separate ourselves from the world system in rebellion against Him.

1 John 5:20-21 – Abide in Jesus and avoid idols.

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

What does it mean *that we may know Him who is true*?

In the conclusion of this letter, John returned to his major theme: fellowship with Jesus Christ.

- We must *know Him*, and the word used for *know* (*ginosko*) speaks of *knowledge by experience*.

What are Christians given an understanding about?

The work of Jesus in us gives us the ability to *know Him*, and to be *in Him* — the abiding life of fellowship that John invited us to back in 1 John 1:3.

Why must our understanding about Christ be given?

We cannot attain it on our own. If God did not reveal Himself to us, we would never find Him.

- We know Him, and can know Him, because He has revealed Himself to us.

How has God revealed Himself to us?

God has revealed Himself to us by *Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ*. Jesus said:

In 14:9 – *he who has seen me has seen the Father* Jesus is the key and the focus of it all. We see the personality and character of God by looking at Jesus.

Why is Jesus described as *Him who is true*?

This reminds us of a theme John has had through the letter: the importance of true belief, of trusting in the true Jesus, not a made-up Jesus.

- The Jesus of the Bible is *Him who is true*, who is *His Son Jesus Christ*.

How is Jesus *the true God and eternal life*?

Not only is Jesus a man (per 1 John 1:1, 4:2, and 5:6), but He is also *the true God and eternal life*.

- We cannot promote the humanity of Jesus over His deity, or His deity over His humanity. He is both: fully God and fully man.
- This is the most unequivocal statement of the deity of Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

Why does John conclude with an admonition to keep *from idols*?

It fits in with the theme of a real, living relationship with God. The enemy to fellowship with God is *idolatry*: embracing a false god, or a false idea of the true God.

- Believing in a false Jesus is idolatry; see the warnings in 1 John 3:18-23; 4:1-3; 5:6-9.

What idols should Christians be particularly wary of?

- worshipping yourself... by overindulgence in food or drink, laziness, or too much concern about how we look or what we wear.
- worshipping wealth or some hobby or pursuit.
- worshipping dear friends or relatives.

How does idolatrous religious activity choke out a real relationship with God?

Living for someone other than the God revealed in Scripture is not a *real relationship* with God.

- It will also damage our relationships with our brothers and sisters in Jesus.

Why is this warning about idolatry addressed to *little children*?

This is a title...

- of deep affection.
- that indicates regeneration and family relation.
- that indicates humility.
- that indicates teachableness.
- that implies faith.
- that implies weakness.

What applications do we see from this discussion?

- Confidence in prayer comes from conforming our will to God's will.
- There is a sin leading to physical death so damaging our witness that God calls us home early.
- Intercessory prayer is important.
- God helps us in spiritual warfare.
- Idolatry interrupts fellowship.