



**“Assurance through Fellowship Pt. 2 –
Assurance Breeds a Holiness”
Wk.15 of Light and Love - 1 John 5:18-21
By Pastor Jody May**

1 John 5:18-21 ESV

¹⁸We 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.

¹⁹We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

²⁰And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. ²¹Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

REVIEW:

LIGHT & LOVE

1st – Light – Truth that stems from Christ and is sustained in Fellowship with each other.

2nd – Love - Treasuring God and how we value each other.

Introduction:

So, for 5 weeks now we have been building around the theme of the reason why John wrote his letter:

That You May Know

¹³I write these things to **you** who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may **know** that you have **eternal life**.

Again, I want to point out John’s writing style of using key words to build a point. In verse 13 please take note of the word **Know** - οἶδα (*oída*). vb. **to have seen, to know**. *Refers to the past act of seeing with the present effect of knowing what was seen.*¹

¹ Garrett, J. K. (2014). [Knowledge](#). D. Mangum, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, & R. Hurst (Eds.), *Lexham Theological Wordbook*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.



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For John, this word means having the ability to perceive and fully understand what you are seeing. You are not fooled or disillusioned, you don't question it anymore – **to truly comprehend the world is to be seen in the action you take.** “In the Gospel of John, knowing often connotes having the ability to fully understand what one is seeing (John 1:26 - JB; 13:7 – Jesus you don't get it; 19:10 – Pilate has the audacity, you don't know)”² John uses the word to show that people had no concept who Jesus was nor the things He stood for.

Believing in Jesus by Faith is having Assurance and a **part of that assurance** is **you really see Him and what He stands for** and that knowledge calls for **action!** That perception, whether you accept it or not, is **shown** in how you **live out your life.** To the disdain of my children one of my pet peeves as a father is when after a disciplinary correction they say, “**yes sir**” and I always ask them what does that mean? I usually ask that when the thing I have corrected them for has happened before. I want them to learn that **their actions do not point to their understanding** but rather their actions point to a lack of understanding. I desire a different outcome. I want to see a confession and “I'm sorry”, I want to see repentance, I want to see them “getting it”, that is **KNOWING...**

That's the Christian life. Because of the one who came before us, and because we say we know Him, we understand and perceive Him rightly, we will and should want to respond to this world accordingly. An assured Christian will display that trait AND they will start backing off on the things of this world...

The last thing we are taking away from 1 John is what one's life will look like when they KNOW that they have assurance of Salvation:

Assurance of Salvation breeds a life of Holiness.

The word for Holiness in the NT is ἅγιος (*hagios*). adj. **holy, set apart, consecrated, dedicated, saints.** *Refers to the quality of God who is*

² Garrett, J. K. (2014). [Knowledge](#). D. Mangum, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, & R. Hurst (Eds.), *Lexham Theological Wordbook*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.



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*transcendently distinctive, unique, majestic, perfect, and pure.*³ You won't find it here in this text, but you have the description of what that looks like. The Gnostics were trying to draw Christians into the world while the Christian is to remain separate from the world. **To remain separate is to be Holy.** **(You saw this description all week in Leviticus)** Jesus perfected Holiness and we are to emulate Him.

This last part in 1 John is explaining that a person that has assurance of Salvation knows the world in which they are looking at, and while not drawn in, they respond to it. John uses the same word from v. 13 the word for KNOW 3 separate times to show how we should act. That's what we will be looking at today as we close out this very beneficial letter.

1. Those that KNOW don't keep on sinning. (vs. 18).

¹⁸We 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.

Ok so that first line can be a little daunting. If you know God, truly perceive who He is, then you will not keep on sinning! I know, and you're like **that is better said than done**, and I agree with you! But remember we have to read scripture in context, so we remember what John said back in chapter 1:

1 John 1:8 ESV

⁸If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

John is not Pelagian, he doesn't think that by conjuring up enough will power you can keep from sinning, as a matter of fact if you did say that then he would call you a liar.

1 John 1:10 ESV

¹⁰If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

³ Kwok, H.-L. (2014). [Holiness](#). D. Mangum, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, & R. Hurst (Eds.), *Lexham Theological Wordbook*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.



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What word is that? Well, the Ephesians were already in possession of a letter that explained the doctrine of sin (the Word) given to them by Paul 20+ years earlier:

Ephesians 2:1-2 ESV

By Grace Through Faith

2 And you were **dead** in the **trespasses** and **sins** ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.

So, sin comes from a dead spirit in us that keeps us from **KNOWING** God. We can't rightly perceive Him, dead people don't know what's going on around them. That's how it is for spiritually dead people. It takes the regeneration by the Holy Spirit to make us alive so we can **KNOW** any Spiritual Truth whatsoever. That regeneration brings you into the fellowship or the body of those that **KNOW** because when you know you know, you know?!

