

Dr. Robert Yarbrough, The Johannine Epistles, Balancing Life in Christ; Session 8, 1 John, Full Scale Faith. Section 6 [4:15-5:15] Necessary Instruction, Section 7 [5:16-21] Concluding Admonition

1) Abstract, 2) Briefing Document, 3) Study Guide Questions, 4) FAQs

Abstract:

This academic material from Dr. Robert Yarbrough's teaching series examines the latter sections of the New Testament book of **1 John**, focusing on themes related to a **balanced Christian life**. The lecture, titled "Full Scale Faith," explores how faith in Jesus leads to obedience and love, emphasizing that genuine faith is not merely intellectual assent but a transformative relationship with God. Key topics discussed include the importance of **confessing Jesus as the Son of God**, the interconnectedness of **love for God and love for fellow believers**, and the nature of **faith that overcomes the world**. Yarbrough also addresses the issue of **sin**, distinguishing between sins that do not lead to death and those that do, and concludes with a warning against **idolatry** and counterfeit beliefs.

Briefing Document: Here is a detailed briefing document reviewing the main themes and most important ideas or facts from the provided excerpts of Dr. Robert Yarbrough's lecture on the Johannine Epistles:

Briefing Document: Review of Robert Yarbrough's Lecture on 1 John (Sections 6 & 7)

Source: Excerpts from "Yarbrough_JohannineEp08_English.pdf" - Dr. Robert Yarbrough, The Johannine Epistles, Balancing Life in Christ; Session 8, 1 John, Full Scale Faith. Section 6 [4:15-5:15] Necessary Instruction, Section 7 [5:16-21] Concluding Admonition.

Date: As per source.

Topic: An exposition of 1 John chapters 4:15-5:15 (Necessary Instruction) and 5:16-21 (Concluding Admonition), focusing on the concept of "Full Scale Faith" and balancing the Christian life through faith, works, and love.

Key Themes and Main Ideas:

The lecture focuses on the concluding sections of 1 John, highlighting the importance of **full-scale faith**, which encompasses not just intellectual belief but also trust in Christ that transforms devotion, prioritizes God's will, and results in obedience and love. Yarbrough structures his analysis around Byzantine-era divisions of the text, emphasizing key instructions and admonitions.

1. Full-Scale Faith as a Balanced Life: Yarbrough introduces the concept of "full-scale faith" or "full-package faith" as the embodiment of a balanced Christian life. This balance is achieved through the interplay of **faith, works (obeying commands), and love**. This faith is not merely believing in a doctrine but a transformative trust in Christ that leads to God's presence and changes our priorities.

"And faith, works, and love are the things that are produced that give the whole and the Balanced Christian life. And I'm calling these lectures on, first, John, full-scale faith, full-scale faith, or you could call it full-package faith."

2. Necessary Instruction: Believing in Jesus Christ, the Son of God (4:15-5:15): This section is broken down into sub-sections focusing on the nature and implications of believing in Jesus.

- **Invitation and Warrant (4:15-16):** Confessing Jesus as the Son of God is presented as an invitation that opens the door to God's presence and assurance. This confession is linked to knowing and believing in God's love and abiding in that love.
- "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God." "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." Yarbrough stresses that love is an implication of this true confession and cannot be separated from it.
- **Commendation of Love (4:17-21):** Love, stemming from God's prior love for us, is commended as a defense against the fear of judgment and a mark of authentic faith.
- "This love is perfected with us so that we have confidence in the day of judgment, because as he is, so also are we in this world." "There's 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. We love because he first loved us." Yarbrough highlights that love for God is inseparable from love for other believers; not loving a visible brother contradicts a claim to love the invisible God. "If anyone says I love God and hates his

brother, he's a liar, for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen."

