

# 1 John 5:11 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 1 Jn 1:1-2:27		Manifestations of Fellowship 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...

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## 1 John 5:11 And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son

**Greek** - kai aute estin (3SPA1) e marturia hoti zoen aionion edoken (3SAA1) hemin o theos kai aute e zoe en to huio autou estin (3SPA1):

**Wuest** - which testimony is on record, with the result that he is in a settled state of unbelief. And this is the testimony, that life eternal God gave us.

KJV 1 John 5:11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

BGT 1 John 5:11 Κα ατη σ τ ν μαρτυρα, τι ζω ν α νιον δωκεν μ ν θε ς, κα ατη ζω ν τ υ α το σ τ ι ν.

NET 1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

CSB 1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

ESV 1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

NIV 1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

NLT 1 John 5:11 And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

NRS 1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

NJB 1 John 5:11 This is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

NAB 1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

YLT 1 John 5:11 and this is the testimony, that life age-during did God give to us, and this -- the life -- is in His Son;

MIT 1 John 5:11 So this is the testimony: God gave us life everlasting. This life is in his son.

GWN 1 John 5:11 This is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is found in his Son.

BBE 1 John 5:11 And his witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

RSV 1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

NKJ 1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

ASV 1 John 5:11 And the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

- **this:** 1Jn 5:7,10 Joh 1:19,32-34 8:13,14 19:35 3Jn 1:12 Rev 1:2
- **God:** 1Jn 5:13 2:25 Mt 25:46 Joh 3:15,16,36 4:4,36 6:40,47,68 10:28 12:50 Joh 17:2,3 Ro 5:21 6:23 1Ti 1:16 Tit 1:2 Jude 1:21
- **this:** 1Jn 5:12,20 1Jn 1:1-3 1Jn 4:9 John 1:4 Jn 5:21,26 Jn 11:25,26 Jn 14:6 Col 3:3-4 Rev 22:1
- [1 John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GOD'S GIFT: LIFE IN HIS SON

**And** (kai) - John, in the previous verse, just told us how serious the matter of receiving the testimony of God is. Now he will tell us what this testimony is. The testimony is crucial because in the receipt or rejection of it hangs the reception or failure to receive eternal life. The **testimony** of God to His Son comes with a life-changing offer. [Hiebert](#) - The opening "**and**" (kai) of 1Jn 5:11 points to a further matter connected with the response made to God's witness. Involved is the matter of eternal life. In verse 11 John states what the witness of God involves whereas 1Jn 5:12 states the contrasting results of these opposite reactions to the Son of God.

**The testimony** ([marturia](#)) **is this, that God has given** (aorist tense) **us eternal** ([ainios](#)) **life** ([zoe](#)), **and this life** ([zoe](#)) **is in His Son** - Now the **testimony** shifts from the Person of Christ to the Benefit of Christ, God's greatest message to mankind, eternal life from God in Christ. **Has given** means to give and in context is based on decision of will of Giver and no merit of the recipients. **Has given** (didomi) is in the aorist tense which marks the historic fact that God gave us the gift of eternal life in His Son and we possess it now in time but forever in eternity. In 1Jn 3:24 **didomi** is used by John of the Holy Spirit "Whom He **has given** (didomi) us." The only thing men have to do is to receive God's bountiful gift of Christ's payment for our sins. And notice that John uses the plural pronoun "**us**" thus including himself in those blessed with God's gift. The Greek order is emphatic - "**eternal life** God has given to us." **Eternal life** is a qualitatively brand new life (2Co 5:17+) and quantitatively a life forever with the Triune God. **Life** ([zoe](#)) describes the absolute fullness of **life**, both essential and ethical, which alone belongs to God the Giver of **life**. Truly meaningful **life**, **life** on the "highest plane", **life** that really is worthwhile is found only in "the promise of life in Christ Jesus". (2Ti 1:1+) Who came so that we might have life and might have it abundantly (Jn 10:10). **Eternal life** then is the **life** of the Lord Jesus Himself. It is a **life** that is capable of enjoying the things of God down here, but especially the only **life** that will be suitable to enter and enjoy the grace of God forever in heaven.

*Eternal life is God's own deed  
and God's own gift.*

John uses **didomi** in the perfect tense in 1Jn 3:1 = **See** ([aorist imperative](#)) how great a love the Father has **bestowed** upon us, that we should be called children of God; and [such] we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him." The perfect tense of the gift emphasizes the abiding presence of God's love! We will have His love forever and ever, amen!