Ephesians 2:18-20 ESV

¹⁹ So then you are **no longer strangers** and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,

There use to be this ridiculous saying that people use to say back when I was in high school:

- Freshmen don't know they don't know.
- Sophomores know they don't know.
- Juniors don't know that they know.
- Seniors know that they know.

What does that all mean? I don't know ☺ but what I think it alludes to is that **the older you get the more you understand how life works.**

As a Christian lives among God's people, they become **spiritually self-aware**. The scripture starts to become self-evident, they start to see their own sin, and the more that happens the more they can repent and turn from sin. What John is talking about, is not taking the **stance of perfection but that of direction.**



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As a Christian, we ask ourselves are we constantly heading towards becoming more holy or are there repetitive patterns of sin, that not only am I blind to but that I don't want to give up? **Not sinning here in vs. 18 is about not repeating a sin over and over again.**

But that can still be daunting, because if my heart is bent towards rebellion what if I get stuck in something that I really like? All of us either know someone or have experienced a harmful and destructive sinful behavior that is hard to shake. What if I come across the thing that I can't shake?

1 John 1:18b

but he who was **born of God** protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.

Born of God is referring to a particular person, that is Jesus Himself, and who's job is it to protect us – HIS! This has always been His job since the first disciples.

John 17:12 ESV

¹² While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

And now even to this day Peter explains that's how it is for all of God's children:

1 Peter 1:15 ESV

⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

The “evil one” **cannot touch** us in such a way that it is **permanently damaging** us to the point we cannot be saved, that is what it means to be preserved! The **Doctrine of the preservation of the saints** is not built on how hard you try to be Holy but that the work of Christ has brought us into holiness and will continue to do so until we see Him face to face. The evidence of Jesus' persevering work in you is not perfection but direction am I moving away from sin and towards a life of Holiness.



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John again though alludes as to how you can help in this process that is your sanctification.

2. Those that KNOW associate with God’s people. (vs. 19).

¹⁹We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

I am just going to spend a couple of minutes here on this point because I spent a lot of time last week explaining from verse 14 that John is a big fan of Christians (remember the pronoun “WE”) living in the **structure of the church**. I will even add to that more in the closing parts of this sermon but let me just remind us from chapter 1 again:

1 John 1:2-7 ESV

⁵This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

John is summarizing here is Chp. 5 what he said in these 1st verses that if you spend more time living in the world, for the world, enjoying the pleasures of the world, you are not of God but actually you are for the enemy. God’s people fellowship in the light which can only be found **among other people living in the light!** The assured person KNOWS this, they perceive that to be true!

Listen I don’t know where you are at today, perhaps you have a hang up about me, this church, or the church in general. All I can say to you is look man, you KNOW I am right, and if you are not in fellowship in a church by choice you ARE in the WRONG. You are walking on dangerous ground. Jesus perseveres in us by **using the church** to keep us on the right path.

This little point pushes us onto point three:

3. Those that KNOW accept and act on the truth. (vs. 20).



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²⁰ And we **know** that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may **know** him who is **true**; and we are in him who is **true**, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the **true** God and eternal life.

Knowing and perceiving means acting on what you know to be true. If you act in any other way you know not, and it means you are still lost. God gives us understanding and the ability to perceive the spiritual world for the **sole purpose of being saved**, to live and experience truth. It is what we call in the reformed faith **Irresistible Grace**. You only know God is true IF you have first had your eyes open to KNOW. And when your eyes have been opened to the beauty of God one cannot resist Him.

Perhaps right now you may be on the unsure side, the sophomore side, “**you know you don’t know**”, and you are not sure how to enter into having rest or assurance in Christ. The author of Hebrews this week told us how in our reading plans to gain understanding, perception, so we can know the truth:

Hebrews 4:11-12 ESV

¹¹ Let us therefore strive to **enter that rest**, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. ¹² For the **word of God** is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

We enter into assurance and rest by continually going to God’s Word as an individual, and as a people. God’s Word knows how to cut through to get to your dead heart, and when there, *God’s Will* reaches into even our hidden intentions and reveals the sin in our heart the righteousness of God magnifying our need for Him. **That my friend takes time, it takes lots of preaching, it takes prayer, and it takes support of the body.**

This continual pattern is what breeds a life of Holiness, the life of the assured.

Assurance of Salvation breeds a life of Holiness.



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Closing and Challenge:

In verse 20 John gives what may be the greatest closing of any epistle. It is not the most eloquent as Paul’s conclusions were nor even encapsulating as when Peter writes but I think John here has the best closing statement out of all the epistles and there are two reasons why.

