

1 John – Note 13

1 John 5:1-5

Several times, in this letter, John has addressed the issue of:

- a. How do I know God?
- b. How do I know that I know God?

There has also been an emphasis on making sure that we love our fellow Christians, which John refers to as our brothers (and sisters included, obviously!). This brings us to an equally important question, which is this:

- c. How do I know whether this person really is my brother? How do I know that they know God?

In one sense, the question does not matter as far as we treat them, because we have to treat them well, whichever camp they are in. But there is another sense in which it does matter. What am I going to share with this other person? Am I going to share words of faith? What is the point of that, if the other person is not really a Christian? If he/she is not a Christian, then we ought to be sharing the Gospel with them, but we obviously don't need to do that if they are already saved!

This problem would be apparent for all you guys. In the case of Adam and Jack, I might have asked whether you were really saved, or whether you were just trying to please your old Dad. In your case, Josh, I would have asked whether you really were a Christian, or whether you were just pretending, because you were attracted to Bethany. In all your cases, I now know that you are all really saved. How do I know? I know, because of the test that is right here in 1 John 5:1.

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him.

The truth is that there is something indefinable inside me that just knows that you are saved. Because I have been working on my own life, and ensuring that I know that I know God, it means that the Holy Spirit within me can witness to my spirit that you guys are saved. I can't actually put it into writing. Yet I know when I am talking to any of you, that I am talking to a fellow child of God. If I was not working on my personal walk with God, by the way, I think this sort-of spiritual sense gets dulled, and we can easily be fooled. But while you are in tune with God, while you are, to the best of your ability, praying and reading His word, and obeying Him, you also will know whether the person you are talking to is really saved or not. This is the Holy Spirit speaking within you, and points to yet another good reason for being baptized in the Holy Spirit.

The next interesting point in this section is the issue of Victory. Look at verses 4-5.

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Actually, the Christian life can be a struggle. You all know that. The apostle Peter says this:

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. (1 Peter 5:8)

If you are seeking to serve God, as all you young men are, then the devil is going to oppose you. I cannot do anything about that. The only way to stop the devil having a go at you is to stop serving God, and for obvious reasons, that is not an option for you! So, I have some good news for you. God tells you how the story ends. You

have victory! Because you have faith, you will overcome the world. If you have deep temptations, how will you overcome them? Your faith in God will give you the strength to overcome. You have victory.

The next study will look a bit more closely at the witness of the Holy Spirit within us. It's exciting stuff, because it shows what a huge resource you actually have available to you – all the power of God the Holy Spirit Himself!