

Sermon Notes 5/31/2026

## Knowing for Certain

**As Christians, what can we know for certain?  
Como cristianos, ¿qué podemos saber con certeza?**

1. We have eternal life in \_\_\_\_\_.

Tenemos vida eterna en \_\_\_\_\_.

1 John 5:13 (1 Juan 5:13)

John 3:16 (Juan 3:16)

2. We can pray with \_\_\_\_\_.

Podemos rezar con \_\_\_\_\_.

1 John 5:14-15 (1 Juan 5:14-15)

Hebrews 4:15-16 (Hebreos 4:15-16)

1 John 5:16-17 (1 Juan 5:16-17)

James 5:16 (Santiago 5:16)

3. We are the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.

Somos \_\_\_\_\_ de Dios.

1 John 5:18-19 (1 Juan 5:18-19)

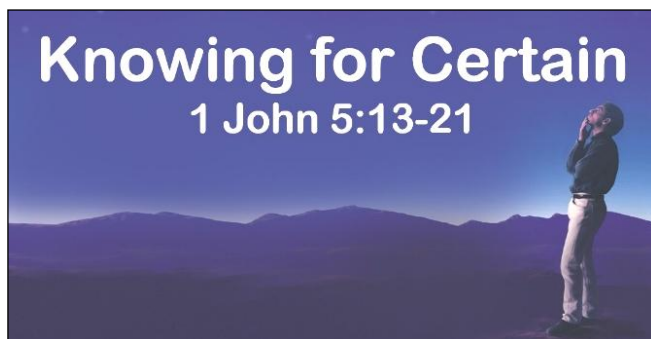
Romans 8:14-16 (Romanos 8:14-16)

4. We know the one \_\_\_\_\_ God.

Conocemos al único Dios \_\_\_\_\_.

1 John 5:20-21 (1 Juan 5:20-21)

John 17:3 (Juan 17:3)



# Life Group Discussion Questions

**Week 11: May 31—June 7**

**Scripture: 1 John 5:13-21**

In 1 John chapter 5, John gave his Christian readers assurance of their relationship with God. The false teachers of the Gnostics were causing them to doubt if they really were children of God. But John gave them objective ways to evaluate their relationship with God. As Christians today, we hear a lot of false ideas that challenge our convictions. But here in this passage, we see several things we can know for certain that will help us to stand firm in our faith regardless of what the world tells us.

## **Read 1 John 5:13-21**

1. Why did John write this letter? (5:13)
2. What kind of attitude should we have when we approach God in prayer? (5:14)
3. What are the conditions in this passage for having our prayers answered? (5:14-15)

There are a number of conditions for answered prayer mentioned in the Bible. We can't just read one and ignore the rest. Consider the different conditions mentioned in these passages: Matt. 18:19; Mark 11:24; John 14:13-14; 15:7; and 1 John 3:22.

John Stott writes,

The qualification... is if we ask anything according to his will. In 3:22 the condition of answered prayer is whether our behavior accords with God's commands; here whether our requests accord with his will. Prayer is not a convenient device for imposing our will upon God, or for bending his will to ours, but the prescribed way of subordinating our will to his. It is by prayer that we seek God's will, embrace it and align ourselves with it. Every true prayer is a variation on the theme 'your will be done'. Our Master taught us to say this in the pattern prayer he gave us and added the supreme example of it in Gethsemane. (Stott, 184-185)

4. What kind of sin did John tell his readers to pray about in verse 16?

This is a difficult passage to understand. John seems to be describing two different categories of sin: a sin leading to death and a sin not leading to death. But he doesn't describe any details of how to distinguish one from the other. Why doesn't he give us a list of all the sins that lead to death and all the sins that don't lead to death? Probably because that is not the purpose of this passage. John wants his readers to pray for each other so that they will remain faithful to Christ. I believe that the sin unto death in this passage is apostasy, choosing to give up on Christianity. There were some Christians who listened to the false teaching of the Gnostics and they left the church.

Morris Womack observes,

It is possible that John is using this language to indict those false teachers who were claiming that Jesus was not born in the flesh. Their sin would likely be "unto death," that is, until they died. These brothers had gone out from them. John does not name any specific sin as a "sin unto death." John does not use the article "the" in the Greek text, thus allowing the translation "sin unto death" rather than "the sin unto death." "Sin unto death" should be regarded as those sins from which no recovery is possible. (Womack, 131)

5. How did John describe sin in verse 17?
6. What does the person born of God not continue to do? (5:18)
7. What kind of spiritual protection do Christians have? (5:18)

Robert Yarbrough notes,

First John 5:18 names the enemy and meets his threat head on: "the evil one does not touch" Christ's followers. He had no hold on the Son (John 14:30) and so cannot bring down and destroy his followers. This is akin to Paul's affirmation that nothing can separate the believer from God's love in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:35-39). There is no illusion of discipleship being free of danger... Jesus warns of bitter persecution (John 16:1-4). He knew the dangers to which his followers would be exposed and prayed for their preservation: "My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one" (17:15 NIV). (Yarbrough, 316-317)

8. What does the first part of verse 19 say about Christians?

9. What does the last part of verse 19 say about the whole world?
10. Why has the Son of God given us understanding? (5:20)
11. How is Jesus described in verse 20?
12. What was the last thing John wrote in this letter? (5:21)

David Allen writes,

Sometimes our idols can be a conglomeration of metal and plastic, circuits and rubber, upholstery and glass, otherwise known as a car. Sometimes our idols can be flesh and blood, as in a spouse, child, grandchild, or parent. Sometimes our idols are less tangible things such as fame, position, or popularity. Ezekiel got it right when he said concerning some of the leaders of his day, “These men have taken their idols into their hearts” (Ezekiel 14:3)... The fact of the matter is, every culture throughout history has always had its own idols. The human heart is an “idol factory.” We are prone to make idols of almost anything. We have little difficulty identifying idolatry in other cultures but are often blind to the idolatry rampant in our own backyard. (Allen, 250)

13. How can we know for certain that we have eternal life?
14. How does Jesus give us a greater understanding of God?
15. How can we guard ourselves from the “idols” of our culture?
16. When is it difficult to approach God with confidence?
17. How can you help fellow believers when they are struggling with sin?
18. How can you help fellow believers when they have doubts about their salvation?

**Sources cited:**

Allen, David. *1-3 John: Fellowship in God’s Family*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013.

Stott, John. *The Letters of John*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2009.

Womack, Morris. *1, 2, & 3 John*. Joplin, MO: College Press, 1998.

Yarbrough, Robert. *1-3 John*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008.