2. Faith must be confessed

"Every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God... whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God" (1Jn 4:3,15).

The term "does not confess" goes a little further than "denies" (1Jn 2:22-23). One may take an uncommitted position and neither deny nor confess Jesus Christ. But John does not recognize a third camp. The one who "does not confess" is in the same camp with the one who "denies".

3. Faith is based upon true testimony

"God has borne witness concerning his Son. The one who believes in the Son has the witness in himself" (1Jn 5:7-10).

True faith does not arise from within yourself, rather it comes by taking into yourself the witness that God has borne by his word (cf Rom 10:17).

The only person who has a true "witness in himself" is the one who has got it from the external witness borne by God to and through apostles like John (1Jn 1:1-4; 4:14).

4. An obedient faith assures us of salvation

"These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life" (1Jn 5:11-13). "...we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments" (1Jn 2:24,27).

John has a very black-and-white view of obedience:

"The one who says, 'I have come to know him' and does not keep his commandments is a liar. Whoever keeps God's word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected" (1Jn 2:4-5).

So entwined in John's mind are faith and obedience, that he regards faith itself as a commandment to obey: "And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son" (1Jn 3:23-24). Faith that pushes obedience into second place is not true faith at all.

5. Faith makes our prayers effective

"This is the confidence (faith) which we have before him, that if we ask anything in line with his will... whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight" (1Jn 3:22-24).

As you can see, this does not mean that faith alone makes prayer work, and we don't have to do anything except believe and then we will get whatever we ask.

No, first our prayers have to be "according to God's will" and second we have to "do the things that are pleasing in his sight". Faith then makes prayer work.

How can we know what God's will is and what pleases him? Once again, we come back to the word of God which he has revealed to us (1Jn 2:12-14, 5:13).