**Vincent** on the aorist tense of **have given** - The reference is to the historic fact of the gift. So 1 John 3:23: "We should love one another as He gave us commandment." 1Jn 3:24: "We know that He abideth in us by the

Spirit which He gave us." On the other hand, 1John 3:1: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed (dedoken) upon us." The gift of love abides in the fact that we are now children of God (1Jn 3:2).

**THOUGHT** - The only life that can be classified as the blessed life, the joyful life, the meaningful life is **eternal life**. Dear reader, dare I asked "Do you possess this life?" It is found only in God's Son, Who Himself is our life (Col 3:4+).

As **David Jackman** rightly remarks 1Jn 5:11 and 1Jn 5:12 "must stand as among the most magnificent in the whole of the New Testament. The consequences of believing God's truth or denying it could hardly be more important or far-reaching. John is not merely concerned about academic disagreements over theological niceties. Eternal destinies are at stake. (Borrow [The Message of John's Letters page 154](#))

**Colin Kruse** on **eternal life** - Up to this point the author has emphasized God's witness concerning the **person** (came in the flesh) and work (came by water and blood) of the historical Jesus, but here he emphasizes God's testimony concerning the **benefit** made available to believers through him. (See [The Letters of John](#)) (Bolding added)

*We have this life now in principle (John 3:17),  
and when we enter the presence of God in glory, we will have it fully.*

**Simon Kistemaker** on **eternal life** - John comes to the concluding thought of his discourse on the Son of God. He specifically states the content of God's testimony and eliminates any misunderstanding about God's Son. What is the content of God's testimony? "God has given us **eternal life**." Notice that John is addressing believers when he uses the first person pronoun **us**. He does not say that eternal life will be given (future tense) but that God has given it (past tense) to us. We have this life now in principle (John 3:17), and when we enter the presence of God in glory, we will have it fully. ([New Testament Commentary: James and I-III John](#))

**Steven Cole** - **Eternal life** is God's **gift**, not something we gain through our good works or efforts. It does not require some special secret knowledge, as the heretics taught. Like any gift, you must know about it (in this case, God has testified about it) and you must receive it (cp Jn 1:11-13). If you have to earn it, it's not a gift (cp Ro 4:1-5+)....God's gift is **eternal life**. Nothing could be a greater gift! Because of our sins, we were spiritually dead (Eph 2:1-3+), alienated from the life of God (Col 1:21+, Ro 5:10+). God gives us as our present possession, not only unending life, but also His very life (Col 3:4+). He is the Author of life (cp Acts 3:15NIV, Heb 2:10+, Heb 5:9+, Heb 12:2+). Jesus promised that if we believe in Him, we shall live even if we die, and that everyone who lives and believes in Him will never die (John 11:25-26). In other words, physical death will not rob us of this eternal life with God. ([1 John 5:5-13 Is Christianity Merely Psychological?](#))

*The gift of life is a witness  
only where it has been received.*

-- A E Brooke

**Westcott** notes that **has given** refers "to the historic facts by which this life was communicated to humanity. That which before Christ's coming was a great hope, by His coming was realized and given. The gift, as far as St John here regards it, was made to Christians, who appropriate it.....The Mission of His Son, which He attested, was the gift of **life** (John 10:10, 10:28; 17:2), of **life in His Son** (John 20:31).

**J. Hampton Keathley, III** on **eternal life** - "Eternal life is a life with eternal ramifications that are not only future, but is to so encompass our daily existence that it becomes a controlling and directing force... Our need is to take hold of our eternal life and live in the light of its significance and meaning both for time and eternity."

**Marvin Vincent** on **eternal life** - "Your new spiritual life is no longer in the sphere of the earthly and sensual, but is with the life of the risen Christ, Who is unseen with God."

