1 John 5:1-5 Belief Love Family Obedience and Faith
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August 14, 2024 - UCG MT Online Bible Study

Imagine John, as the last living apostle trained by Jesus Christ writing a message that he most likely knew would become part of the New Testament Canon, deciding what to write. In these introductory words to chapter 5 he focuses on believing in Jesus Christ, recognizing we are now part of a special family and we need to love one another, and the importance of being obedient to God's word and the teachings of Jesus. AND having Faith - the assurance that God the Father is in charge and will be sending His Son to establish His Kingdom.

He starts out with belief and moves to the other topics rapidly. Again John ties in obedience in verse 2. Apparently because the gnostic teachings were saying that you didn't need to obey. Similarly today many say that the law is done away, or that to try to keep the law is being "legalistic". God probably gave him special insights into problems that would be challenges for His Church in the many years ahead until Jesus would return as the King of King and Lord of Lords.

1 John 5:1 NKJV - Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him.

Whoever believes…

1 John 4:3 ESV - and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.
1 John 4:4 ESV - Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

Mark 16:16 ESV - Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

Believing with ALL of your heart:

Acts 8:26 NKJV - Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert.
Acts 8:27 NKJV - So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship,
Acts 8:28 NKJV - was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet.
Acts 8:29 NKJV - Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot."
Acts 8:30 NKJV - So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"
Acts 8:31 NKJV - And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him.
Acts 8:32 NKJV - The place in the Scripture which he read was this: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth.

Acts 8:33 NKJV - In His humiliation His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth."
Acts 8:34 NKJV - So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?"
Acts 8:35 NKJV - Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.
Acts 8:36 NKJV - Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, [here is] water. What hinders me from being baptized?"
Acts 8:37 NKJV - Then Philip said, **"If you believe <u>with all your heart</u>, you may."** And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
Acts 8:38 NKJV - So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.

and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him.
ESV:...and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him.

Barclay Daily Study Bible says this:

John transfers this to the realm of Christian thought and experience. The Christian undergoes the experience of being reborn; the father is God; and the Christian is bound to love God for all that he has done for his soul. But birth is always into a family; and the Christian is reborn into the family of God. As it was for Jesus, so it is for him--those who do the will of God, as he himself does, become his mother, his sisters and his brothers (Mar_3:35). If, then, the Christian loves God the Father who begat him, he must also love the other children whom God has begotten. His love of God and his love of his Christian brothers and sisters must be parts of the same love, so closely interlocked that they can never be separated.

Mark 3:35 NKJV - "For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother."

Long before this the Psalmist had said that, "God gives the desolate a home to dwell in" (Psa_68:6). The Christian by virtue of his rebirth is set within the family of God and as he loves the Father, so must he also love the children who are of the same family as he is.

Psalm 68:6 ESV - God settles the solitary in a home; he leads out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious dwell in a parched land.

1 John 5:2 NKJV - By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.

1 John 5:3 NKJV - For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

HIS commandments are not burdensome.
But the extra “laws” added as the Pharisees did.

Legalism

From 3 Types of Legalism by R.C. Sproul:

Basically, legalism involves abstracting the law of God from its original context. Some people seem to be preoccupied in the Christian life with obeying rules and regulations, and they conceive of Christianity as being a series of do’s and don’ts, cold and deadly set of moral principles. That’s one form of legalism, where one is concerned merely with the keeping of God’s law as an end in itself.

Now, God certainly cares about our following His commandments. Yet there is more to the story that we dare not forget. God gave laws such as the Ten Commandments in the context of the covenant. First, God was gracious. He redeemed His people out of slavery in Egypt and entered into a loving, filial relationship with Israel. Only after that grace-based relationship was established did God begin to define the specific laws that are pleasing to Him. I had a professor in graduate school who said, “The essence of Christian theology is grace, and the essence of Christian ethics is gratitude.” The legalist isolates the law from the God who gave the law. He is not so much seeking to obey God or honor Christ as he is to obey rules that are devoid of any personal relationship.

There’s no love, joy, life, or passion. It’s a rote, mechanical form of law-keeping that we call externalism. The legalist focuses only on obeying bare rules, destroying the broader context of God’s love and redemption in which He gave His law in the first place.

From Association of Certified Biblical Counselors site:

1. Legalism is believing that salvation can be earned by obedience.

The mindset is “justification is not obtained through *faith alone,* but rather by obedience to certain commandments.” This form of legalism wants to establish our standing before God by our own achievements. It argues that spirituality is based on Christ *plus* human works. It makes conformity to man-made rules the measure of spirituality.

2. Believing that one can obey the Bible through his own will and power for the purpose of gaining a greater measure of God’s approval and favor.

Legalism is attempting to live the Christian life in one’s own strength instead of relying on the supernatural grace God gives us through the Holy Spirit.

