

# 1 John 5:1 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<br>1 Jn 1:1-2:27 |                        | Manifestations of Fellowship<br>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+

"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...

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|--|--|

## 1 John 5:1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him:

**Greek** - Pas ho pisteuon (PAPMSN) hoti Iesous estin (3SPA1) ho Christos ek tou theou gegennetai (3SRPI) kai pas ho agapon (PAPMSN) ton gennesanta (AAPMSA) agapa (3SPA1) kai ton gegennemenon (RPPMSA) ex autou.

KJV 1 John 5:1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

BGT 1 John 5:1 Π ς πιστε ων τι ησο ς σtiv Χριστ ς, κ το θεο γεγ νηται, κ α π ς γαπ ν τ ν γενν σαντα γαπ [κ α ] τ ν γεγεννημ νον ξ α το .

NET 1 John 5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been fathered by God, and everyone who

loves the father loves the child fathered by him.

CSB 1 John 5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Messiah has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father also loves the one born of Him.

ESV 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.

NIV 1 John 5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well.

NLT 1 John 5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has become a child of God. And everyone who loves the Father loves his children, too.

NRS 1 John 5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child.

NJB 1 John 5:1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God, and whoever loves the father loves the son.

NAB 1 John 5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is begotten by God, and everyone who loves the father loves (also) the one begotten by him.

MIT 1 John 5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been fathered by God. Everyone who loves the one who generated also loves one fathered by him.

GWN 1 John 5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Messiah has been born from God. Everyone who loves the Father also loves his children.

BBE 1 John 5:1 Everyone who has faith that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God: and everyone who has love for the Father has love for his child.

RSV 1 John 5:1 Every one who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God, and every one who loves the parent loves the child.

NKJ 1 John 5:1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him.

ASV 1 John 5:1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God: and whosoever loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

DBY 1 John 5:1 Every one that believes that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God; and every one that loves him that has begotten loves also him that is begotten of him.

Wuest - Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ, out from God has been born and as a result is His child. And everyone who loves the One who begot, loves the one who has been begotten out from Him.

YLT Every one who **is believing** that Jesus is the Christ, of God he **hath been begotten**, and every one who is loving Him who did beget, doth love also him who is begotten of Him:

- **believes** (is believing): 1Jn 2:22,23 4:2,14,15 Mt 16:16 Joh 1:12,13 6:69 Ac 8:37 Ro 10:9,10
- **is born**: 1Jn 5:4 2:29 3:9 4:7
- **and whoever**: 1Jn 2:10 3:14,17 4:20 Joh 15:23 Jas 1:18 1Pe 1:3,22,23
- See comments on Born Again in John 3
- [1 John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 John 2:29 If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is **born** ([gennao](#) - perfect tense) of Him.

1 John 3:9 No one who is **born** ([gennao](#) - perfect tense) of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is **born** ([gennao](#) - perfect tense) of God.

1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves **isborn** ([gennao](#) - perfect tense) of God and knows God.

1 John 5:1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is **born** ([gennao](#) - perfect tense) of God; and whoever

loves the Father loves the child **born** ([gennao](#) - perfect tense) of Him.

**Young's Literal** "Everyone who **is believing** (picks up the sense of the present tense) that Jesus is the Christ, of God he **hath been begotten** ([gennao](#) - perfect tense), and every one who is loving (picks up the sense of the present tense) Him who **did beget** ([gennao](#) - aorist tense), doth love also him who is **begotten** ([gennao](#) - perfect tense) of Him.

(**Comment** - Young's translation while awkward is more literal and helps us see that **believing** is the result of having been **born of God**)

1 John 5:4 For whatever is **born** ([gennao](#) - perfect tense) of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

1 John 5:18 We know that no one who is **born** ([gennao](#) - perfect tense) of God sins; but He who was **born** ([gennao](#) - perfect tense) of God keeps him and the evil one does not touch him.

## **DO YOU HAVE THE BIRTHMARK? WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ABOUT JESUS?**

Many who preach on 1 John 5:1 use it primarily as an evangelistic passage that clearly states how one is born again. While there is no doubt that the one who places their faith in Jesus the Christ will be born again, is evangelism really John's main intent? Or could this opening clause have another sense in context? Remember that 1Jn 5:13 states one of John's main purposes in this letter is that his readers might have assurance they have eternal life. As discussed below, a number of other writers and preachers see 1 John 5:1 as providing another "test" or evidence that one has truly been born again. I will leave it to your discernment to which is that the most accurate interpretation of this passage. And it is certainly possible that John intended a double sense as he seems to have done in some of his writing.

**Whoever believes** ([pisteuo](#) - present tense - continues to believe) **that Jesus** ([Iesous](#)) **is the Christ** ([Christos](#)) **is born** ([gennao](#) - perfect tense, divine passive) **of God** - I will alert you that this first clause can be very confusing if you read it too quickly, which is exactly what I did which led me initially to misinterpret the meaning of **believes** in the present tense. I interpreted belief as the cause of being born again and not the result or evidence of one who has been born again. As explained below, the fact that one continues to believe (as indicated by the present tense) is actually evidence that they are genuine believers. "*The tenses of the Greek verbs indicate that belief is the **result**, not the **cause**, of the new birth.*" (Barton [p105](#)) In other words, the only way a person would exhibit evidence of continuing belief is by have a supernatural Source (the indwelling Spirit) enabling them to continue to believe. Don't misunderstand what I am saying. I am not saying that belief does not save, because without question faith (belief) alone saves. However, the faith that saves is not alone, but gives evidence that it is genuine by bearing fruit or works as James calls it (See Jas 2:14-26+) Both John the Baptist and Jesus exhorted their hearers to bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance. If there is absolutely no (spiritual) fruit, this is strong presumptive evidence that there is not root (of genuine saving faith). In 1Jn 5:1 the "*spiritual fruit*" (so to speak) is the fact that an individual **keeps on believing** in Jesus. His/her continuing to believe in Jesus does not save him/her, but demonstrates that he/her is genuinely saved. To say it another way, continuing belief is a "work" that gives evidence one has truly been born again. Are you confused (see the comments by the experts below)? Clearly, John's major thrust in this first part of chapter 5 is to address the evidence that one is truly **born of God** or **born of Him** (1Jn 5:1, 4 and "children of God" 1Jn 5:2), as manifestations of this evidence in one's life will undergird their assurance of eternal life (1Jn 5:13). Note that **born** ([gennao](#)) is in the perfect tense signifying past completed action (that moment when one initially believed in Jesus and were born again by the Spirit) with continuing or ongoing effect which speaks of permanence of the (new) birth. "*The emphasis is on the state or result that follows from the completed action. This present result is the effect of which the action in the past is the cause.*" ([Storms](#)) In other words, everyone God has saved in the past continues to give evidence of that fact in the present and in this context that evidence is they keep on "believing."