- **Commendation of Personal Faith (Fides Qua Creditor) (5:1-5):** John commends individual belief and trust in Christ. This "faithing" (faith as an action) is a result of God's regenerating work and leads to loving and obeying God's commandments, which are seen as a delight when the heart is right.
- "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." "For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world, and this is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith." This personal faith is the means by which believers overcome the world, which is presented as a rival to God.
- **Commendation of the Christian Faith (Fides Quae Creditor) (5:6-12):** Beyond personal belief, Yarbrough emphasizes the importance of believing in the substance of the Christian faith – the truth about Jesus Christ. This "faith that is believed" includes acknowledging Jesus' mission as evidenced by the "water and blood" (likely referencing his baptism and crucifixion) and testified to by the Spirit, the water, and the blood.
- "This is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ. Not by the water only, but by the water and the blood." "For there are three that testify, the Spirit and the water and the blood, and these three agree." This truth is the "testimony of God" about His Son, and believing it results in eternal life. Rejecting this testimony is presented as making God a liar. "Whoever has the Son has life. Whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life."

3. Concluding Admonition: The True God and the Threat of Impostors (5:16-21): This final section offers counsel and a concluding pastoral appeal.

- **Counsel Regarding Sin and Sinners (5:16-17):** John addresses the issue of sin within the community. Believers are encouraged to pray for those committing sins "not leading to death." However, he distinguishes this from sins "leading to death," for which he does not instruct prayer.
- "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." Yarbrough interprets "sin leading to death" as possibly referring to terminal rebellion against God, such as unbelief or blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which leads to separation from God. He notes the difficulty in discerning such sins and the need for

discernment and caution in interceding for those deeply entangled in destructive behavior, drawing a parallel to Jeremiah's experience. "All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death." He also emphasizes that not all sins are equal in their implications and that struggling against sin is important.

- **The Tie That Binds and Final Pastoral Appeal (5:18-21):** John concludes with statements of certainty ("We know that...") that ground the believers' identity and assurance.
- "We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he was born of God, and that protects him... and the evil one does not touch him." "We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one." "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." These certainties about God's protection, the reality of the evil one's influence in the world, and the identity of Jesus as the "true God and eternal life" form the bedrock of Christian fellowship. The final admonition is a tender call to "little children" to **"Keep yourselves from idols."** Yarbrough interprets "idols" not just as physical statues but as "fantasies" or incorrect imaginings about Christ, God's commandments, or one's relationship with God that are not grounded in the truth revealed in Scripture. "little children, there's that word again, that devotion and commitment of an older believer to everybody else. An apostolic believer who is so humble he calls himself an elder in his other letters. Keep yourselves from idols." "I think he's warning about the things that people imagine about Christ, or about God's commandments, or about the relationship with God that he's been warning about for five chapters. Things that are, we say, half a bubble off. Things that aren't right or true. And we throw ourselves into a religious commitment that's invalid because it's a fantasy." This serves as a call for vigilance against counterfeits and a reminder to remain grounded in the true God revealed in Jesus Christ, maintaining a humble dependence on His grace.

Most Important Ideas/Facts:

- **Full-scale faith** is a balanced life of faith, works (obedience), and love, all stemming from God's love and resulting in transformation.
- **Confession of Jesus as the Son of God** is foundational and opens the door to God's presence.
- **Love for God and love for other believers are inseparable** and an indicator of authentic faith.

- **Personal faith (believing)** is an active trust born of God's work, leading to obedience and overcoming the world.
- **The substance of the Christian faith (what is believed)** concerning Jesus' mission (water and blood) and his identity as the Son of God is critical for eternal life.
- **Distinction between sins leading to death and those not leading to death** highlights the varying degrees of sin and the need for discernment in prayer and engagement with others' struggles.
- **Certainty in Christ's protection and identity** as the "true God and eternal life" is the basis for Christian identity and fellowship.
- The final admonition to **"Keep yourselves from idols"** warns against incorrect, fantasy-based understandings of faith and God, emphasizing the need to stay grounded in scriptural truth.

In summary, Yarbrough's analysis of these concluding sections of 1 John reinforces the interconnectedness of believing in the truth about Jesus, experiencing God's transformative love, and living a life of obedient love towards others, all while remaining vigilant against false beliefs and deceptive imaginations.

