

## 1 John 5:1-5 Answers Overcoming the World

**Introduction: What is the difference between believing Jesus and believing in Jesus?** To believe Jesus means one accepts what He taught as true. To believe in Jesus is to trust Him and commit one's life to Him (Coleman & Peace, p. 49).

One of John's goals in writing was to help his readers know if they truly believed in Jesus so they could have assurance of salvation:

ESV **1 John 5:13** I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

This is similar to how John concluded his Gospel:

ESV **John 20:31** but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

In today's passage we shall understand what it looks like to believe in Jesus and thus be able to have assurance of salvation.

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**\*\*\*\*\*What two things are true of everyone who overcomes the word (5:1-5)?** Those who overcome the world have been born of God (5:4) and believe that Jesus is the Son of God (5:1, 5).

**Analyze 5:1. Does a person believe because he has been born of God or is a person born of God because he believes?** Amazing: The way John wrote this indicates that believing in Jesus is the result of being born of God.

Here are similar statements by John that clearly indicate faith is the result of being born of God rather than the means of being born of God:

ESV **1 John 2:29** . . . everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

[Do you practice righteousness in order to be born of Him or because you have already been born of Him?]

ESV **1 John 3:9** No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.

ESV **1 John 4:7** . . . whoever loves has been born of God . . .

Clearly then, based on 5:1, regeneration precedes faith.

**Since regeneration precedes faith, what can a person do to be born again (5:1)?** This is the same question Nicodemus asked Jesus. Jesus answer is stunning:

ESV **John 3:3-8** Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God . . . The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

**Back to 5:1a. If you have been born of God, what will you believe about Jesus?** If you have been born of God you will believe that Jesus is the Christ.

ESV **1 John 2:22** Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.

**What does Christ mean (5:1)?** Christ is not Jesus' last name (although there is evidence some first century Gentiles understood it that way). Christ is the Greek way to say Messiah. It means anointed one and was used by the Old Testament Jews as the official title of the central figure of expectation. Five Messianic expectations: **1)** He is the man of God's choice, **2)** in all his activities he is the real agent of God Himself, **3)** He is appointed to accomplish the redemption of God's people, **4)** He is appointed to accomplish judgment of God's enemies, **5)** He is given dominion over the nations (NBD, p. 764).

NIV **John 8:24** . . . if you do not believe that I am *the one I claim to be*, you will indeed die in your sins.

**Important: According to 5:1b, if you truly love God the Father, who else will you love?** You will also love everyone else who has been born of God. This theme of us loving one another is prominent in John's letter.

ESV **1 John 4:20** If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

**Have you ever known anyone who claimed to love God but who did not love other believers? How was this lack of love obvious?** It could show itself in apathy, indifference or even overt hostility.

— 5:2 —

**What is unexpected or unusual about what John wrote in 5:2?** One would expect him to have written it the other way around: that we know we love God when we love His children. The way he wrote it is like a literary speed-bump.

**How does obeying God's commands help us love the children of God (5:2)?** God's commandments instruct us how to love the brethren, painting a picture of what love looks like:

ESV **Romans 13:9** The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

— 5:3 —

**According to 5:3, what proves that a person truly loves God?** The proof is that he keeps his commandments. Jesus Himself said:

ESV **John 14:15** If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

ESV **John 14:21** Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me.

ESV **John 14:23** If anyone loves me, he will keep my word . . .

**Why did John point out that God's commandments are not burdensome (5:3)?** Perhaps John's purpose was to make the point by way of contrast that if you do find God's commandments burdensome, you might not really love God. The world finds God's commandments to be burdensome: "I've gotta do what? You're crazy, man. There is no way I'm givin that up!"

**Why are God's commandments not burdensome (5:3)?** It is because our love for God will motivate us to do what pleases God. We will have an eagerness to please Him. John Stott wrote, "The spell of the old life has been broken. The fascination of the world has lost its appeal" (Coleman & Peace, p. 50).

ESV **Matthew 11:30** . . . my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

— 5:4 —

**According to 5:4, what is true of everyone who has been born of God?** Everyone born of God overcomes (*nikao*, "nike") the world.

As we saw before, one does not have to overcome the world in order to be born of God. Rather, he overcomes because he has been born of God.

**What is the significance (function) of the word "for" at the start of 5:4?** *Compare back to 5:3.* It denotes a reason why (as in "because"). The reason why God's commandments are not burdensome is because everyone born of God can overcome the world. It's easy to defy gravity when you have an anti-gravity suit! The Holy Spirit within us give us the desire and ability to obey Jesus.

ESV **Philippians 2:13** . . . it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

**What does it mean to overcome the world (5:4a)?** In general, to overcome the world means we keep God's commandments (as opposed to giving in to the world's temptations). We are not lured into love for the world.

**ESV 1 John 2:15-16 . . .** If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions - is not from the Father but is from the world.

**According to 5:4b, what constitutes victory over the world?** The victory is our faith in Jesus despite worldly antichrist false teachings against Christ.

**Is faith itself is the victory or is faith the means to victory (5:4b)?** Since the spirit of antichrist is to deny Jesus is the Christ, to actually believe in Jesus is victory over the world. However, it could also be argued that by means of faith we can go from victory to victory in successfully resisting the world's temptations and obeying the commands of Jesus.

**Song:** Faith is the Victory.

— 5:5 —

**What is the answer to John's question in 5:5?** No one overcomes the world except those who have faith that Jesus is the Son of God.

**Son of God = Christ:** Notice how John parallels believing that Jesus is the Christ (5:1) with believing that Jesus is the Son of God (5:5).

**What purpose did John have in asking this question (5:5)?** In asking the question John is really making the statement that there no victory over the world except through faith in Jesus.

**So What?**

**What does it mean to overcome the world?** Faith is the victory.

**Themes in John's letter:** Love for God and love for the brethren, believing Jesus is the Christ, believing Jesus is the Son of God, obedience to God's commands, overcoming the world.

**How can you know that you have eternal life?** Those who have faith in Jesus that moves them to love the brethren can have assurance.

\*\*\*\* = ask this question before reading the text aloud. Doing so will cause focus.

- These lessons are designed for a 45 minute session and are based on the text of the ESV.
- You can hear this lesson being taught at [www.SermonAudio.Com/NTRF](http://www.SermonAudio.Com/NTRF).

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10/25/15