

Dr. Robert Yarbrough, Johannine Epistles, Session 8, 1 John Sec 6 (4:15-5:15) & Sec 7 (5:16-21) Audio Overview Podcast from NotebookLM

Sponsored by Biblicalelearning.org by Ted Hildebrandt

Okay, let's unpack this. What does it really mean to live a balanced life of faith? Is it, you know, just believing certain things? Or is it something more, something more dynamic, active, even? Right. And that's our mission today, really.

We're doing a deep dive using source material one of you shared. Thanks for that, by the way. It's a lecture digging into the end of the letter 1 John.

Yeah. Focusing on those concluding sections, roughly 1 John chapter 4, verse 15 through to the very end, using those older Byzantine divisions, which is an interesting way to look at it. And we want to pull out the key instructions, the final advice John gives.

What was he telling those first readers? And crucially, what does it mean for us now? As we try to build what the source calls full-scale faith, that mix of belief, action, and, well, love. The lecture structures this part really helpfully, I thought. It separates it into the necessary instruction, the absolute must-knows about believing in Jesus.

And then the concluding admonition, which is more like, OK, here's some final practical advice on living this out. Dealing with sin, watching out for, well, the source calls them imposters or idols. It's a great way to see how these last thoughts really tie everything together from the whole letter, doesn't it? It does.

And looking at it through these slightly different section breaks, maybe how people read it historically can actually shed some light. OK. So let's jump into that necessary instruction first.

The source really hones in on this powerful statement right near the start of this bit. Oh, yeah. Absolutely foundational.

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God. Which sounds simple, but the source stresses this isn't just saying the words. Not at all.

It's presented as a valid confession, one that actually does something. It brings about this deep reality: God living in the believer, the believer living in God, mutual indwelling. And what's fascinating is how quickly it connects that confession to love.

It's not just intellectual assent. Exactly. That confession opens the door, you might say, to God's presence, to assurance.

But it's the love piece that confirms it, makes it visible, real. Right. Like that earlier line, God is love and whoever abides in love abides in God.

The source is really clear. These aren't like separate options. You can't just pick the confession part or just the love part.

True confession leads to love, and that's how you abide in God. One flows from the other. Okay.

So that leads naturally into commending this love. The source says perfected love gives confidence in the day of judgment. That's not like a big claim.

How does love do that? Well, the text connects it to becoming like God. As he is, so also are we in this world. And then that famous line: love casts out fear.

Because fear has to do with punishment. Right. So as God's love gets deeper in us, it actually changes us.

We start to look more like Christ. And the more we resemble the judge, in a sense, the less paralyzing fear we have about facing judgment. It's not about hiding.

It's about transformation. And it's not a love we have to somehow, you know, drum up ourselves. Oh, definitely not.

The source points right back to the origin. We love because he first loved us. It's a response.

It flows out of what God has already done in us. That idea of being born of God that John talks about earlier. And then there's that test.

Yeah. The reality check. The source calls it irrefutable logic.

It really is, isn't it? Yeah. How can you say you love God whom you haven't seen if you hate your brother or sister whom you have seen? Yeah. It just doesn't add up.

If the love isn't showing up in your actual relationships with God's people right there, your claim to love the invisible God is, well, questionable, logically speaking. Okay. Now, here's where, for me, it got really interesting.

The lecture starts unpacking faith, but using these two different aspects, these sort of old-school terms. Yeah. *Fides qua* and *fides quae*.

It sounds academic, but it's actually super helpful. Yeah. *Fides qua* creditor.

That's the faith by which we believe. Our personal act of faith. Right.

My faith. And then *fides quae* creditor, the faith that is believed. The content: what we actually put our faith in.

It helps show faith isn't just one simple thing. It's both the doing of believing and the what we believe. Exactly.

So let's take that personal side first, the *fides qua*. The source describes it as really active, almost like a verb. You mentioned faith.

Yeah, I like that. It's this dynamic thing, a projection of our will and commitment towards Christ. And what's powerful, the source notes, is that this active faith actually produces results.

It leads to loving God, obeying God. And it makes obedience feel different, right? Not just like a burden. Right.

The source says that when our hearts are right because of this active faith, the commands aren't burdensome. They can actually be a delight. Like, you know, the psalmist meditating on the Torah.