Study Guide: Study Guide: Yarbrough's Johannine Epistles - Session 8

Key Concepts:

- **Full-Scale Faith:** This encompasses not just intellectual belief in doctrines about Jesus, but a trust that allows God's Spirit to enter and transform one's life, shifting priorities from self to God's kingdom. It involves faith, obedience (works), and love.
- **Balanced Christian Life:** The integration of faith, obedience to commands, walking as Christ did, and experiencing God's love through a personal relationship.
- **Central Themes in 1 John:** God is light, the command to love one another, abiding in Christ and receiving eternal life, the warning against hate (like Cain), and the foundational imperative to love one another (growing out of God's love).
- **Byzantine Divisions of 1 John:** Yarbrough structures his lecture based on these older divisions (Section 6: Necessary Instruction, Section 7: Concluding Admonition) rather than the modern chapter divisions to offer a different perspective on the text.

- **Section 6: Necessary Instruction (4:15-5:15): Believing in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.****Invitation/Declaration with Warrant:** Confessing Jesus as the Son of God leads to mutual abiding between God and the believer. This confession is rooted in a full understanding of Jesus as the Messiah, Propitiation, and Deliverer.
- **Commendation of Love:** A believer's love is perfected, leading to confidence in the day of judgment. This love originates from God's prior love for us. Love for God is inseparable from love for other believers.
- **Commendation of Faith (fides qua creditur):** Personal faith by which we believe. This faith is an active verb, arising from God's regenerating work, resulting in loving and obeying God, and bringing victory over the world by inviting Christ into one's life.
- **Commendation of Faith (fides quae creditur):** The faith that is believed, referring to the content of Christian belief about Jesus Christ (e.g., His baptism, crucifixion, the testimony of the Spirit, water, and blood). Believers resonate with this truth, and receiving it results in eternal life, while rejecting it leads to the opposite.
- **Section 7: Concluding Admonition (5:16-21): The True God and the Threat of Impostors.****Counsel Regarding Sin and Sinners:** Believers should pray for those committing sins that do not lead to death, seeking restoration. There is also "sin that leads to death," for which John does not say one should pray. This "sin unto death" is possibly radical unbelief or rebellion against God (potentially related to the unpardonable sin). While all wrongdoing is sin, not all sins are equal in their indication of a person's relationship with God. Love needs to be discerning when dealing with destructive behavior.
- **The Tie That Binds:** Christian fellowship is grounded in shared certainties about God and Christ ("We know that..."). These certainties assure believers of their identity as born of God, protected from the evil one, and possessing insight into the true God revealed in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is identified as the "true God and eternal life."
- **Final Pastoral Appeal:** "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." Idols can be literal statues, but more broadly refer to imagined or fantasy concepts about Christ, God's commands, or one's relationship with God that are not based on biblical truth. Vigilance against counterfeits is crucial for maintaining true faith.

Quiz:

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. According to Yarbrough, what are the three core components of "full-scale faith" described in 1 John?
2. How does Yarbrough explain the difference between "fides qua creditur" and "fides quae creditur"?
3. What does Yarbrough suggest is the significance of the "water and the blood" mentioned in 1 John 5:6?
4. What is the primary benefit of having God's love perfected in us, according to the lecture?
5. Why does Yarbrough emphasize that love for God cannot be separated from love for other believers?
6. According to the lecture, where does a believer's love originate?
7. What does John mean when he says that everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world?
8. What is the distinction John makes regarding different types of sin in 1 John 5:16-17?
9. How does Yarbrough interpret the concluding admonition to "keep yourselves from idols"?
10. What does Yarbrough identify as the bedrock of Christian fellowship based on the "we know that" statements?

Quiz Answer Key:

1. According to Yarbrough, the three core components of "full-scale faith" are faith in Jesus, obeying his commands (works), and experiencing the love of God. This comprehensive approach constitutes a balanced Christian life.
2. "Fides qua creditur" refers to the personal faith by which an individual believes. "Fides quae creditur" refers to the content of the faith, the specific truths about Jesus Christ that are believed.
3. Yarbrough suggests the "water and the blood" most likely represent Christ's baptism (inaugurating his ministry) and his crucifixion (shedding blood for sin). These events are part of the core truths about Jesus.
4. Having God's love perfected in us provides confidence in the day of judgment. As believers grow in this love, they become more assured that God has claimed them and will not condemn them.

