

1 John

Introduction

How do you know what God feels toward you? How can you be certain God loves you and has saved you from your sins?

If we base our certainty on our perception of God, on our feelings about God, or on our reaction to God, we are building on a shaky foundation. Our certainty is not based on anything in us or on anything we have done. Our certainty is based on God—who he is and what he has done. Our hope and confidence rest on God’s nature, God’s love, and all of God’s integrity wrapped up in his promises.

The full faith and credit of God

Read 1 John 5:1-5. How do we show our love for God?

We might easily feel restricted or held back because of God’s do’s and don’ts—his commands. Why is this such a backwards way of viewing God’s commandments?

The one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God “overcomes the world” (v. 5). Explain what this means for you.

Read 1 John 6:1-12. What are the “water” and the “blood” that John speaks of here? What does it mean that Jesus “came by water and blood”?

In a Jewish court the testimony of multiple witnesses was required to establish the truth of a matter. How is John establishing here the truth of Jesus’ humanity and his divinity? (For another example of witnesses that testify to Jesus, see **John 5:31-37**.)

This selection includes one of the best-known variants in the biblical text. The King James Version translated verse 7, “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.” The verse was used as a proof passage for the Trinity. It was included Bible translations based on the *Textus Receptus*, a Greek text produced by Erasmus in the 1500s. The translation in the NIV and EHV is based on older manuscripts.

Think of different ways that God testified (and continues to testify) about his Son?

Evaluate: When God promises to save you through Jesus he puts all his reputation and integrity on the line.

Verses 11 and 12 summarize the basic truth of all Scripture:

Read 1 John 5:13-21. What is the goal of all of Scripture? Find the parallel thought in **John 20:30,31**.

What does it mean for you that God invites you to pray and promises to answer your prayers?

In the Roman Catholic Church the terms *mortal sin* and *venial sin* are used to describe different types of sin. What do these terms mean, and how might they be used incorrectly?

Lutheran theologians also speak of *mortal sin* and *venial sin*. What do we mean when we use these terms correctly?

We recognize that we are *simul iustus et peccator*—"at the same time righteous and sinner." How can John assert that "anyone born of God does not continue to sin"?

Evaluate: Your doorbell rings, and two visitors who claim to speak for Jehovah tell you that Jesus is the Son of God, but he's not really true God; he is not Jehovah. Use 1 John 5:20 to support the truth that Jesus Christ is truly God.

What modern idols should we avoid in our world today?