*Continuing activity of believing is the result, and therefore the evidence, of our past experience of new birth.*

**John Stott** explains that **believes** in the present tense "shows clearly that **believing** is the **consequence**, not the **cause**, of the new birth. Our present, continuing activity of believing is the result, and **therefore the evidence, of our past experience of new birth** by which we became and remain God's children." (Borrow [The Letters of John](#))

*There is no such thing as an "unbelieving believer."*

**John MacArthur** agrees adding that "The point is that, contrary to [Arminian theology](#), continual faith is the **result** of the new birth, not its **cause**. Christians do not keep themselves Born Again by believing, and lose their salvation if they stop believing. On the

contrary, it is their [perseverance in the faith](#) that gives evidence that they have been born again. The faith that God grants in regeneration (Eph. 2:8+) is permanent, and cannot be lost. Nor, as some teach, can it die, for dead faith does not save (Jas 2:14–26+). There is no such thing as an “unbelieving believer.”...The primary mark of an overcomer involves the doctrinal test of believing the truth of the Christian faith. (SEE [1-3 John MacArthur New Testament Commentary - Page 177](#))

*“The Divine Begetting is the [antecedent](#),  
not the [consequent](#) of the believing”*

-- [Robert Law](#)

**I Howard Marshall** agrees with **Stott** and **MacArthur** writing that "Faith is thus a sign of the new birth (ED: NOTE HE DOES NOT SAY THE "CAUSE" BUT THE "RESULT" OF THE NEW BIRTH), just as love (1Jn 4:7) and doing what is right (1Jn 2:29; 3:9f.) are also indications that a person has been **born of God**. At the same time, however, faith is a condition of the new birth: “to all who received him, to those who believed in His Name, he gave the right to become children of God” (Jn. 1:12+). Here, however, John is not trying to show how a person experiences the new birth; his aim is rather to indicate the evidence which shows that a person stands in the continuing relationship of a child to God his Father: that evidence is that he holds to the true faith (ED: IN OTHER WORDS, CONTINUES TO BELIEVE AS EXPLAINED ABOVE) about Jesus. (Bolding added) (Borrow [The Epistles of John - page 226](#))

*Regeneration precedes faith.*

- ESV Study Bible

(See Grudem's [Systematic Theology](#) page 609)

**Steven Cole** writes "Regeneration (or the new birth) is *totally* a work of God. We cannot play an active role at all, in that we are spiritually dead. Many mistakenly think that being born again is a matter of our “free will” or choice. Certainly, we must choose to trust in Christ (John 1:12). But the question is, how can a dead sinner do that? John 1:13 states, “who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” Just as none of us had any say in whether we would be born physically, neither did we determine that we would be born spiritually. It is entirely a work of God according to His sovereign will. (See Wayne Grudem's chapter on Regeneration - scroll to page 606 [Systematic Theology](#)) In other words, the Bible teaches that the reason you choose to trust Christ is that God has quickened you from the dead. Otherwise, no one could or would choose to trust in Christ. The new birth is essential. For some reason, even the New American Standard Bible, which is usually quite literal, obscures the sense of the Greek verb in verse 1. The English Standard Version translates correctly, “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God...” The Greek verb (perfect tense) indicates an action that took place in the past with continuing results in the present and future. In other words, John is emphasizing that faith is the result or evidence of the new birth, not the cause of it. A person who has been born of God in the past will be characterized by ongoing faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. So one way that you can tell if you've been born again is to answer the question, “Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God?”

**Many evangelicals object to the teaching that regeneration precedes saving faith.** (By precedes, I mean logically as the cause, not chronologically. Chronologically, faith occurs immediately after regeneration.) Critics say, “How can God (or preachers) call upon people to believe in Christ as Savior if they cannot believe?” **So they make faith the means of regeneration, rather than the result.** But I would counter, how could Jesus command a dead man, “Lazarus, come forth” (John 11:43)? Isn't it futile to command a dead man to do anything? Yes, unless it is the will of Jesus to raise him from the dead! Then, with the command, God imparts the power of new life, so that Lazarus can obey the command. Lazarus' coming forth is clear evidence that he had already received new life from God. Faith is the evident result of the new birth, not the cause of it.

**Gary Burge** agrees that "In 1Jn 5:1a we learn that holding a true confession (ED: CONTINUALLY BELIEVING) of faith is evidence of rebirth (ED: NOT THE CAUSE OF IT). (SEE [The NIV Application Commentary on the Bible](#))

*Faith and love are each expressions  
of the work of God in a person's life.*

**M A Thompson** explains **believes** ([pisteuo](#) - present tense - continues to believe) this way - Two parallel statements in 1Jn 5:1 both begin, **everyone who ...** (ED: NAS = "WHOEVER...") One points to the importance of faith in Jesus, the other to the importance of loving each other. These are not two separate commands that one must keep in order to become a child of God; rather, they are two expressions of what the child of God does. Faith and love are each expressions of the work of God in a person's life. (See [1-3 John - Page 129](#))

*A present action of believing is evidence  
of a past experience of begetting.*

**Sam Storms** adds "John says in 1Jn 5:1 that whoever is presently believing in Christ has in the past been born or begotten of God i.e., a present action of believing is evidence of a past experience of begetting....When one examines these texts where the

terminology of regeneration is used, one finds that John is concerned with describing the consequences or fruit of the new birth: Question: "How may I know that regeneration has occurred? How may I know if someone has been born again?" Answer: "That person will not practice sin (1Jn 3:9; 5:18). That person will practice righteousness (1Jn 2:29). That person will love the brethren (1Jn 4:7). That person will believe in Christ (1Jn 5:1). And that person will overcome the world (1Jn 5:4)." John's point is simply that these activities are the evidence of the new birth and hence of salvation. Their absence is the evidence that regeneration has not taken place. He makes this point, not because he wants to demonstrate the cause/effect relationship between regeneration and faith, but because he wants to provide the church with tests by which to discern between true and spurious "believers".

*Faith is both the condition  
and the proof of regeneration.*

-- James Smith

**Phil Newton** says it this way first asking "What does it look like when we're born of God?" He then lists the 5 evidences in 1Jn 5:1-5. "We keep believing in Jesus as the Messiah...(2) We keep loving God as Father....(3) We keep loving those born of God... Calvin aptly wrote, "There is never a true love to God, except when our brethren are also loved".....(4) We keep doing God's commands.... (5) We keep overcoming the world."

*The regenerate Christian (past) must constantly live out (present) his faith  
in Jesus as Messiah, and also give his sustained allegiance to the love command.*

**Stephen Smalley** - The evidence of standing in a proper relationship to God, he says, consists of faith (ED:[pisteuo](#) - present tense - continues to believe) in Jesus as Messiah (cf. John 1:12, where **faith** is described as the condition of spiritual regeneration; elsewhere John describes right behavior [1Jn 2:29; 1Jn 3:9–10] and love [1Jn 4:7] as **indications of birth from God**).....The perfect tense of γενένηται ([gennao](#))(literally, as in our translation, "has been born") indicates, as often in 1 John, a past act with continuing effects in the present. The regenerate Christian (past) must constantly live out (present) his faith in Jesus as Messiah, and also give his sustained allegiance to the love command. (Borrow [1, 2, 3 John](#) page 266)

**Barker** - "**Believing**" in Jesus (present tense in Gr) is a direct consequence of our "having been born" (perfect tense in Gr) of God and therefore becomes a "test" or proof of that birth. (See [The Expositor's Bible Commentary - Abridged Edition](#))

**D Edmond Hiebert** - John's assertion "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" declares the content and result of saving faith.