**John Stott** on **eternal life** - Three important truths are taught in these verses about **eternal life**. First, it is not a prize which we have earned or could earn but an undeserved gift. Secondly, it is found in Christ, so that, in order to give us life, God both gave and gives us his Son. Thirdly, this gift of life in Christ is a present possession. True, it is further described as eternal, aiōnios, which means literally 'belonging to the age', i.e. the age to come. But since the age to come has broken into this present age, the life of the age to come, namely 'eternal life', can be received and enjoyed here and now. (Borrow [The Letters of John page 186](#))

**David Jackman** observes that **eternal life** "means literally the life of eternity, the life of the world to come. Yet this is something which God has already given to those who believe in Jesus. It is **the present possession of every Christian believer**... Supremely, the life of eternity is life that has overcome the grave, and that life can be found in Christ alone who triumphed over death by his glorious resurrection. This life is in his Son." (Borrow [The Message of John's Letters](#)) (Bolding added) One wonders if we more fully grasped the profundity of the truth that we even now possess eternal life, would that realization not significantly impact how we live in time?

**Vincent on eternal life** - Compare the phrase *ten zoen ten aionion* - the life, the eternal life (1Jn 1:2), and *e aionios zoe* = the eternal life (John 17:3). For the distinction between the phrases see note on 1Jn 1:2 (Note on 1Jn 1:2 = The Word Himself who is the Life. Compare John 14:6; 5:26; 1Jn 5:11, 12. Life expresses the nature of the Word John 1:4). The phrase, the Life, besides being equivalent to the Word, also indicates, like the Truth and the Light, an aspect of His being.). The phrase here, without either article, merely defines the character of the life.

**THOUGHT** - I would add it speaks not of the quantity but of the quality of life. Some might refer to it as "Abundant Life" (Jn 10:10a), the "Christ life" or the "Exchanged Life." In any event, it is life as God intended it to be lived, for our good and His glory. Amen.

**Stephen Smalley on eternal life** - It is the highest kind of spiritual and moral life, irrespective of time, which God enables the believer to share in relationship with Jesus. (Borrow [1, 2, 3 John page 286](#))

*Life eternal is life with Christ  
and in Christ.*

**Robert W. Yarbrough on eternal life** - The divinely bestowed gift of blessedness in God's presence that endures without end. This relates especially to the quality of life in this age, and to both the quality and duration of life in the age to come. (Excerpt from article on [Eternal Life - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#))

*Eternal life speaks of the absolute fullness of life,  
both essential and ethical, which belongs to God.*

-- Kenneth Wuest

**John MacArthur** - The essence of **eternal life** is the believer's participation in the blessed everlasting life of Christ (cf. Jn 1:4) through his or her union with Him (Ro 5:21; 6:4, 11, 23; 1Co 15:22; 2Co 5:17; Gal 2:20; Col 3:3-4; 2Ti 1:1, 10; Jude 1:21). 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). It is the life of the age to come (Eph 2:6-7), which believers will most fully experience in the perfect, unending glory, holiness, and joy of heaven (Ro 8:19-23, 29; 1Co 15:49; Phil 3:20-21; 1Jn 3:2). The eternal life promised by God in the Old Testament (e.g., 2Sa 12:23; Ps 16:8-10; 133:3; Da 12:2) and sought by the Jews of Jesus' day (Lk 10:25; Jn 5:39) comes only to those who believe God's testimony and place their faith in His Son. (See [1-3 John MacArthur New Testament Commentary - Page 197](#))

## REAL LIFE IN CHRIST

**And this life ([zoe](#)) is in His Son** - Compare this thought with Paul's phrase **In Christ**. The only way to obtain this life is by believing in His Son. Jesus is **eternal life** (1Jn 5:20), the eternal life that was with the Father from the beginning (1Jn 1:2+). Eternal life is not an abstract concept but a very real existence in a Person, "Christ, our life" (Col 3:4+), the One Who is the "Word of Life." (1Jn 1:1+)

*"It is as impossible to have life without having Christ as it is impossible  
to have Christ without at the same time possessing eternal life."*

-- James Montgomery Boice

**David Jackman on life in His Son** - this is a theme developed very extensively in John's Gospel ([see note](#)), which underlines that only in Jesus can such life be known and experienced. So to the unbelieving Jews who were trying to kill him because 'he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God' (Jn. 5:18+), Jesus unambiguously declared, 'Just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom He is pleased to give it' (Jn. 5:21+). And again, 'As the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself' (Jn. 5:26). He concludes, 'Yet you refuse to come to me to have life' (Jn. 5:40+). Later, to the crowds still marveling at the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus declares himself to be the bread of life, for which they are craving, and continues, 'For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day' (Jn. 6:40+). Speaking of his sheep, as the good shepherd, Jesus promises, 'I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no-one can snatch them out of my hand' (Jn. 10:28+). Then, in the very face of death itself, with Lazarus four days in the tomb, he declares to Martha, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die' (Jn. 11:25-26+). With this dominant theme running through John's gospel, we are not surprised to find that it recurs in the most intimate chapter of all, chapter 17. Here the Son is reviewing in prayer all that has happened in his ministry before committing himself, his disciples and the future church to the Father. The work he is now about to complete is seen in terms of eternal life. 'For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus

