

1 John 5

1) Read 1 John 5: 1-5

In the first 4 chapters, John applies 3 types of tests to our Xn faith: the test of obedience, of love, and belief. In these opening verses, we see all 3 tests, which are the natural result from being born from above – 3 signs of the new life.

“Our faith in the character of God is the doorway that opens up our lives toward God.”

The result of faith is our relationship with God, a 4-fold relationship:

- 1) The upward, vertical relationship between God as our Lord.
- 2) The inner understanding that I am a child of God.
- 3) The love that I have for others around me.
- 4) The relationship between my life and the world.

Loving God = keeping his commandments, “which are not burdensome.” (not a crushing weight)

Keeping God’s commandments also take place in this 4-fold pattern.

Notes from John R.W. Stott:

It was the regulations of the scribes and Pharisees that were “heavy burdens, hard to bear,” (Mt 23) but the yoke of Jesus “is easy and his burden is light.” (Mt 11) God’s will is “pleasing and perfect” (Rom 12)

It is the will of an all-wise, all-loving Father who seeks our highest welfare.

“The reason we can say that God’s commands are not burdensome is the fact that we have been given the possibility of keeping them. God’s commands seem burdensome to the world, but to the children of God they are not, because everyone born of God overcomes the world.”

“It is not the man, but his birth from God, which conquers. The new birth takes us out of the sphere of the world, where Satan rules, into the family of God – transferred out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. The spell of the old life has been broken – the fascination of the world has lost its appeal.”

MZ: “Love God, and do what you want.” That’s because as we love God, desiring to follow his commands, God will work in our hearts so that “what we want” changes. (There will always be a struggle between the flesh and the spirit, but God can change our desires.)

2) Read 1 John 5: 6-12

v.6 Jesus came by water and by blood – he was really baptized, and he really died.

Yes, the Jesus who was the Son of God (=God) who was being baptized, and 2) he really died on the cross. The Gnostics would have claimed that only the human Jesus died, but not that he was God.

The life that God give is available only through his Son. He alone is the way, the truth, and the life; no one can come to the Father except through him.

v. 12 “Whoever has the Son has life...”

Screwtape was right when he wrote to Wormwood this warning about our God: “When he talks of their losing their selves, he only means abandoning the clamour of self-will; once they have done that, He really gives them back all their personality, and boasts (I am afraid, sincerely) that when they are wholly His they will be more themselves than ever.” (Letter 13)

3) Read 1 John 5: 13-21

The Epilogue

John concludes his letter exhorting his readers about what Xns can be certain of:
God's power will keep us, God's Son is divine and through him we have communion with God.
Therefore, don't be led astray into false religion.

This is written to Xns who questioned their beliefs – was their belief in X enough? John stresses that it is, and explains just who exactly this Jesus is.

A fruit of our Xn assurance: confidence in prayer.

Sins that lead to death – sins that are incompatible w being a child of God –

Denying that Jesus is the Son of God

Refusing to obey God's commands

Love of the world

Hatred of the brethren

These sins are characteristic of who belongs to the sphere of darkness rather than the sphere of light.

The person who consistently and deliberately chooses the way that lead to death will surely die – deliberately refusing to believe in Jesus...