**Rick Williamson** - The present participle seems to emphasize continuous believing—everyone who keeps on believing—not a once-for-all moment of spiritual rebirth. Ongoing belief and obedience (v 2) provide evidence that one is born of God. (1-3 John - Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition)

**A E Brooke** makes an interesting comment - Where true faith in Jesus as God's appointed messenger to men is present, there the new birth has taken place. The writer does not state whether faith is the cause or the result of the new birth.....**But incidentally the tenses "make it clear that the Divine Begetting is the antecedent, not the consequent of the believing."** "Christian belief, which is essentially the spiritual recognition of spiritual truth, is a function of the Divine Life as imparted to men" (Law).

**Brian Bill** asks "Do you ever doubt that you're a Christian? Every wonder if someone you know who claims to be a Christian is a true Christ-follower? These signs will help us see what salvation is all about. Signs of our Salvation. Belief. The first sign is belief. (COMMENT - Notice that while faith in Christ alone saves, Bill is saying that faith itself is a sign of genuine conversion! So if you made a profession of Christ 10 years ago and you are still believing that Jesus is the Christ, your belief serves as a sign to authenticate or validate the reality of your salvation. In other words, you are "safe and secure" for all eternity! That's the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!)

**THOUGHT** - As mentioned at the beginning of these notes, a number of preachers do not interpret this first clause as explained in the preceding comments. In other words, they do not see one who keeps on believing as evidence of the new birth. They interpret John as describing what a person has to do to be saved and that is to believe in Jesus as the Christ, which of course is a true statement, but does not appear to be the thrust of this passage which in context is to show the signs that demonstrate one is born again. Let me give you one example from **Thomas Constable** says "*The first part of this verse is one of the clearest statements in Scripture of what a person has to do to be saved (cf. John 20:31). There is no other way that John ever defined a Christian. We must believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ (i.e., the Anointed One whom God promised to provide as a substitute sacrifice for the sins of the world). What defines a Christian is his or her faith in Jesus Christ, **not lifestyle, good works, or obedience to God.***" While no one would argue that belief in Christ is the only way to salvation, Constable then goes on to state that there is no role for **lifestyle, good works or obedience to God** as evidence that one is truly a Christian! Is that really what the Bible teaches (cf

Jas 2:14-26+)? Yes, he is correct that faith alone saves, but the faith that truly saves is not alone and John goes on in 1Jn 5:1-5 to give evidences of a faith that truly saves, including a faith that loves fellow believers and a faith that obeys God's commandments. John told us how to be saved in his Gospel (Jn 20:31+ - [see uses of pisteuo in the Gospel versus the Epistle](#)) and what he is doing now is giving several lines of evidence that show one is truly a Christian, and the first evidence is that he continues to believe in Jesus. To show how important continuing belief is as evidence genuine regeneration here is an example from Constable's former associate [Zane Hodges](#) who had no problem saying that a close friend who had totally abandoned the Christian faith and no longer believed things he once preached and taught was still genuinely saved! John would say whoever does not continue believing is not born of God! (For a complete discussion see **item #7** in the paper entitled [The Unusual and Troubling Teachings of Zane Hodges](#).)

Let me introduce you to another man named **Charles Templeton** (see my short article [The Tragic Tale of Charles Templeton](#)), who carried on evangelistic crusades with Billy Graham, and ostensibly appeared to be a man **born of God**. Years later Templeton rejected the truth about God in his book [Farewell to God: My Reasons for Rejecting the Christian Faith. BORROW the book and see page 232](#)), where he listed 16 things that he now believed (you will be flabbergasted by his list!) I have several personal examples that are similar to Templeton's journey. You cannot convince me that John's words "Whoever continues to believe that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" is not a critically important "test" of one's eternal fate!

As an aside, while we are saved by faith alone, that initial faith must be genuine and not fake faith. Does the latter occur in the New Testament? Absolutely. Notice in John 2:23-24+ we read "Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, **many believed** in His name (**ED**: Ostensibly this sounds like they were genuine believers, but read on), beholding His signs which He was doing. But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men." (Jn 2:23-24+) John Piper explains that "Some Belief Is Not Saving. In view of this, John 2:23–25+ has an unsettling effect. What it says, in essence, is that Jesus knows what is in every heart, and so he can see when someone *believes* in a way that is not *really believing*. In other words, Jesus' ability to know every heart perfectly leads to the unsettling truth that some belief is not the kind of belief that obtains fellowship with Jesus and eternal life. Some belief is not *saving belief*." (If you are unsure of this truth read Dr Piper's full sermon - [He Knew What Was in Man](#)).

We see another example of belief in Jesus which did not continue in John 8:30+ where John records that many Jews "came to believe in Him." Jesus Himself demonstrates that their "faith" did not continue because a few minutes later He asked these "believing Jews" "Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, **why do you not believe Me?** "He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because **you are not of God.**" (cf 1Jn 5:1 phrase "**born of God**") (Jn 8:46-47+) Their faith failed to continue and was clear evidence to Jesus that they were not **born of God!**

**Kenneth Wuest** - The Cerinthian Gnostics denied the identity of Jesus and the Christ. That is, they denied that the individual whom the Christian Church knew by the name "Jesus" was also the Christ. The word "**Christ**" is the English spelling of the Greek word Christos which means "**the anointed one.**" But the predicted Anointed One was to be God-incarnate, virgin-born into the human race (Isa 7:14, cp Ps 2:2, Da 9:25, Da 9:26). Thus, the incarnation is in view here. But this belief is not a mere intellectual assent to the fact of the incarnation, but a heart acceptance of all that it implied in its purpose, the substitutionary death of the Incarnate One for sinners, thus making a way of salvation in which God could bestow mercy on the basis of justice satisfied. That person, John says, and he uses the perfect tense here, has been born of God and as a result is a child of God. [Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

## **BORN OF GOD**

**Is born** ([gennao](#) - perfect tense, divine passive) **of God** (NET = fathered by God) - Once a baby is born it cannot be "unborn!" (i.e., assuming it is a real baby and not a manufactured baby made to look like the real thing). Once you are born, you are born! So just as in physical birth, so too in spiritual birth a new born believer cannot be unborn and will cease believing! Stated another way, he or she cannot lose their salvation (new birth)! And just as a physical baby is born into a family, so too believers are born into a family, the family of God (Jn 1:12-13+). And as a newborn baby has characteristic features of its parents, spiritually new born babes have characteristics of their heavenly Father (cp 2Pe 1:4+). In context, he or she is born with a desire to love the Father and love the children in His family. **Wuest** adds that **born** in the perfect tense signifies that "The relationship between God and the believer as Father and child is a permanent one." ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

**THOUGHT** - Notice that even the perfect tense of the verb **born** supports the [doctrine of eternal security!](#) Once saved, always saved! The caveat is one must be genuinely saved! Asking Jesus into one's heart and living the

rest of your life like the devil is **absolutely not** evidence of genuine salvation contrary to what some evangelical scholars write! Do not be deceived, dear reader!