Christ, whom you have sent' (Jn. 17:2-3+). (Borrow [The Message of John's Letters](#))

*Yes, in me, in me He dwelleth;  
I in Him, and He in me!  
And my empty soul He filleth,  
**Here and through eternity.***  
—Horatius Bonar

**THOUGHT** - Since we as believers have eternal life by the work of the Holy Spirit in us, let us live out the new life by the power of the same Spirit not by trying to keep a set of rules of do's and don'ts.

**Jon Courson** - Sorry, Islam. Sorry Watchtower Society. Sorry Salt Lake City. The fact of the matter is this: Life is in the *Son*.

**This life is in His Son** - a few cross references to ponder our life in Jesus...

1Jn 5:12 **He who has the Son has the life**; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

1Jn 5:20+ And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and **eternal life**.

1Jn 4:9+ By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that **we might live through Him**.

John 1:4+ **In Him was life**, and the life was the light of men.

John 5:21; 26+ "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so **the Son also gives life to whom He wishes**. 26 "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also **to have life in Himself**;

John 11:25-26+ Jesus said to her, "**I am** the resurrection and **the life**; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

John 14:6+ Jesus said to him, '**I am** the way, and the truth, and **the life**; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.

Jn 20:31+ but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing **you may have life in His Name**.

Colossians 3:3-4+ For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When **Christ, who is our life**, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory (cp 1Jn 3:3+).

#### **Related Resources :**

- [Eternal Life - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#) - **Excerpt:** The divinely bestowed gift of blessedness in God's presence that endures without end. This relates especially to the quality of life in this age, and to both the quality and duration of life in the age to come. Key to understanding the biblical meaning of these terms is the Bible's use of the word "eternal."
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Eternal Life](#)
- [Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary \(borrow\)](#) - **Excerpt:** Eternal life is "a person's new and redeemed existence in Jesus Christ that is granted by God as a gift to all believers. **Eternal life** refers to the quality or character of our new existence in Christ as well as the unending character of that life."
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Eternal Life](#) - **Excerpt:** The quality of life including the promise of resurrection which God gives to those who believe in Christ. This important term in the New Testament is emphasized in the Gospel of John, but also appears in the other Gospels and in Paul's writings. Eternal life in the New Testament eliminates the boundary line of death. Death is still a foe, but the one who has eternal life already experiences the kind of existence that will never end. Yet in this expression, the emphasis is on the quality of life rather than on the unending duration of life. Probably some aspects of both quality and duration appear in every context, but some refer primarily to quality of life and others point to unending life or a life to be entered into in the future.
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Eternal Life \(2\) Eternal Life](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Eternal Life](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Eternal Life](#)
- [Got Eternal Life? Do you know for sure that you will have eternal life in Heaven with God?](#)
- [How can I gain an eternal perspective on life?](#)
- [Is there life after death?](#)

- [What does John 3:16 mean?](#)
- See verse by verse commentary on John 3:16
- [What things in this world have a true eternal value?](#) **Excerpt:** It goes without saying that the only things of eternal value in this world are those that are eternal. Life in this world is temporal, not eternal, and therefore, the only part of life that has eternal value is that which lasts through eternity. Clearly, the most important thing in this world that has true eternal value is having a relationship with Jesus Christ, as the free gift of eternal life comes only through Him to all those who believe (John 3:16). As Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Everyone is going to live somewhere for all of eternity, Christians and non-Christians alike. And the only eternal destiny other than the one in heaven with Christ is one that provides everlasting punishment for those who reject Him (Matthew 25:46).

