



## The Epistle of 1 John

# “THE WITNESS OF GOD’S SPIRIT”

*1 John 5:6-12*

**Theme:** Believing the witness of the Spirit about the Son of God results in eternal life.

## I. The Power of the Spirit’s Testimony – 5:6-8

### A. THE DYNAMIC OF THE SPIRIT’S TESTIMONY – v. 6

1. We have just been taught that the one who is overcoming the world is the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God – John now addresses more specifically the reliability of the truth about the One on Whom so much depends – even eternal life.
2. *“This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ ...”* –
  - a) *“came by water ...”* – a reference to the inauguration of the ministry of Christ when He was baptized.
  - b) *“... and blood ...”* – a reference to the fact that the Son of God Himself died for our sin, vicariously suffering for us.
3. John is refuting several erroneous perspectives about the nature of the Savior – some teaching that the “divinity” part of Christ left him when He suffered and died, and that only the humanity remained when He actually died.
4. However, we are told that *“it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth”*
  - a) The Holy Spirit, the One who moved in the holy men who wrote the Scriptures, inspiring the product of their writing, is the real author of Scripture – cp. *2 Peter 1:21*

## The Epistle of 1 John

- b) In our hearts, the Holy Spirit now affirms that what He moved in the ancient saints to write is truly His own – pressing it home and verifying it to our hearts as truth.
  - c) “And these works now he may so connect with words spoken or written of old, as to make us feel, not only that he then suggested the words as his, but that he is addressing them to us now as his; not only that he did once bear witness, but that he is now bearing witness, and that this is his testimony.”<sup>1</sup>
5. Hence, the Holy Spirit is constantly drawing men to Christ, confirming in them as if new the reality of what He inspired long ago – serving as the great Teacher of truth – cp. *John 14:26*
  6. We must take care that we don’t abuse the Spirit by taking the Word and booting Him out of the process – determining for ourselves what He was really trying to say..

### **B. THE DETAILS OF THE SPIRIT’S TESTIMONY – vv. 7-8**

1. We are now informed as to the details of the testimony of God’s Spirit – that *“there are three that bear witness ... and the three are in agreement.”*
2. These three witnesses are:
  - a) *“The Spirit ...”* – a reference to the Holy Spirit who uses God’s Word to testify of the accomplishment of Christ.
  - b) *“... the water ...”* – the event of Christ’s baptism which identified Christ as the anointed Messiah of God who would accomplish redemption.

---

<sup>1</sup> Candlish, pp. 361-362

## The Epistle of 1 John

- c) *“... and the blood”* – the cost of the sacrifice of Christ who redeemed us – perhaps referring to our repeated remembrance through communion (present tense reference).

## II. The Penetration of the Spirit’s Testimony – 5:9-10

### A. THE PREEMINENCE OF THE TESTIMONY OF GOD – v. 9

1. This witness provided by God’s Spirit is not just another testimony, but is the testimony of God Himself and is therefore elevated above its “peers” – *“If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater.”*
2. How much more reliable is the testimony of God than the testimony of mere men – cp. *Psalm 62:9*
3. On the other hand, God’s faithfulness is impeccable – as He is unable to lie – cp. *Hebrews 6:17-18*
4. *“The testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son”* – God’s current testimony is that He has given testimony about His Son, Jesus Christ and we must listen and trust Him:
  - a) *“This is my beloved Son”* – *Matthew 3:17*
  - b) *“This is my beloved Son”* – *Matthew 17:5*
  - c) Jesus *“was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead”* – *Romans 1:4*
5. In essence, the whole of Scripture, inspired by God’s Spirit, is the testimony of God as to the identity of God’s Son, Jesus Christ – cp. *Luke 24:27*.

### B. THE PERSONALIZATION OF THE TESTIMONY OF GOD – v. 10

1. Notice that when one responds in faith to the external testimony of God’s Spirit in the Word, and is indwelt

## The Epistle of 1 John

by the Holy Spirit, that they actually have the witness *“in himself.”*

2. *“The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself”* – this is the personalized availability to be taught by the indwelling Holy Spirit of God – an internal, experiential confirmation of truth.
3. *“... the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son”* – a personal affront to God.

### III. The Purpose of the Spirit’s Testimony – *5:11-12*

#### A. THE ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING ETERNAL LIFE – v. 11

1. Now we get to the point – the reason God has provided a witness to us concerning His Son – the *“testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.”*
2. Receiving this testimony from God about His Son is not merely a matter of being convinced as by some authority from without or above, but being quickened by a might agency and influence from within.
3. The issue of *“eternal life”* is not something that rests merely in the future, it is something we receive right now and benefit by forever.
4. So, what is the *“eternal life”* that “God has given us?” – certainly it goes beyond merely existing forever ...
  - a) Certainly it is the abolition of death – our having passed from death to life – connoting that there is no more condemnation for sin – cp. *John 5:24*
  - b) Certainly it involves the endowment of a power or capacity to live in harmony with God – conformity to the image of the Son of God – cp. *Romans 8:29*

The Epistle of 1 John

- c) Certainly it involves a relationship with God the Father and with His Son – cp. ***John 17:3***.

**B. THE ACQUISITION OF ETERNAL LIFE – v. 12**

1. The sole way by which eternal life is received is through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. *“He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.”* –
3. The forgiveness and freedom from sin and the ability to live in harmony with God are things that are linked directly to the reception of the Lord Jesus Christ as the only hope of reconciliation to God.
4. When a person does not possess the Lord Jesus, they still have an eternal existence, but not one that knows the abolition of death, the “wages of sin” – they live forever under that constant damnation of the wrath of a holy God – they *“do not have the life”* – cp. ***Romans 8:23***.