Work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God [the Holy Spirit] who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure. (Philippians. 2:12-13, *emphasis added*)

3. Legalism elevates man-made rules above the Scripture.

This third form of legalism elevates man-made rules, especially prohibitions, to the same level of authority as God-given commands and the belief that following these rules will aid you in your spiritual growth. This often extends to strict adherence to non-essential doctrinal positions as well as unconventional interpretations of certain passages of Scriptures.

1 John 5:4 NKJV - For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.

Victory = νίκη níkē, nee'-kay; apparently a primary word; conquest (abstractly), i.e. (figuratively) the means of success:—victory.

1 John 4:4 AMP - Little children (believers, dear ones), you are of God and you belong to Him and have [already] overcome them [the agents of the antichrist]; because He who is in you is greater than he (Satan) who is in the world [of sinful mankind].

1 Corinthians 15:54 NKJV - So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in **victory**."

Victory = νῖκος nîkos, nee'-kos; from G3529; a conquest (concretely), i.e. (by implication) triumph:—victory.
The KJV translates Strong's G3534 in the following manner: victory (4x).

Outline of Biblical Usage:

I. victory
II. to utterly vanquish

1 Corinthians 15:55 NKJV - "O Death, where [is] your sting? O Hades, where [is] your **victory**?"
1 Corinthians 15:56 NKJV - The sting of death [is] sin, and the strength of sin [is] the law.
1 Corinthians 15:57 NKJV - But thanks [be] to God, who gives us the **victory** through our Lord Jesus Christ.
1 Corinthians 15:58 NKJV - Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

1 John 5:5 NKJV - Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Overcomes the world:
Overcomes = G3528 = νικάω nikáō, nik-ah'-o; from G3529; to subdue (literally or figuratively):—conquer, overcome, prevail, get the victory.

The KJV translates Strong's G3528 in the following manner: overcome (24x), conquer (2x), prevail (1x), get the victory (1x).
Outline of Biblical Usage:

I. to conquer
  A. to carry off the victory, come off victorious
    1. of Christ, victorious over all His foes
    2. of Christians, that hold fast their faith even unto death against the power of their foes, and temptations and persecutions
    3. when one is arraigned or goes to law, to win the case, maintain one's cause

The WORLD

World = κόσμος kósmos, kos'-mos; probably from the base of G2865; orderly arrangement, i.e. decoration; by implication, the world (in a wide or narrow sense, including its inhabitants, literally or figuratively (morally)):—adorning, world.
The KJV translates Strong's G2889 in the following manner: world (186x), adorning (1x).

Outline of Biblical Usage:

I. an apt and harmonious arrangement or constitution, order, government
II. ornament, decoration, adornment, i.e. the arrangement of the stars, 'the heavenly hosts', as the ornament of the heavens. 1 Pet. 3:3
III. the world, the universe
IV. the circle of the earth, the earth
V. the inhabitants of the earth, men, the human family
VI. the ungodly multitude; the whole mass of men alienated from God, and therefore hostile to the cause of Christ
VII. world affairs, the aggregate of things earthly
  A. the whole circle of earthly goods, endowments riches, advantages, pleasures, etc, which although hollow and frail and fleeting, stir desire, seduce from God and are obstacles to the cause of Christ
VIII. any aggregate or general collection of particulars of any sort
  A. the Gentiles as contrasted to the Jews (Rom. 11:12 etc)

It is interesting that he says we need to overcome the world.

Mark 4:18 KJV - And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word,
Mark 4:19 KJV - And the **cares of this world**, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

NOTE: the Greek word used in this parable is G165 = aion. And it introduces another world for world also, Chronos

αἰών aiṓn, ahee-ohn'; from the same as G104; properly, an age; by extension, perpetuity (also past); by implication, the world; specially (Jewish) a Messianic period (present or future):—age, course, eternal, (for) ever(-more), (n-)ever, (beginning of the , while the) world (began, without end). Compare G5550.

He speaks about overcoming a lot in Revelation 2 & 3 in the messages to the 7 churches.

Conclusion of this section:

"He that believes Jesus is the Son of God":

Tying it back to "belief" that he started this section with in verse 1. And saying the keys to overcoming are:

1. Being born of God
2. Having Godly Faith
3. Believing Jesus is the Son of God

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Additional possible bible study ideas:

- Study of the different words for victory
- Study of the different words for world
- 1 Corinthians 15:56 NKJV - The sting of death [is] sin, and the strength of sin [is] the law.
- How do we overcome the world?
- Revelation 2 & 3 in the messages to the 7 churches.

Additional Resources:

https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/3-types-legalism

https://biblicalcounseling.com/resource-library/articles/what-is-legalism/
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