**Testimony** (3141)(**marturia/martyria** related to **martureo** = to witness <> **martus/martys** = a witness) is that which furnishes evidence or proof. "According to the Jewish law threefold testimony was valid." (Smith) "The conditions for a legally valid witness are laid down in Dt. 19:15 (cf. Mt. 18:16; Jn 8:17-18.; 10:25; 2Co 13:1)." (Robertson) A **testimony** is a solemn declaration or affirmation made for the purpose of establishing or proving some fact. As an aside the frequent cost of such a "witness" is pointed up by the fact that we derive our English word "**martyr**" from this Greek word.

**MARTURIA - 28V - reputation(1), testimony(30), witness(1).** Mk. 14:55; Mk. 14:56; Mk. 14:59; Lk. 22:71; Jn. 1:7; Jn. 1:19; Jn. 3:33; Jn. 5:31; Jn. 5:32; Jn. 5:34; Jn. 5:36; Jn. 8:13; Jn. 8:17; Jn. 21:24; Acts 22:18; 1 Tim. 3:7; Tit. 1:13; 1 Jn. 5:9; 1 Jn. 5:10; 1 Jn. 5:11; Rev. 1:2; Rev. 1:9; Rev. 6:9; Rev. 11:7; Rev. 12:11; Rev. 12:17; Rev. 19:10; Rev. 20:4

**Eternal** (166)(**aionios**) is an adjective which means existing at all times, perpetual, pertaining to an unlimited duration of time. Without end, never to cease, everlasting. (Ro 1:20 - God's power, Mt 18:8 - God's place of judgment, Ro 16:26 - God's attribute) **Mounce** observes that "This adjective typically functions in three settings: the eternity of God and the divine realm; the blessings of salvation; and everlasting conditions that have neither beginning nor end."

**AIONIOS - 69V** - Matt. 18:8; Matt. 19:16; Matt. 19:29; Matt. 25:41; Matt. 25:46; Mk. 3:29; Mk. 10:17; Mk. 10:30; Lk. 10:25; Lk. 16:9; Lk. 18:18; Lk. 18:30; Jn. 3:15; Jn. 3:16; Jn. 3:36; Jn. 4:14; Jn. 4:36; Jn. 5:24; Jn. 5:39; Jn. 6:27; Jn. 6:40; Jn. 6:47; Jn. 6:54; Jn. 6:68; Jn. 10:28; Jn. 12:25; Jn. 12:50; Jn. 17:2; Jn. 17:3; Acts 13:46; Acts 13:48; Rom. 2:7; Rom. 5:21; Rom. 6:22; Rom. 6:23; Rom. 16:25; Rom. 16:26; 2 Co. 4:17; 2 Co. 4:18; 2 Co. 5:1; Gal. 6:8; 2 Thess. 1:9; 2 Thess. 2:16; 1 Tim. 1:16; 1 Tim. 6:12; 1 Tim. 6:16; 1 Tim. 6:19; 2 Tim. 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:10; Tit. 1:2; Tit. 3:7; Phlm. 1:15; Heb. 5:9; Heb. 6:2; Heb. 9:12; Heb. 9:14; Heb. 9:15; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 5:10; 2 Pet. 1:11; 1 Jn. 1:2; 1 Jn. 2:25; 1 Jn. 3:15; 1 Jn. 5:11; 1 Jn. 5:13; 1 Jn. 5:20; Jude 1:7; Jude 1:21; Rev. 14:6

**Eternal life** occurs 41x in the NAS, most often (21x) in the writings of John -

Matt 19:16, 29; 25:46; Mark 10:17, 30; Luke 10:25; 18:18, 30; John 3:15-16, 36; 4:14; 5:24, 39; 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 68; 10:28; 12:50; 17:2-3; Acts 13:46, 48; Ro 2:7; 5:21; 6:22f; Gal 6:8; 1Ti 1:16; 6:12; Titus 1:2; 3:7; 1 John 1:2; 2:25; 3:15; 5:11, 13, 20; Jude 1:21

**Life** (2222)(**zoe**) in Scripture is used (1) to refer to physical life (Ro 8:38+, 1Co 3:22, Php 1:20+, Jas 4:14, etc) but more often to (2) to supernatural life in contrast to a life subject to eternal death (Jn 3:36+). This quality of life speaks of fullness of life which alone belongs to God the Giver of life and is available to His children now (Ro 6:4+, Ep 4:18+) as well as in eternity future (Mk 10:30+, Titus 1:2+ on Eternal Life).

**Kenneth Wuest** - Zoe is "life that God is, is not to be defined as merely animation, but as definitely ethical in its content. God is not the mere reason for the universe, as the Greeks thought, but a Person with the characteristics and qualities of a divine Person.

