

1 John Lesson 13 Articles

Christian assurance is not a matter of “working up” a religious emotion; it is simply a matter of taking God at His Word.¹

This is the final section of John’s first epistle.²¹⁹ It consists of John’s purpose for writing his epistle (5:13), teaching about prayer (5:14–17), a summary section about the believer’s knowledge and sin (5:18–20), and a warning to flee false religion (5:20–21). The theme of knowledge or confidence pervades this section.²

The Spirit and the Word always agree, for “the Spirit is truth” (5:6) and God’s Word is truth (John 17:17). The witness of the Spirit within the heart will never contradict the words of the Spirit in the Bible. The false teachers John was opposing taught that one had to belong to a special “inner circle” before one could understand spiritual knowledge, but John affirms that any true believer can know God’s truth.

The true God is opposed to the false gods, the idols. An idol is man’s conception of god. God made man in His image; now men make gods in their own image! Read Rom. 1:21ff. Note that John affirms that Jesus Christ is the true God!

Obedience, love, and truth are the key thoughts in this epistle. They are the evidence of salvation and the essentials of fellowship, the secret of true and abiding life.³

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). *Wiersbe’s expository outlines on the New Testament* (p. 778). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

²¹⁹ Some argue that 5:13 is still part of the main body and that the conclusion does not begin until 5:14 (so Bultmann, *Johannine Epistles*, 83; Dodd, *Johannine Epistles*, 133; Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 274–75.). Yet even Smalley admits that this verse “is transitional, in that it looks back to the subject matter of vv 5–12, and also provides a summary conclusion (to 1 John in its entirety) which leads into the closing remarks of vv 14–21” (p. 289). Marshall similarly states that v. 13 “sums up the Epistle as a whole, but in function it serves to link verses 5–11 with verses 14–21” (*Epistles of John*, 243, n. 1). Sherman and Tuggy argue: “In 5:13–21 John makes a Final Appeal to the readers’ emotions so that all the previous appeals aimed at affecting their behavior will be heeded. In 5:13 he explicitly presents his purpose along with further descriptions of the benefits of living together according to Christ. Then pointedly and succinctly he gives the Final Appeal summarizing the letter: avoid anything that is not according to Christ (5:21).... Coherence is evidenced by the unit’s being a summary of the whole letter” (*Semantic and Structural Analysis*, 98).

² Akin, D. L. (2001). *1, 2, 3 John* (Vol. 38, p. 203). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

³ Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). *Wiersbe’s expository outlines on the New Testament* (p. 779). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.