

**Study Notes: 1 John 5:1-5**  
**September 20, 2020: “The Path to Victory!”**  
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***Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well.***

- Throughout his letter, John made definitive statements about what it means to be a child of God. Some commentators refer to these as “tests of faith.” Having talked about several “tests of faith” already, John began to draw all that he taught into a summary statement about how we can know if we belong to God. The New American Commentary summarizes this idea, “For John, true faith always leads to love for God and others, and true love always results in obedience.”
- To open this section, John clearly stated that we are born of God if we believe that Jesus is the Messiah who has come from God the Father. John made this statement to contradict the false teachers (antichrists) who did not believe that Jesus had come in the flesh.
- The implication of our love for God is that we will also love the children of God, meaning our brothers and sisters in Christ. We cannot love God and not love those who also love Him. The Faithlife Study Bible notes, “John draws on the expected love a father has for a child to encourage love among the Christian community. Believers should love one another because they are now spiritual siblings, adopted into the same family by God the Father (4:21; 5:2; John 14:9–20).”

***This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world.***

- Continuing to review the “tests of faith,” John now turned to the idea of loving others. Loving others shows our love for God, as it involves obedience to the command that has been given to us by Jesus Christ (see John 15:12).
- John also clearly stated that if we love God, we will keep His commandments. This statement comes directly from Jesus Christ. In John 14:15, Jesus said, “If you love me, keep my commands.” Biblical Scholar, James Boice, notes, “Love divorced from obedience to the commands of God is not love, however. So John immediately passes from love to the matter of God’s commandments, saying, ‘This is love for God, to obey his commands.’ Christians frequently attempt to turn love for God into a mushy emotional experience, but John does not allow this in his epistle. Love for the brethren means love that expresses itself ‘with actions and in truth’ (3:18). Similarly, love for God means a love that expresses itself in obedience to his commandments.”
- John further made it distinct that the commands of Jesus are not a weight or a burden that we carry, but are the way to find victory, instead. When we love God and keep His commands, we find victory over the world. In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus also taught that

His yoke (teachings or commandments) were not burdensome, but given that we might have life.

***This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.***

- In Greek, the words for “victory” and “overcome,” come from the same root word (*nikē*). More literally, this verse would read, “This is the victory that has victory over the world.”
- Our victory comes from our faith in Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God that has taken victory from sin and death, and has given it to us when we believe and trust in Him.
- John’s words in these verses are closely related to the words of Jesus in John 16:33, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”
- In trying to understand what it is to have victory over the world, the NET Bible notes help us understand the context of John’s writing, “Once again, the author’s language is far from clear at this point, and so is his meaning, but the author has used the verb *conquers* (νικάω, *nikaō*) previously to describe the believer’s victory over the enemy, the evil one himself, in 2:13–14, and over the secessionist opponents, described as ‘false prophets’ in 4:4. This suggests that what the author has in mind here is a victory over the opponents, who now belong to the *world* and speak its language (cf. 4:5). In the face of the opponents’ attempts through their false teaching to confuse the readers (true believers) about who it is they are supposed to love, the author assures the readers that loving God and keeping his commandments assures us that we really do love God’s children, and because we have already achieved victory over the world through our faith, keeping God’s commandments is not a difficult matter.”