

FAITH IN THE SON OF GOD

In the previous chapter of this first letter by the Apostle John, he stressed the greatness of God's love in providing His one and only Son. John continues this focus as he starts in the fifth chapter. In particular John now emphasizes the importance of having faith in the Son of God. First, this faith is seen by having love for Jesus, just as we do for God. If we love God, we will love his child, who is the Lord Jesus Christ.

What is a great way to show our love for God? John gives us the answer. He writes: "This is love for God: to obey his commands" (1 John 5:3). That is a pretty basic way to show our love for God. We should obey His commands. John also teaches that this is a great way to demonstrate our love towards others. "This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands" (1 John 5:2).

John goes on to say that our faith in the Son of God is also very important to overcoming the world. When someone believes in God and His promises, it puts them in a position that is often not well received by the world at large. Early in his letter John had said: "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world – the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does – comes not from the Father but from the world" (1 John 2:15-16). The natural tendencies of the world are the ways of sin and stand in opposition to God.

However, when we love the Father and have faith in the Son of God, then we are in a position to win victory over the world. In fact John says: "Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God" (1 John 5:5). John wrote earlier: "The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever" (1 John 2:17), and the will of God that is important is belief in Jesus as the Son of God.

John stresses to his readers that it is faith in the Son of God that brings victory over the world. It is faith in the Son of God that gives eternal life. John writes: "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life"

John wanted his readers to be confident of this great principle. Salvation was available through the Son of God. So, he encourages them to have faith in the Son of God. They are to believe in what God has

accomplished through His Son, and to put their trust in him. If they do this, then as John indicated, they can know that they have eternal life.

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- When John earlier wrote his Gospel, he summarizes the purpose God had in providing His Son, Jesus. He also stresses here the importance of faith in the Son of God. He writes: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him" (John 3:16-17).
- Just before his arrest and death, Jesus warned his apostles they would be scattered like sheep without a shepherd. Yet, in the end, Jesus was going to be victorious through God's help. He warns them to encourage them, even though it was going to be difficult for them in the world. He says to them: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).
- John recorded Jesus' teaching about obeying the Father's commands in his gospel in John 15. Jesus beautifully teaches how because of his love for the Father, he obeys His commands. In the same way he encourages his apostles to keep his commands. Jesus said: "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete" (John 15:9-11).

ANSWER KEY:

Obey His commands.

God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His son. He who has the son has life; he who does not have the son of God does not have life.

knee, calf, shin, thigh

If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.