And this personal faith, this *fides qua*, it leads to victory. Victory over the world. Yeah.

The world here, meaning everything that competes with God for our allegiance, everything pulling us away. And how does faith win? The source puts it beautifully. It invites Christ onto the scene of our lives.

Ah, so it's not just me trying harder. It's your active trust, bringing his power, his perspective into your struggles. OK, then the other side: the content.

The *fides qua*. It's not just generic belief. No, it has to be faith in something specific.

Faith in who Christ really showed himself to be. The core truths. Exactly.

The source mentions things like what the Apostles' Creed summarizes. Jesus' conception, birth, suffering, death, resurrection, ascension, and coming judgment. It's about the real historical Jesus.

And the text itself points to specifics. This is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ. The source interprets this as pointing to key historical moments validating who he is.

His baptism in the water, his crucifixion in the blood. Real events. And there's testimony confirming this isn't just made up.

Right. John says the spirit and the water and the blood all testify, and crucially, they agree. They point to the same reality about Jesus.

This is presented as God's own testimony about his son, divine validation. So what happens inside someone who gets this, who has both the personal commitment and believes these specific truths? The source says whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. There's an internal resonance.

These core truths about Jesus, they just ring true for a believer. And if they don't ring true? Well, the source suggests that's maybe a signal, a call to dig deeper, to really try and understand who Jesus revealed himself to be. Maybe there's a misunderstanding or an incomplete picture.

And the consequences are pretty stark. Life or death, essentially. Essentially, yes.

Believing, which means receiving Christ in his work, results in eternal life. Whoever has the son have life. It's that direct.

And the opposite is just as direct. Whoever does not have the son of God does not have life. And the source reminds us this wasn't just theory for John.

People had left the community he was writing to because they held a different and ultimately wrong view of Jesus. So faith connects us not just to God, but to his people, his community. Okay, so that covers the necessary instruction.

Then the lecture moves into the concluding admonition, final practical advice. And it tackles that really tricky bit about sin. Ah, yes.

Sin not leading to death versus sin that leads to death. Definitely one of the passages commentators really wrestle with. And the source acknowledges that.

No easy answers here. But we can still pull out some important insights, especially about how we respond to sin in the community. It's not just about pointing fingers, right? When you see a fellow believer stumble, sinning in a way that's not leading to death.

The instruction is actually quite specific. He shall ask, and God will give him life. Pray for them.

Pray for their restoration, their spiritual vitality. But then there's this other category, the sin leading to death. And Jain says he does not say we should pray about that one.

That's challenging. It is. The source describes this as sin that seems headed in a terminal direction.

It signifies a kind of fundamental break, a turning away from God. What kind of thing might that be? Well, the examples the source suggests point towards things like persistent, deliberate unbelief from within the church or living in an act of lawlessness, maybe drastic rebellion. Some are even connected to the unpardonable sin Jesus mentioned: blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

It's serious stuff. And the source points out this isn't about us becoming judges, trying to figure out everyone's eternal destiny. Exactly.

And trying to jump in and fix someone deep in that kind of destructive pattern can actually be dangerous. The source quotes Jude: show mercy, yes, but with fear, right? Be careful you don't get pulled down too. It's often impossible to know for sure from the outside if someone's sin is truly terminal in God's eyes.

So why the instruction not to pray? The source brought up Jeremiah being told not to pray for Israel. Yeah, that was a fascinating parallel. The idea wasn't that God didn't care, but that Jeremiah was getting too identified with the people's determined path to judgment.

It was potentially compromising his own walk with God, his prophetic role. So the takeaway is discerning love. That's all the source puts it.

Love is discerning. Your compassion for someone heading down a destructive path shouldn't lead you away from faithfulness to God. And ultimately, you can't know with certainty if a sin is unto eternal death this side of eternity.

Okay, that's heavy. But the flip side is important too. Not all sin automatically puts you in that category.

Absolutely not. John is clear. All wrongdoing is sin.

But for a believer, someone truly born of God, not every sin signifies that terminal break. There are sins that do not lead to death. The stumbles, the failures we confess and receive forgiveness for.

Exactly. The very things Jesus came to deal with through his sacrifice. The source really encourages believers: don't give up the fight against sin just because all sin is sin.

