

# 1 John 5:17 Commentary

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FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND HIS CHILDREN  
Click chart to enlarge  
Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission  
Another Overview Chart - [1 John](#) - Charles Swindoll

BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP		BEHAVIOR OF FELLOWSHIP	
Conditions of Fellowship	Cautions of Fellowship	Fellowship Characteristics	Fellowship Consequences
Meaning of Fellowship 1 Jn 1:1-2:27		Manifestations of Fellowship 1 Jn 2:28-5:21	
Abiding in God's Light		Abiding in God's Love	
Written in Ephesus			
circa 90 AD			
From Talk Thru the Bible			

## STUDY GUIDE

### 1 JOHN 5

What is this? On the photograph of the Observation Worksheet for this chapter you will find handwritten 5W/H questions (Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?) on each verse to help you either personally study or lead a discussion on this chapter. The questions are generally very simple and are stated in such a way as to stimulate you to observe the text to discern the answer. As a reminder, given the truth that your ultimate Teacher is the Holy Spirit, begin your time with God with prayer such as Psalm 119:12<sup>+</sup>

"Blessed are You, O LORD; Teach me Your statutes." (you can vary it with similar prayers - Ps 119:18, 26, 33, 64, 66, 68, 108, 124, 135, 171, etc) The questions are generally highlighted in yellow and the answers in green. Some questions have no answers and are left to your observations and the illuminating/teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. Some qualifying thoughts - (1) Use "As is" - these are handwritten and will include mistakes I made, etc. (2) They may not be the best question for a given verse and my guess is that on some verses you will think of a far superior 5W/H question and/or many other questions.

Dr Howard Hendricks once gave an assignment to his seminary students to list as many observations as they could from Acts 1:8. He said "So far they've come up with more than 600 different ones! Imagine what fun you could have with 600 observations on this passage. Would you like to see Scripture with eyes like that?" (P. 63 [Living by the Book](#) - borrow) With practice you can! And needless to say, you will likely make many more observations and related questions than I recorded on the pages below and in fact I pray that the Spirit would indeed lead you to discover a veritable treasure chest of observations and questions! In Jesus' Name. Amen

Why am I doing this? **Mortimer Adler** among others helped me develop a questioning mindset as I read, seeking to read actively rather than passively. Over the years I have discovered that as I have practiced reading with a 5W/H questioning mindset, it has yielded more accurate interpretation and the good fruit of meditation. In other words, consciously interacting with the inspired Holy Word of God and the illuminating Holy Spirit has honed my ability to meditate on the Scripture, and my prayer is that this tool will have the same impact in your spiritual life. The benefits of meditation are literally priceless in regard to their value in this life and in the life to come (cf discipline yourself for godliness in 1Ti 4:8+.) For some of the benefits - see Joshua 1:8+ and Psalm 1:2-3+. It will take diligence and mental effort to develop an "inductive" ([especially an "observational"](#)), interrogative mindset as you read God's Word, but it bears repeating that the benefits in this life and the rewards in the next will make it more than worth the effort you invest! Dear Christian reader let me encourage you to strongly consider learning the skills of [inductive Bible study](#) and spending the rest of your life practicing them on the Scriptures and living them out in your daily walk with Christ.

Although Mortimer Adler's advice is from a secular perspective, his words are worth pondering...

*Strictly, all reading is active. What we call passive is simply less active. Reading is better or worse according as it is more or less active. And one reader is better than another in proportion as he is capable of a greater range of activity in reading.* (Adler's classic book [How to Read a Book is free online](#))

[John Piper](#) adds that "Insight or understanding is the product of intensive, headache-producing meditation on two or three verses and how they fit together. This kind of reflection and rumination is provoked by asking questions of the text. And you cannot do it if you hurry. Therefore, we must resist the deceptive urge to carve notches in our bibliographic gun. Take two hours to ask ten questions of Galatians 2:20+ and you will gain one hundred times the insight you would have attained by reading thirty pages of the New Testament or any other book. Slow down. Query. Ponder. Chew.... (John Dewey rightly said) "People only truly think when they are confronted with a problem. Without some kind of dilemma to stimulate thought, behavior becomes habitual rather than thoughtful."

*"Asking questions is the key to understanding."*

--Jonathan Edwards

That said, below are the [5W/H questions](#) for each verse in this chapter (click page to enlarge). This is not neatly typed but is handwritten and was used for leading a class discussion on this chapter, so you are welcome to use it in this "as is" condition...

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## 1 John 5:17 All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not leading to death

**Greek** - pasa adikia hamartia estin (3SPAI) kai estin (3SPAI) hamartia ou pros thanaton:

**Amplified** - All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin which does not [involve] death [that may be repented of and forgiven].

KJV 1 John 5:17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

BGT 1 John 5:17 π σα δικ α μαρτ α στ ν, κα σπιν μαρτ α ο πρ ς θ νατον.

NET 1 John 5:17 All unrighteousness is sin, but there is sin not resulting in death.

CSB 1 John 5:17 All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin that does not bring death.

ESV 1 John 5:17 All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.

NIV 1 John 5:17 All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death.

NLT 1 John 5:17 All wicked actions are sin, but not every sin leads to death.

