

FROM GOD'S LOVE TO OBEDIENCE BY FAITH

1 John 5

Obedience by Faith

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. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

The Certainty of God's Witness

This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

Confidence and Compassion in Prayer

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death.

Knowing the True—Rejecting the False

We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

There is quite much that can be expounded upon in this last chapter of the 1st epistle of the Apostle John's. And just as the Apostle Peter said of Paul's epistles, that "some things [are] hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures." (**2 Peter 3:16**) We have to be careful in not making the Word of God say something it is not intended to say but to look at how it complements and is complemented by the rest of Scripture. Our primary emphasis, as it concerns **1 John 5**, is that we have to clarify, in context to all of God's Word, what it truly means to "believe on Christ". As James stated, "Even the demons believe—and tremble!" (**James 2:19**) There are several themes clearly being put forth throughout John's writings, including this letter of **1 John**. We looked at last week, as one of the main themes in John's letters, being the incredible but true love of God. Yes, we are told that God indeed loves us, more than we can comprehend with our finite, carnal minds, yet it is revealed to us, as we are told in the Words of Christ Jesus Himself, as was recorded by John in his gospel narrative of the life and ministry of Christ Jesus. Jesus tells us, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." (**John 3:16-17**) The Apostle John elaborates by speaking of our response then to the love of God by telling us, "We love Him because He first loved us. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (**1 John 4:9-10**) Jesus being the propitiation for our sins means that He satisfied the requirement of the law of God, just as He tells us. "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them." (**Matthew 5:17 NIV**) Paul connects the two, that is, the love of God with the satisfying of the law, saying in **Romans 5:8**, which is part of what we call the Romans Road to salvation, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." It IS therefore, up to us, to then respond to the love of God. As we recognize what the Apostle John says that we are to, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him." (**1 John 3:1**)

So, how do we go about responding to the love of God that has been bestowed upon us by the gospel, or good news, of Christ Jesus? John is telling us right at the beginning of our chapter in **1 John 5**. It is then also another of the main themes of John's writings. Biblegateway.com gave a subtitle to this section as "Obedience by Faith". John writes, "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot [God] also loves him who is begotten of Him [Jesus]. By this we know that we love the

children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is **the victory** that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" Now let's connect believing on Jesus with knowing Jesus. Have you ever had someone ask you if you know Jesus? You may respond with "Yes, He is the Christ, the Son of God. Then they respond back with something like, "yeah, but do you KNOW Him?" What John was getting at was what he said earlier in the first chapter saying, "Now by this we know that we know Him [if we truly believe that He is the Christ], if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him [ie-is a child of God] ought himself also to walk just as He walked." (**1 John 2:3-6**) What I am getting at, and what John was getting at, is not that we are saved by our works. Once again, one of my all-time favorite Scriptures, although I truly do love all of God's Word, is **Ephesians 2:8-10**. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Our faith is based on the understanding that we cannot save ourselves, that no matter how righteous we try to be, as we've all sinned against God (**Romans 3:23**) and then the penalty of our sins, according to God's perfect nature and character, is eternal separation from God, ie- death, a spiritual death. (**Romans 6:23**) But Jesus spelled it out for us in saying, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him." (**John 14:23**) John simplified that in making a distinction between those who say they are saved and those who are truly saved saying, "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."

The perfect will of God for all of His creation is summed up in the doctrine or teachings of Christ Jesus, of which Jesus said that the great commandment of God's is to love God with all of our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and then the second commandment that is like it, to love our neighbors as ourselves. (**Mark 12:30-31**). Matthew's account of Jesus saying that has Jesus concluding, "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (**Matthew 23:39**) That is God's intended purpose of how we should respond to His great love that He has demonstrated to us and bestowed upon us! But wait, we are saved by grace, right? John gives us the answer in his second epistle. "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son." (**2 John 1:9**) It makes

sense I think that God does not intend to save anyone that hates Him and will continue to rebel against His will and purpose for their lives, right? We are though, by the goodness of God, being led by the Spirit of God to repentance, the Greek word metanoeo, meaning to recognize a need for change and then heeding to that need for change—that of course is a need for the Righteousness that is in Christ Jesus. Jesus spoke of that in saying, **“If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—” (John 14:15-16)** Just prior to that, by the way, Jesus said, **“If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.” (John 14:14)** In context to what Jesus meant, John tells us in our passage of Scripture in **1 John 5**, **“that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”**

By the love of God we are led by His Spirit to believe on Christ, by the goodness of God we are led to repentance, and then by the grace of God we are saved and become children of God and are promised eternal life in Christ Jesus. It must always be before us in our hearts and minds that it is in Christ alone that we have the Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption from God. We are just living in His will and His Way, just as Jesus said in **John 14:6**, **“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”**

“This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.” I won’t get too technical by all that is implied by those words as you will find from reading different commentaries that there are multiple layers that are present in what is being said. But, the primary emphasis though is that John was addressing the fact that Jesus in fact was fully human, in referencing the water and the blood, but He is also divine, of God, of what we have termed the Trinity, as John said that there are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and those three are one. What that means to us then is that Jesus being fully human, was able to be the “propitiation for our sins”, in a legal sense. Yet Jesus was also, God manifested in the flesh as John spoke of at the beginning of His gospel. **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.” (John 1:1-5)** **“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)** And then “as

many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”
(John 1:12-13)

“We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.” In context to what John is saying, he is not saying that one does not ever sin, but he is speaking of continuing in the practice of sin. As he mentions in the first chapter, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.” **(1 John 1:8-9)** He is saying what the Apostle Peter was saying when he said, “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;” **(1 Peter 2:9)**

We are being led by God, through the Holy Spirit, to believe on Christ, to repent of our sins, to live our lives in a way that is pleasing to our Heavenly Father, loving God with all that is in us and loving others as God loves them. From God’s love to our obedience by faith in Christ Jesus, fully putting our trust in Christ that, as Paul said to the church at Philippi, “He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.” **(Philippians 1:6)** We are wholeheartedly believing that we are indeed God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, to the glory of God!