

(Through the Bible) 1 John 5

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith in Jesus Christ, loving God and His commandments, and the essence of Christianity, which is believing on Jesus Christ and loving one another.

Duration: 50:33

Scripture: John 3:23, John 3:36, 1 John 1:3, 1 John 3:23, 1 John 5:2-3, 1 John 5:6-8, 1 John 5:11-12

Topics: "Through The Bible"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of believing in the witness of God. He compares it to our legal system, which relies on the testimony of witnesses. The preacher explains that faith in God is developed by knowing Him through studying the Bible. He highlights that eternal life is only possible through Jesus Christ, and it is not just about the duration of time but also the quality of life. The sermon concludes with a prayer for the listeners to have a loving and impactful year, sharing God's love with the world.

Transcript

Now, whosoever believes that Jesus is the Messiah is born of God, and everyone that loveth Him that begeth Him also that is begotten of Him. So, I say I love Jesus. He is the Messiah.

Yes, I'm born again. Oh, and how I love Him. Well, if I love Him who has begotten me into this new life, then I will also love those who have been begotten.

The family of God. My brothers and sisters in Jesus. And by this we know another proof of how we know what we know.

By this we know that we love the children of God when we love God and we keep His commandments. Jesus said, a new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another even as I have loved you. Now, when John seeks to bring down the commandments of Jesus, Jesus gave us the Old Testament commandments in the concise form.

Love God supremely, love your neighbors as yourself. In this is all the law and the prophets. I mean, it's all wrapped up right here.

Very concise. Now, John also capsulizes, gives us the essence of the commandments of Jesus. He does that over there in chapter 3. This is His commandment that we should believe on the name of His Son,

Jesus Christ, and love one another as He gave His commandment.

This is the commandment. And He gives us a condensed, concise form. Just believe on Jesus and love each other.

I mean, that's what it's all about. That's what Christianity is all about. That's the heart of Christianity.

That's the essence of Christianity. That we believe on Jesus Christ and that we love one another. There it is.

You've got the whole thing right there. Now, hereby I know that I love God. I can say that I love God, but I might just be mouthing empty phrases.

By this I know when I love the children of God, I keep His commandments. For this is the love of God that we keep His commandments and His commandments are not grievous. They're not that hard.

Tell me what's... well, take it back. The first one's not so bad. Believing on His Son, Jesus Christ.

Now, the second one is more difficult. Loving each other as we love ourselves. That is more difficult.

And that does take a work of God's Spirit within my heart. I can't just say, well, I'm going to love Him. You know, I've done that.

I've tried to mesmerize myself. You know, self-hypnosis. Well, He's not such a bad guy.

He's got some good traits and I really shouldn't feel that way about Him. And, you know, He's loud and He's brash and He says stupid things, but yet, you know, He's not that bad. And I shouldn't really feel, you know, this animosity towards Him.

Also, you know, I like Him, I guess. And, you know, He's not too bad and I can tolerate Him. And, you know, I try and talk myself into, you know, like we were used to say when we were kids, well, I love you only enough to get to heaven, you know.

And so you've got yourself all psyched into, hey, yeah, no, He's not so bad, yeah. And then He shows up at a party. And as He comes in, loud mouth, crude, says some stupid thing and you think, oh, you jerk, why didn't you stay home, you know.

And all of this mesmerizing out the window, you know. All of this, you know, hours building myself up for this next time that I meet Him. Yeah, He's not too bad, you know.

I sort of like Him, you know. And then, poof, all of the effort of bringing my mind into a loving state is gone. Yes, it's true, there are people with whom you are incompatible.

They're too much like you. It's amazing how horrible our sins look when someone else is committing them. You know, if I'm committing, oh, not too bad.

But if you start committing my sins, oh, it's ugly and horrible. Can't stand you. This kind of love takes a special work of God's Spirit within my heart.

I can't do it. I can't manufacture agape. I can't psych myself into agape.

And that's why it's a proof to me that it is God. As God has given to me love for people that I could not stand in the natural. And to experience God's love working in my heart and changing my heart and my attitude towards these people.

I know it's God's love being perfected in me. And there are many times that I've had to pray, now Lord, I know that you require that I love them. But that's impossible for me.

I can't do it. But Lord, I want you to work in me and give me your love for them. I know that I don't love them, but I know that you do.

