**Grace Group Guide**

**1 John 5: 10-13**

I had been doing really well as of late. Scrolling social media just to see recipes and feel-good stories about dogs and keeping up with friends and their kids. And then it happened. I got sucked into reading comments on a very divisive post this past week while on Twitter**.**

The comment started out like this – “*Christian parent here….”* Then it went on to make a very bold statement affirming something that the apostle John would most certainly *not* have agreed with in light of what he’s said in this letter. That led to more comments. (Cue the dumpster fire) A couple comments in, I was fuming….because I’m a follower of Christ and that person DID NOT speak for me. That’s how a lot of people have been with the last several presidents – the president supposedly represents our country but then they say or do something that people don’t agree with and all of the sudden people are upset saying “he doesn’t represent me or my beliefs.”

Folks, there’s a lot going on. A lot of it does upset us, and it should upset us, but I’m constantly reminded in the unlikeliest of places that **a)** I’m not the Holy Spirit and therefore I can’t reveal God to someone by my wit, or intellect or hard work and **2)** all of these little wars and fires we try to fight with culture are not going to gain us any ground because our war isn’t against the culture we live in, it’s against darkness. Let me say that again, we aren’t at war with the culture that we live in, we’re at war with darkness.

A *failure* to remember that reality will keep us bogged down with aimless battles and wars that cannot be won because you aren’t going to win a spiritual battle with earthly weapons. After all, life isn’t about trolling people on social media trying to get them to think the way you think. It also isn’t about proclaiming a message of inclusivity that gathers everyone just as they are and says “you can be who you want to be and still be ok.” In fact, if I take anything from John’s letter pertaining to these few verses, it is that the gospel is actually very *exclusive*.

In verse 11, John says “God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.” Let that sink in for a moment. That means that there is ZERO salvation in any other. But it also means that eternal life is something that the believer has presently. Yes, it is something that we get to look forward to, but it’s also our present state. And that’s true for no other reason than that we have the Eternal One living inside of us.

John MacArthur says *“The essence of****eternal life****is the believer’s participation in the blessed everlasting life of Christ through his or her union with Him.”* ([Ro 5:21](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Rom%205.21); [6:4](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Ro%206.4), [11](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Ro%206.11), [23](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Ro%206.23); [1 Cor 15:22](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Cor%2015.22); [2 Cor 5:17](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/2%20Cor%205.17); [Gal 2:20](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Gal%202.20); [Col 3:3-4](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Col%203.3-4); [2Tim 1:1](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/2%20Tim%201.1), [10](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/2Ti%201.10); [Jude 1:21](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Jude%201.21)).

*Jesus defined it in His High Priestly Prayer to the Father: “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent”* ([Jn 17:3](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/John%2017.3%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)). *It is the life of the age to come* ([Eph 2:6-7](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Eph%202.6-7%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)), *which believers will most fully experience in the perfect, unending glory, holiness, and joy of heaven* ([Ro 8:19-23](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Rom%208.19-23), [29](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Ro%208.29); [1Co 15:49](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Cor%2015.49); [Phil 3:20–21](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Phil%203.20%E2%80%9321); [1Jn 3:2](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20John%203.2)).

*The eternal life promised by God in the Old Testament* ([2Sam 12:23](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/2%20Sam%2012.23); [Ps 16:8-10](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Ps%2016.8-10); [133:3](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Ps%20133.3); [Dan 12:2](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Dan%2012.2)) *and sought by the Jews of Jesus’ day* ([Lk 10:25](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Luke%2010.25); [Jn 5:39](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/John%205.39%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)) *comes only to those who believe God’s testimony and place their faith in His Son.*

What do you think the most important question that Jesus ever asked His disciples was? Matthew 16:16-16 come to mind when I consider that question. ***15He \*said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”***

That is the key, folks. And that key unlocks the door to eternal life. You see, we’re all living this very moment in the condition of *spiritual life* (in Christ) **or** *spiritual death* (in Adam). And there is no middle ground. No gray area. No back-up plan. You either have the Son, and therefore eternal life. Or you don’t. To claim otherwise is to, as John says, call God a liar.

Spurgeon discusses the two conditions of life in his sermon “Alive or Dead;” and there he says: *Of course, by "****life****" here is meant not mere existence, or natural life; for we all have that whether we have the Son of God or no—in the image of the first Adam we are all created living souls, and continue in life until the Lord recalls the breath from our nostrils—but the life here intended is spiritual life, the life received at the new birth, by which we perceive and enter into the heavenly kingdom, come under new and spiritual laws, are moved by new motives, and exist in a new world.*

*The life here meant is the life of God in the soul, which is given us when we are new created in the image of the second Adam, who was made a quickening spirit; a celestial form of life inwardly perceptible to the person who possesses it, and outwardly discernible to spiritual observers by its holy effects and heavenly fruits. This spiritual life is the sure mark of deliverance from the penal death which the sentence of the law pronounced. Man under the law is condemned, sentence of death is recorded against him; but man under grace is free from the law, and is not adjudged to death, but lives by virtue of a legal justification, which absolves him from guilt, and consequently liberates him from death.*

*These two kinds of life, the life which is given by the judge to the offender when he is pardoned, and the life which is imparted from the divine Father, the heir of heaven is begotten again unto a lively hope—these two lives blend together and ensure for us the life eternal, such as they possess who stand upon the "sea of glass," and tune their tongues to the music of celestial hosts. Eternal life is spiritual life made perfect. If we live by virtue of our pardon and justification, and if, moreover, we live because we are quickened by the Holy Spirit, we shall also live in the glory of the eternal Father, being made in the likeness of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the true God and eternal life. This is the life here intended—life spiritual, life eternal.*

Hikers in California’s Sierra Mountains are surprised to encounter 10-foot-high fences with barbed wire stretched around the top. What do they see inside the fence-surrounded enclosures? Some vital communication equipment like a radio tower? No, they see only a few gnarled trees, maybe just a twisted stump with a few needles.

A sign reads: DO NOT ENTER. BRISTLECONE PINE PROTECTION ZONE. PLEASE PROTECT THESE TREES. They are the oldest living things on earth.

Pamphlets explain that these bristlecone pines were flourishing when Jesus walked on earth, and that the oldest were seedlings at the time of the Exodus from Egypt. Eventually, though, regardless of how carefully they are protected, those trees will die. They are not destined to live forever. But Christians have the certainty of everlasting life. To be sure, our bodies will die. Yet by God’s grace and power, our souls will never perish. Our bodies will be raised up and, as Paul said, be changed from mortal to immortal ([1 Cor. 15:53](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Cor.%2015.53)).