

1 John 5:14-21

"Keep It Real!"

What a wonderful journey 1st Jn has been. *Jn has written to us in a profoundly simple, straightforward & powerful way. His overwhelming emphasis upon who J.C. is in truth, who you are *in* Him & what your life will look like if you truly belong *to* Him. His heart has been to assure us of the fact that salvation is in J.C. *It's found only in Him & there is no other name under heaven, given among men by which we must be saved. You've trusted in Him, you've been saved by Him, now continue to trust in Him & don't be shaken or led down a path that drifts away from Him. Keep confidence in the simplicity which is in Christ.* *

Vs 13

Don't 2nd guess the power of God to save you by grace through faith in J.C. Don't add *to* the gospel, don't take away *from* the gospel, just continue to believe in the name of the Son of God. Keep confidence in Christ. The author of Hebrews put that like this, *"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful."*¹ & It's w/this encouragement to trust in the *faithfulness* of God, that Jn begins to wrap up & wind down his letter.

Vs 14-15

Having developed the idea of keeping confidence in Christ for our salvation & our sanctification, Jn now takes this same principle & applies it to our prayer lives. *If you can trust the Lord to save you, to pull you out of the miry clay & establish you, then you can trust Him to hear you & respond to you when you call to Him!*

It's almost as if he's reasoning from the lesser to the greater. If God heard you when you were a *sinner* crying out *to* Him & calling *upon* Him, how much more (now that you're His child) can you trust Him to hear your cries, your prayers, your petitions?

"Now this is the confidence we have in Him," This word "confidence" more literally means "freedom of speech". It speaks of boldness, it speaks to the fact that we can come to God openly, transparently, there's no need for ambiguity or walking on eggshells. – *Have you ever been in a situation where you really feel that you can't speak openly or plainly to someone? You feel like you're walking on eggshells around them & the slightest word that hits them wrong will set them off or somehow be taken & turned back against you or cause some kind of difficulty or resistance to you?*

¹ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Heb 10:23). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

John says, “There’s none of that kind of thing w/God. You can come to Him & speak openly w/Him about what’s in your heart & on your mind.” Again, in the words of the writer of Hebrews, *“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”*² & Just to state the obvious, this isn’t an invitation to be rude, or vent in the flesh, but the Lord is saying, “Speak freely to Me, share openly w/Me, make your requests of Me, there’s no need for intimidation or trepidation, just speak from the heart.”

& I think we do well to pick up on the fact that there are a couple prerequisites here that need to be in place if we’re to have fruitful/effective prayer lives... I suppose the 1st thing we need to see is that if we want God to move (don’t miss this) we need to “ask”! The 1st condition put in place is that we need to *ask*...

***** Truth be told, much prayer comes to naught because it never truly *asks* God for anything! & I’m not seeking to imply that our prayers should revolve *only* around petitions. Certainly, we want to worship God, we want to praise God, give thanks to God (& all of those things) as we come *before* God in prayer. But ladies & gentlemen, if you want to see God move in your life, in a certain situation, on behalf of someone else, in this ministry (whatever the case may be) you just need to ask! The book of James puts it plainly, *“...you do not have because you do not ask.”*³ Allow me to remind you that you serve a loving, generous, giving God & He *wants* you to *ask* of Him.

Again, reasoning (this time) from the greater to the lesser, if God didn’t w/hold His only Son from us (the greatest gift He could ever give) but freely gave Him, (out of His great love for us) how then (or why then) would He w/hold something lesser from us if it would truly bless/benefit us w/in the context of His plan for us?

But often times people simply don’t ask... They may give God the details of their problem, or describe the situation that they’re facing... They circle the runway (so to speak) but never land the plane! 😊 *****

& Look at this next word. John says you can ask... *anything*. ***** There is absolutely *nothing* that you can’t talk to God about. There’s nothing swirling around in your heart/mind that you can’t bring *before* God & seek to glean the *heart* of God concerning the matter. There’s no part of your life that God doesn’t care about. There’s no detail too small, no problem too big but that we can’t bring it *to* Him & lay it down *before* Him.