So give me your love for them. You know, in these kind of things, I think that it's extremely important that we be totally frank and honest with God because it's, you know, if anything else, you're only fooling yourself. You don't fool God.

And so many times we're trying to snow God with our prayers. Well, God, thank you for this great love you've given to me. Oh, Lord, I love everybody.

Now, there's one fellow, Lord, and I'm having difficulty loving him with the intensity and degree that I should be loving him. So, Lord, increase that intensity of love in my heart. You're not being honest with God.

God can't do anything for you. Now, you need to be straightforward and honest with God. You say, God, I hate him.

I can't stand his looks or anything else. And so, God, if there's going to be any love coming from me in his direction, you're going to have to do it. But I'm willing, Lord, for you to do it.

Please work within my heart. Take away the hatred and give me your love. And if you're honest, then God can deal with it and God will deal with it and work.

As long as you try to snow God, you're not going to get anywhere because he knows the truth of your heart. And, you know, we try to paint a pretty nice picture of ourselves when we come before God. And all the while, God knows the whole ugly truth.

His commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that overcomes the world.

Even our faith. Now, we read in the book of Revelation that when Satan is cast out of heaven, that they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, loving not their lives unto death. Here, our victory is our faith in Jesus Christ.

We overcome the world, the things of the world, through our faith in him. And how is that faith developed? By knowing him. And how can I know him? By studying the revelation of himself, the Bible.

It is awfully hard to trust somebody you don't know. If a total stranger walks up to you on the street and asks to borrow \$50, I'll meet you here tomorrow and pay you back. If any of you are prone to give it to him, let me know.

I'd be anxious to meet you. I need \$50. But, I mean, boy, I mean, you're, you know, anybody can... You see, I don't know you.

How can I, you know, trust you to be here to pay me back? I don't know you. It's hard to believe or trust someone you don't know. Because we know that there are a lot of shams and a lot of, you know, frauds and everything else.

A lot of scams going on. But when you know someone, know them well, know that they have a tremendous reputation for honesty, uprightness, character, then you don't have any trouble trusting them. Your problem in trusting God is you just don't know him.

Your problem in trusting Jesus Christ is the lack of knowledge. That's why Jesus said, learn of me. He said, come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, I'll give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn of me. Why does he want you to learn of him? Because there is where your faith is increased. The more you know him, the easier it is to trust him.

And so we overcome by this faith. And who is he that overcomes the world? But he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God. My faith in Jesus Christ brings me victory over the world.

Now this is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ. Not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness because the Spirit is truth.

What does it mean he came by water and he came by blood? Not by water only, but water and blood. There are two general opinions of the commentators. The first opinion is that it is referring to his baptism.

He was baptized in water and then later baptized in blood. When John and James came to him and said, Lord, you know, we'd like a favor. When you establish your kingdom, let him sit on your right side and let me sit on your left side.

And Jesus said, you don't know what you ask. He said, are you able to be baptized with a baptism wherein I am going to be baptized? Oh, yes, Lord, we are. He said, you don't know what you're saying.

But he was referring to the cross as a baptism. So when he refers here, he came not only by water, but by blood. It was a reference to his water baptism and then his crucifixion.

The other field of thought of the commentators is that it is a reference to the crucifixion itself when the soldier pierced his side and there came forth blood and water. And it is a reference to that cleansing flow from Jesus by which our sins are cleansed, the pouring forth of the water and the blood. And so I leave the theologians to argue it.

I say that you can take either opinion and you're not going to be too far from wrong. Just exactly what he means by this, I am not sure. But this is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ, not by the water only, but by water and blood.

And it is the spirit that bears witness because the spirit is truth. And so the spirit bears witness of the truth to our hearts. Now, verse seven did not appear in any of the early manuscripts.

It did not appear in the manuscripts until about the 10th century. And so this verse probably was not original in John's writing. The fact that it doesn't exist in any of the early manuscripts that exist before the 10th century.

So, verse seven probably should not be here in the Scriptures. This is the only verse of which I would declare that in the New Testament. But evidence of it existing in the early manuscripts is non-existent.

There is an early church father who quoted from an ancient manuscript, no doubt, in which he quoted this particular passage. Now, what manuscripts he had, we don't know. But there is only one church father that made reference to it, early church father.

And so it is generally conceded that this does not belong as a part of the original text. But you should go from verse six to verse eight. The spirit bears witness because the spirit is truth.

Of what does the spirit bear witness? There are three that bear witness in the earth. The spirit, the water, and the blood. And these three all agree.