NRS 1 John 5:17 All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that is not mortal.

NJB 1 John 5:17 Every kind of wickedness is sin, but not all sin leads to death.

NAB 1 John 5:17 All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that is not deadly.

YLT 1 John 5:17 all unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not unto death.

MIT 1 John 5:17 All evildoing is sin, and there is sin that is not mortal.

GWN 1 John 5:17 Every kind of wrongdoing is sin, yet there are sins that don't lead to death.

BBE 1 John 5:17 All evil-doing is sin: but death is not the punishment for every sort of sin.

RSV 1 John 5:17 All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin which is not mortal.

NKJ 1 John 5:17 All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death.

ASV 1 John 5:17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

- **all:** 1Jn 3:4 Dt 5:32 12:32
- **and:** 1Jn 5:16 Isa 1:18 Eze 18:26-32 Ro 5:20,21 Jas 1:15 4:7-10
- [1 John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 John 3:4+ Everyone who practices (present tense) sin also practices (present tense) lawlessness; and sin is (present tense) lawlessness.

### A DESCRIPTION OF SIN

**All unrighteousness** ([adikia](#)) is (present tense) **sin** ([hamartia](#)), and there is a sin ([hamartia](#)) not leading to death ([thanatos](#)) - John has just mentioned praying in the will of God which gives one assurance God hears and will answer. Here he is saying that all sin is serious. "The writer inserts this clause over a concern that the distinction between lesser and greater sin implied in the distinction between sin to death and sin not to death might lead some to think some sin was not serious." ([Anderson](#)) The implication is that believers should pray for their own sins and sins of their brethren.

*John's real concern is to encourage believers  
to pray for those whose sin "is not to death."  
-- Daniel Akin*

**NET Note** - Here, having implied that sins committed by believers (sins "not to death") may be prayed for and forgiven, the author does not want to leave the impression that such sin is insignificant, because this could be viewed as a concession to the views of the opponents (who as moral indifferentists have downplayed the significance of sin in the Christian's life).

**John Stott** agrees that "In distinguishing between sin that leads to death and sin that does not lead to death, he is not meaning to minimize the gravity of sin" (Borrow [The Letters of John page 192](#))

**David Smith** says John is giving "A gentle warning. "Principiis obsta." Also a reassurance. "You have sinned, but not necessarily 'unto death'."

**Vincent** on all **unrighteousness** - This is the character of every offence against that which is right. Every breach of duty is a manifestation of sin. Compare 1Jn 3:4, where sin is defined as *vopia* lawlessness, and lawlessness as sin. See Rom. 6:13.

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**Unrighteousness** ([93](#))([adikia](#) from **a** = not + **dikê** = right) is a condition of not being right, whether with God, according to the standard of His holiness and righteousness or with man, according to the standard of what man knows to be right by his conscience.

**Barclay** writes that "**Adikia** is the precise opposite of *dikaioisune* (righteousness), which means justice; and the Greeks defined justice as giving to God and to men their due. The evil man is the man who robs both man and God of their rights. He has so erected an altar to himself in the centre of things that he worships himself to the exclusion of God and man." ([Daily Study Bible Online](#))

**ADIKIA - 24V - doing wrong(1), evildoers(1), iniquities(1), iniquity(2), injustice(1), unrighteous(2), unrighteousness(12), wickedness(4), wrong(1).** Lk. 13:27; Lk. 16:8; Lk. 16:9; Lk. 18:6; Jn. 7:18; Acts 1:18; Acts 8:23; Rom. 1:18; Rom. 1:29; Rom. 2:8; Rom. 3:5; Rom. 6:13; Rom. 9:14; 1 Co. 13:6; 2 Co. 12:13; 2 Thess. 2:10; 2 Thess. 2:12; 2 Tim. 2:19; Heb. 8:12; Jas. 3:6; 2 Pet. 2:13; 2 Pet. 2:15; 1 Jn. 1:9; 1 Jn. 5:17

**Sin** (266)(**hamartia**) literally conveys the idea of missing the mark as when hunting with a bow and arrow (in Homer some hundred times of a warrior hurling his spear but missing his foe). Later hamartia came to mean missing or falling short of any goal, standard, or purpose. Hamartia in the Bible signifies a departure from God's holy, perfect standard of what is right in word or deed (righteous). It pictures the idea of missing His appointed goal (His will) which results in a deviation from what is pleasing to Him. In short, sin is conceived as a missing the true end and scope of our lives, which is the Triune God Himself. As Martin Luther put it "Sin is essentially a departure from God."

**Death** (2288)(**thanatos**) is a permanent cessation of all vital functions and thus is the end of life on earth (as we know it). The separation of the soul from the body and the end of earthly life. Spiritual death is separation from the life of God forever by dying without being born again. The first use in the Septuagint is in a well known promise from God "you shall surely die (Lxx = thanatos apothnesko)." (Ge 2:17) followed by the second use in the deceptive lie by Satan "You surely shall not die (thanatos apothnesko)!" (Ge 3:4) Death is natural to humanity as part of the created world. Death is a result of Adam's sin (Ro 5:12). Death is universal - no one can escape it.

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**1 John 5:16 Commentary <> 1 John 5:18 Commentary**