5. Yarbrough argues that love for God without love for one's visible brother is a contradiction in terms. It is irrefutable logic that if someone cannot love a person they see, they cannot authentically claim to love God whom they do not see.
6. According to the lecture, a believer's love originates from God's prior love for us and His work of redemption. It is a continuing manifestation of what God did first on our behalf.
7. John means that through faith, which invites Christ into our lives, believers gain victory over the world. The world is seen as a rival to God, and faith brings Jesus, the Son of God, onto the scene to overcome it.
8. John distinguishes between "sin not leading to death" and "sin that leads to death." While all wrongdoing is sin, some sins (possibly radical unbelief or rebellion) are terminal in nature, indicating separation from God.
9. Yarbrough interprets the admonition against idols not just as avoiding physical statues, but as guarding against imagined or fantasy concepts about God, Christ, or the Christian life that are not rooted in truth or scripture.
10. Yarbrough identifies the bedrock of Christian fellowship as the shared certainties expressed in the "we know that" statements. These certainties about who God is and what Christ has done provide the foundation for believers' identity and connection.

Essay Questions:

1. Discuss Yarbrough's concept of "full-scale faith" in 1 John. How does he distinguish it from mere intellectual assent, and what are its key components according to the lecture?
2. Analyze the significance of the distinction between "fides qua creditur" and "fides quae creditur" as presented by Yarbrough. How do these two aspects of faith relate to each other within the message of 1 John?
3. Explore John's teaching on love as discussed in the lecture. What is the origin of this love, how is it perfected, and what is its relationship to both the fear of judgment and love for other believers?
4. Explain John's counsel regarding "sin that leads to death" versus "sin not leading to death" in 1 John 5:16-17, drawing upon Yarbrough's plausible interpretations. How does this teaching relate to the nature of sin and the role of prayer?

5. Evaluate the concluding admonition to "keep yourselves from idols" in light of Yarbrough's broader interpretation. What are some examples of "idols" in this sense that believers might need to guard against today, and why is vigilance against them important?

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Full-Scale Faith:** A comprehensive faith that includes believing in Jesus, obeying His commands, and experiencing God's love; not merely intellectual belief.
- **Balanced Christian Life:** The harmonious integration of faith, obedience, and love in the life of a believer.
- **Byzantine Divisions:** The way the Greek New Testament was divided into sections by the Byzantine church, used by Yarbrough as a structural framework for his lecture on 1 John.
- **Necessary Instruction (Section 6):** Refers to 1 John 4:15-5:15, focusing on the instruction to believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, encompassing confession, the nature of love, and the nature of faith.
- **Concluding Admonition (Section 7):** Refers to 1 John 5:16-21, providing final counsel regarding sin, the identity of the true God, and the warning against impostors or idols.
- **Fides qua creditur:** Latin term meaning "the faith by which we believe" or personal faith, referring to the act of believing and trusting in Christ.
- **Fides quae creditur:** Latin term meaning "the faith that is believed," referring to the content of Christian belief, the truths about Jesus Christ (e.g., His life, death, resurrection).
- **Water and the Blood:** Likely references to Christ's baptism and crucifixion, significant events testifying to His identity and mission.
- **Sin Not Leading to Death:** Sins committed by believers that can be confessed and forgiven, not indicating a terminal separation from God.
- **Sin That Leads to Death:** Sins that indicate a radical state of unbelief, rebellion, or separation from God, for which John does not specifically recommend praying.
- **Idols (eidolon):** In the broader sense used by John in the conclusion, refers to imagined or fantasy concepts about God, Christ, or spiritual reality that are not based on truth or scripture, serving as counterfeits to true faith.

- **We Know That:** Recurring phrase in 1 John 5:18-20, highlighting certainties about the believer's identity, origin, protection, and knowledge of the true God through Christ.
- **True God:** Identified in 1 John 5:20 as Jesus Christ, distinct from idols or false conceptions of divinity.

FAQs:

What is the "full-scale faith" discussed in the Johannine Epistles?

