

**Lesson 29: “What We Know With Confidence” 1 John 5:18-21 Craig Crawshaw**

With this lesson, we have come to the end of our study in 1 John. Before we examine the final words of this epistle, let us review the highlights of what John has taught us. These highlights are what I hope you will remember and treasure from this wonderful little book.

**TWO GREAT CONCEPTS OF GOD**

1. God is LIGHT
2. God is LOVE

God is LIGHT teaches us of His purity, His power, His perfection and His all-encompassing person. God is LIGHT means God cannot be contained, or moved, or snuffed out by darkness. For light is not the absence of darkness, rather darkness is the absence of light. God is LIGHT reminds us that we are to walk in the light of His righteousness and purity, whereby we can enjoy fellowship with God. God is LOVE teaches us that God is loving, but far more, that God can only be loving. Love is at the core of His very nature. God is LOVE teaches us that God loves me, and that God loves everyone – even the vilest sinner, and that He wants everyone to be saved. God is LOVE teaches me that God is not a harsh taskmaster, but a gentle and compassionate Father to His children. And God is LOVE teaches me that as God has loved me, I am to love all others, and love God in return.

**WHY THE LETTER WAS WRITTEN**

Not every book of the Bible is as clear as to its purpose as is 1 John. John gives three clear reasons for writing this epistle.

1. That our joy may be made complete (1:4). John wants all Christians to be filled with the joy of knowing what God has done for them and be victorious through all circumstances.
2. That we may not sin (2:1). He knows we will sin (1:8-10), but gives instruction that we may keep sin to a minimum through abiding close to Him.
3. That we may know with confidence that we have eternal life (5:13). The one word theme of the book is “confidence” or assurance in our salvation.

**TESTS OF OUR SALVATION**

To help us evaluate our “walking in the light” and confidence in our salvation, John gives us a series of 3 behavior tests and 4 belief tests – 7 total tests of our being truly saved. These are not HOW we are saved, but how we can KNOW that we are saved.

**3 Behavior Tests:**

1. OBEYING - We must keep His commandments (2:3-4, 3:22-24)
2. ABIDING - We must have a close relationship with God through Jesus (1:7, 2:6, 2:27-28)
3. LOVING – We must love others with the love of God (2:7-11, 3:11, 4:7)

**4 Belief Tests:**

4. JESUS IS FULLY MAN (4:2)
5. JESUS IS FULLY GOD (4:15)
6. JESUS IS SAVIOR OF ALL (5:1)
7. JESUS IS SAVIOR OF EACH (5:11-12)

**1 John 5:18-21** *We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him. We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. And we know 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, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, guard yourselves from idols.*

We have already noted that John wrote to give us confidence in what we should KNOW. And so it is appropriate that he closes his epistle with three things that we as believers should KNOW with confidence. Note that verse 18, 19 and 20 all begin with “we know.”

**OUR HOLINESS**

**1 John 5:18** *We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him.*

Now certainly John is NOT saying that a Christian does not sin, even though it appears so in a casual reading of this translation. We need only reread chapter 1, verses 8-10 and chapter 2, verse one to know that John is well aware that a Christian sins, needs to confess and receive the advocacy of Jesus. John is reiterating what he wrote in chapter 3, verses 6-10, where he talks about “practicing righteousness” versus “not practicing righteousness.” NASB translation of 3:9 says it the clearest: *“no one who is born of God practices sin.”*

A Christian who is abiding close to God through Jesus will not be a habitual sinner. In fact to be close to God is to be kept from sin. When the Spirit is strong in a believer, sin will not be present. That is what John is saying. He is talking about the believer’s status of HOLINESS – made a “saint,” not by our goodness, but by His goodness in us. And we are protected by God in that He “*keeps him*” and “*the evil one does not touch him.*” Just like the Israelites in Egypt were protected from the flies when they were in their area of Goshen, so Christian believers are protected from the enemy’s worst when we are abiding close to God.

My simple synthesis of verse 18: God has made me holy, and protects me from evil. That is what God wants you to know, believer! Thank God that I am born again as a non-habitual sinner, and that He shields me from evil.

Remember the Lord’s Prayer: “*Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*” And that is exactly what God does for His beloved children – shield us from temptations that we could not handle, and deliver us from the worst that Satan would throw at us.

**1 Corinthians 10:13** *No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.*

Fellow believer, let us celebrate our HOLINESS - and God’s protection of His own!

## OUR IDENTITY

**1 John 5:19** *We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.*

The second great truth John wants us to know as he closes his letter is that we have our IDENTITY in God. All Christians are in one “camp” of God, and all the rest of the world is in another “camp” controlled by the evil one, the devil. Yes, in so many ways we are all the same. But in the way that matters most, we Christians are very different. We belong to God. The rest do not.

**1 Corinthians 6:19-20** *Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.*

The apostle Peter spoke of our unique IDENTITY in this way:

**2 Peter 1:3-4** *Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.*

Ephesians, chapter one, is perhaps the most complete listing of our status, or identity as a believer: Chosen, holy, blameless, predestined, redeemed, forgiven, given spiritual insights and an inheritance and sealed with the Holy Spirit, the pledge of more to come – all this and more, because we are God’s possession. (1:3-14)

Believer you are loved by God! You are hand-selected by God. You are super-blessed by God. You bear His image and are possessed by His very person and nature in the Holy Spirit.

Fellow believer, let us celebrate our IDENTITY – distinct from the rest of the world!

## OUR SALVATION

**1 John 5:20** *And we know 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, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.*

Fellow believer, you know that it was not your great spiritual perception that led you to believe in and trust Jesus as your Savior. *The apostle Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 12:3 that “no one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit.”* It was God who gave you the spiritual insight to believe Him and receive His Son. Your salvation and mine is a gift of God from beginning to completion. We simply believed, or received by faith, what was freely offered to us. And even that faith was a gift of God.

**Ephesians 2:8-9** *For by grace you have been saved by faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

What is the “that” and the “it” that is “not as a result of works?” Clearly it is “saved by faith.” Both our salvation and the faith that we exercised are both a gift of God, so that we might not be able to boast about our spiritual insight or our amazing faith. John want us to KNOW with CONFIDENCE that Jesus has come to give you the spiritual insight to believe in Him as Savior and trust Him as Lord. Your SALVATION is by Him and Him alone. This is the third truth God wants you to KNOW. Fellow believer, let us celebrate our SALVATION – God’s gift of eternal life!

## **FINAL THOUGHTS**

Has it struck you that the first letters of HOLINESS, IDENTITY and SALVATION spells HIS?

### **I AM H.I.S. :**

#### **HOLINESS:**

*Thank God that I am born again as a non-habitual sinner, and that He shields me from evil.*

#### **IIDENTITY:**

*Thank God that I belong to Him, and am separate from the world of sin and the evil one.*

#### **SALVATION:**

*Thank God that He came as Jesus, that I might know Him as my Savior and Lord.*

And let us not forget John’s final challenge to us (and since this is God’s Holy Word, God’ final challenge to us):

**1 John 5:21** *Little children, guard yourselves from idols.*

You will remember that “little children” is literally “little born ones,” John’s name for God’s children. And to all God’s “little born ones,” he says as a final challenge and warning, guard yourselves from anything or anyone that would displace Me as your God and your all-in-all. Let nothing hinder you from making Me first place in your life. May your sole and ultimate purpose in life be to glorify Me. As Johann Sebastian Bach, the great Baroque composer and avid follower of God, wrote on every piece he ever composed: “Soli Deo Gloria.” Translation: “To God alone be the glory!”