So the spirit bearing witness of Jesus Christ and of that salvation that we have through Jesus. Either the baptism in water and the baptism of crucifixion or the blood and the water that poured forth from His side. John said, we bear record of it.

We saw it. It is true. And we bear record of it that you might believe.

And testifying in the 19th chapter of the spear, when the soldier pierced him with the spear, there came forth blood and water. There is an interesting aspect to that from a physiological standpoint. The doctors say that the fact, you know, Jesus was dead when the soldier came.

They were going to break his legs. But when they came to Jesus, they found he was already dead. They were sort of surprised that he was already dead.

But he had dismissed his spirit. He said, no man takes my life from me. Who killed Jesus? Nobody.

Jesus said, no man takes my life from me. I give my life. I have the power to lay it down.

I have the power to take it up again. Now Jesus had divine powers and he had the power to just dismiss his spirit. Now we don't.

I can't say to my spirit, oh, you've had it. Might as well leave. Jesus had the power of dismissing his spirit, of laying down his life and of taking it up again.

So while he was there on the cross, it says, and he dismissed his spirit. He said, okay, you can go now. You know, it's finished.

All right, you can go. And he dismissed his spirit so that when they came, they were surprised that he was already dead. So they didn't break his legs in order that the scriptures might be fulfilled.

Not a bone of him shall be broken. But instead, the soldier took his spirit and pierced his side in order that the scriptures might be fulfilled, which said, and they pierced him. Now they came forth blood and water.

From a scientific standpoint, the fact that when they pierced his heart, and of course, that's where he put the spirit through his heart. The fact that blood and water came forth would indicate that his death from a physical cause was that of a ruptured heart, broken heart. His heart actually ruptured.

When your heart ruptures, there's a sac around the heart that fills with a water like substance. So when they pierced the heart, the blood and water coming forth indicated death by a ruptured heart or by a

broken heart. From a physiological standpoint, from a spiritual standpoint, he just dismissed his spirit.

The spirit bears witness that the blood of Jesus Christ that was shed cleanses us from all sin. Three that bear record. The record of God that there is forgiveness provided for you and for your sins from God through Jesus Christ and his sacrifice on the cross for you.

Now, if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. What is our whole jurisprudence system based upon? The witnesses of men. You're charged with a crime.

You're arrested for robbing the security of the civic bank. You plead innocent. You get a good attorney.

The prosecuting attorney introduces the first witness, your name, your occupation. You're a teller at security Pacific Bank. On March the 15th at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, what happened? Well, a man came up to my window and he handed me a paper bag and a note and he said, I have a gun and I'm going to shoot you unless you fill the bag with money and hand it to me.

Do you see this man in the courtroom? Yes, he's sitting right over there. Are you sure that's the man? Oh yes, I'm sure. What makes you so sure? Well, I noticed this scar down the side of his face and I'm sure it's him.

He calls his next witness. Where were you on the afternoon, 2 o'clock? Well, I happen to be standing in line in the bank and I noticed this man go up to the window and they tell their story. Do you see the man in the courtroom? Oh yeah, he's sitting right over there.

Are you sure that's the man? Oh yes, yes, I couldn't be mistaken. I'm sure it's him. And they get three or four people and say, oh yeah, I saw him.

I saw him running out. I was standing at the door and he almost knocked me over as he went running by and I turned to yell at him but he had already gone. But oh man, I faced him and I saw a gun in his hand.

Yeah, he's right over there. Guilty. The witness of men.

We accept it. Our Jewish President's system is based upon the witness of men. You've got two or three people that give you an identical story and they put the finger on the same fellow and you say, yeah, it's got to be the fellow.

He's guilty. They build up the case. They show all the evidence to show your guilt.

And you're a judge guilty because of the witness of men. Now, if we will accept the witness of men, then ought we not to accept the witness of God and of God's Spirit? If we accept the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. And it is interesting that there are men who will believe men but won't believe God.

They'll accept the word of men who are often untrustworthy. But it was such a convincing story, you know. I was sure his grandmother was dying.

You know, he cried. And we believe the word of men. Well, if we believe the word of men, the witness of God is greater.

We ought to believe God. And this is the witness which he has testified of his son. He that believeth on the Son of God then has this witness in himself.

The Spirit bears witness. The Spirit within me. And so there is that internal witness within me testifying to the truth of Jesus Christ to my heart.

