

## A Compelling Conclusion (Part 1) # 18

1 John 5: 13-21

After several months of study we have come to the concluding passage of 1<sup>st</sup> John. We have been encouraged and greatly challenged in our personal walk with the Lord. John spoke much about our love for the Lord and for one another. There was valuable instruction concerning false doctrine and the spirit of antichrist. He has provided several marks by which we gain confidence of our relationship with Christ. Here John concludes his thoughts and offers a final word to the reader.

We find a final exhortation concerning the Christian life. This passage was given to the believer. We find comfort, as well as, a final challenge in these closing verses. Let's examine the [aspects of life](#) John discusses as we consider: [A Compelling Conclusion](#).

**I. The Certainty in Life (13-15)** – Here we discover some certainties, some absolutes within the lives of believers. Notice:

**A. Our Association (13a)** – [These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God](#). Again John emphasizes that he is writing to the believer, to those who have believed on the name of Christ in salvation. Those to whom John originally wrote lived among the world, with all the difficulties associated with it, but they were not of the world. They had been set apart in Christ. Even though they faced much adversity, they were not alone in the journey. They had the Lord walking with them and they had each other.

- We are a couple thousand years removed from the time when John penned these words, but the same is true for all who believe in Christ. I am certainly thankful for the opportunity of receiving salvation in the Lord and I rejoice for those of like faith with whom I share this journey.

**B. Our Assurance (13b)** – [These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God](#).

John encouraged them to consider all he has shared with them. He had not written because he had to say something; he had written because he had something to say. There were many who were confused, and some were being misled. John wanted them to be settled in their faith, enjoying assurance of salvation, and productive for the Lord. Their faith in Christ, resulting in salvation was not a temporary thing. Their faith in Him brought eternal life. There was no need to fear adversity in this life or death at the end of life. They were secure in Christ.

- We too can experience the same comforting assurance. I am not depending upon my works or abilities to secure eternal life. I am not looking to the latest trends or modern philosophies. The world does not embrace my faith, but I am secure in the finished work of Christ. He rose from the grave triumphant over sin and death. Because He lives, we have the assurance of a future resurrection. All the saved inherit eternal life. [2 Cor.5:1 – For we know that if our earthly house of \*this\* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.](#)

**C. Our Appeal** (14) – [And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:](#) John assured the believer of the great confidence available in Christ. The Lord is attentive to the prayers we pray. We are promised God will hear when we pray according to His will for our lives. This isn't something we hope might happen or that we can experience occasionally. We can confidently pray, knowing the Lord will hear. He is mindful of us and attentive to our prayers.

**D. Our Accommodation** (15) – [And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.](#) We are assured that God not only hears a prayer of faith, but He will answer our prayers as well. This doesn't imply that God gives everything we ask for; but that we can have confidence He will supply our needs when we pray according to His will for our lives. [Mat.7:7-8 – Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:](#) <sup>[8]</sup> [For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.](#) The key is praying according to the will of God. When we are in His will, our desires will be consistent with His. [Mat.6:33 – But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.](#)

**II. The Conviction in Life** (16-17) – Here we come to a couple verses that have created conversation and debate for centuries. At first glance it appears John has shifted to a completely different train of thought, but in reality they tie directly to the previous verses. John continues to speak of prayer in the lives of believers. Let's look a bit closer at the conviction in life. We see:

**A. The Responsibility** (16a) – [If any man see his brother sin a sin \*which is\* not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death.](#) We are well aware that all commit sin. As long as we live in this body of flesh we will be prone to sin and failure in regard to God's holy standard. Walking close to the Lord, in fellowship with Him, greatly reduces our tendency to sin, but the fact remains: we all sin. John speaks of seeing a brother sin a sin which is not unto death and the responsibility to we have to pray for such a one. (We will look closer at the sin unto death

in a moment.) We must sense the great need we have to pray for one another. I will not be judged by others actions and neither will you, but we are obligated to pray for one another. If we see a brother engaged in willful sin, we have a responsibility to pray for him, crying out to God on his behalf.