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Heb 4:16). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Jas 4:2). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

As Paul the apostle said, “...in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;”⁴ I just don’t see a caveat or an exception in this Vs... “Oh what peace we often forfeit, Oh what needless pain we bear. All because we do not carry, everything to God in prayer!”

Family, I just can’t stress it emphatically enough, God wants you to *ask* of Him. Jeremiah 33:3, “*Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.*”⁵ Jesus said, “*Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.*”⁶ & You should know that the verb tense in what Jesus said there & what Jn said here are identical. “*Ask, & keep asking... don’t stop asking.*” & I’m not saying that you can ask for anything & God will give you anything you ask for. What I *am* saying is that there’s no part of your life or the worries/wonderings of your heart that can’t be or shouldn’t be brought to God.

I’ve run across a number of people over the years who tell me that they never ask God for anything. Because they feel like #1 God already knows their needs so if He desires to meet them, He will (kind of this fatalistic approach) & #2 They feel like a personal petition is selfish. So, they’ll pray for others but not ask for themselves. Now, that certainly *sounds* noble, but the truth is that it’s prideful, defiant & stands in direct disobedience to the word of God. The *word* of God tells us plainly to *ask* of God.

& I suppose that we should point out that perhaps the biggest secret to effective prayer lies in the next phrase. You can ask *anything*... that doesn’t mean He’ll do anything. * But here’s the real key to a powerful/fruitful/effective prayer life. If we ask anything... “according to His will”. – I know this may come as a bit of a surprise to some of you, but the purpose of prayer isn’t one of trying to persuade a reluctant God to do what I want Him to do. It’s been said that prayer isn’t overcoming God’s reluctance. It’s laying hold of His willingness. The idea isn’t that of trying to form & fashion His heart after *ours*, but that He would form & fashion *our heart, our mind, our desires after His*. It’s not about lining His will up w/ours, but getting our will in line w/His. ... One commentator said this (Stott), “Prayer is not a convenient device for imposing our will upon God, or for bending His will to ours, but the prescribed way of subordinating our will to His. It is by prayer that we seek God’s will, embrace it and align ourselves with it. Every true prayer is a variation of the theme ‘Your will be done’”.*

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Php 4:6]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁵ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Je 33:3]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁶ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Mt 7:7-8]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

* Now. Perhaps you're there & you're sort of thinking. "I don't get it. If God has a will, & He wants to perform His will, why doesn't He just do it? Why wait around for me to *ask* Him to do it?" That's a great question. *It can seem sort of silly to us that God would wait on us to ask Him, rather than just do what He wants to do. & Though it may sound (or at least on the surface seem) silly to us, it's not silly to God at all... Because more than what God wants to do through us is the work that He wants to do in us in aligning our heart, our mind, our will w/His. Making us more like Jesus.*

Let me give it to you another way. God is more concerned about you, than He is the ministry He's given or entrusted to you. He places greater priority on His work *in* you than He does His work *through* you. & For reasons (some of which are unknown to us) God has ordained (2 Cor 6:1) to partner w/us in the accomplishing of His purposes & His plans. Therefore, He'll wait *on* us (all the while doing a work in us) while our will, our agenda, our desires are being aligned w/His... He wants us to care about the things He cares about. *

* We need to understand that prayer is much more than casting wishes up to heaven (not much different than throwing a penny in a wishing well, that's how some people see prayer). God would have us be *confident* in prayer. "This is the confidence we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He *hears us*. & If we know that He hears us, then whatever we ask, we know we have the petitions that we have asked of Him."

& I should just say that the most definitive way to be sure that you're praying according to the will of God is to find the premise of your petition in His word... "God, help me to love that person more like Jesus." "God says, "I hear you." "Help me to forgive that person, those people." "Give me a grateful, more thankful heart." "May I be more generous toward You God as You have been so gracious & generous toward me." You wait, you watch & you'll see God move... *

Now, there's always overarching context. * There are things that can *hinder* our prayers. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear."⁷ If I'm harboring sin in my life, my prayer life is hindered. If my relationship w/my spouse isn't as it should be (1 Pet 3:7), my prayer life is hindered. So if you're in a place where it seems like your prayers aren't rising much higher than the ceiling. You may do well to consider the things we've talked about. & Pray a prayer kind of like David did in Ps 139. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting."⁸ *