That's why there is no doubt. I know because of the witness of the Spirit within my heart. There is that Oedipus of the Greek, this intuitive, internal knowledge that I have by the witness that is within me, the witness of God's Spirit.

Now, he that believeth not God has made God a liar. If you don't believe the witness of God, you in essence are saying that God is lying. And that's a pretty horrible charge to make against God.

But that's the charge you make when you refuse to believe God's witness to your heart. And that's what basically the sin against the Holy Spirit is. It's not believing the witness of the Holy Spirit that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world.

Your only hope of eternal life is in Jesus Christ. And you don't believe that? That's unpardonable. God's made no other provision for your salvation apart from Jesus Christ.

And so that's the sin against the Holy Spirit. You're calling him a liar when he bears witness to your need of Jesus Christ and surrendering your life to him. So this is the record.

You call God a liar because you did not believe the record that God gave of his son. What is the record that God gave of his son? What is the witness that God has made of his son? Just this. This is the record.

That God has given to us eternal life. And this life is in his son. And he who has the son hath life.

And he that hath not the son of God hath not life. That's God's witness to you. God has given to us eternal life.

But the life is in his son. You cannot have eternal life apart from the son. And as we pointed out this morning, eternal life is much more than quantity or duration of time.

It is a quality of life. You know, I can think of nothing more horrible than living forever in this decrepit body that I have. That is getting more decrepit year by year.

Looking forward to 1985. See what's going to go wrong. Though the outward man perishes, the inward man is renewed day by day.

Thank God for his work of his spirit within my heart or I'd really be discouraged. The inward man being renewed. You see, the outward man is wearing out, decaying, going to pieces.

But the inward man, hey, getting stronger every day. Now, as the body continues to deteriorate, if I should live to be 150, that'd be horrible. Because I'm sure by then I wouldn't be able to see at all.

Wouldn't be able to get out of bed at all. I'd probably lose all my senses. Wouldn't be able to taste chocolate anymore.

To go on forever in a body that isn't functioning. You see, the Bible teaches the real me isn't this body. The real me is spirit.

The body is just the instrument through which my spirit can express itself. And when through age the body can no longer fulfill the purposes for which God designed it, when it can't really express me anymore, then God and His love is going to release my spirit from this body. I don't want to rot away in some old folks home, senile and walking around just, you know.

I want God to take me long before that. Man, I don't want to rust out. That's why I keep going.

I want to wear out. And if the Lord should take me some day suddenly by, you know, some means, I don't know, accident, heart attack or whatever, just rejoice with me. Because you can be sure I'll be rejoicing that I've been delivered from a body of weakness.

Hey, I don't mean that I'm decrepit yet, but I'm getting there. And, you know, I'm not trying to say, oh, you know, I'm on the verge of toppling, you know, or whatever. I, you know, I feel strong and healthy and great.

And God is good and I'm not speaking disparagingly of God's gift to me, this body. I thank God for the strength and all that He has given to me. I thank God for the energy that I have.

I thank God for the strength that I have. And I rejoice in that. But I am also practical enough to realize that I don't have as much strength as I used to have.

I don't have as much physical abilities as I used to have. I have more pains than I used to have. I can't see as well as I used to see.

I can't hear as well as I used to hear. I mean, things are going on. I can recognize that.

But that age-abiding life that I have is not just a quantity of life, it's a quality. It's a quality of life that is rich and full. It is a life that is marked by joy.

The kingdom of God is not meat or drink, but it's righteousness, peace and joy. And that's the quality of life that we have in God's kingdom. It's a life of righteousness, a life of peace, a life of joy.

So, this is the record God's given to us, this age-abiding life, this life of joy, this life of righteousness, this life of peace. And this life is in the Son. So, it immediately gives us the contrast.

You remember in the book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon, an old man, sort of embittered, tried everything. He had gone the full ten yards. I mean, there wasn't anything he didn't try.

In fact, he said, all that my eyes or my heart desired, I did not withhold anything from them. Hey, I did everything. I didn't hold back anything that my heart desired.

So, he had reached the epitome of wealth, the epitome of education, sciences, the whole thing. He had gone the full distance. Anything that could be done under the sun, he did.

And then what does he say? Hey, emptiness, emptiness, everything is empty and frustrating under the sun. Life under the sun he found to be intolerable. He had tried it all and it was all empty.

