

Module 19: 1 John 5:1-5 (Part 1)

Group Exercise 1

What title do you suggest for the paragraph in 1 John 5:1-5? (Some (e.g. Jensen and Ryrie) would separate this paragraph into two (verses 1-3 and 4-5). Others (e.g. Stott and Hiebert) would not. Try to find a unifying theme between these two sets of verses. You may find separate titles for each set of verses first and then unite them afterwards, if that helps. This would be a form of “analysis”, then “synthesis”.)

Group Exercise 2

In verse 1, determine the cause (or causes) and the effect (or effects).

Group Exercise 3

Compare verse 1 with 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; and 5:18. What is different about verse 1 from the other verses regarding the consequences of being born of God? What do you think this difference teaches us?

1) Observations and Observational Questions that guide Interpretation

- a) Read 1 John 4:7-5:5 for context.
- b) What words do you see as important, either because they are repeated often or they are part of a key teaching in verses 5:1-5?
- c) What title do you suggest for the paragraph starting in verse 5:1?
- d) Transition – links to previous verses
 - i) Vocabulary
 - (1) Love – 33x in 1 John, including 23x in chapters 4 and 5 (**4:7 thrice, 8 twice, 10 thrice, 11 twice, 12 twice, 19 twice, 20 thrice, 21 twice; 5:1 twice, 2 twice**)
 - (2) Commandment (2:3, 4, 7 thrice, 8; 3:22, 23, 24; **4:21; 5:2, 3 twice**)
 - (3) Believe (3:23; **4:1, 16; 5:1, 5**, 10 thrice, 13)
 - (4) Son & God (3:8; **4:9, 10, 15; 5:5**, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 20)
 - (5) Born of Him/God (2:29; 3:9 twice; **4:7; 5:1 twice, 4**, 18 twice)
 - (6) Overcome (2:13, 14; **4:4; 5:4 twice, 5**)
 - (7) Jesus & Christ (1:3; 2:1, 22; 3:23; **4:2; 5:1**, 6, 20)
 - ii) Theme (Stott)
 - (1) Preface (1:1-4)
 - (2) Apostolic Message and Its Moral Implications (1:5-2:2)
 - (3) First Application of the Tests (2:3-27)
 - (a) Obedience (2:3-6)
 - (b) Love (2:7-11)
 - (c) Belief (2:18-27)
 - (4) Second Application of the Tests (2:28-4:6)
 - (a) Obedience (2:28-3:10)
 - (b) Love (3:11-18)
 - (c) Belief (4:1-6)

- (5) **Third Application of the Tests (4:7-5:5)**
 - (a) Love (4:7-12)
 - (b) Belief and love combined (4:13-21)
 - (c) **Belief, love, and obedience combined (5:1-5)**
- (6) Three Witnesses (5:6-17)
- (7) Three Affirmations (5:18-21)
- iii) Theme (MacArthur)
 - (1) The Fundamental Tests of Genuine Fellowship – SPIRAL I (1:1-2:17)
 - (a) Doctrine (1:1-2:2)
 - (b) Morals (2:3-17)
 - (i) Obedience (2:3-6)
 - (ii) Love (2:7-17)
 - (2) The Fundamental Tests of Genuine Fellowship – SPIRAL II (2:18-3:24)
 - (a) Doctrine (2:18-27)
 - (b) Moral (2:28-3:24)
 - (3) The Fundamental Tests of Genuine Fellowship – SPIRAL III (4:1-21)
 - (a) Doctrine (4:1-6)
 - (b) Moral (Love) (4:7-21)
 - (4) **The Fundamental Tests of Genuine Fellowship – SPIRAL IV (5:1-21)**
 - (a) **Victorious Life (5:1-5)**
 - (b) Witness of God (5:6-12)
 - (c) Certainties (5:13-21)
- iv) Theme (Hiebert)
 - (1) Prologue: The Reality of the Incarnation (1:1-4)
 - (2) Assurance Through the Test of Fellowship (1:5-2:17)
 - (3) Assurance from the Conflicts of Faith (2:18-4:6)
 - (4) **Assurance from the Evidence of True Love (4:7-5:5)**
 - (5) Assurance Through the Witness of the Spirit (5:6-12)
 - (6) Epilogue: The Confidence and Certainties of Believers (5:13-21)
- e) “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God”
 - i) “Whoever believes”, literally, “everyone one believing”
 - (1) Present tense participle
 - (2) Depicts the individual’s continuing, persistent faith
 - (3) “means more than intellectual apprehension of the truth involved; it is not mere assent to a creed; it involves an active personal commitment to the truth believed.” (Hiebert)
 - (4) Available to all who personally accept the truth of Jesus Christ
 - ii) “that Jesus is the Christ”
 - (1) “Jesus” acknowledges His humanity
 - (2) “Christ” acknowledges that He is “the anointed one”.
 - (3) “is”, being in the present tense, “declares that His incarnate identity is a continuing unchanging reality” (Hiebert)
 - iii) “is born of God”
 - (1) Literally, “out of God has been born”
 - (2) “out of God” stresses the source of this birth

