

Wednesday 18th November – 1 John

Study 7.1- How to be sure

John has written this letter because he wants his readers to be sure they're Christians. Throughout the letter he's given them—and us—a number of ways to tell that.

Are you sure?

Read 1 John 5:13

Questions.

Do you believe in Jesus (see v 1)?

Do you love other Christians (3:14)?

Do you continue in your struggle to obey God's commands (2:3)?

Do you know the testimony of the Spirit (3:24; 4:13)?

These signs are not a checklist. They merge into one another. But together they show whether we're children of God and whether the gospel has begun to transform our lives.

Apply

Questions

Review these signs. How do you match up?

If you're not sure, make it your top priority to talk with an older or more mature Christian about these things.

Confident prayers

Read | John 5:14-17

Questions

How can we be confident in approaching God in prayer?

Why is it important to know that God will hear our prayers (v 14)?

What example does John give of praying in confidence?

What is “the sin that leads to death” (v 16), do you think?

If you're a child of God, you can talk to your Father. It's as simple as that. A good father will always take the time to listen to his children; and our Father is always there to listen to his children.

Does prayer change things? We instinctively want to say yes. But does that mean we make God change his mind? The relationship between our prayers and God's will is a mystery. Praying according to God's will can sound a bit like “God answers us when he was going to do it anyway”. But we have to remember that our prayers are also part of God's will. God works in us as we pray, just as he works to answer our prayers.

But not all of God's will is mysterious. In the Bible, God has revealed all we need to know of it. And this is John's main concern here. We do know God's will. And so we should pray in the light of God's word. We should remind him of his promises. We should ask for what we know pleases him.

The sin that leads to death is most likely to be rejecting Jesus—turning away from him. God's will is that believers should be continually repenting of sin and finding life in Jesus. God's will is that believers should be holy. That is what we should pray for.

Pray

Use this understanding to pray for yourself, your friends and family, and your church family.

Study 7.2- What you Can Know

John ends his letter with three great affirmations of faith: “We know... we know... we know...” Confidence in salvation leads to confident prayer and confidence in the truth.

He will keep us

Read | John 5:18

Questions

Who will keep us safe?

Who cannot harm a genuine believer?

It's one thing to have assurance of salvation now, but will it last? What about tomorrow? What about when I face death? John says we can be sure that God will keep us. Satan cannot touch us; he cannot wrestle us out of God's grip. Neither can our sin, because the power of sin in our lives has been decisively broken.

We belong to God

Read | John 5:19

Questions

How do the two halves of this verse fit together?

What happens when we forget that the world is under the control of the evil one?

It can be tough being a Christian. Sometimes it seems that the rest of the world thinks we're crazy. But being sure of our salvation means that we know we belong to God. The rest of the world may think we're mad, not because we are but because they are in the grip of Satan's lies. When we forget the truth about the world or the truth about what Jesus has done, we are in danger of falling in love with the world or feeling hopelessly overwhelmed by the opposition.

We know the truth

Read I John 5:20

Questions

What things do we “know”?

Why is it not arrogant to be confident about the gospel truths about Jesus?

Why is it unpopular to be confident about these things today?

And finally...

Read I John 5:21

Questions

Why do you think John ends his letter in such a strange way?

What do you think the idols are that he is referring to?

Idolatry is making your priority something other than God. Idolatry is settling for a god, or a view of God, that is less than the true God, who can only be found in Christ. Letting the views of the world shape your view of God is idolatry. But Christians have been freed from the lies of Satan. We know the truth. Our confidence in salvation leads to confidence in the truth. For John, this isn't just about reassurance. It's also a challenge not to compromise the truth.

Pray

Have you got what John is driving at repeatedly in this letter? Pray that you would grasp it firmly—and never let go.