

Wenstrom Bible Ministries
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First John: 1 John 5:12-The Person Who Possesses a Relationship with the Son Experiences Eternal Life

Lesson # 197

1 John 5:12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. (ESV)

1 John 5:12 The person who does possess a relationship with the Son, does experience this life. The person who does not possess a relationship with God's one and only Son, absolutely never experiences this life. (My translation)

1 John 5:12 completes the tenth major section of First John which began in 1 John 5:3b.

This tenth major section parallels 1 John 1:5-2:2 and 1 John 5:4-12 since both explicitly mention making God a liar.

This is indicated by the chiasmic structure of this epistle.

1 John 5:12 also completes a pericope which began in 1 John 5:6 and also brings out the implications of the second assertion which appears in 1 John 5:11.

In the former, John solemnly presents two assertions, which stand in emphatic contrast to one another.

The first states that the person who does possess a relationship with the Son, does experience eternal life.

The second teaches that the person who does not possess a relationship with God's one and only Son, absolutely never experiences eternal life.

Eternal life is an attribute of each member of the Trinity and is received as a gift by the sinner the moment they exercise faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.

It is experienced by the justified sinner after conversion through obedience to the teaching of the Word of God and in particular obeying the command to love one's fellow believer as Jesus Christ does.

The Lord Jesus Christ defined eternal life in John 17:3 as an experiential knowledge of the Father, which speaks of experiencing fellowship with the Father but from the perspective of personally encountering Him through learning and obeying His Word.

This results in godly character and practical spiritual wisdom.

John 3:36 answers the question as to how a person possesses a relationship with the Son.

John 3:36 He who believes in the Son has eternal life, but he who does not obey the Son shall not see eternal life, but the wrath of God abides on him. (NASB95)

1 John 5:10 also answers the question as to how a person possesses a relationship with the Son.

As we noted, this verse is teaching that the person who at any time does believe in God's Son does possess God's testimony concerning His Son.

This testimony is that the Father gave His children eternal life and this life is resident in the character and nature of His Son.

Conversely, 1 John 5:10 also teaches that the person who does not possess a relationship with God's one and only Son has not believed this testimony, which the Father is testifying concerning His Son.

Since, God's gift of eternal life is given through faith in His one and only Son and possessing God's testimony concerning His Son, it follows that the one who exercises faith in the Son and thus possesses God's testimony concerning His Son possesses a relationship with the Son.

Conversely, the one who does not exercise faith in the Son and thus does not possess this testimony, does not possess a relationship with the Son.

Furthermore, 1 John 2:23, 4:15 and 5:1 help to answer this question.

1 John 2:23 Anyone who does at any time reject the Son, unequivocally does not possess a relationship with the Father. The person who does at any time acknowledge the Son, does possess a relationship with the Father also. (Author's translation)

1 John 4:15 If anyone has confessed that Jesus is God's one and only Son, then God (the Father) is living in fellowship with him. Correspondingly, he himself is living in fellowship with God (the Father). (Author's translation)

1 John 5:1 Anyone who at any time does believe that Jesus is the Christ has been fathered by God. Consequently, anyone who at any time does divinely love the Father, correspondingly does divinely love the one who has been fathered by Him. (Author's translation)

A comparison of 1 John 5:1 with 1 John 5:12 teaches that the person who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been fathered by God and thus they possess a relationship with the Father as well as the Son and the Spirit since being fathered by God implies relationship with Him.

Now, as we noted, the person who experiences eternal life is experiencing fellowship with God and with His children who are obedient to His Word and thus His will since the former reveals the latter.

There are many synonyms in Scripture which describe the church age believer experiencing fellowship with God.

First of all, experiencing fellowship with God is synonymous with experiencing eternal life.

When a Christian is experiencing fellowship with God they are experiencing eternal life.

They are also experiencing their salvation or in other words, their deliverance from eternal condemnation, condemnation from the Law, spiritual and physical death, personal sin, enslavement from the sin nature and Satan and his cosmic system.

To experience fellowship with God is also to experience sanctification or in other words, fellowship is experiencing being set apart to serve God exclusively in doing His will.

The believer must be filled with the Spirit or more accurately influenced by the Spirit in order to experience fellowship with God which is accomplished by obeying the Spirit's voice as He speaks to the believer through the communication of the Word of God regarding the will of the Father.

They must also be operating in the love of God in order to experience fellowship with God.

The term “**fellowship**” appeared in 1 John 1:3 where it referred to both the horizontal and vertical aspects of Christian fellowship, namely communion or fellowship between believers and between believers and the Trinity.

The word speaks of John and his fellow eyewitnesses and the recipients of this epistle experiencing fellowship with each other as well as together with the Trinity.

(1) Fellowship means being a part of a group, a body of people. It is opposed to isolation, solitude, loneliness, and our present-day independent kind of individualism.

(2) Fellowship means having or sharing with others certain things in common such as interest, goals, feelings, beliefs, activities, labor, privileges and responsibilities, experiences, and concerns.

(3) Fellowship can mean a partnership that involves working together and caring for one another as a company of people, like a company of soldiers or members of a family.

Fellowship has two directions: (1) Vertical: God (2) Horizontal: Royal family of God.

Christian fellowship is a relationship and partnership with God and His royal family and involves sharing His objective of advancing His kingdom on earth by caring for and working together with the royal family in this endeavor.

Christian Fellowship denotes the following concepts:

(1) Relationship with Christ: We are all permanently united together by the common (eternal) life that we share as a result of regeneration and the Baptism of the Spirit (Acts 2:42; 1 C. 1:9; 1 Jn. 1:3).

(2) Partnership: We are to work together for a common purpose to obtain common objectives for the glory of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ (cf. Phil 1:27; Phlp. 1:5; Gal. 2:9; Heb. 1:9).

(3) Companionship: We are to communicate with one another and have fellowship with one another sharing with one another the things (viewpoint and thinking) of Christ (Acts. 2:42; Heb. 10:25; 2 Tim. 2:2; 1 Thess. 5:11; Rom. 1:11-12; 2 Tim. 2:2; 1 Thess 5:11; Philem. 6).

(4) Stewardship: We must recognize that all we have belongs to the Lord and has been given to us as trusts from God to invest for His purposes.

Believers need to be willing to share their material possessions for the promotion of the gospel and to help those in need.

Good stewardship stems from recognizing our relationship to Jesus Christ, but it also means recognizing our partnership in Christ's enterprise on earth. (Rom. 12:13; 15:27; Gal. 6:6; Phil. 4:15; Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:13; Heb. 13:16; 1 Tim. 6:18).