

OPEN

WATCH

Show Session 6: 1 John 5:13–21 (10:20 minutes).

[illegible]

DISCUSS

Dr. Tony Evans began this session by diagnosing a disease among Christians: Assurance Deficit Disorder. **What did Tony describe as the problem?** (We often feel unsure about our salvation or our ability to fellowship with God.)

The entire book of 1 John finds its point and purpose in 5:13. What is it? (That we would know that we have eternal life.)

As Tony pointed out, God doesn't want His children guessing about our relationship with Him. God wants to instill in us confidence that we are not only in right standing with Him, but we are also His children and promised eternal life.

How would you describe your assurance regarding your salvation?

In the past, what things have worried you, or threatened your confidence in your relationship to God?

What has contributed to building up your assurance that you're God's child?

If you could talk directly to God, and He would answer you, what would you like to hear from Him to build your confidence in your eternal destiny?

Tony told the story of flying on an airplane with his wife. Her faith grew in direct proportion to the thing she was trusting to fly her to their destination. **How does Tony's story reflect the truth of our relationship to God?** (Our faith depends on Him, not on us.)

We have the strongest foundation for our faith in the God who created the universe. As Tony said, “God says He cannot lie. He’s given testimony to Jesus Christ. This testimony to His Son brings witness within ourselves. But if you’re looking to anything outside of Christ to give you internal verification, you will always ride up and down this rollercoaster of uncertainty because you never whether you’re good enough.”

Our confidence grows as we come to understand the hugeness of our God.

How would your confidence in your salvation change if you focused on God’s strength, rather than your own feelings of assurance?

Read 1 John 5:13–15.

What further proof does John give for our confidence in God? (God answers our prayers.)

John’s not advocating that we test God with grandiose prayers. Instead, he’s pointing out that our confidence will grow even greater as we see God come through on our earnest prayer.

When have you seen God answer prayer in your life or the life of someone you care about?

What impact did it have on your relationship with God?

What impact did that one answered prayer have on your desire to pray? How did it affect how you prayed?

Again, we have to be careful to not misread John as saying that God will always answer our

prayers the way we want so long as we're walking in close fellowship with Him. Rather, John is trying to help us connect three things: our fellowship with God, our confidence in His power to save us, and our prayer life.

Based on everything we've studied so far in 1 John, how would you connect those three things?

Leader: *This is a good opportunity to review the material covered in previous sessions—particularly the points about walking in God's light and seeing the world and ourselves from His perspective. A robust connection you can lead your group toward is as follows:*

There's a cycle to John's argument here. The more we grow in fellowship with God, the more closely our desires and prayers will line up with His will. As God answers those prayers, we'll grow in our confidence that He hears us, which will ultimately lead us into an even closer relationship with God.

Tony connected it to a football playbook. We learn the plays, pray in keeping with them, and get better at the game.

Where have you seen prayer—whether just simply praying or an answered prayer—change the way you approached your Christian life?

What could you do this week to practice prayer that pulls from God's playbook?

Read 1 John 5:16–19.

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How does it change your view of the Christian life to know that you cannot separate yourself from God's forgiveness?

This image shows a vertical sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's part of a bound notebook.

As we've seen throughout our study of 1 John, one of the fundamental parts of being a Christian is loving our fellow believers. Part of that love takes the form of praying for our brothers and sisters everything that John has laid out for us:

- Pray for the removal of sin in their lives.
- Pray that they'd experience life from God.
- Pray that they'd be equipped to overcome the world and Satan.

If we're all loving each other and praying for each other, we have not only the strength and love of our God, but also the strength and love of our brothers and sisters.

How could your fellow believers—especially your friends or the people in your small group—pray for you today?

Leader: *Take this time to seriously pray for each other. Make sure to point out that you're not doing it because everyone's sinning, but because it is how we can show love to each other. Depending on the group size and dynamic, you can take more or less time to pray. Really focus on having your members pray for each other along the lines of John's challenges.*

As we look to wrap up the study of 1 John, read 1 John 5:20–21.

What does John remind us about the character of Jesus? (He is the True One.)

What does that mean for us? How do we live differently as a result? (He's 100% trustworthy, and worthy of being followed.)

What does Jesus promise? (Eternal life.)

In case we missed it over the course of the whole book, John concludes by reminding us that living life as a follower of Jesus depends on Jesus Himself. Our life's purpose is to know Him (grow in fellowship), follow Him (forsake the world and embrace God's way of doing things), and live in light of eternity.

And then John lands his letter on one strange sentence: "Little children, keep yourself from idols."

What are idols, as Tony described them? (Any person, thing, or idea that we look to as our source of being.)

Why does John follow up talking about Jesus being true with a warning about idols? (Idols entail everything that's false.)

The constant problem that we'll face as believers is the temptation to abandon God for something lesser. When we forsake God's light, we become liars.

When we forsake God's people, we become hateful.

When we forsake God's character, we become faithless.

When we forsake fellowship with God, we become children of the devil.

PEEK AT THE GREEK

John uses the term “true” (*alethinos*) three times in one sentence in verse 20. He says we have received understanding through Christ to know the One who is true, we are in the One who is true, and the One who is true is God. The term *alethinos* describes something that is genuine, authentic, and real. Interestingly, John uses two different terms for “know” in this verse. The first is *oida*, which refers to a cerebral kind of knowledge. But in the second clause (“so that we may know Him who is true”), he switches to the verb *ginosko*, which refers to knowledge arrived at by way of personal experience. Bearing this in mind, John tells us in verse 20 that Christ has come so that we might know by real-life experience the One who is true—God. Faith in Christ ushers us into a permanent personal relationship with the one true God.

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Here at the end of his letter, John is pointing out how crucial it is that we know God intimately. So well, in fact, that we reject every lesser thing that would promise what only God can give.

What things in your life tempt you away from fellowship with God?

Now that we’ve gone through 1 John, what do you stand to lose if you chase after idols?

What do you stand to gain if you refuse to follow the idolatry of our world?

John’s argument is simple: God, through Jesus, has brought us into His family. If we build our relationship with Him, love our brothers and sisters, and chase the things that please Him, we will find true joy.

LAST WORD

It’s one thing to know something in your head—to understand the facts. It’s another thing altogether to have complete confidence in that thing as truth.

We’ve been called into relationship with the God who created the universe. Our present life and our future don’t depend on us anymore. They rest entirely in the hands of our kind and gracious heavenly Father.

As we look toward the coming days and weeks, the question that sits before us is simple: Will we take the steps to grow in fellowship with our God? It’s not complicated. We confess our sin, love each other, resist the world, and listen to the Holy Spirit.

That’s what living in God’s family looks like. That’s what it means to be a Christian.

Pray: Spend time in prayer this week for one other believer. Pray for them by name that God would deliver them from evil, bring them close to Him, and pour His love out through them.

Write: Take ten minutes this week and write out a list of things that worry you. What do you fear? Then, next to each, write out the character trait of God that best corresponds to that worry. Keep that list where you can see it every day this week.

Connect: Ask one of your brothers or sisters in Christ how you can encourage, uplift, or pray for them. Then do it. Right there. On the spot.

Memorize: This week, work on memorizing 1 John 5:20. Keep always in the front of your mind that God is true.

Summarize: How would you summarize the message of 1 John? Write it out or repeat it to yourself until you can explain it to a family member or friend. Then, this week, take two minutes and talk about 1 John.

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RightNow Presents **1, 2 & 3 John**
LEADER'S GUIDE

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