The ethical and spiritual qualities of this life which God is, are communicated to the sinner when the latter places his faith in the Lord Jesus as Saviour, and this becomes the new, animating, energizing, motivating principle which transforms the experience of that individual, and the saint thus lives a Christian life.

The message of (the epistle of) John is that since the believer is a partaker of this life, it is an absolute necessity that he show the ethical and spiritual qualities that are part of the essential nature of God, in his own life. If these are entirely absent, John says, that person is devoid of the life of God, and is unsaved. The ethical and spiritual qualities of this life were exhibited to the human race in the earthly life of the Lord Jesus. His life thus becomes the pattern of what our lives should be in holiness, self-sacrifice, humility and love. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

**ZOE IN FIRST JOHN** - 1 Jn. 1:1; 1 Jn. 1:2; 1 Jn. 2:25; 1 Jn. 3:14; 1 Jn. 3:15; 1 Jn. 5:11; 1 Jn. 5:12; 1 Jn. 5:13; 1 Jn. 5:16; 1 Jn. 5:20;

[Click for an in depth 8 PAGE discussion of zoe and see preceding discussion of "BIOS" in the New International Dictionary of the New Testament](#)

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**QUESTION: ["What is eternal life?"](#)**

**ANSWER:** When the Bible speaks of eternal life, it refers to a gift of God that comes only "through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). This gift is in contrast to the "death" that is the natural result of sin.

The gift of eternal life comes to those who believe in Jesus Christ, who is Himself "the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). The fact that this life is "eternal" indicates that it is perpetual life—it goes on and on and on, with no end.

It is a mistake, however, to view eternal life as simply an unending progression of years. A common New Testament word for "eternal" is *aiónios*, which carries the idea of quality as well as quantity. In fact, eternal life is not really associated with "years" at all, as it is independent of time. Eternal life can function outside of and beyond time, as well as within time.

For this reason, eternal life can be thought of as something that Christians experience now. Believers don't have to "wait" for eternal life, because it's not something that starts when they die. Rather, eternal life begins the moment a person exercises faith in Christ. It is our current possession. John 3:36 says, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life." Note that the believer "has" (present tense) this life (the verb is present tense in the Greek, too). We find similar present-tense constructions in John 5:24 and John 6:47. The focus of eternal life is not on our future, but on our current standing in Christ.

The Bible inextricably links eternal life with the Person of Jesus Christ. John 17:3 is an important passage in this regard, as Jesus prays, "Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." Here, Jesus equates "eternal life" with a knowledge of God and of the Son. There is no knowledge of God without the Son, for it is through the Son that the Father reveals Himself to the elect (John 17:6; 14:9).

This life-giving knowledge of the Father and the Son is a true, personal knowledge, not just an academic awareness. There will be some on Judgment Day who had claimed to be followers of Christ but never really had a relationship with Him. To those false professors, Jesus will say, "I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!" (Matthew 7:23). The apostle Paul made it his goal to know the Lord, and he linked that knowledge to resurrection from the dead: "I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead" (Philippians 3:10–11).

In the New Jerusalem, the apostle John sees a river flowing from "the throne of God and of the Lamb," and "on each side of the river stood the tree of life. . . . And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:1–2). In Eden, we rebelled against God and were banished from the tree of life (Genesis 3:24). In the end, God graciously restores our access to the tree of life. This access is provided through Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

Right now, every sinner is invited to know Christ and to receive eternal life: "Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life" (Revelation 22:17).

How can you know that you have eternal life? First of all, confess your sin before our holy God. Then accept God's provision of a Savior on your behalf. "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13). Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for your sins, and He rose again the third day. Believe this good news; trust the Lord Jesus as your Savior, and you will be saved (Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9–10).

John puts it so simply: "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life" (1 John 5:11–12).

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**Robert Morgan** - BORROW [100 Bible Verses Everyone Should Know by Heart - page 84](#) - recommended

Assurance: Inner Peace and Security 1 John 5:11 (See Morgan's note on 1 John 5:12 and [Morgan's note](#) on 1 John 5:14)

And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. —1 John 5:11

As a college sophomore, I was mentored by an upperclassman who gave me these two verses, 1 John 5:11-12, to memorize. He called them two of the best verses in the Bible about assurance of salvation. As long as I knew these verses, he said, I'd never doubt being saved. I've come back to them many times, and I'm thankful for what's not in them. There is no maybe, if, might, or



hope so...