*"Everyone God has saved in the past  
continues to give evidence of that fact in the present."*

-- John MacArthur

**Steven Cole** makes a good point writing that "We live in a culture which has taken some biblical words and used them in a way that redefines and cheapens them so that they no longer mean what the Bible means. But then they seep back into the vocabulary of Christians with their devalued meaning. Take the term "Born Again." The media uses it to describe anyone who makes a comeback or gets a fresh start in life. A baseball team that has been in the cellar and suddenly starts winning is called "the born again" Dodgers. Chrysler under Lee Iacocca was a "born again" corporation. And so it's not surprising when over 50 percent of Americans say that they're "born again Christians." They mean that they had some sort of religious or emotional experience that resulted in a fresh start in life. It may have involved praying to Jesus or "inviting Him into their hearts." But in most cases, they have no idea what the Bible means by being born again. ([Vital Signs of the New Birth](#))

## **THOSE BORN OF GOD TRULY LOVE**

**And whoever loves** ([agapao](#) - present tense) **the Father** ([pater](#)) **loves** ([agapao](#) - present tense) **the child born** ([gennao](#) - perfect tense) **of Him - Loves** is in the present tense (and active voice calling for a decision of our will - we are not robots) which speaks of one's habitual choice to practice loving others. The test of true love for God (it's easy to **say** "I love You Lord") is whether we love the children of God, our Christian brethren (it's more difficult to **show** we truly love God by loving others, who are sometimes not the most lovable, humanly speaking). Virtually all the modern translations miss the second use of [gennao](#) in this verse, Young's Literal picking it up as "*loving Him Who did beget* ([gennao](#) - aorist tense = at a point in time He birthed us!)." This is incredibly beautiful, for in the every sense, God is truly our Father (and for one who had 2 derelict fathers this is amazing love indeed!)

*Those whose lives are not characterized by love for others  
are not Christians, no matter what they claim.*

**John MacArthur** writes that the perfect tense of **born** signifies that "Those who possess the life of God have the capacity and the experience of loving. In contrast, the one who does not love does not know God. Those whose lives are not characterized by love for others are not Christians, no matter what they claim. The Jewish religionists (scribes, Pharisees, and other leaders) of Jesus' day, as well as the false teachers in the church of John's day, knew a lot about God, but they did not really know Him (cf. 1Ti 6:20; 2Ti 3:7). The absence of God's love in their lives revealed their unregenerate condition as conclusively as did their aberrant theology." ([MacArthur Commentary](#))

*"In essence, faith and love are inseparable. In God's family,  
faith in God and love for Him and His children are totally integrated."*

-- Simon Kistemaker

**MacArthur** adds that "The new birth brings people not only into a faith relationship with God, but also into a love relationship with Him and His children. John has emphasized that principle throughout this epistle: 1Jn 2:10-11+, 1Jn 3:10+, 1Jn 3:14+, 1Jn 3:17+, 1Jn 3:23+, 1Jn 4:7-8+, 1Jn 4:12+, 1Jn 4:20-21+. (SEE [1-3 John MacArthur New Testament Commentary - Page 180](#))

*"Since God regenerates us by faith, He must necessarily  
be loved by us as a Father; and this love embraces all His children."*

--John Calvin

**W E Vine**- Since every believer has part in the gift of divine life (cp 2Pe 1:4), by which he is born of God, it is inevitable that this life will be manifested in love to those who likewise are born of God...In 1Jn 4:7-21 stress was laid upon the outward expression of brotherly love, as the effect of the inward experience of the love of God; here the stress is laid upon the outward expression, as the effect of the inward experience of the new birth. In the former passage the truth set forth was that every believer has experience of God's love and therefore shows it in love to others. Here what is set forth is that every believer shares the gift of life in Christ, and this again involves the manifestation of love to those who likewise are blessed. None of this is possible apart from faith in Christ, but, on the other hand, faith inevitably leads to the exercise of love. The whole of this passage teaches, not that in loving our brother we rise to the love of God, but that, on the contrary, God Himself is the Source of all the love that we can and do show." ([The Collected Writings](#))

**Paul** defined this supernatural **love** in his first letter to the Corinthians writing "Love (agape) is patient

(makrothumeo = has a "long fuse" so to speak! And present tense = continually!), love is kind (present tense), [and] is not jealous (present tense); love does not brag (present tense) [and] is not arrogant (present tense), (13:5+) does not act unbecomingly (present tense); it does not seek (present tense) its own, is not provoked (present tense), does not take into account (present tense) a wrong suffered (it does not keep books on evil. You never "keep books" do you?), (13:6+) does not rejoice (present tense) in unrighteousness, but rejoices (present tense) with the truth; (13:7+) bears (stego [great verb for husbands to understand!] present tense) all things, believes (present tense) all things, hopes (present tense) all things, endures (present tense) all things. (1Cor 13:4-7+)

**THOUGHT** - Notice that love is not a one time act but an ongoing process as emphasized by the repeated use of the present tense. Don't dare try to love like this by relying on yourself. This 'present tense love' clearly calls for continual reliance on the Spirit, not on the self!!

*The two loves are inseparable (1Jn 4:12);  
we are to love others in God, and God in others...  
We can recognize that we love God's children properly  
by loving God Himself obediently  
--Stephen Smalley*

**Matthew Henry** - True love for the people of God, may be distinguished from natural kindness or party attachments, by its being united with the love of God, and obedience to His commands. The same Holy Spirit that taught the love, will have taught obedience also; and that man cannot truly love the children of God, who, by habit, commits sin or neglects known duty (1Jn 5:2). As God's commands are holy, just, and good rules of liberty and happiness, so those who are born of God and love Him, do not consider them grievous, but lament that they cannot serve Him more perfectly (1Jn 5:3).

**John Stott** helps us disentangle John's tightly woven argument in 1Jn 5:1-5 - We have by now become familiar with the three tests which John applies, with repeated but varied emphasis, to the professing Christian. In chapter 2 he describes all three tests in order, obedience (1Jn 2:3-6), love (1Jn 2:7-11) and belief (1Jn 2:18-27). In chapter 3 he treats only obedience (1Jn 2:28-3:10) and love (1Jn 3:11-18), while in chapter 4 only belief (1Jn 4:1-6) and love (1Jn 4:7-12). In 1Jn 4:13-21 he has combined the doctrinal and social tests. Now, however, in the brief opening paragraph of chapter 5, we meet the three together again. The words 'believe' and 'faith' occur in 1Jn 5:1, 1Jn 5:4 and 1Jn 5:5, 'love' in 1Jn 5:1, 1Jn 5:2 and 1Jn 5:3, and the need to obey or carry out 'his commands' in 1Jn 5:2 and 1Jn 5:3. What John is at pains to show is the essential unity of his threefold thesis. He has not chosen three tests arbitrarily or at random and stuck them together artificially. On the contrary, he shows that they are so closely woven together into a single, coherent fabric that it is difficult to unpick and disentangle the threads. The previous paragraph, at the end of chapter 4, ended with a statement of our duty, if we love God, to love our brother also (1Jn 4:21). John now elaborates the essential connection between these two loves, and between them and both belief and obedience. We cannot believe in Jesus Christ without loving the Father and his children (1Jn 5:1-2a); we cannot love the Father without obeying His commands and overcoming the world (1Jn 5:2b-4a); and we cannot overcome the world without believing in Jesus Christ (1Jn 5:4b-5). So this compressed paragraph begins and ends with belief, but between these two termini is concerned with love and obedience. The real link between the three tests is seen to be the new birth. Faith, love and obedience are all the natural growth which follows a birth from above, just as in 1Jn 4:13-16 faith and love were shown to be evidences of the mutual indwelling of God and His people. (Borrow [The Letters of John](#))

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**Life Application Bible Commentary - THREE TESTS FOR BELIEVERS** - Throughout this letter, John has been describing how to determine true believers. The false teachers had done a good job of confusing the believers, so John went back to the basics and described three tests for discerning true believers. Like a braided cord, these three "tests" are interwoven, each dependent upon the other, none existing alone in the life of a true believer. True believers ...