- I think we are well aware of the need and importance of prayer for others, but we certainly need to be reminded. There is a tremendous need for those who will pray in our day. Many tend to gossip about others who are engaged in open sin. There is plenty of condemnation being offered today, but I fear we are weak in our praying. We are not instructed to make sure the community knows of the failure of a brother. We are not expected to publicly condemn them. We are expected to pray for them and desire their restoration. [Gal.6:1 – Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.](#) Here the word restore literally speaks of “*setting a broken bone.*” It isn’t amputated and cast aside, but set so that it can mend and become useful again. We are expected to pray for repentance and forgiveness for those who have sinned and missed the mark.

**B. The Reality** (16-17) – [If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.](#) <sup>[17]</sup> [All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.](#) John offers interesting insight in this passage. He clearly defines all unrighteousness as sin. Anything we engage in, whether in thought, word, or deed, contrary to the Lord and His righteousness is sin. However, John speaks of sin unto death and sin that is not unto death. Now we know that death is the end result of sin. [Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death,](#) but what is John speaking of here?

- Apparently those in John’s day were very familiar with what he had in mind because he doesn’t define the particular aspects of such sin. Because we do not have an absolute definition of which sin John is referring, it would not be wise for us to be dogmatic here. There are a couple of circumstances that would fit biblically. First of all, John could be referring to those who deny the Lord in salvation, rejecting His grace and forgiveness through the leading of the Holy Spirit. Jesus described this in: [Mat.12:31-32 – Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.](#) <sup>[32]</sup> [And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.](#) This is what we refer to as the unpardonable sin. Rejecting the gracious offer of salvation from our Lord and His finished work on Calvary cannot be forgiven and will result in eternal death. This does not imply that we should not pray for the lost or try to reach them, but it does confirm that God will not overlook the rejection of His Son in salvation. Once someone passes through the gates of death, their eternal destiny is forever settled. Our prayers cannot alter that.

- The other possibility involves those who are genuinely born again, living in habitual, unrepentant sin. We do not like to think in these terms, but it is possible to cross the line with sin and fill an early grave. We know this can happen through biblical confirmation. We know the end result of the sin of Ananias and Sapphira in [Acts 5: 1-11](#). They lied concerning money that had received and sought to be deceptive to the church. This resulted in an untimely death for them both. Paul spoke of those who were sick, and some had even died, because of their casual attitude toward the Lord's Supper, continually observing such a solemn remembrance while engaged in gross sin. It is possible to engage in unrepentant sin for so long that God calls a believer home through a premature death. When one has crossed the line with God, there is no need to pray for a different outcome.
- Again I want to emphasize that John is not discouraging prayer. We are not God and we will never know when the last opportunity is presented to a lost soul or when a believer has crossed the line with God. We must continually pray for those around us. Clearly we ought to be burdened for the needs of the lost. As long as there is breath in their bodies, there is the possibility of salvation. The same is true for the believer who has wandered in sin. As long as they are living, there is opportunity for repentance and restoration of fellowship.
- One thing is absolutely certain: [all unrighteousness is sin](#). This passage reveals a stern warning regarding sin. God is not pleased with sin. He cannot condone sin nor have fellowship with it at all. He sent His only begotten Son to die on the cross for sin. He will never wink at sin or overlook it. Sin must be atoned. As believers it is dangerous to dabble in sin. May we pray for those who are engaged in sin and strive to keep short accounts with our own sin!

**Conclusion:** I had genuinely hoped to complete our study today, but the context of the passage would not allow it. Hopefully we will conclude 1<sup>st</sup> John when we meet again. Our time today has brought a sense of great comfort, as well as, a sobering conviction. I rejoice for all I have in Christ. I am certain of my salvation and I know I am secure in Him. I am reminded though of the seriousness of sin and how it grieves our Lord. As Christians we must seek to live upright before the Lord, avoiding sin at all costs. We are obligated to pray for those who have stumbled and fallen or are bound in sin.

Are there needs in your life? Is there sin that needs to be confessed? Are you burdened about the condition of another? Has the Spirit revealed your need for salvation? These are all serious and deserve our full attention. Whatever the need is, we must seek the Lord. He alone provided atonement for sin, and He alone can save and pardon!