- (3) Perfect tense – completed action of being born with continuing membership in God’s family.
- iv) Believing is the consequence, not the cause, of new birth. (Stott, MacArthur)
- v) “Here the fact of the birth from God is connected with faith, but . . . all ‘the other I John statements (2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:18) relate the divine begetting to the Christian’s behavior (acting justly, not sinning, and loving) – an indication that belief and behavior are two aspects of the same struggle in I John.’” (Hiebert quoting Brown)
- f) “and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him”
 - i) “and” closely joins this saving faith with a loving relationship to the Father and His children (Hiebert)
 - ii) Literally, “and whoever loves the Father loves the born of Him”. There is no “child” (NAS, NIV).
 - iii) “John’s use of the singular throughout this verse indicates that this God-prompted love operates on an individual basis; each member of the family of God is born not only to love but also to be loved.” (Hiebert)
 - iv) “As soon as we realize what has happened to us through the new birth, our response is one of gratitude and love to God. He has now become our Father; we are members of a new family.” (Jackman)
 - v) “This love does not spring from something loveable in the person himself, but from his paternity.” (Hodges)
 - vi) “It does not necessarily express itself in warm emotional feelings toward the one loved, nor does it always run with the natural inclinations of our individual nature, but it does seek the true welfare of the one loved. True love reveals itself in its beneficent concern for the welfare of others.” (Hiebert)
- g) What other observations do you see? (Words, grammar, construction, history, content, etc.)

2) Interpretation

Everyone believing that the human Jesus is and remains the Anointed One announced in the Old Testament has been born of God and continues to be a member of His family. Also, everyone who continually loves the Father continually loves those born of Him.

3) Applications

- a) Referring to verse 1, MacArthur says “contrary to Arminian theology, continual faith is the result of the new birth, not its cause. Christians do not keep themselves born again by believing, and lose their salvation if they stop believing. On the contrary, it is their perseverance in the faith that gives evidence that they have been born again. The faith that God grants in regeneration (Eph. 2:8) is permanent, and cannot be lost. Nor, as some teach, can it die, for dead faith does not save (James 2:14-26). There is no such thing as an ‘unbelieving believer.’ The question sometimes arises concerning those who profess faith in Christ, but then stop believing in Him. Our Lord described such people in the parable of the soils. . . . Such false, temporary faith produces no fruit, in contrast to genuine

saving faith, which alone produces the fruit that proves one's new birth. . . .
Earlier in this epistle, John explained that those who permanently fall away from the faith were never redeemed in the first place." Explain one way in which this truth makes a difference in your life.

b) Again this week, sacrificially love a brother in Christ. Write down an idea from a category below and remember to do it.

(1) Words of affirmation

(2) Gifts

(3) Acts of service

(4) Physical touch

(5) Quality time

You can find these in Gary Chapman's books "The Five Love Languages" and "The Five Love Languages of Children".

c) What other application do you have?