²¹ Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

FIRST, in v.21 he ties it all up with a bow and uses the term **“Little Children”** 5448 τεκνίον (*teknion*), ου (*ou*), τό (*to*): n.neu.; ≡ Str 5040; TDNT 5.636—LN 9.46 **child**, (often in some contexts considered a term of endearment) **little children**, dear children (NIV), (Jn 13:33; 1Jn 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21+; Gal 4:19 v.r. NA26)⁴

He has used that term 7 times in his letter. It is a term that not only shows his affection, but it is a term to show the shared lineage (*teknon also means descendent*) and heredity of the church with him the last remaining apostle. It is a term of endearment that conveys not just fondness but the **strength of family love** that cannot be shaken by the world and it can only be strengthened by what the world throws at them.

It conveys that the assured ones will make it, and John will see them on the other side! It is meant for us the reader for we should see that pertains to us, to you! We are in John’s family for Jesus IS our Lord! We shall see John one day, you will get to thank him for being patient with that church, he will know his letter touched people 2,000 years distant, and we will sit with him at the table supper of our Lamb and worship our Christ together!

SECOND, the last line of the letter he gives his final command and remember if you are saying by this point you are a child of God, you walk in the light, you practice loving those in the church, then you will follow the apostle’s command for you know it to be TRUTH!

⁴ Swanson, J. (1997). [*Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek \(New Testament\)*](#) (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.



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“KEEP YOURSELVES FROM IDOLS...”. **Some** of the best 4 words out of all the epistles because it transcends time, and it transcends all cultural practices. There has been the allure to worship other things other than the true God since the garden and the temptation will be there until he returns and burns that desire away.

Most likely the reason he leaves us with this challenge is because what the Gnostics were trying to sell to the church was that you can have God AND your idols too! You can keep being promiscuous in Ephesus, you can keep worshipping at the other temples all over the town, you can keep participating in all the events/holidays/celebrations of the other religions. Just add Christianity to these other things but John quells that offer by telling you why that offer is appealing, it is because deep down we desire to worship other things other than God.

Idolatry for us comes out in how we worship like the rest of the world it shows what we really want to give attention to. If we worship our kids more than God, then yeah you will compete in travel league that keeps you out of the church more than in it. If we worship money, we will never have a problem buying the next new whatever, but we will always have problems justifying giving to the church. If we worship comfort were apt to get angry when the church, spouse, or govt. doesn't placate to our needs. It's all idols.

Family, there is one more idol I want to warn you about and as for these Christians in Ephesus this idol is everywhere. Virgil Walker who is a reformed/conservative podcast and organizer for the G3 conference said it this way this week on SM: *The new god of our age are our personal emotions*. Emotions are the things that control you, they are what overrides anyone else's opinions, and they must be obeyed at all costs.

Think about it, our new God as a culture then will override the real God of the universe all the time, because the God of this age has seduced us into believing that if you feel it then it must become the overall absolute truth in your life. **It's just relativism repackaged. It is SUBJECTIVITY run amuck.** Then what happens is the powers and authorities of this world play your emotions to get you to do what you want. Was it not just this week that someone testified to congress that FB knows that and uses emotions to sway people on



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their online platforms? Listen you and I know this to be true, when people give opinions today, they no longer state. “I believe” they say, “I feel”.

Because in an argument I can't say your not feeling a certain way, therefore you are always right! But what God's people are called to do is to ask, “What makes me feel this way?” Then you find the thought and nail it down to God's will revealed in scripture. That's why again, we need the church. In the body we find people fighting with the same feelings all the time and it is here that we can say to one another, “I don't think you're thinking that rightly.”

So, family let's walk away with this from John.

Light – Truth that stems from Christ and is sustained in Fellowship with each other.

We need the Light that God's Word sheds on us, but we also need the body that protects the light from being tainted from outside sources. Are their feelings that keep you from loving and living with people in this church? Are there idols that you are chasing after that keep you from employing your gifts for this body?

Love - Treasuring God and how we value each other.

We need the love of God to get us through, yes you do need to feel that in your lives. But in the church is the only place you are going to find that. What you want to know, to be assured of more than anything, is to know you are saved and it is around people in the local church that you can gain that assurance. Family will tell you, guide you, chastise you and encourage you because family, *little children*, don't quit on each other.

And if you have been lacking Light or Love then you need to come home, receive Jesus as your savior, seek Him with the people of this church or your local church, confess your sins, renounce your idols, and follow Him and experience eternal life for yourself.

Now as John has taught us let us go confidently in Jesus' name and ask Him for these things because we know God hears us and He will answer us, amen...



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Prayer

Communion

Benediction

Go in the name of the Father, that has revealed the TRUTH of Himself in His Son.

Go in the name of the Son, that lived a life revealing the TRUTH is worth living and dying for.

Go in the name and power of the HS, that helps you KNOW the truth to set you free to share the good news with others.