Yes, some patterns of sin can indicate a heart that doesn't truly know God. But for those who are genuinely his, there's assurance, there's forgiveness, there's restoration. Okay, moving towards the very end now.

The source talks about the tie that binds the community together, which isn't just liking each other, apparently. No, it's deeper. It's grounded in knowing the true God.

And John uses these incredibly confident phrases. We know that. Like what? What do we know? Well, we know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, meaning presumably in that terminal, definitive way.

Why? Because they're protected by Christ, kept from the full power of the evil one. It speaks to our identity, our security, our origin. We are from God.

We also know the Son has come and given us understanding. Insight. Yes.

Understanding or insight, and the purpose of that insight, so we can know him who is true. And this knowing, the source clarifies, isn't just head knowledge; it's relational. It's that deep rapport with God.

Because we are in him who is true. In his son, Jesus Christ. Our connection to the true God is through Jesus.

And then comes this massive statement about Jesus himself. Right at the end. The source points out: John says, referring to Jesus, that this one is the true God in eternal life.

It's an incredibly high claim, identifying Jesus directly with the true God and the source of life itself. Wow. So, connecting this all up, the real glue holding Christian community together is this shared certainty, the shared knowledge of who God is revealed in Jesus.

That seems to be the core of it. Yeah. It's not primarily about shared hobbies or even just affection, though those are good.

The fundamental bond is this shared identity in the true God who has claimed us through his son. That shared reality is the bedrock. Which leads right into the final words, an affectionate appeal, but also a serious warning.

Yeah. He calls them little children. It's tender, shows his care, but also maybe reminds them of their need for ongoing guidance, their dependence on God's grace.

And the final command. Keep yourselves from idols. Now, Ephesus, where John likely was, had a lot of literal idols, like the Temple of Artemis.

True. But the source makes a fascinating point about the Greek word itself, eidolon. It's related to the word idea, something you imagine.

So it's not just about statues. Probably not just statues, though that was relevant. The source suggests John is also warning against imagining things about God, about Christ, about the commandments, about your relationship with God, that simply aren't true.

Fantasies, things that are half a bubble off, as the source put it. Like what kind of things? Well, the source mentioned an invalid religious commitment based on fantasy, maybe like the I'm spiritual, but not religious idea, if that construct ignores God's revealed will. But it could be anything, really.

Imagining a God who is only loving and never just, fantasizing that grace means obedience doesn't matter. Thinking faith is just positive thinking. Believing our cultural ideas are more true than God's word.

So the call is to stay vigilant, to check our ideas against reality. Exactly. Guard against these invented versions.

Find truth in Scripture. Confirm it in the community of faith. Keep growing in a real understanding of Christ and God.

Stick to God's actual revealed way. Because these fantasies, these mental idols, can totally derail us. They stop us from moving towards that full-scale faith, that living reality of faith producing works out of love.

The goal, then, is to stay grounded, to be men and women of true faith, constantly tuning in to the true God revealed in Jesus, being humble enough to admit our ideas might need adjusting. It really does bring it all together. Full-scale faith means being claimed by the true God, knowing him through Christ, letting that truth shape everything- love, actions, relationships- while always, always watching out for counterfeits, whether they're external pressures or internal fantasies.

OK, so quite a journey through these final verses. We've looked at that necessary instruction on believing in Jesus, both the personal act of faith and the crucial content of who Jesus is. We've tackled the complex counsel on sin, the distinction between sins and how we respond with discerning love.

And we ended with that vital warning. Keep yourselves from idols, not just statues, but any imagined false ideas about God or faith that aren't rooted in the reality revealed in Christ. It

really paints a picture of a faith that's robust, grounded in truth, lived out in love and obedience, but also requires this constant alertness, this humility.

It's not passive. It's active, relational, and requires vigilance. So here's something for you to think about as we wrap up.

That idea of sin leading to death is challenging. The source stressed that love is discerning. If you see someone you care about seemingly on that kind of destructive path, how does discerning love actually play out beyond just deciding whether or not to pray in a certain way? What concrete actions might that involve? Balancing compassion and hope with protecting your own faithfulness to the true God.

Lots to chew on there. Thanks for joining us for this deep dive into the end of 1 John.