

UNSHAKEABLE

INTIMACY WITH GOD LEADS TO CONFIDENT FAITH

About the Series: In a dark world, God is light. In a cold world, God brings love. In a dying world, God brings life. In this study of John's first letter, you will learn what it means to be in fellowship with God and see that growing more intimately close to Him builds up a confident faith that will allow you to be unshakeable in times of uncertainties.

PART 9

Be Different

1 John 5:14-21 | Dr. Stephen G. Tan

Discussion Questions

1. We live in a generation that celebrates diversity and differences. What are some differences you see around the society you live in? How have these differences affected your beliefs and convictions?
2. Living in the tension between following Christ and being accepted by the world has caused many Christians to falter and waver in their faith and convictions in these challenging times. As followers of Jesus, we are called to be different--our perspectives, lifestyles, focus, and priorities should be different from the world, and these differences should be embraced and applied to help us to stand firm and be unshakeable. Read 1 John 5:14-21.

A different kind of prayer: Prayers in accordance with God's will (v. 14-15).

How do you understand verse 14? How do you know if your prayers are in accordance with God's will? Your prayers often reveal the state of your spiritual life. What do you pray for on a daily basis, and what do your prayers reveal about your Christian walk?

A different view towards sin: Admitting its severe consequences (v. 16-17). All unrighteousness is sin and there are always consequences to sin. This is very clear throughout the Bible. What does John mean about "sin which does not lead to death" and "sin leading to death" in these verses? How do you view sin? Have you seen what sin can do to a believer? Discuss its effects. Do you know of a fellow believer who is sinning? Think about ways

you can help wake them up from their life of sin, repent, and be restored so that their continual sin will not lead to permanent physical death and judgment?

A different type of confidence: Realizing we are protected in this life and in the next (v. 18-20). John reminds us that we are children of God who live in a hostile world under the control of Satan. What does being a child of God mean? What guarantees do you have if you are a child of God?

A different approach to priorities: Removing everything that distracts us from focusing on Jesus (v. 21). Read verse 21 out loud. This is a very clear warning followers of Jesus need to take seriously, because idols are anything that takes us away from having a deep and intimate relationship with Jesus, which in turn causes us to be more unsure in our faith. How can you tell if you're worshipping an idol or counterfeit god? Try answering these questions:

- What occupies your mind when you don't have other things to think about?
- Where do you look for significance and security?
- What do you fear losing?
- What could you not live without?

What breaks the idols' hold is deepening your understanding of the salvation of Christ. What steps have you taken to do this?

Reflect & Respond

As a follower of Jesus, you have been called to live your life for Jesus Christ, to be distinct so that you can give the world a reason for the hope that you have. Are you being different from the world according to your calling, and are you celebrating this difference? Which of the four differences are you finding difficult to understand and live out? Ask God to reveal where you need to improve. If possible, find a small group in the church where you can share this spiritual journey and can help you develop a different kind of prayer, a different view towards sin, a different type of confidence, and a different approach to priorities.

Prayer

Father, thank You for Your grace that allowed me to be different from this world. I struggle in embracing my identity as Your child because I'm looking for acceptance in the wrong places. Help me to pursue being different especially in my spiritual life. Reveal my weaknesses and grant me strength to be faithful in living a life that honors You. May Your will be mine as well. In Jesus' name. Amen.