⁷ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Ps 66:18]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁸ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Ps 139:23-24]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Vs 16-17

You know, I'd just like to thank the apostle Jn for putting these little zingers in here toward the end of his letter, leaving guys like me to have to wrestle w/& try & sort out a couple thousand yrs later... 😊

Let's just start w/this, * "If anyone sees his brother sinning... he will ask." When you see a brother or a sister in sin, Jn says that the 1st thing we should do for them (which too often becomes the last thing we do for them) is *pray*. People often feel it's their duty to expose them 1st. To send a few text messages out so that *others* "can pray". But I don't read here where Jn says, "If anyone sees his brother sinning... he should alert other folks." God will allow us (at times) to be made aware of a sin situation in someone's life, so that we might *pray for them!*

"& He (God) will give him (the sinning bro/sis) life." This is the power of intercessory prayer. God promises to bless & to honor the prayer made on behalf of another brother in sin. Possibly because they fall in line w/what we've been learning already. It's a fulfillment of the command to love the brethren, we know we're praying according to His will & God says that He will honor that. Surely one of the greatest displays of our *love* for one another is found in that we would *pray* for one another. *

Now. Jn qualifies this promise by clarifying that he's not speaking of sin that leads to death. He says, "You see someone commit sin that leads to death, I'm not saying you should pray about that." So again, we sorta scratch our heads & think, "What exactly are you talking about Jn w/this business of sin that leads to death?" There are a couple schools of thought on this, I'll give you my thoughts, you can agree or disagree so long as you have a biblical reason behind your thoughts.

1st of all let me say that ultimately, all sin leads to death. * The bible is clear, "*...the wages of sin is death,*"⁹ & Btw, to digress just a little bit here. That statement should be shocking, sobering to say the least & should provoke a heart of repentance in each & every one of us! The *wages*, the *reward* of sin... is death! Imagine someone putting out an ad for a job opening. It sounds pretty good, pretty exciting, fairly exhilarating & so you read on... "I wonder what it pays, what are the wages?" But you're confused when you look under wages because it just says, "Your death." You'd be like, "Thx but no thanks! I'm not going to die for this guy! I don't care *what* the job is!" But people do this for sin all the time.

⁹ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Ro 6:23). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

It's like sin comes along & says, "Hey, I got a little something I'd like you to do for me & you're going to think it's awesome... You'll enjoy the thunder out of it." & People are like, "Cool! What'll you give me if I do this for you?" & Sin says, "Death, I pay in death." & People say, "Awesome! Sign me up!" It makes no sense, but we're so quick to entertain it! *

But what Jn is talking about here (it seems to me) is sin that is *punished* by death. In other words, not the ultimate, eventual, or even eternal sense of the word, but the removal of the person from the planet (death being a rapid consequence) because they're in a place where things are only going to be worse if they remain.

Some wonder if Jn is speaking of the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. It doesn't seem so to me because he calls the person a "brother". He's speaking of a fellow believer. & The bible demonstrates again & again that there is sin that leads to the physical death of the believer. God essentially saying, "Enough is enough, it's time for you to come home." **We see it (in a sense) even w/Moses. When he struck the rock out of anger rather than speak to the rock as God told him to. Moses was in perfect health when it came time to enter the Promised Land, but God said, "No." & Because of the way he misrepresented God, God took him home rather than let him cross over the Jordan.**

Nadab & Abihu were struck immediately by God when they offered profane fire at the inauguration of the priestly ministry in Lev 10. We could speak of Korah & his clan in Num 16, or Uzzah in 2nd Sam 6 when he grabbed hold of the ark. In the book of Acts we have Ananias & Saphira who under the pretense of giving all to the Lord were struck dead by God because they lied to the Holy Spirit. In the book of 1st Cor Paul speaks of those who were getting drunk during the time they were to be honoring the Lord's supper. & He said, ***"For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world."***¹⁰

I would venture to say that this probably happens more often than we even realize. God is not afraid to just bring people home when they come to a place where things are only going to escalate in an unhealthy manner if they remain. Now Jn is clear, not every sin is "punishable by death" or else we'd all just die immediately. & The reason he doesn't name a specific sin that's punished by death is probably because it would be something different in your life than it would be in mine, God searches the heart.

