

**FIND & FOLLOW 2022**  
**That You May Know**  
**1 John 4-5**

I love John's letters. They are like letters from a FATHER to his CHILDREN. John uses that language because he has such affection for the people to whom he is writing. **Even though none of us have ever met John, we feel that love as well because it is actually an INSPIRED letter from the heart of our Heavenly Father to us, his children!** John's letter is filled with both ENCOURAGEMENT and WARNING. Like so many of the other letters that were written at the time when the CANON of SCRIPTURE was almost complete, the writings were meant to HEIGHTEN the AWARENESS of each believer about how important their individual and collective FAITH was to not only their own lives, but to the lives of untold generations that would follow them. The same is true for us today. We cannot fail to see ourselves as people of faith who must also pass the Gospel on to the next generation as well. We must GUARD IT and GIVE IT AWAY!

John writes with SIMPLICITY. He is speaking to us of a PURE and SIMPLE FAITH. I love how he uses phrases like, **"That you may KNOW, and "This is how you KNOW,"** over and over! He wants to instill CONFIDENCE in the hearts of followers of Jesus by giving them the CLEAR EVIDENCES of SAVING FAITH. In the final two chapters, John puts a laser focus on how to spot a TRUE BELIEVER. Here are the KEY CHARACTERISTICS you WILL SEE in the life of any genuine follower of Jesus Christ.

**TRUE BELIEVERS CONFESS THAT JESUS CHRIST CAME IN THE FLESH TO SAVE US. 1 John 4:1-6 NIV**

**1 Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. 4 You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. 5 They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. 6 We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.**

This is a very SIMPLE, yet powerful summation of Gospel truth. What is one's viewpoint about Jesus? If it denies his literal physical birth or his divine nature, it is heresy! If it puts Jesus alongside other deities in some pantheon of saviors, it is error! If it tries to present the Gospel as just MORAL MANDATES, it is not the Gospel!

**\*There is a SPIRIT behind every form of belief. Satan loves to CONFUSE FAITH.**

**Don't believe everything you hear about faith!** It is amazing how Satan uses people to attack the faith by changing it. Heresy is not just error, it is satanic damnation! In our world today, there is a popular sense of EASY BELIEVISM that puts ALL FAITH on the SAME LEVEL. "As long as you believe in something, you should be fine!" All forms of RELIGION are presented as EQUAL and VALID. **Do you believe this?** Even more subtle is the "faith" that REDEFINES who Jesus is, what Jesus said, and what Jesus did. It is another Jesus and another Gospel, and neither of them saves you. Look at how many people have tried to present Jesus as DIFFERENT from how he is presented in the Gospels! Time magazine puts out some new "scholarly" articles about Jesus nearly every year that diminishes his holiness and dismisses his divinity. We even have professors in some seminaries who cast doubts on the miracles of Christ and the historicity of his life, death, and resurrection. ENOUGH! True believers choose to STAND on the SCRIPTURES and confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God that came to earth as a virgin-born child, who lived a perfect, sinless life, and then gave his life to atone for our sins and rose again from the grave to demonstrate his power over sin and the devil. **Any attempt to change those basic Gospel truths is evidence that one has the spirit of the ANTICHRIST within them.** They are NOT children of God. Period. **The GOSPELS are the FOUNDATION for our Faith. Any DEPARTURE from the Gospels is a departure from the faith. (Vs. 5-6).** Furthermore, we are all called to TEST the SPIRITS to see if they are true or false! Don't just let your emotions be moved by messages. Test the spirits and hold to what is true!

There is another clear evidence of true faith that you can look for in true believers.

**TRUE BELIEVERS LOVE LIKE JESUS. 1 John 4:7-11 NIV**

7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 **This is how God showed his love among us:** He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

## **JESUS CHRIST'S LIFE DEFINES LOVE!**

**God's love in Christ DEMONSTRATES the NATURE of true love.** It is HOLY, SACRIFICIAL, and LIFE-CHANGING. If you want to study REAL LOVE, study the life of Christ as revealed in Scripture. No greater model exists! Think of just HOW Jesus loved his disciples. From the beginning, he invited them into his life. He also spoke hope, purpose, and encouragement into their lives. His love for them was not just a warm feeling. At times, it was not soft and gentle. He was firm with his followers. He rebuked them openly and privately when they needed it. That was love. He also regularly affirmed his love for them. He told them that he loved them! He loved them by spending TIME with them. (Quality AND quantity!). He loved them by PRAYING for them regularly. **He loved them by GIVING HIS LIFE for them. And this is just how he told us to love one another!** (1 John 3:16) He also lovingly challenged his disciples. He stretched their faith. He did not PANDER to them. He even LET THEM FAIL (but not

without praying for them to be restored afterwards!). He did not shield them from the truth. He exposed their obstinance and pride. **His love was perfect, stubborn, selfless love.**

This leads to a supernatural effect on the followers of Jesus: They learn to love like Jesus. John tells us that when God's love is EVIDENT in the life of a person, that is a clear sign that he or she has been BORN of God. Only God's kids can love like that! Our faith is revealed in love! Do you love God's people? **Are you even CLOSE to any of God's children in your everyday life? If not, how can you love them? I am always trying to encourage believers to DEVELOP Christ-centered friendships in their lives. How can you live the Christian life without this? You cannot!** Furthermore, if we do not love God's children, then we will stumble around in our darkness of our own disobedience and **fail to feel secure.** **Our "love life" is also actually tied to our sense of eternal security in Christ. (16) 1 John 4:12-17 NIV**

**12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. 13 This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. 15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. 16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. 17 This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus.**

There is one other evidence that John gives us in these chapters about what genuine belief looks like in the lives of professing followers of Jesus.