Life under the sun. But, life in the sun, a whole different story. That's age-abiding eternal life, a quality of life that is rich and full and glorious.

Too bad Solomon didn't know the life in the sun. Maybe you're living a life under the sun. It can be pretty miserable, pretty frustrating, pretty empty.

You need to try life in the sun. This is the record. God has given to us eternal life and this life is in the sun.

And he who has the sun has life. But he who has not the son of God hath not life. Jesus said this in John 3.36. He said, he that hath the son of God hath everlasting life.

And he that believeth in the son of God hath everlasting life. And he that believeth not the son of God shall not see life. But then he added, but the wrath of God abides on him.

Now John said, these things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the son of God. Why did John write this epistle? Chapter 1, he wrote it that we might have fellowship with God and the fullness of joy that comes from that fellowship. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you that you may have fellowship with us.

Truly our fellowship is with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ and these things write we unto you that your joy may be full. Chapter 2 verse 1, these things write we unto you that ye sin not. Now these things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the son of God.

Why did he write that ye may know that you have eternal life and that you might believe on the name of the son of God. So the purpose of the epistle is to bring you assurance of that eternal life. The record, this is the record God's given that God has given to us eternal life.

The life is in the son. I write these things to you that you might have this eternal life and that you might believe on the name of the son of God. And this is the confidence that we have in him.

That if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. Notice though the condition there is if we ask anything according to his will, you just can't ask God for anything and get it.

James said you have not because you ask not and then you ask and receive not because you ask amiss that you might consume it on your own lust. Now we have this confidence in prayer. If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

You see the purpose of prayer is not to get your will done. And that's a common mistake that people make about prayer. They think it's some genie in a bottle.

That's going to pop out and grant you your three wishes. Not so. The purpose of prayer is to get God's will done.

So I have this confidence in prayer. If I ask anything according to his will, he hears me. And if he hears me, then I've received the petitions that I've desired of him.

If I ask not according to his will, then he's going to be good enough and gracious enough to not listen and not answer. I am just as thankful for the unanswered prayers that I have as I am for the answered prayers. God knew so much better than I did.

And had he answered all my prayers, hey, we'd all be in a mess. And so I have this confidence in prayer. If I ask anything that's according to his will, because that's the purpose of prayer is to get God's will done.

Always the thrust of prayer is God's will to get it accomplished here upon the earth. Now, if any man see his brother's sin, a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask and he shall give him life for them that sin not

unto death. Now, there are sins that are not unto death.

There are sins that we commit. The word sin is missing the mark. A lot of people miss the mark.

In fact, we've all missed the mark. We're told that in the first chapter. And if we say that we haven't missed the mark, then, hey, you're only deceiving yourself.

The truth isn't in you. We've all missed the mark. And if you see a brother missing the mark, he's sinning, but it's not unto death.

What is the deadly sin? The rejection of Jesus Christ. That's the sin unto death. When a man turns his back deliberately and willfully upon Jesus Christ, that's the sin unto death.

And John said, I don't see you pray for that. I mean, you see, that's a line that God won't cross. God won't cross your free will.

He has given you the power of choice and then he honors it. He won't cross your free will and he won't save you against your will. You don't have to worry.

God's not going to force you to be saved. God's not going to force you to be with him in heaven. You don't want to be with God.

You don't want to make him miserable. You don't have to be with me. But you've chosen your own misery.

God didn't make you miserable. You made yourself miserable. So, when a brother is sinning, we should pray for them.

Now, quite often they cannot see their own error. Satan is very deceptive. He comes as an angel of light to deceive.

He brings a strong delusion that man might believe a lie rather than the truth. I could write his script. I've heard it enough times.

Well, my wife never understood me and I never really did love her. I just married her but never did love her. But this woman, she understands me.

We have a communication. Ours is special. She's so spiritual.

Oh, we feel so close to God when we're with each other. I could write this stupid script. Satan's lies.

And so you see a brother taking in a sin, a fault, a sin not unto death. Pray for him because Satan has blinded his eyes. He can't see what he's doing himself.

He's deceived. Pray for him. Pray that God will open his eyes and cause him to see the deception that Satan has pulled over his eyes.

Pray that God will set him free from the blinding power of the enemy that's distorted his true sense of values. God might give him life and cause him to see and deliver him. But if a person deliberately, willfully turns his back and rejects Jesus Christ, then pray also for him but not God save him because God won't save him against his will.

