

(Eternal) Life Introduction

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- **Author:** John the Apostle
- **Date:** 90 AD (more or less)
- **Location:** Ephesus
- **Recipients:** Believers in and around Ephesus in the Roman province of Asia.
- **Circumstances:** Some leaders separated from John, teaching false doctrines and soft views of sin.
- **Purpose:** John writes both to warn and encourage the flock to remain faithful to the original apostles' teaching.

(Eternal) Life Introduction

- Many years ago I worked in the field of electronics.
- We sold some very expensive instruments that made extremely sensitive measurements.
- My job was to test these instruments before they went out to the customer, and make all the final adjustments.
- Each time I changed one setting it usually impacted others.

(Eternal) Life Introduction

- The Christian life is much like this.
- There is more than one thing that needs our attention, but they are all related.
- John knows this, and as he closes up this letter, it is as if he is trying to point us in any number of different directions.
- We're going to reduce it to seven key areas – far fewer than I had to look at in my old job.

(Eternal) Life Introduction

Key Areas

1. Correct Doctrine about Jesus Christ
2. Love of God
3. Love of Others
4. Obedience to God's Commandments
5. The Holy Spirit
6. Prayer for Self
7. Prayer for Others

1 John 5:1

1 John 5:1

- John is already pacing no fewer than three items in this first verse. They are:
 1. Correct Doctrine about Jesus Christ
 2. Love of God
 3. Love of Others
- We need to be born of God to experience this love, but this is only true of those who believe that Jesus is the Christ.

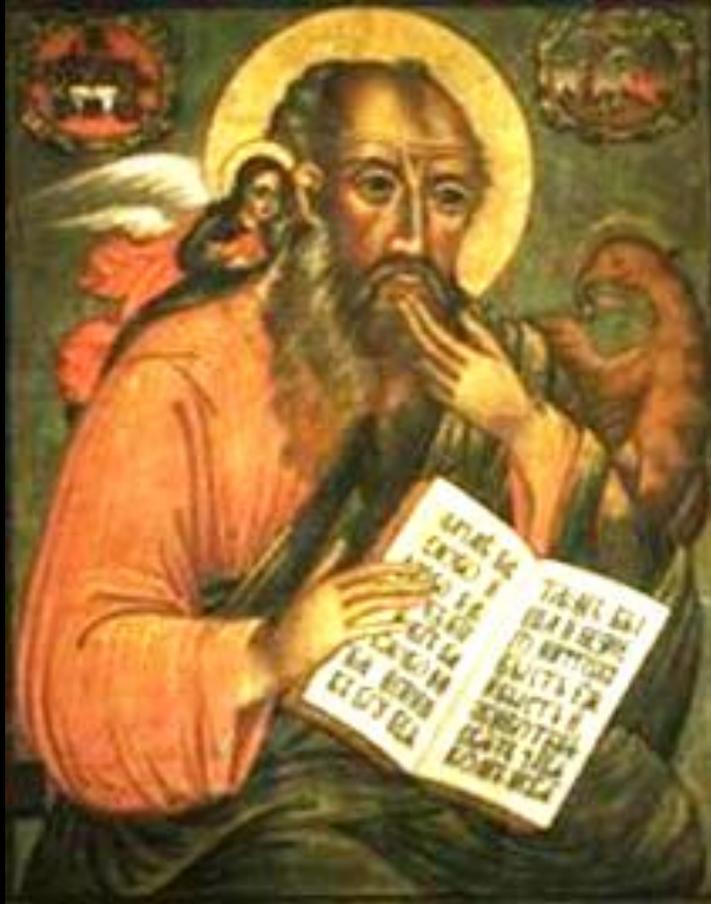
1 John 5:2-3

1 John 5:2-3

- I may want to love God's people, but how can I know when I am doing that well enough?
- Look at your love for God, John says, and whether or not you are keeping his commandments.
- This is because obedience to his commandments is how we love God. That was [Area 4](#).

[4. Obedience to God's Commandments](#)

1 John 5:2-3



Keeping the commandments is both the form and substance of our love for God. Those who obey them are brought close to God by them.