Dr. Robert Yarbrough describes "full-scale faith" as more than just believing in a concept or doctrine about Jesus. It's a comprehensive faith that involves trusting in Christ in such a way that God, through His Spirit, enters and transforms our lives. This transformation shifts our devotion from ourselves or worldly pursuits to prioritizing God's guidance, kingdom, and counsel. It's a balanced Christian life where faith leads to obeying God's commands and walking as Christ did, all empowered by the love of God and a personal relationship with Him.

How does confessing Jesus as the Son of God relate to God's presence and assurance?

Confessing that Jesus is the Son of God, in the full sense of his identity as Messiah, propitiation for sins, and the promised deliverer, opens the door to God's presence and assurance. This confession is not merely an intellectual acknowledgment but is intrinsically linked to knowing and believing the love God has for us. As a result, whoever confesses Jesus as the Son of God experiences God abiding in them, and they in God, confirmed and demonstrated by the presence of love in their lives.

How does love relate to the fear of judgment in the context of 1 John?

According to the teaching on 1 John, a believer's expression of love serves as a defense against the fear of judgment. As God's love is perfected in us, we gain confidence for the day of judgment because we become increasingly aware that God has claimed us and will not condemn us. "Perfect love casts out fear, for fear has to do with punishment." Our love for others is a manifestation of God's prior love for us and indicates a right relationship with Him, thus alleviating the fear associated with future judgment.

What is the distinction between "fides qua creditor" and "fides quae creditur" in understanding faith?

"Fides qua creditor" refers to the faith by which we believe, or personal faith. This is our individual act of believing in Jesus Christ, which arises from God's regenerating work and

results in love and obedience. "Fides quae creditur," on the other hand, refers to the faith that is believed, or the content of Christian faith. This encompasses the truth about who Christ is and what he did, such as outlined in the Apostles' Creed (his virgin birth, suffering, death, resurrection, etc.). Both are necessary: personal faith (fides qua) is placed in the truth of the Christian faith (fides quae).

How does the concept of "water and blood" and the testimony of the Spirit, water, and blood confirm the Christian faith?

The "water and blood" are likely references to Christ's baptism and crucifixion, key events in his messianic ministry and atoning work. These, along with the Spirit, are presented as three witnesses that testify to Jesus Christ's identity and fulfilled mission as the Son of God. This threefold testimony (Spirit, water, and blood) agrees and serves as the testimony of God concerning His Son. Believers who have personal faith resonate with this testimony, confirming the truth of the Christian faith and assuring them of eternal life found in Christ.

What is the significance of knowing "him who is true" and being "in him who is true" in 1 John?

Knowing "him who is true" and being "in him who is true" (identified as God in His Son, Jesus Christ) are fundamental certainties of the Christian faith. This knowledge and indwelling are enabled by the Son of God who has come and given believers understanding or insight. These certainties provide assurance of believers' identity as those born of God, protected from the evil one. This shared knowledge and relationship with the true God, Jesus Christ, serve as the bedrock of Christian fellowship and unity.

How does the admonition to "keep yourselves from idols" apply beyond physical statues?

While the admonition "keep yourselves from idols" in Ephesus had historical relevance to physical idol veneration, in a broader sense, it warns against forming inaccurate or fanciful ideas ("eidolon" is cognate with "idea") about Christ, God's commands, or the relationship with God. It cautions against religious commitment based on fantasy or personal imagination rather than the truth revealed in Scripture and confirmed in the Christian community. It calls for vigilance against counterfeits and maintaining true faith rooted in a genuine understanding of God.

How does 1 John distinguish between different types of sin and what is the counsel regarding prayer for others' sins?

1 John acknowledges that "all wrongdoing is sin," but distinguishes between "sin not leading to death" and "sin that leads to death." While the exact nature of "sin that leads to death" is debated, it is understood to involve radical rebellion against God, potentially

including unbelief or deliberate lawlessness that indicates a heart separate from God, potentially the unpardonable sin. Believers are encouraged to pray for those committing sins not leading to death, seeking their restoration. However, John states he does not say one should pray for sin leading to death, suggesting a discernment is needed and not all intervention is advisable, particularly if it risks one's own spiritual health. This highlights that while forgiveness is available for confessable sins, some actions can indicate a state of being outside of God's grace.