**TRUE BELIEVERS OBEY GOD AND OVERCOME BY FAITH. 1 John 5:1-5 NIV**

**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 In fact, this is love for God: to keep 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 the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.**

**\*Obedience to God's commands is evidence of true faith.**

Obedience here is tied to LOVE. But love prompts obedience! Remember the first commandment: Love the Lord your God with all your heart. This means that your life is FOCUSED on the heart and will of God. Again, we can SAY all day that we love God, but are we OBEYING him? Jesus said that he only KNOWS those that DO what he commands. Is your life a CONTRADICTION of the faith you profess? A true believer is ALWAYS a LIFE that is NEW because it has been so RADICALLY CHANGED!

"The existence of the new life is matter of fact. We ourselves know many whose lives are pure and blameless; they have faults before God, but before the eyes of men they

are perfect and upright, blameless and harmless. The godly lives of Christians are good evidence of the truth of the gospel. Did I hear some one object, "But many professors of Christianity are not holy"? I grant you it, but then everybody knows that they are inconsistent with the religion which they profess. If I heard of a lustful Mahomedan I should not consider him inconsistent with Mahomedanism; is he not allowed his harem? If I heard of a licentious Hindoo, I should not consider him to be dishonoring his religion, for some of its sacred rites are disgusting and unmentionable. The same may be said of all the idolatries. But everybody knows that if a man professes to be a Christian and he is guilty of a gross fault, the world rings with the scandal, because it recognizes the inconsistency of his conduct with his profession." **CHARLES SPURGEON**

**\*His commands are not burdensome.**

God's commands are not NIT-PICKY. They are not TEDIOUS, pointless commands about RITUALS and RITES. His commands are LIFE as we LEARN them. They don't lead to REGRETS but to REST. Jesus promised that those who come to him will not be weighted down with his yoke, but LIFTED UP by them. These words mean that true believers do not RESENT the commands of God. They do not push against the command to be like Jesus in HOLY conduct and service to God. This does not mean that true believers never sin or stumble, but their life and passion are bent toward obedience to God. When they fail, they confess and seek the forgiveness and power of God's grace to restore and refine them. Their response to the CONVICTION of the Holy Spirit is one of gratitude.

**\*Faith-driven obedience OVERCOMES the world.**

The beauty of saving faith is that it does not RELY on human effort! It relies on the power of God to supply what it demands. **Faith overcomes the world [defined in 1 John 2:15-17 as the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." ]** The world is constantly shouting for our attention and affection. John is reminding us that we must keep our eyes on the One that has saved us. When we experience his life within us, we have the PEACE, JOY, HOPE, and FAITH that we need to move from "grace to grace" in our Christian lives! Obedience prompts more obedience as we come to know and love Jesus more and more as we experience the FRUIT of his will. It is a God-created cycle of faith. And we are the VICTORS! **1 John 5:11-13 NIV**

**11 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. 13 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.**

Do you BELIEVE that Jesus Christ came in the flesh and lived and died and rose again just as the Gospels teach? Does your life DEMONSTRATE the LOVE of God by the way you love fellow believers? Is your FAITH evident by the way you OVERCOME the world through OBEDIENCE? If so, you do not have to be FEARFUL about your relationship with God. You do not have to HOPE that you will go to heaven.

You can KNOW. You can REST and RUN in that confidence. May John's words always COMFORT and CHALLENGE you in your daily walk with Jesus!

Let's pray.

**FIND & FOLLOW 2022**  
**November 27 – Southaven Facilitation Guide**  
**1 John 4-5: That You May Know**

**Start talking**

Talk about how some television/radio preachers have raised “red flags” in your spirit over the years.

**Start thinking.**

Is it possible to have complete assurance about your salvation, and if so, how?

**Start sharing.**

[Read 1 John 4:1-6](#). How is it possible to teach a “different Jesus” than what we know about Jesus from the New Testament? How can you “test the spirits” to see if someone is teaching truth or error? Why do you think the world resists the straightforward words about Christ Jesus in the Bible?

[Read 1 John 4:7-11](#). In what ways does Jesus Christ's life give us a real definition of love? What are some of the differences between God's love and the world's view of love?

[Read 1 John 4:12-17](#). Talk about why love between believers is a reflection of true faith in God. Why does John say that love for other believers can give you greater confidence and security in your life of faith?

[Read 1 John 5:1-5](#). What is the relationship between love for God and obedience to God? Why are God's commandments not ‘burdensome’ to believers, and what does that mean? What is “the world,” and how does our faith give us victory over the world?

[Read 1 John 5:11-13](#). How do these verses give you comfort and confidence?

**Start praying.**

Ask God to bless your pastors as they seek to teach truth to our church family.

**Start doing.**

If you are not in a Life Group or a D-Group, inquire about how to join one this week.