– Andreas of Caesarea (563 – 637)

1 John 5:2-3

- John 14:15 (ESV)

If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

1 John 5:4-5

1 John 5:4-5

- John consistently sees the church in contrast to the world.
- Some people are born of God, others are not.
- Only those with saving faith in Christ receive this new birth which removes us from the world's grasp.
- And we now must keep **1 John 2:15-17** in mind.

1 John 5:4-5

- Once again let's keep those seven areas in mind. So far we have mentioned the first four.
 1. Correct Doctrine about Jesus Christ
 2. Love of God
 3. Love of Others
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1 John 5:6

1 John 5:6

- Jesus Christ is “he who came by water and blood.”
- An early false teaching said the divine Christ came upon Jesus at his baptism and left him before his death.
- John wants us to know that the divine Christ and the human Jesus are one and the same person.
- Jesus Christ who was baptized is the same Jesus Christ who died on the cross, shedding his blood for our sins.

1 John 5:6

- The Holy Spirit also bears witness, first through the Scriptures, but then through an inward testimony.
- Cultivating this inner life with God through the Holy Spirit is another area we have to attend to.
- We have labelled it **Area 5**.

5. The Holy Spirit

1 John 5:7-8

1 John 5:7-8

- At this point those reading the KJV or NKJV will have some additional words.
- **1 John 5:7-8** (ESV)

⁷ For there are three that bear witness [in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. ⁸ And there are three that bear witness on earth]: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.

1 John 5:7-8

- The footnote to the NKJV explains this pretty well.
- “Only 4 or 5 very late mss. contain these words in Greek.”
- In other words, early manuscripts, early church teachings and early translations of the Greek do not have them.
- It’s safe to say they are a late addition and there is a long story as to how they got into the KJV to begin with.

1 John 5:9-10

1 John 5:9-10

- John reminds us that the Holy Spirit is God.
- Therefore, we are required to believe his testimony.
- The first testimony is outward, since he has spoken through the human authors of Scripture.
- Once we believe, however, we also receive the Holy Spirit who gives testimony within us.

1 John 5:9-10

- 2 Peter 1:20-21 (ESV)

²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹ For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

1 John 5:9-10



The reference to the Spirit clearly means that the Holy Spirit lives within believers and provides assurance of the truth about Jesus ... John is stressing that Jesus identified with humankind at his baptism and gave himself to death as our Saviour. Both these actions were done by Jesus Christ (both names are used in 5:6) and not by a Jesus separate from the Christ.

– Samuel Ngewa, professor of NT studies, Nairobi, Kenya

1 John 5:9-10

- This inward relationship with God, through the Holy Spirit, is cultivated mainly through the Word of God and prayer.
- And now once again, John emphasizes right beliefs about Jesus Christ.

1 John 5:11-12

1 John 5:11-12

- What has God said concerning his Son?
- Not least, what John reminds us of right here.

1 John 5:13

1 John 5:13

- This is perhaps the key verse and the primary statement of purpose John gives for writing this letter.
- It is similar to what he says near the end of his Gospel.
- **John 20:30-31** (ESV)

³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

1 John 5:14-15

1 John 5:14-15

- John now turns to the subject of prayer.
- We called this [Area 6](#).

6. Prayer for Self

1 John 5:14-15

- God wants us to pray for our own needs and desires.
- He does not promise to simply do whatever we ask, like a genie that grants us our wishes.
- He wants our will to conform to his own and prayer helps develop our will in that direction.

1 John 5:16-17

1 John 5:16-17

- Throughout this letter, John has emphasized the right beliefs, love and obedience that are consistent with eternal life.
- The “sin leading to death” is another way of describing what has gone wrong in the lives of some “former Christians.”

1 John 5:16-17

- In John's environment there were many who had gone off after a number of strange teachings.
- In **2:18-19** he refers to them – especially to the teachers themselves – as “**antichrists.**”
- Persistence in these false teachings would be “**a sin that leads to death,**” because they are based on a false Jesus.

1 John 5:16-17

- There are also any number of garden variety sins that we have to watch out for.
- We can always come back to Jesus with them, as John reminds us in **1 John 1:9**.
- But won't this kind of easy forgiveness lead to lax behavior on our part? Not according to the next verse.

