Text

Description automatically generated

Study Series: Unfailing Love in Uncertain Times

Author: J. Ryan Wicker

Lesson Title: “Loving God and Witness” (pp. 76-89)

Session 6

April 9, 2023

The main point of this lesson is: Believers should grow in loving Jesus, understanding the overwhelming testimony that He is who He claimed to be.

Focus on this goal: To help adults find ways or areas in which to strengthen their love for Jesus

Key Bible Passage: 1 John 4:20–5:12

Before the Session

Bring any of the following exercise equipment you have: small dumbbells, resistance bands, running shoes, ankle/wrist weights, and so forth. (Step 1)

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Display the exercise equipment you brought from home. Share how you use it (or, if applicable, should use it but don’t). Mention that each item is good for overall health and strength. Hold up each item, one at a time, and ask: What does this help strengthen?

After briefly going through each of the items, say: On top of the muscle strength each of these pieces of equipment can give, they all strengthen the heart, as well. Explain that today’s passage will help us see how we should grow in love, strengthening our heart in a different way than exercise does.

Step 2. Walk in Loving Obedience, Part 1

Invite a volunteer to read 1 John 4:20–5:1. Briefly look back at 4:7-19, pointing out the word “love” (or a variation) that appears so often. Then use the first Day One paragraph (p. 76) to describe John’s logic for why we must love our brothers and sisters in Christ. Help learners understand that, as we love God by faith, we must also love others by faith in God.

Read the statement from Day One (p. 77): “To love God is to also love people.” Then read the paragraph (p. 77) that begins, “But there is a special familial love . . . .”

Invite a few volunteers to share a time they have experienced the deep, abiding love of a faith family in a time of crisis or rejoicing.

Step 3. Walk in Loving Obedience, Part 2

Invite a volunteer to read 1 John 5:2-3 aloud. Read the Day Two pull quote (p. 78): “I love others best when I am practicing love for God through obedience to His commands. Faith, love, and obedience mutually exist with each other in Scripture.”

Use the Day Two content (pp. 77-78) to explore this concept, pointing out that our obedience must overflow from a love of God and others. Don’t be afraid to explore the objections (p. 78) the author touches on.

Invite a volunteer to read 1 John 5:4-5. As a group celebrate that God’s love gives us the ability to overcome the world and glorify Him.

Step 4. Defend the Certain Testimony that Jesus Is the Christ, Part 1

Invite a volunteer to read 1 John 5:6-8. Use the opening paragraph (p. 80) to point out that Jesus—God Himself—needed no witness; yet He loved us enough to identify for us six things that testify to Him. As a group, begin walking through the six witnesses that testify to Jesus.

Stress the importance of water, or baptism, in both Jesus’s life and the life of every believer.

Use the Day Three content (pp. 81-82) to help us Gentile learners understand the significance of Jesus’s blood and the absence of regular sacrifice.

Read the paragraph (pp. 82-83) that begins “Every time we are convicted . . .” to stress the significance of the Holy Spirit in our daily faith.

Step 5. Defend the Certain Testimony that Jesus Is the Christ, Part 2

Invite a volunteer to read 1 John 5:9-10 aloud. If you’ve ever been on a jury, share how some of the testimonies affected how you chose to respond to the case. (OPTION: If you’ve not been on a jury, invite a volunteer to share this.)

Read the second paragraph from Day Four (p. 83), and engage learners in considering all the different ways that God testifies to Jesus through His Word.

Use the opening paragraph under the heading “The Believer” (Day Four, p. 84) to stress how believers contribute to the testimony about Jesus. Ask the group what significance they see in Jesus identifying a believer’s confession of faith as a witness for Him.

Challenge learners to spend time this week considering their own testimony of Jesus: their faith that the Bible teaches the truth about Jesus.

Step 6. Defend the Certain Testimony that Jesus Is the Christ, Part 3

Invite a volunteer to read 1 John 5:11-12. Say: Anyone in church for more than ten minutes has heard the phrase “eternal life.” But what does that really mean? Discuss this concept as a group and use the Day Five content (pp. 85-86) to help learners see the assurance we can have through faith.

Direct attention to the paragraph (p. 85) that begins, “There is also a warning here.” Invite learners to read the paragraph to themselves. Ask: Do we see sharing Christ as “vitally important” as the author declares here?

Challenge learners to consider their own commitment to speaking the truth of Jesus to friends, neighbors, family, acquaintances, and strangers.

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

Wrap up today’s lesson by reading the last paragraph of Day Five (p. 86). Emphasize the powerful, unbreakable, indescribable love of God the Father for God the Son, which leads to that same love dwelling within us. Say: God’s love, flowing through Jesus, is the source of our salvation and the basis for our faith.

Close in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to guide us to the truth of God’s love as learners reflect on that love and our lives lived in response to it.