Pray that God will bind Satan's power and work and God will open his heart to the truth. You can't really say God save him because that's something that God won't do against a person's will. So, there is a sin unto death.

I do not say that you should pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin and there is a sin not unto death. A lot of things that we do are wrong but they're not going to damn your soul eternally.

And I disagree with that kind of preaching that gets on these little issues and hangs you over the pit and tells you you're going to hell and you'll wish you'd listened to me when you're kicking coals in hell. I don't believe in that. I believe in the grace of God and I think that there's only one sin that can damn your soul and that's the rejection of God's love in Jesus Christ.

That's the sin unto death. And God is so gracious and merciful. There is a sin that's not unto death.

Now, we know that whosoever is born of God doesn't practice sin because I have a new nature. Paul said, how can we who are dead to sin live any longer therein? That old nature is dead. So, I cannot practice sin.

I know that whosoever is really born of God, born again, can't practice sin. Now, we may sin but you know what? You're going to find out something very interesting. Once you're born again, you can't get away with your sin.

You may have been very good at getting away with sin in the past. You know, before you were born again, you may have cheated anything else and got by with it. Once you're born again, God won't let you get by with it.

He'll nail you every time. That's because He loves you and He knows it wouldn't be good for you to get by with it. So, God will see that it's exposed.

Hey, if you're getting by with it, then oh, look out. It could be you're not born again. You know, whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth and scourges every son whom he receives.

That means He doesn't let you get by with it. So, we know that whosoever is born of God does not practice sin, but he that is begotten of God. Who is it that was begotten of God? Jesus Christ.

And so here, you should correct the capitalization here. He that is begotten of God, that he should be capitalized. He that is begotten of God keepeth him, and the wicked one toucheth him not.

I am kept by the power of Jesus Christ. He, Jesus, who is begotten of God, keeps me, and the wicked one touches me not. And we know that we are of God, and the whole world is lying in wickedness.

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son, Jesus Christ. And this is the true God and eternal life. So, he now closes out with we know, we know, we know.

We know that whosoever is born of God does not practice sin. We know that we are of God, and the whole world is in wickedness. We know that the Son of God has come and given us the understanding that we may know the truth.

The word know there is gnosko, and that is we know by experience the truth. We have experienced now that which is true, that we are in Him who is true, even in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God and

eternal life.

And then a final exhortation. Little children, keep yourself from idols. But what an important exhortation, because it is so easy for us to get hung up with idols.

Oh, I don't believe that any of you have a little statue in your room with a candle in front of it, and you sit and chant in front of it in the evening hours. We're too sophisticated for that. Your idol probably has one eye and is in your living room or family room.

And you stare at it for hours on end. Sometimes bursting out in laughter. Sometimes yelling and screaming.

But very devoted to your idol. You give it more time than anything else, more time than your wife or anyone else. Especially this time of the year.

Your idol could be that car that you drive by and look at every day. You've gone up and sat in it. And one of these days, it's going to be yours.

And all you can think about is that car. And how great it's going to be to sit behind the wheel and drive that thing. It's yours.

I don't know what your idol may be, but there are many idols. Anything that takes the place of God in the devotion of my life, anything that comes between God and me, anything that begins to occupy my mind and my heart and displace God in my life, is an idol that I must keep myself from. I cannot allow anything to come between my relationship with God.

It can be a person. It can be an object. But little children, keep yourself from idols.

Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Shall we pray? Father, we thank you again for the opportunity of studying your Word tonight and just basking in the richness of Thy truth. Thank you, Lord, for the Holy Spirit and His anointing upon the Word and upon our hearts that we might hear and receive Thy truth.

And now, Lord, help us to believe and trust in Thee more. Increase our faith, Lord. And Father, perfect in our lives Your love.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen. The last Sunday night of 1984, and you're doing the very best thing a person could do on the last Sunday night of 1984, learning more about God. Glorious.

May the Lord be with you. And the Lord guide you as you begin 1985. May His hand be upon your life and the anointing of the Spirit.

And may you increase in your knowledge and in your understanding of God's love and of God's grace. And may you walk in the Spirit. And may the evidence of the Spirit of God upon your life just flow forth in that love.

Love for God. Love for each other. May God give us one of the most beautiful, loving years as we share His love with the needy world than we have ever known before.

May this be the greatest year yet in the work of God within our midst, in making of us a witness to the world that God is love. In Jesus' name.

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