1. Obey God's commands in his Word. 1Jn 2:3-6; 1Jn 2:28-3:10; 1Jn 5:2-3
2. Love God and other believers; have lifestyles characterized by love. 1Jn 2:7-11; 1Jn 3:11-18; 1Jn 4:7-12; 1Jn 5:1-3
3. Believe in the truth of the Gospel message that Jesus Christ is the Savior. 1Jn 2:18-27; 1Jn 4:1; 1Jn 5:1, 1Jn 5:4-5 ([1, 2, & 3 John](#))

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**Believes** (4100)(pisteuo) means to entrust oneself to an entity (in this case Jesus) in complete confidence. To believe in with the implication of total commitment to the one who is trusted (Jesus). This is not just intellectual assent, but a that is not associated in a change in one's heart and thus in one's behavior or actions. Belief in the New Testament sense that effects the new birth denotes more than a "demonic" like, intellectual assent to a set of facts or truths. The demons believe but they are clearly not saved. Genuine belief does involve an intellectual assent and consent of one's mind, but also includes an act of one's heart and will. Biblical

saving faith is not passive assent but an active staking of one's life on the claims of God. The respected Greek lexicon author **W E Vine** defines belief as consisting of (1) a firm conviction which produces full acknowledgment of God's revelation of Truth - (2Th 2:11 -"in order that they all may be judged who did not believe [pisteuo] the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness."); (2) a personal surrender to the Truth (Jn 1:12 "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe [pisteuo] in His name") and (3) a conduct inspired by and consistent with that surrender.

When missionary **John Paton** was translating the Scripture for the South Sea islanders, he was unable to find a word in their vocabulary for the concept of believing, trusting, or having faith. He had no idea how he would convey that to them. One day while he was in his hut translating, a native came running up the stairs into Paton's study and flopped in a chair, exhausted. He said to Paton, "It's so good to rest my whole weight in this chair." John Paton had his word: **Faith** is resting your whole weight on God. That word went into the translation of their New Testament and helped bring that civilization of natives to Christ. Believing is putting your whole weight on God. If God said it, then it's true, and we're to believe it.

#### **PISTEUO USES BY JOHN - NOTE THE MAJORITY ARE IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, NOT THE EPISTLE -**

Jn. 1:7; Jn. 1:12; Jn. 1:50; Jn. 2:11; Jn. 2:22; Jn. 2:23; Jn. 2:24; Jn. 3:12; Jn. 3:15; Jn. 3:16; Jn. 3:18; Jn. 3:36; Jn. 4:21; Jn. 4:39; Jn. 4:41; Jn. 4:42; Jn. 4:48; Jn. 4:50; Jn. 4:53; Jn. 5:24; Jn. 5:38; Jn. 5:44; Jn. 5:46; Jn. 5:47; Jn. 6:29; Jn. 6:30; Jn. 6:35; Jn. 6:36; Jn. 6:40; Jn. 6:47; Jn. 6:64; Jn. 6:69; Jn. 7:5; Jn. 7:31; Jn. 7:38; Jn. 7:39; Jn. 7:48; Jn. 8:24; Jn. 8:30; Jn. 8:31; Jn. 8:45; Jn. 8:46; Jn. 9:18; Jn. 9:35; Jn. 9:36; Jn. 9:38; Jn. 10:25; Jn. 10:26; Jn. 10:37; Jn. 10:38; Jn. 10:42; Jn. 11:15; Jn. 11:25; Jn. 11:26; Jn. 11:27; Jn. 11:40; Jn. 11:42; Jn. 11:45; Jn. 11:48; Jn. 12:11; Jn. 12:36; Jn. 12:37; Jn. 12:38; Jn. 12:39; Jn. 12:42; Jn. 12:44; Jn. 12:46; Jn. 13:19; Jn. 14:1; Jn. 14:10; Jn. 14:11; Jn. 14:12; Jn. 14:29; Jn. 16:9; Jn. 16:27; Jn. 16:30; Jn. 16:31; Jn. 17:8; Jn. 17:20; Jn. 17:21; Jn. 19:35; Jn. 20:8; Jn. 20:25; Jn. 20:29; Jn. 20:31; 1 Jn. 3:23; 1 Jn. 4:1; 1 Jn. 4:16; 1 Jn. 5:1; 1 Jn. 5:5; 1 Jn. 5:10; 1 Jn. 5:13

**Christ** (5547) **Christos** from **chrío** = to rub or anoint, consecrate to an office)(See also **Messiah - Anointed One**) describes one who has been anointed with oil, one who has been consecrated. Christos describes one who has been anointed, symbolizing appointment to a task. It is used here as the title "Anointed One" and is the Greek synonym for "Messiah." Christos is used in the **Septuagint** describing everyone anointed with the holy oil, especially the priesthood (Lev. 4:5+, Lev 4:16+) and it is also a name applied to those who were acting as redeemers like Cyrus.

#### **Related Resources:**

- [Messiah the Anointed On](#)
- Messianic Prophecies
- [Josh McDowell's classic "More than a Carpenter"](#)
- [How a Jewish man Michael Goldstone met Messiah \(site has Jewish testimonies\)](#) - Highly recommended if you have Jewish friends to whom you would like to share the Good News.
- [Is Jesus the Messiah?](#)
- [Where do the Hebrew Scriptures prophesy the death and resurrection of the Messiah?](#)
- [Which psalms predict the coming of Jesus Christ?](#)
- [What does Messiah mean?](#)
- [Why do most Jews reject Jesus as the Messiah?](#)

**Born** (begotten, father of, conceived) (1080) **gennao** from **genos** = offspring, in turn from **ginomai** = to become) means to beget, to bring forth, to give birth, to procreate a descendant, to produce offspring, to generate. To beget is spoken of men (Mt 1:2-16), whereas to bear is spoken of women. The passive voice means to be begotten or to be born. The most notable uses of **gennao** are in the description of Jesus' virgin birth in which He was supernaturally "**conceived** (gennao) in her (Mary) of the Holy Spirit." (Mt 1:20) and His subsequent supernatural resurrection in which He is described as "**begotten** (gennao)." (Acts 13:33).

**Gennao** describes the commencement of life where previously none had existed. In fact most of the uses of gennao refer to biology (birth) but as noted some refer to spirituality (new birth). **Gennao** can refer literally to begetting or conceiving a child or figuratively to spiritually "begetting" a person, resulting in them finding new life when they are born again (Jn 3:3, 5) In a similar use Paul presents himself as the spiritual father of the Corinthians. (1Cor 4:15)

The **born** (**gennao** - perfect tense) is found 10x - 1Jn 2:29; 1Jn 3:9 (2x); 1Jn 4:7; 1Jn 5:1 (3x); 1Jn 5:4; 1Jn 5:18 (2x). In 1Jn 3:14 he uses another term "passed out of" (*metabaino*) death into life."

