

## 1 John Sections 6-7: Full-Scale Faith

		OPENING WORDS	THEMES
1	1:1-2:6	“That which was from the beginning ...”	Central Burden: God Is Light
2	2:7-2:17	“Beloved, I am writing to you ...”	Central Commandment: Embody the Age-Old Message
3	2:18-3:8	“Children, it is the last hour ...”	Key Counsel: Remain in His Anointing and Receive Eternal Life
4	3:9-4:6	“No one born of God makes a practice of sinning ...”	Central Warning: Beware Cain’s Error and False Prophets
5	4:7-4:14	“Beloved, let us love one another ...”	Foundational Imperative: God’s Love
6	4:15-5:15	“Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God ...”	Necessary Instruction: Believing in Jesus the Christ, the Son of God
7	5:16-5:21	“If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death...”	Concluding Admonition: The True God and the Threat of Imposters

## VI. Necessary Instruction: Believing in Jesus the Christ, the Son of God (4:15–5:15)

- A. Declarative Invitation with Supporting Warrant (4:15–16)
- B. Commendation of Love (4:17–21)
- C. Commendation of Faith as *fides qua creditur* (5:1–5)
- D. Commendation of Faith as *fides quae creditur* (5:6–12)
- E. Commendation of the Full Assurance of Eternal Life: Confident Prayer (5:13–15)

## A. Declarative Invitation with Supporting Warrant (4:15–16)

**1 John 4:15** Whoever confesses that **Jesus** is the **Son of God**, **God** abides in him, and he in **God**.  
<sup>16</sup> So we have come to know and to believe the love that **God** has for us. **God** is love, and whoever abides in love abides in **God**, and **God** abides in him.

Valid confession of Jesus is opens the door to God’s presence and assurance, as it is confirmed by believers’ love.

## B. Commendation of Love (4:17–21)

1 John 4:17 By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. 19 We love because he first loved us. 20 If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

1. V. 17: Believers’ expression of love is a defense against fear of judgment.
2. V. 19: Our love grows out of God’s prior love for us (see John 1:13).
3. Vv. 20–21: Love for God without love for other believers is a contradiction in terms.

## C. Commendation of Faith as *fides qua creditur* (the faith by which we believe; “our/my faith”) (5:1–5)

**1 John 5:1** Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. <sup>2</sup> By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. <sup>3</sup> For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. <sup>4</sup> For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. <sup>5</sup> Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

1. V. 1: Faith is a verb arising from God’s regenerating work (John 1:12–13) and resulting in love.
2. Vv. 2–3: “Faithing” results in loving and obeying God’s directives.
3. Vv. 4–5: Through “our faith” (our believing) comes victory over the world, because this faith invites Christ onto the scene of our lives.

D. Commendation of Faith as *fides quae creditur* (the faith which is believed) (5:6–12)

**1 John 5:6** This is he who came by water and blood—**Jesus Christ**; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the **Spirit** is the one who testifies, because the **Spirit** is the truth. <sup>7</sup> For there are three that testify: <sup>8</sup> the **Spirit** and the water and the blood; and these three agree. <sup>9</sup> If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of **God** is greater, for this is the testimony of **God** that he has borne concerning his **Son**. <sup>10</sup> Whoever believes in the **Son of God** has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe **God** has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that **God** has borne concerning his **Son**. <sup>11</sup> And this is the testimony, that **God** gave us eternal life, and this life is in his **Son**. <sup>12</sup> Whoever has the **Son** has life; whoever does not have the **Son of God** does not have life.

1. V. 6: Water and blood: could be Christ's baptism and crucifixion.
2. Spirit-Son-Father all testify that Jesus Christ "came"—carried out and fulfilled his mission.
3. V. 10: Believers resonate with the declarations of this paragraph.
4. V. 11–12: What we are called to believe about Christ results in eternal life if received, the opposite if rejected (as the schismatics and Diotrophes apparently did).

**VII. Concluding Admonition: The True God and the Threat of Imposters**

- A. Counsel Regarding Sinners and Sin (5:16–17)
- B. The Tie That Binds: Shared Certainties (5:18–20)
- C. Final Pastoral Appeal (5:21)

A. Counsel Regarding Sinners and Sin (5:16–17)

**1 John 5:16** If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and **God** will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that. <sup>17</sup> All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.

1. V. 16a: Believers serve each other, not by condemning each others inevitable sins, but by prayer and restoration.
2. V. 16b: Some sins (like sins of unbelief, disobeying commands, and hating not loving) are headed in a terminal direction; not all believers should involve themselves in interceding for every sin they may learn of.
3. V. 17: Not all sin/s and sinning are equal.

## B. The Tie That Binds: Shared Certainties (5:18–20)

1 John 5:18 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.

1 John 5:19 We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

1 John 5:20 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.

Three “we know” statements assure readers of their identity, protection, and origin/identity. The third statement what Christ has done and who he is.

## C. Final Pastoral Appeal (5:21)

1 John 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

Ephesus had a history of idol veneration (Acts 19). More broadly, and “idol” (εἰδωλον) refers to the imagined “deities of the nations” which “have no reality, and so are truly the products of fantasy; and they are manufactured by human hands” (BDAG, p. 280).

Readers/hearers of 1 John could imagine many variations of what/whom is only true known through faith, leading to works as expression of love, i.e., full-scale faith. John concludes by calling for vigilance against counterfeits and maintenance of their “little children” status as men and women of true faith.