

SESSION 10 – WEEK OF 21 MAR. 2021

TRUE CONFIDENCE AS GOD'S CHILDREN

SCRIPTURE: 1 JOHN 5:14-21

Theme:

God desires for us to be confident that we are His children, and to ground our lives in His love and protection.

Key Verse:

“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.” (1John 5:18)

Context

John brings his letter to a conclusion, reminding his audience of a purpose of His letter, that they might know that they have eternal life. (5:13)

As we have discussed over the past few weeks, knowing that we have eternal life is evidenced in our love for God through our love for our brothers. Now, John asks us to consider: How do we live with confidence as children of God who truly have eternal life?

Read 1 John 5:14-21

Core Questions for Discussion

(If your group meets fortnightly, combine Core Questions of two sessions and choose one Further Question from either session.)

1. In V14-15, John says that we will receive whatever we ask of God, if it aligns with His will. What encouragement and confidence do you draw from this verse?

Does God really give us everything that we ask for?

It is easy for us to misconstrue verses like 1 John 5:15 and Philippians 4:13 with the idea that God will give us anything our hearts desire.

However, when we buy into this idea, we mistake God to be a wish-fulfilling genie. Romans 12:2 reminds us that as God renews our minds, we will come to know and to esteem His good and perfect will. 1John 5:14 itself reminds us that our asking ought to be according to God's will, not our own. (See also James 4:1-3.) Hence, when we desire what God desires, He will give us everything we desire.

For further reading, see <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/six-prayers-god-always-answers>

2. What does John encourage us to pray for? (V16)

What are the sins that lead, or not lead, to death?

Do you feel puzzled when you read vv. 16-17? Isn't the penalty for all sin death and eternal damnation? The following comments may help:

"In the context of 1 John, the sin that leads to death must be related to the statement in 5:12. [...] The sin that leads to death, therefore, is the sin of rejecting Christ's atonement, the sin of calling God's testimony a lie (1:10; 2:22; 5:10). [...] The brother or sister who is sinning the sin that leads to death has a heart that has not been transformed by the new birth. Despite their self-identification as a Christian and their presence in the gatherings of the church(es), they have refused to believe in Jesus Christ, to follow God's commands, and to love their brothers and sisters. As Kruse suggests, "the sin that does not lead to death is the sin of the believer ... the sin that does lead to death is most likely that of the unbeliever." Scholer also emphasizes that "the 'sin not unto death' is one which a believer can and does commit and the 'sin unto death' is one which a believer does not and cannot commit."

-Karen H. Jobes, *1, 2, & 3 John*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (2014), pp.234-236.

"The sin that does not lead to death and damnation is any sin that we commit that, by God's grace, we are capable of truly confessing and repenting from."

- John Piper, <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-is-the-sin-not-leading-to-death-in-1-john-5>

3. John ends his epistle by emphasizing the blessings and the calling of a child of God. What are some of these things? What confidence and hope does this give you amidst the challenges of living in a sinful and troubled world?

Further Questions for Discussion

(Optional question for discussion if time permits. Do allocate adequate time for prayer and fellowship.)

4. *If you have time ...*

Take some time to look back on the 10 weeks of our study of 1 John.

What are some key themes that have emerged? (*Hint: revisit the sermon titles at our website, <http://www.brmc.org.sg/category/worship-service-times/pulpit-calendar>*)

The Word of God should not leave us unchanged but discovering God's truth through His Word should transform our lives. How is God using these themes to mould and transform your mindset, your activity, your way of life?

For instance: Is Jesus your light? Are you living entirely in His light, or are you partly walking in the shadows? Do you have the assurance that you're born of God? Do you trust that in Christ, we have overcome the world? In whom or what is your confidence really placed? How does this confidence show through in your everyday pattern of life? In what ways can you identify with the struggles of John's audience? Is God calling you to know a deeper love for Him? Is God calling you to soften up your hearts towards a brother or a sister in Christ? Is the Lord prompting you to demonstrate love in material and sacrificial ways? Is your love for our unseen God seen through your love for brothers and sisters?

Suggestions for Prayer

5. We could pray for:

a. Ourselves:

- i. Has your confidence in God been negatively impacted due to sin and spiritual apathy? Or due to an experience of pain and suffering? Or due to fear of the evil one? Has your confidence been misplaced, or displaced onto other worldly priorities? Would you share these struggles with your group, and commit to pray for one another that God might daily grow in us the true confidence as His children?
- ii. What has God revealed to you over the past few weeks? Will you pray that God will set the truth that He has revealed deep in your heart? May you discover the love behind the eternal life God has given you. Ask God to take the head knowledge of His love and transform your heart such that you may marvel at His love.

b. Others beyond our small group:

Love for the people around us. Is there a brother or a sister whom you are struggling to love? Ask God to show you His love for him/her and may His love for you be an overflow into that person's life. Is there someone you know who has not discovered God's love? Would you, as a group, lift up that person to God in prayer that they may receive eternal life from Jesus? Would you ask God for opportunities to have spiritual conversations with this person, and for opportunities to demonstrate love to this person in practical and material ways?