This is the testimony. This is what God Himself has declared as truth. This is the record. These are the facts.

- He has... It's already done. This has been irrevocably accomplished.
- He has given us... It's not just a generic promise that He has given eternal life. It includes that personal pronoun us. And us includes you and me.
- He has given us eternal life. While the whole Bible teaches that God is eternal and He bestows everlasting life on His children, it's John who is the apostle of eternal life. He used the phrase twenty-three times in His writing.
- And this life is in His Son. Jesus not only gives us life; He is the Source and Creator of life. And yet—paradox of the ages—He died to conquer death, and because He lives, we live also.

### John on Eternal Life

- Everyone who believes on Him will not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)
- The one who believes in the Son has eternal life. (John 3:36)
- Anyone who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life. (John 5:24)
- I assure you: Anyone who believes has eternal life. (John 6:47)
- Lord, who will we go to? You have the words of eternal life. (John 6:68)
- I gave them eternal life, and they will never perish. (John 10:28)
- This is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and the One You have sent—Jesus Christ. (John 17:3)
- We... declare to you the eternal life. (1 John 1:2)
- And this is the promise that He Himself made to us: eternal life. (1 John 2:25)
- And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. (1 John 5:11)
- I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. (1 John 5:13)

Our hope is not hung upon such an untwisted thread as, "I imagine so," or "It is likely," but the cable, the strong tow of our fastened anchor, is the oath and promise of Him who is eternal verity. Our salvation is fastened with God's own hand, and with Christ's own strength, to the strong stake of God's unchangeable nature. —Samuel Rutherford

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**H A Ironside** - A friend of mine who died some years ago in India did not have the assurance of salvation. The thing that troubled him above everything else was that he had an idea that God had chosen an elect few that should be saved, and as he had no evidence that he was among them, he could not know that he was saved. He went to a meeting where the preacher declared that a man was saved the moment he believed in Jesus, and that he possessed eternal life and could never perish. "Now," he said, "I would like to be sure of that." When he got home, he got down on his knees and prayed, "O God, if it is possible for a man to be sure he has eternal life, show it to me now from Thy own Word; but if it is not possible, show me that, and I will leave it with Thee." He turned to this fifth chapter of First John and read the verses that I have read to you, and when he came to the verse, "He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son," he said, "I don't want to make Him a liar, but I don't know what that record is." And so he looked at the next verse, and read, "And this is the record." He put his thumb down on the rest of the verse, and shut his eyes and prayed, "O God, I have just been reading that if a man does not believe the record that Thou hast given of Thy Son, he makes Thee a liar; I don't want to make Thee a liar, but I don't know what the record is. I suppose I have it under my thumb. I am going to lift my thumb, and when I do, help me to believe whatever I find there, because I do not want to make Thee a liar." He almost dreaded to lift his thumb, but finally did, and read, "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." "Oh," he said, "blessed be God! Then right here and now I can know!" and his faith was confirmed as he read, "He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." He saw that it was just a question of receiving Him. He came into peace, and for years preached this same truth to others.

"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1:11-12). Have you received Christ? Then, "He that hath the Son hath life." Are you rejecting Him? "He that hath not the Son of God hath not life." If the Son of God has not been received by faith as Saviour, you are still dead in trespasses and sins, but if you have received Him as your Saviour, God says you have everlasting life. Take Him at His word.

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**C H Spurgeon** - Many go to heaven with very little comfort on the road. I do not commend them for their want [lack] of comfort; but I do advise you, instead of looking to singular experiences as a ground of confidence, look to the bleeding Saviour, and rest alone in Him, for if you have Him you have eternal life.

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[Daniel Akin](#) - PBS tackled the soul-searching following 9-11 with "Faith and Doubt at Ground Zero." It aired on Sept. 3 and 11, 2002. On the show an agnostic photographer named Luca Babini said she doesn't know if she ever believed in God, but she now wishes "there was a God that I could access and that it could be proven that I can access Him. I wish God had a telephone number since Sept. 11," she said (RNS, 2002).

