

How to Know We Have Eternal Life

1 John 5:11-21

How can we be sure we have eternal life?

People participate in world religions, seeking an answer to that question

They want to be SURE they're O.K. with God; that they're safe. Even people who aren't interested in heaven, & who don't want to come face to face with God, seek some way to be sure that they aren't going to spend eternity in hell, suffering for their sin.

So, how *can* we be **SURE**, that we have eternal life?

How can we be sure we're right with God?

John wrote for people who aren't enjoying life

They're actively involved in church.

But they're miserable.

He writes to tell us how we can enjoy fellowship with God, and with each other.

When we have the real thing, we'll enjoy life more!

So he reveals the secret for getting more out of life.

He tells us that **if we want to enjoy fellowship with God, we must be going the same way he is—We must be like Him.**

3 characteristics of God

If we want to enjoy fellowship with Him, these 3 traits must be true in our life also.

GOD'S HOLINESS 1:5-3:10

God is holy. 1:5

To enjoy fellowship with a God Who is holy, we must be holy!

"You be holy, for I am holy."

GOD'S LOVE 3:11-5:10

God is love. 4:8

To enjoy fellowship with God who **IS** love, we must love one another.

GOD'S LIFE 5:11-21

God (Jesus) is life. 5:20 *"We know that the Son of God has come & has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; & we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ.*

He is the true God & eternal life

To enjoy fellowship with God Who **IS** life, we must have life.

To enjoy fellowship with God we must abide in Him.

Through Him we receive eternal life.

John assumes that his readers already know Him and have life.

But just in case,...

He warns us, if we want to enjoy fellowship with God, **we must have life!**

SOURCE OF LIFE 5:11

Summary, introductory statement:

[Notice how it starts!

1:5 => *"This is the message"*

3:11 => *"This is the message"*

5:11=>] ***"This is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, & this life is in his Son"***

(God's Son) **Jesus is the source of life.**

Eternal life is in God's Son!

It's in Jesus!

WAY TO LIFE 5:12-13

“Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. ¹³I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.”

People who have the Son, who trust Jesus, have life.

People who *don't* have the Son, who don't trust Jesus, *don't* have life.

v. 13 indicates that to have God's Son is the same as to TRUST God's Son!

We can know that we have eternal life, if we're trusting Jesus. 13

¹³I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.”

Based on our trust in Christ,

we can *know* we have eternal life.

Not like the legalist's list => never sure you've done enough!

[J.W. encounter in Molino de las Flores]

Assurance That Accompanies Life 5:14-17

What can we be sure of? 14-15

“This is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. ¹⁵& if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.”

When we trust Jesus, we have confidence to ask for what we need—when it's consistent with His will—knowing He'll give it to us.

(Lit., He has *already* given them to us!)

This is the assurance we have before Him: When we ask anything according to His will,

[What's significance of "according to His will?]

He hears us.

[What are the implications of God's response: "He hears us?"]

What does this kind of hearing mean?

This is much more than just *listening* to our cry!

He hears & *responds* to our cry.

When we know that He hears anything we ask, we can also be sure that we HAVE the petitions we have asked for!

[Significance of present tense?]

Present tense—it's a sure thing!

– It's already been granted—

we can count on the reality of it!

In no area is this more true than in our intercession for others. **16-17**

"If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, & God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that. ¹⁷All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death."

[How does this assurance work out in our prayer for others?]

When we pray for restoration of others, God answers.

When we pray for the restoration of others, we may be instruments of restoration & life.

“If anyone sees his brother committing a sin which doesn’t lead to death, He shall ask & he shall give him life— that is to those sinning sin which doesn’t lead to death. Some sin leads to death. In that case, I’m not saying that he should ask on their behalf. All wrongdoing is sin; but there is sin which doesn’t lead to death.

[If “the wages of sin is death,…” doesn’t any/all sin lead to death? What’s the difference between “a sin that leads to death” & common, ordinary sin?

How do you recognize the difference when you see it?]

4 N.T. examples of “sin leading to death”

Peter’s dealing with Ananias & Sapphira Acts 5:1-11

Paul’s dealing with church at Corinth 1 Cor. 11:27-34 (**30**)

–hoarding food at potlucks

If offense harms God’s testimony, God may judge a person with physical death for His name’s sake.

Even the intercession of faithful people will be ineffective in the case of those whose sin damages God’s reputation.

Heb. 10:26-31 *“If we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,²⁷ but a fearful expectation of judgment, & a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.²⁸ Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses.²⁹ How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, & has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, & has outraged the Spirit of grace?³⁰ For we know him*

who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” & again, “The Lord will judge his people.”³¹ *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”*

James 5:19-20 *“If anyone among you wanders from the truth & someone brings him back,²⁰ let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death & will cover a multitude of sins.”*

Note O.T. examples of sin which leads to death:

Israel in the wilderness;

Nadab & Abihu (Lev.10:1-2);

Achan (Josh. 7:25) *et.al.*

In such cases, even intercession by faithful people won't avail.

Modern examples:

Pastor from Guate.

How should we pray in such cases?

How should this truth change the way we pray?

What does John want us to do when we see a brother sinning?

What does John want us to do when we see such a brother sinning, but believe this may be a “sin unto death”?

What should WE learn from implied warning in this word of assurance?

How do these come together?

Remember “according to His will?”

We start by seeking to determine GOD'S WILL in this situation.

It's not about OUR wishful thinking—one way or the other— it's about His will!

Victory which accompanies life 5:18-20

John concludes focusing on the result of Christ's life-giving work
3 things we know: 18 "We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him."

1. God protects those who have eternal life from continuous sin.

People born of God receive a nature born of God, which keeps them from continual sin.

[#2–2nd thing we know:] **19**

"We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one."

2. We belong to God; but the world is under the control of the evil one.

Therefore, we are free from the power of the evil one who controls the world.

He doesn't control us!

The world does! WE don't!

[#3–3rd thing we know:] **20**

"We know that the Son of God has come & has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; & we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God & eternal life."

3. The Son of God has come.

Therefore, we can know God & enjoy fellowship with Him, if we abide in Christ, the One Who IS God Himself and eternal life.

What are the results of His coming?

We know Him.

We are in Him.

What lessons are there for us in this promise of victory?

We can enjoy assurance!

We are secure!

Concluding warning against idolatry 5:21 *“Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”*

John concludes with a warning about a significant contemporary danger:

Keep away from idols.

What’s the danger he’s warning about? For them? For us?

How does this warning apply to our life today?

Some see this as an “add-on.”

2 things catch our attention:

1. They’re surrounded by idols.

Everywhere they look!

Their neighbors participate in the gods’ celebrations.

John’s listeners aren’t enjoying life

–if they’d join in the pagan parties, they’d have a lot more fun!

2. Jesus is the *true* God!

If we want to get more out of life, we’ll find it by abiding in *Him*, NOT by celebrating the idols!

Stay away from the idols!

Abide in Jesus! Follow Jesus!

You’ll enjoy fellowship with God.

You'll experience true joy.

What difference should this passage make in our life?

What should we DO about it?

If we want to be sure that we have eternal life, we must know what we're trusting in!

Life is found in God's Son.

Are we trusting *Him*?

Are we trusting *ourselves*?

Are we trusting *something else*? Somebody's rules?

How good is good enough?

God says *Life is found in his son!*

Are you trusting Him?