

1 John 5:1 Born Again to Express God's Love

First, God is love-this describes one of His divine attributes. The love of God expresses itself in His actions, and especially by sending Jesus, His one and only son, to die for us on the cross, so that we can be saved. God is seen through the love of His children. No living human has seen God. However, God can be seen by this world through the loving actions of His children as we express His love toward each other. God is relational. He abides with and in His children. This relationship is reciprocal, we abide in Him, and He in us through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God,

John discusses the believer's relationship with God in terms of both the possession and expression of eternal life. It is evidenced by faith in Christ and obedience to His command to love. This relationship with God is evidenced in one's confession that Jesus is the Christ and one's love for the brethren in obedience to God. Since love of God is impossible without loving other believers, in this verse John answers the question, "Who is my brother?" And, In this verse our identity as Brethren, and a relationship with God in salvation is revealed by our confession that Jesus is the Christ and our love for Him. It's faith in Jesus, and in particular the efficacy of His sacrifice on the cross to remove our sin, in His role as Messiah, as Christ, that is indicative of spiritual birth. This is true of all believers. Our faith is connected to the confession that "Jesus is the Christ."

Those born of God are the ones who have confessed Jesus, and believed in Him for salvation. Or, as Paul puts it in Romans 10:9-10 **9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.** Understanding our need for salvation because of sin, and confession of Jesus as Lord and Savior is necessary for salvation. This verse serves as a reminder that one must believe in Jesus as He is revealed, not as He is fictionalized by false teachings. It is not just the "name" alone that saves, but the person behind that name when correctly understood. Our walk with the Lord is only as real as it is based on truth. 1st John 3:24 **24 The one who keeps His commandments remains in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He remains in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.** So, our mutual abiding in Christ is dependent not only on saving faith initially, but continually abiding in obedience to God's commands. It's not just that we believe and affirm the right things, but also that we have faith in our ongoing relationship with Jesus, built on love, which results in obedience.

Remember that we are saved by faith through grace, and so faith isn't so much what results from our Spiritual birth, but it is the cause of our spiritual birth, as it is facilitated by God as a means by which His Grace is applied. The condition for being born of God is faith in Jesus. Only those who believe in Him are children of God by spiritual birth. Spiritual birth does not precede faith in Christ, but faith in Christ precedes spiritual birth. Those who believe faith is a fruit of regeneration rather than its predecessor miss the point of such passages as Eph 1:13. **13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also [p]believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of the promise,.** So, we believed in faith and were saved, and then were sealed by the Holy Spirit. Prior to being sealed a person cannot be regenerate, because Paul clearly affirms in Rom 8:9 **9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.** So, we do not belong to Christ without the presence of the Holy Spirit within within us. Being elect does not make someone automatically regenerate or a child of God either. By the Grace of God, and through faith, we must be born again!

Similarly, it is God's Work that keeps us In Christ. We are kept in Him because we have believed, and we do believe, not because we are in the process of believing. Otherwise, if continuous faith is necessary to be a child of God, then we would be apostate every time we experienced doubt or unbelief, and this would mean that we would be maintaining our spiritual birth by our own faith. But, it is God who preserves, not the child of God. It is God's faithfulness, not our faith that keeps us securely and eternally

saved (John 10:28–30 **8 and I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. 30 I and the Father are one.”** ; Rom 8:38–39; 38 **For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.** (see also Eph 1:13–14, 2 Thess 3:3, It is God who does all this, not us. Our part is to remain faithful to Him, and abide in Christ. We need to be very Glad and very Thankful that it is His faithfulness that keeps us, and not our own!

and everyone who loves the Father loves the child born of Him.

Our spiritual birth expresses itself in love for other believers, those who have been born into our spiritual family. And so our faith given to us by God, and nurtured in us by God results in love toward other believers. And active love and service to our brothers and sisters is indicative of a lifestyle that describes our walk with the Lord, and the state of our sanctification. When Jesus said that the world would know we are His disciples by our love, He was saying that conduct does indeed define a Christian. It does not create a Christian, but faith leads to regeneration. However, Christian conduct springs from our faith, and there will be evidence that we are saved. Our walk expresses that faith and is shaped by our faith. John’s point is that love is integral to one’s faith as one of its expressions in the life of the believer.

It is a costly love, modeled by the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whenever we are tempted to question God’s love, we have unquestionable proof of His love in Jesus’ sacrificial death for us. To understand how to love them we must meditate on God’s love until we understand its nature and expression from God to us. Only when we really understand how much and how we are loved by God can we in turn live out this love for others.

Can one love God without loving other Christians? No. We do not express our love for God by saying “I love You” to God. We express our love for God by doing something loving for a brother or sister in Christ.