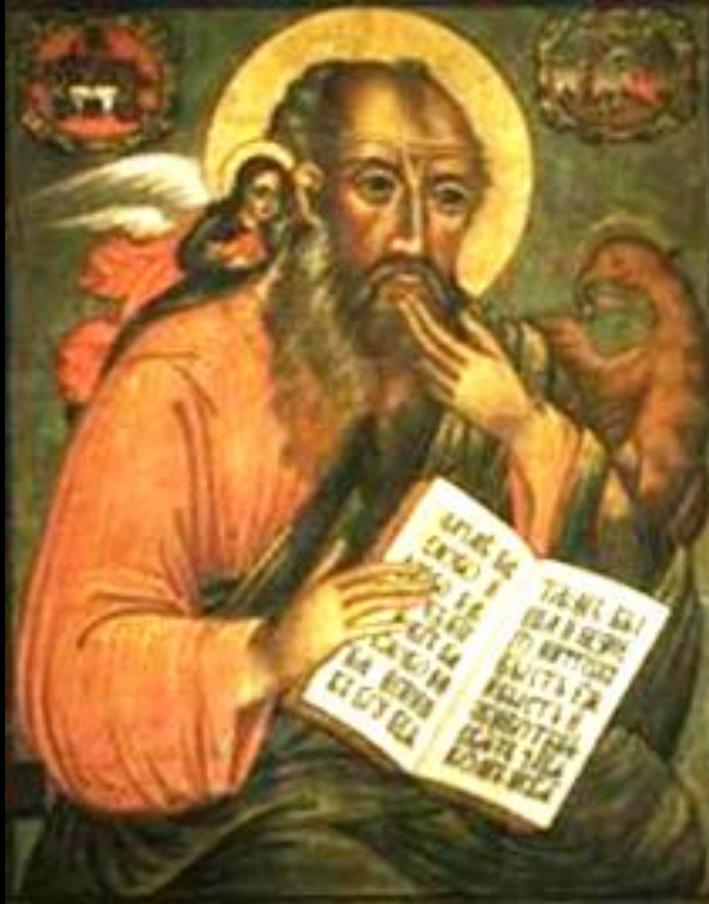
1 John 5:18-19

1 John 5:18-19

- Again, John consistently sees the church in contrast to the world and obedience is part of that.
- Some people are born of God, others are not.
- Those with saving faith in Christ receive this new birth which removes us from the grasp of the world – and “the evil one.”
- Also see **1 John 3:3**.

1 John 5:20

1 John 5:20



Even at the end of his letter, John never stops insisting on the need for right doctrine. We have been given understanding to the extent that we have known the Son of God, who really has come into the world ... The person who has this mind and understanding knows what is really true and is united with him.

– Andreas of Caesarea (563 – 637)

1 John 5:20

- Further, this understanding is something given to us by the Holy Spirit.
- **John 15:26** (ESV)

But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.

1 John 5:20

- Further, this understanding is something given to us by the Holy Spirit.
- **John 16:13** (ESV)

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

1 John 5:20

- John wants us to be clear about who Jesus really is and keep trusting in him.
- Our life – our eternal life – depends upon it.
- **John 17:3** (ESV)

And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

1 John 5:21

1 John 5:21

- Throughout this letter, John has been concerned that we have a right understanding of Jesus and the Christian life.
- Idols come not only in the form of statues and images, but false ideas about God the Father and Jesus Christ his Son.

1 John 5:21

- For that matter, idols can come in many forms, and would be anything that stands in the way of our walk with Christ.
- Think back for a moment on anything or anyone that kept you from giving Jesus Christ the first place in your life.

(Eternal) Life Conclusions

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- The Christian life gives us more than one thing that needs our attention, but they are all related.
- As he closes his letter, John has pointed us in at least seven different directions.
- Like my old job adjusting sensitive electronic instruments, what we do in one area influences all the others.

(Eternal) Life Conclusions

Key Areas

1. Correct Doctrine about Jesus Christ
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