**Love** (25)(agapao) means to love unconditionally and sacrificially as God Himself loves sinful men (John 3:16), the way He loves

the Son (John 3:35, 15:9, 17:23, 24). Note that [agapao](#) is a verb and by its verbal nature calls for action. This quality of love is not an emotion but is an action initiated by a volitional choice."expresses the purest, noblest form of love, which is volitionally driven, not motivated by superficial appearance, emotional attraction, or sentimental relationship." (John MacArthur)

**Vine** writes that "Love can be known only from the actions it prompts. God's love is seen in the gift of His Son, 1 John 4:9, 10. But obviously this is not the love of complacency, or affection, that is, it was not drawn out by any excellency in its objects, Ro 5:8. It was an exercise of the divine will in deliberate choice, made without assignable cause save that which lies in the nature of God Himself." ([Collected Writings](#))

**Wuest** says agape "speaks of a love which is awakened by a sense of value in an object which causes one to prize it. It springs from an apprehension of the preciousness of an object. It is a love of esteem and approbation. The quality of this love is determined by the character of the one who loves, and that of the object loved." ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

**AGAPAO USES BY JOHN** - Jn. 3:16; Jn. 3:19; Jn. 3:35; Jn. 8:42; Jn. 10:17; Jn. 11:5; Jn. 12:43; Jn. 13:1; Jn. 13:23; Jn. 13:34; Jn. 14:15; Jn. 14:21; Jn. 14:23; Jn. 14:24; Jn. 14:28; Jn. 14:31; Jn. 15:9; Jn. 15:12; Jn. 15:17; Jn. 17:23; Jn. 17:24; Jn. 17:26; Jn. 19:26; Jn. 21:7; Jn. 21:15; Jn. 21:16; Jn. 21:20; 1 Jn. 2:10; 1 Jn. 2:15; 1 Jn. 3:10; 1 Jn. 3:11; 1 Jn. 3:14; 1 Jn. 3:18; 1 Jn. 3:23; 1 Jn. 4:7; 1 Jn. 4:8; 1 Jn. 4:10; 1 Jn. 4:11; 1 Jn. 4:12; 1 Jn. 4:19; 1 Jn. 4:20; 1 Jn. 4:21; 1 Jn. 5:1; 1 Jn. 5:2; 2 Jn. 1:1; 2 Jn. 1:5; 3 Jn. 1:1; Jude 1:1; Rev. 1:5; Rev. 3:9; Rev. 12:11; Rev. 20:9

## JOHN PIPER SUMMARIZES JOHN'S EVIDENCE OF THE NEW BIRTH

I think God wants the totality of this book to have its impact on us. It is dominated by the concern to give **tests of life**" or effects and evidences of the new birth. He gives at least eleven evidences that we are born again. We could probably boil them all down to **faith** and **love**. But for now let's let them stand the way he says them. (ED: See comments on Born Again) Here they are:

### 1. Those who are born of God keep his commandments.

1 John 2:3-4+: "By this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says 'I know him' but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

1 John 3:24+: "Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him."

### 2. Those who are born of God walk as Christ walked.

1 John 2:56+: "By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked."

### 3. Those who are born of God don't hate others but love them.

1 John 2:9+: "Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness."

1 John 3:14+: "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death."

1 John 4:7-8+: "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love."

1 John 4:20+: "If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar."

### 4. Those who are born of God don't love the world.

1 John 2:15+: "If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

### 5. Those who are born of God confess the Son and receive (have) him.

1 John 2:23+: "No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also."

1 John 4:15+: "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God."

1 John 5:12+: "Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life."

### 6. Those who are born of God practice righteousness.

1 John 2:29+: "If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him."

### **7. Those who are born of God don't make a practice of sinning.**

1 John 3:6+: "No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him."

1 John 3:9:10+: "No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother."

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."

### **8. Those who are born of God possess the Spirit of God.**

1 John 3:24+: "By this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us."

1 John 4:13+: "By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit."

### **9. Those who are born of God listen submissively to the apostolic Word.**

1 John 4:6+: "We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error."

### **10. Those who are born of God believe that Jesus is the Christ.**(ED: THAT IS THEIR CONTINUING BELIEF IS EVIDENCE THAT THEIR BELIEF IS SAVING BELIEF)

1 John 5:1+: "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God."

### **11. Those who are born of God overcome the world.**

1 John 5:4+: "Everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith."

**Two Wrong Conclusions** - One of the effects of all those "tests of life" is to overwhelm us with the sense that John may be saying: "If you're born again, you're perfect. If you're born again you don't sin at all. There is no defeat in the Christian life. There is only victory."

Another effect that these tests might have in our minds is to make us think we can lose our salvation. That is, we can be born again for a while and then begin to fail in these tests and die and lose the spiritual life that we were given in the new birth.

**Two Key Clarifications** - John is very aware that his words could be taken in these two wrong ways. So he is explicit as any writer in the New Testament that this is not the case: Christians are not sinless, and born-again people cannot lose their spiritual life and be lost.

He says in 1 John 1:8-10+, "If we say we have no sin [present tense], we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins [present tense], he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." So John is at pains to say that "walking in the light" (1Jn 1:7+) does not mean walking flawlessly. It means that, when you stumble, the light of Christ causes you to see it and hate it and confess it and move forward with Christ.

And John is just as jealous to make sure we don't infer from these "tests of life" that we can be born again and then later lose our life and be lost. 1John 2:19+ is one of the clearest statements in the Bible that there is another way to understand what happens when a person abandons the church. It says, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us."

Notice three things John says to protect us from misunderstanding. 1) Those who seemed to be born again and forsook the faith never were born again—they never were of us. "They went out from us, but they were not of us." In other words, the explanation is not that they lost their new birth. They never had it. 2) Those who are truly born again ("of us") will persevere to the end in faith. 1Jn 5:19b-+: "For if they had been of us, they would have continued with us." Endurance is not the cause of the new birth. The new birth is the cause of endurance, and endurance is the evidence of new birth. 3) God often makes plain who the false Christians are in the church by their eventual rejection of the truth and the people of God. Verse 19c: "But they went out, that it might become plain that

they all are not of us.” It became plain. And it often becomes plain today. ([Everyone Who Has Been Born of God Overcomes the World](#))

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**Steven Cole** introduces his sermon on 1Jn 5:1ff with these thoughts - Pollster George Barna classifies the *born-again* as all who say “they have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in their life today,” and who also indicate that they “believe that when they die they will go to heaven because they have confessed their sins and accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior” (*The Barna Update* [3/5/2001], cited by Ron Sider, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience* [Baker], p. 18). By those criteria, anywhere from **35 to 43 percent of the U.S. population claims to be born again**. At first glance, those numbers might cause us to rejoice. But, as evangelical theologian [Michael Horton \(Beyond Culture Wars\)](#) laments, “*Gallup and Barna hand us survey after survey demonstrating that evangelical Christians are as likely to embrace lifestyles every bit as hedonistic, materialistic, self-centered, and sexually immoral as the world in general*” (*Modern Reformation* [May-June, 1993], cited by Sider, p. 13).