¹⁰ *The New King James Version*, (1982). [1 Co 11:30-32]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Having said all that, I need to say this. It's wrong for us to think that any believer who experiences an untimely death is being punished by God, or under the heavy hand of God's chastening. That's simply not true.

But Jn says here that when a brother is sinning a sin that leads to death, you can pray if you want, but if God has determined to bring them home, He's going to bring them home. My personal persuasion is that it's best to err to the side of prayer. I don't presume to know the heart of God in the chastening of each of His children, so why not pray? Jn doesn't forbid prayer, his whole point is to *encourage* prayer. I'm sure that Gal 6:1 fits in here somewhere (you can look that up later).

All unrighteousness is sin (Jn is clear about that) & not all sin leads to rapid corrective judgment, so let's be careful to pray for one another. For restoration & reconciliation to God.

Vs 18-19 *Vs19

So there ya go. If you're wondering why the world is so crazy, so upside down, so reprobate, debased, immoral, evil, unfair & insane. Now you know, the whole world lies under the sway, or the influence of the wicked one. Satan is the prince of the power of the air, the god (lower case "g") of this world. & This is why people call good "evil" & evil "good". But you (believer) are of God. You see things & have an understanding of things in much different way than the people of this world. You have (what we refer to as) a biblical worldview. Which the world hates, because their eyes are blinded, they see things in an inverted fashion. *

But as a child of God, the wicked one can't "touch" you. A promise of protection from God. This word "touch" carries the idea of "cling" or "hold on to". Satan can't get his grips on you, he can't possess you. Doesn't mean he can't harass you, or have you persecuted &/or hurl accusation your way. But he has no part in you, because God keeps charge over you. So he can't anchor himself to you.

As for the one born of God not sinning. We've dealt w/this back in Ch 3 Vs 6, the verb tense is such that it speaks of continual, habitual sin. It's not your lifestyle. If we say we have no sin, we lie & the truth is not in us. The idea is that Christ breaks chains in your life. Sin no longer has dominion over you. You have been crucified w/Christ that the body of sin might be done away with... Where it says, "He who has been born of God keeps himself..." 2 Schools of thought on that. #1 The believer has a role/responsibility before God, just as Jude says to, "keep himself in the love of God."

The other is that the One born of God is a reference to the Son of God & “himself” should be translated “him” meaning that Jesus keeps you & the wicked one doesn’t touch you. I don’t really feel the need to split that hair because both are true.

Vs 20-21

How do we really come to know God, to experience God & understand who He is in truth? Through J.C. Jesus is the One who opens our understanding. Apart from Christ, apart from His work in us, we could not know (in truth) who God is, how God thinks or what He wants to do in/through our lives & in this world. A true understanding of God comes through J.C. We can’t attain it on our own, through academic studies... If God didn’t reveal Himself to us, we simply would not, & could not know Him.

& Look at this declaration of Deity. “We are in Him who is true, in His Son J.C. *This* (J.C.) is the true God & eternal life. Yes, Jesus was a Man, He was also God, the true God & eternal life.

“Little children, keep yourselves from idols.” Is Jn speaking of trinkets carved of stone or fashioned out of wood, silver or gold here? Perhaps. But context tends to point us toward false narratives of who Jesus is... He’s spent all this time developing who Jesus is in truth... Now he says, “Don’t drift toward or go after anything less, anything other than J.C. in truth.

Don’t worship the Jesus of man’s making (good teacher, Michael the archangel, the spirit brother of Lucifer, a man w/the “Christ spirit”, an emanation from God). Keep it real! Follow *after*, believe *in*, cling *to* the true Jesus, fully Man, fully God, the Savior of the world.

Prayer Points:

Father, may we always seek after J.C. in truth. That nothing else come between us, that we not lift up another, or some other thing in His place. Lord we long for the day when rather than this world being under the sway of the wicked one, that You rule & reign over the earth in perfect righteousness. Even so we pray, come Lord Jesus.

I’d encourage you today, if you don’t know the Lord, you’re not ready to see Jesus face to face, don’t delay, turn from your sin, trust in Him today.