Well I have good news for Luca Babini and others like her. God does have a phone number and anyone call Him at anytime and get straight through. Just dial SON-GOD-JESUS. Through that number, but only that number, God can be accessed from anyplace and at anytime. The operator is on the line and waiting. All you have to do is make the call.

Having the Son equals having life. Not having the Son equals not having life. It is that simple, though many try and make it more complex. -

Charismatic Bishop Carlton Pearson of Tulsa, OK boldly touts, "I exclude nobody from the redemptive work of the cross. I believe that Jesus redeemed the entire world." To Jewish leaders he said, "I don't want to convert anybody. I just want to convince everybody." (RNS).

"If you do not have Jesus, you do not have life. You are a walking dead man. You are a corpse waiting on the casket." James Merritt.

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**J C Philpot** - How often we are looking and looking in vain for life in ourselves. True it is that if God has quickened our souls we are partakers of life divine, of life spiritual, of life eternal, of the life that is in Christ and comes from Christ; and yet how often we vainly seek to find it warm and glowing in our breasts. If once given it never dies; but it is often hidden beneath the ashes, and thus though it slowly burns and dimly glows, yet the ashes hide it from view, and we only know it is there by some remains of warmth. "Your life is hid with Christ in God"; and therefore not only hidden as treasured and stored up safely in God, but hidden from the world, and even hidden from the eyes of its possessor. Christ is our life. There is no other. To look, then, for life in ourselves independent of and distinct from the fountain of life is to look for that in the creature which is lodged in the divine Creator, is to look for that in man which dwells in the God-man; to look for that in self which is out of self, embodied in the fulness of the Son of God. And it is not merely that life is in Him, but He is the life itself. As the sun not only has light and heat, but is light itself and heat itself, so the blessed Lord not only grants life, but He Himself is what He grants. As a fountain not only gives water, but is itself all water, so Christ not only gives what He is, but is all that He gives. Not only, therefore, is He the "resurrection," centering in Himself everything, both for time and eternity, which resurrection contains and resurrection implies, but He is "the Life," being in Himself a fountain of life, out of which He gives from His own fulness to the members of His mystical body.

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### **The Life Which Is in Christ Jesus**

• **The Life Defined** (I John 5:11, 12). And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. (5:12) He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

• **The Life and Its Manifestations** (Ro 6:4+). = Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

• **The Life and Its Security** (Col. 3:3+). = For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

• **The Life and Its Precedence** (Gal. 2:20+). = "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

• **The Life and the Life More Abundant** (John 10:10). = "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

• **The Life and Its Tabernacle** (2 Cor. 4:7+). = But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;

• **The Life and How It Is Obtained** (1 Peter 1:23+). = for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.

Unless we have the Life which is in Christ Jesus, we have nothing worth the while; we have nothing upon which to build; we have no basis of development and of growth.

A mere churchianity is not sufficient. A mere formal profession of Christ is not enough. To know all about Christ Jesus will not meet the depths of our need. We must have the Life which is in Christ Jesus.

Our theme is not one of profession but of possession. We are not to discuss imitating Christ, but possessing Christ. It is not a matter of Christ without, our example; but of Christ within, our life.

A song is often sung: (by D. W. Whittle)

[As lives the flow'r within the seed.](#)

As in the cone the tree,  
So, praise the God of truth and grace,  
His Spirit dwelleth in me.

Refrain:

Christ liveth in me,  
Christ liveth in me,  
O what a salvation this,  
That Christ liveth in me!

2 Once far from God and dead in sin,  
No light my heart could see;  
But in God's Word the light I found,  
Now Christ liveth in me. [Refrain]

3 As rays of light from yonder sun,  
The flow'rs of earth set free,  
So life and light and love came forth  
From Christ living in me. [Refrain]

4 With longing all my heart is filled,  
That like Him I may be,  
As on the wond'rous tho't I dwell  
That Christ liveth in me. [Refrain]

**The song contains a truth, but the truth is very poorly expressed. The Spirit of Christ does live in believers; but He does not live there by any natural manifestation or development.**

"Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.  
John 3:7+

There is no greater fallacy than that which supposes that the life of Christ is resident in embryo, in every life, and only needs to be fanned, in order to produce the matured life which is in Christ Jesus.

Christ does not live in us, as the cone lives in the tree at all. Christ lives in us by a new, a supernatural birth. It is our purpose to go into this all-important theme, and to consider what the Word of God says about this Life which is in Christ Jesus - Robert Neighbour