Even among pastors, *Leadership* journal (Winter, 1988, p. 24) found that 20 percent viewed pornographic material at least once a month, and that was before the Internet was invented! Another survey from the same year found that only 64 percent of evangelical seminarians thought that watching pornographic movies is morally wrong (David Wells, *Christianity Today* [1/15/1988], p. 25). (ED: SOUNDS LIKE THEY HAVE EITHER NOT READ OR HAVE NOT TRULY BELIEVED JESUS' WARNING IN Mt 5:27-30+!)

Jesus warned that there will be many who call Him “Lord” who even have done miracles in His name, but at the judgment He will say, “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness” (Matt. 7:23+). In light of these things, we all need to be clear about whether we truly have been born again or not.

**COMMENT** - This genre of commentary makes me favor interpreting 1Jn 5:1 as a test or an evidence that one has genuinely been born again. Continuing faith (aka perseverance) is evidence one is truly a new creation in Christ (2Co 5:17+).

*The vital signs of the new birth are faith in Jesus Christ, love for others, and obedience to God's commandments.*

**Cole** goes on to comment "As the apostle John moves toward the conclusion of this letter, he brings together into one paragraph the three tests of authentic Christianity that he has repeated throughout the book. He does this to summarize and to show that these three tests are part of an interwoven fabric. They all depend on the new birth as their foundation. We may view them as three vital signs of the new birth. If a person has truly received new life from God, these vital signs will be evident. While they grow stronger over time, if there is no evidence of these signs, a person needs to examine whether or not he truly has been born again. John shows that...The vital signs of the new birth are faith in Jesus Christ, love for others, and obedience to God's commandments.

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## THE NEW BIRTH: ITS EVIDENCES AND RESULTS 1 JOHN

The Apostle John does not point out in this Epistle how regeneration can take place, because that he had already done in his Gospel, particularly John 1:12, 13+, and the whole of chapter 3. Here in his Epistle he points out the proofs whereby we may know we are born from above.

I. **Faith** is both the condition and the proof of regeneration. “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God” (1 John 5:1+).

II. **Love**. “Every one that loveth is born of God” (1 John 4:7+).

III. **Life**. “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit (margin, “practice”) sin; or as W., “No one who is a child of God is habitually guilty of sin” (1 John 3:9+). This is to say, one of the clearest proofs of the new birth is to be found in the fact that a new life is begun. Not a life of sin as before, but a life of victory—there may be, there usually is, especially in the early days, lapses into sin, but not a life of sin. By and by we learn the secret of full victory.

IV. **Overcomes**. “For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world” (1 John 5:4+).

V. **Kept**. “We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not, but He that was begotten of God (i.e., the Lord Jesus) keepeth him” (1 John 5:18+, R.V.). The begotten one is kept by the only Begotten of the Father. And the result?

VI. **Holiness**. Personal holiness. “Every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him” (1 John 2:29+).

([James Smith - Handfuls on Purpose](#))

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**A Family Thing** - When I was growing up, I often heard my pastor read the Ten Commandments and our Lord's command to love God with our whole being and our neighbor as ourselves. I knew I didn't fully live up to those demands, but I took them seriously.

As an 8-year-old, I felt sadness when a 6-year-old neighbor boy in a non-Christian family died. But I also felt guilt because I was not as sad as I would have been if this had happened to one of my brothers. And still today, even though my brothers and I all have our own families who come first in our lives, we still take a keen interest in one another.

God is pleased when we cherish these family ties, but He also wants us to love all who have entered our spiritual family by being born again. This is the family Jesus referred to when He responded to a message that His mother and brothers desired to speak with Him. He looked at the audience before Him and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother" (Mark 3:34-35). Loving the lost is our duty, but loving those born into God's family, no matter what their faults, should come naturally. It is, after all, a family thing. ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Love is an attitude, love is a prayer,  
For a soul in sorrow, a heart in despair;  
Love is good will for the gain of another,  
Love suffers long with the fault of a brother. —Anon.

We show our love for God when we love His family.

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### **J. C. Philpot. Daily Portions**

"Everyone who loves the Father loves his child as well." —1 John 5:1

Where there is love to Jesus, there will be love to those who are his by redemption, his byregeneration, and his by personal possession. The more, also, that we see and the more that we know of the beauty and blessedness of the Lord of life and glory, the more we shall love his image as we behold it visibly marked in his dear people, and the more we shall cleave to them as being Christ's with tender affection.

It is our dim, scanty, and imperfect knowledge of God the Father in his eternal love; and of the Lord Jesus Christ in his grace and glory, which leaves us so often cold, lifeless, and dead in our affections towards him; and with the declension of love towards the Head comes on decay of love towards his members. If there were more blessed revelations to our soul of the Person and work, grace and glory, beauty and blessedness of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is impossible but that we would more and more warmly and tenderly fall in love with him; for he is the most glorious object that the eyes of faith can see. He fills heaven with the resplendent beams of his glorious majesty; and has ravished the hearts of thousands of his dear family upon earth by the manifestations of his bleeding, dying love. So that if we love him not, it is because we know him not. If, then, to those who know him he makes himself precious, it is evident that just in proportion to our personal, spiritual, experimental knowledge of him will be our love to him. -- J. C. Philpot. Daily Portions

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### **The Right Answer**

"Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him"— 1 John 5:1

When Jesus asked a question, it was not because He didn't know the answer. You can be sure He was making a point.

Jesus and His disciples were in Caesarea Philippi, away from their own territory. It was a place of idolatry and oppression—a threatening place both politically and spiritually. In this environment, Jesus posed two important questions about the perception of His identity. He wasn't interested in His popularity rating. He wanted His followers to be sure about the One they were following.

Today our culture is just as hostile and opposed to Jesus as when He first asked the question: "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" (Matthew 16:13). As in Jesus' day, people offer a long list of inadequate and incorrect ideas about Jesus, ranging from "just a good teacher" all the way to "divisive" and "intolerant."

The real question was and continues to be: "Who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16:15). Peter boldly declared, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). Jesus said that Peter's accurate confession was a God-given insight and that he was blessed because of his declaration (Matthew 16:17).

Join Peter in confessing that Jesus is your Savior. Your life will be bolstered and blessed. Joe Stowell

O receive Him today who so loved you  
That He died on the cross for your sin;  
O believe Him and open your heart's door,  
Let the Savior who loves you come in.  
—Anon.

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. —1 John 5:1

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### **C H Spurgeon - Faith and regeneration-** sermon [Faith and Regeneration](#)

'Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.' 1 John 5:1

Do I this day believe that Jesus is the great Prophet anointed of God to reveal to me the way of salvation? Do I accept him as my teacher, and admit that he has the words of eternal life? If I so believe, I shall obey his gospel and possess eternal life. Do I accept him to be henceforth the revealer of God to my soul, the messenger of the covenant, the anointed Prophet of the Most High? But he is also a priest. Now, a priest is ordained from among men to offer sacrifices; do I firmly believe that Jesus was ordained to offer his one sacrifice for the sins of mankind, by the offering of which sacrifice once for all he has finished atonement and made complete expiation? Do I accept his atonement as an atonement for me, and receive his death as an expiation upon which I rest my hope for forgiveness of all my transgressions? Do I in fact believe Jesus to be the one sole, only propitiating priest, and accept him to act as priest for me? If so, then I have in part believed that Jesus is the Anointed. But he is also King, and if I desire to know whether I possess the right faith, I further must ask myself, 'Is Jesus, who is now exalted in heaven, who once bled on the cross, now King to me? Is his law my law? Do I desire entirely to submit myself to his government? Do I hate what he hates, and love what he loves? Do I live to praise him? Do I, as a loyal subject, desire to see his kingdom come and his will done on earth as it is in heaven?' My dear friend, if you can heartily and earnestly say, 'I accept Jesus Christ of Nazareth to be Prophet, Priest and King to me, because God has anointed him to exercise those three offices, and in each of these three characters I sincerely trust him,' then, dear friend, you have the faith of God's elect, for it is written, 'Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God'.

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### **Feeling Or Faith?**

By Henry G. Bosch

He who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. —1 John 5:10

Many people seem to think that it's wrong to say we know we are bound for heaven. But the Bible tells us we can be sure.

Jesus said, "He who believes in Me has everlasting life" (Jn. 6:47). To question, therefore, whether one has been redeemed after he has fulfilled God's requirement for salvation is to call God a liar! This is a terrible sin. How much better to trust God's Word, which says, "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 Jn. 5:1).

A believer was once asked, "Do you feel that your sins are forgiven?" "No," was the reply, "I do not always feel that they are forgiven, but I know they are, because God says so in His Word!"

Paul did not say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will feel that you are saved." He said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). Not all people feel that their sins are forgiven the moment they put their faith in Jesus Christ and receive the gift of salvation, but they are saved nonetheless. The feeling may come later.

Even the faintest cry to God for salvation is heard and answered. Rest on the rock-solid foundation of the Word, not on the sinking sand of your feeling!

Salvation is not feeling, but faith.

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### **Adrian Rogers - 1 John 5:1**

A birth is a definite experience. It would be almost nonsensical for me to ask, "Have you ever been born?" But suppose I did ask it, and you were to answer, "I hope so. I'm doing the best I can." Or, "I have always been born." No, birth implies a certainty. There was a time when you were not born and a time when you were. The story is told of Will Rogers who one time went in to get a passport, and the official said, "We need your birth certificate." He asked, "What for?" They said, "For proof of your birth." He shot back, "Well,

here I am, ain't I?" Truly, if you are trusting Jesus, you are saved.

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### **Octavius Winslow. Daily Walking with God - JUNE 22.**

"Every one that loves him that begat loves him also that is begotten of him." 1 John 5:1

THE feeling here referred to is a love to the saints, as saints. Whatever natural infirmities we may discover in them, whatever different shades of opinion they may hold to us, and to whatever branch of the Christian Church they may belong, yet the feeling which is to establish our own divine relationship is a love to them as brethren. Irrespective of all dissonance of creed, of denomination, of gifts, of attainment, of rank, of wealth, of nation—when we meet in a Christian professor the image of Christ, the family-likeness, our love will prompt us immediately to recognize that individual as a believer in Jesus, and to acknowledge him as a brother in the Lord. And what are the grounds of my affection? I may esteem his character, and prize his gifts—may admire his talents, and feel there is an assimilation of disposition, of taste, and of judgment—but my Christian love springs from an infinitely higher and holier source. I love him because the Father is in him, because the Son is in him, because the Holy Spirit is in him. I love him because he is an adopted child of the same family; a member of Christ, and of the same body; and a temple of the same Holy Spirit. I love him that is begotten, because I love Him that begat. It is Christ in one believer, going out after Himself in another believer. It is the Holy Spirit in one temple, holding fellowship with Himself in another temple. And from hence it is that we gather the evidence of our having "passed from death unto life." Loving the Divine Original, we love the human copy, however imperfect the resemblance. The Spirit of God dwelling in the regenerate soul yearns after the image of Jesus, wherever it is found. It pauses not to inquire to what branch of the Christian Church the individual resembling Him belongs; that with which it has to do is the resemblance itself.

Now, if we discover this going out of the heart in sweet, holy, and prayerful affection, towards every believer in Christ—be his denominational name what it may—the most to those who most bear the Savior's image—then have we the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us. A surer evidence we cannot have. There is the affection which surmounts all the separating walls of partition in the Church, and in spite of sects, and parties, and creeds, demonstrates its own divine nature and heavenly birth, by its blending with the same affection glowing in the bosom of another. And where this love to the brethren exists not at all in any Christian professor, we ask that individual, with all the tenderness of affection consistent with true faithfulness, where is the evidence of your union with the body of Christ? You have turned away with contractedness of heart, and with frigidity of manner, if not with secret disdain, from one whom God loves, whom Christ has redeemed, and in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, because he belonged not to your sect. Yes, you have turned away with coldness and suspicion from Christ Himself! How can you love the Father, and hate the child? What affection have you for the Elder Brother, while you despise the younger? If you are a living branch of the same vine, can you, while cherishing those feelings which exclude from your affection, from your sympathies, and from your fellowship, other Christians, more deeply wound Jesus, or more effectually grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom they are "sealed unto the day of redemption"? Perhaps you have long walked in darkness and uncertainty, as to the fact of your own personal adoption into the family of God. Anxious fear and distressing doubt have taken the place of a holy assurance, and a peaceful persuasion that you were one of the Lord's people. In endeavoring to trace this painful state of mind to its cause, did it never occur to you, that your lack of enlargement of heart towards all saints, especially towards those of other branches of the same family, has, in all probability, so grieved the Spirit of adoption, that he has withheld from your own soul that clear testimony, that direct witness, by which your interest in the covenant love of God, and your union with Christ, would have been clearly made known to you? You have grieved that same Spirit in your brother, who dwells in you, and upon whom you are so dependent for all your sweet consolation and holy desires; and He has suspended the light, and peace, and joy of your own soul.

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### **John Piper's Devotional - Love One Another Gladly**

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)

No one has ever felt unloved because he was told that the attainment of his joy would make another person happy. I have never been accused of selfishness when justifying a kindness on the basis that it delights me. On the contrary, loving acts are genuine to the degree that they are not done begrudgingly.

And the good alternative to begrudgingly is not neutrally or dutifully, but gladly. The authentic heart of love "loves kindness" (Micah 6:8); it doesn't just do kindness. Christian Hedonism forces this truth into consideration.

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. (1John 5:2–4) Read these sentences in reverse order and notice the logic. First, being born of God gives a power that conquers the world. This is given as the ground or basis ("**For**") for the statement that the commandments of God are not

burdensome.

So being born of God gives a power that conquers our worldly aversion to the will of God. Now his commandments are not "burdensome," but are the desire and delight of our heart. This is the love of God: not just that we do his commandments, but also that they are not burdensome.

Then in verse 2 the evidence of the genuineness of our love for the children of God is said to be the love of God. What does this teach us about our love for the children of God?

Since love for God is doing his will gladly rather than with a sense of burden, and since love for God is the measure of the genuineness of our love for the children of God, therefore our love for the children of God must also be done gladly rather than begrudgingly.

Christian Hedonism stands squarely in the service of love, for it presses us on to glad obedience.