



## **FBC Dickson**

UNFAILING LOVE IN UNCERTAIN TIMES • WALK IN LOVING OBEDIENCE •  
S1 JOHN 4:20-5:5 • 8/16/2020

### **MAIN POINT**

Loving God means loving each other and obeying His word, and ultimately God's love helps us overcome the world.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Greg Laurie, pastor of multisite church Harvest Community Fellowship in Riverside California, says that “our love for God needs to be emotive and intelligent”. What he means is that we love God with our heads and our hearts. Our minds and our emotions. This sounds a lot like Moses’ teaching in Deuteronomy 6:5 when he told the people to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength”.

#### **What does it mean to love the Lord with "all your strength"?**

We love God best by loving him with everything that we are. We don’t just love in thought or emotions only, but we also love in deed. We love God through obedience. Ultimately the love we have for God helps us overcome the world.

#### **What are some things you've had to overcome in this life?**

#### **How did God help you through that?**

### **UNDERSTANDING**

The Apostle John in this passage lays out three concrete actions that demonstrate our love for God.

#### 1. Loving God Means Loving Each Other (v.20-21, 5:1).

## **Read 1 John 4:20-21**

**What is the reasoning John gives in v.20 as to why if a person fails to love their brothers and sisters in Christ they also do not love God?**

**According to v.21 what is the command John is referring to?**

**Why do you think God has to command us to love each other?**

Love for each other is a clear principle in John's writing. It is impossible to say your love God with your mouth while you hate a brother or sister in Christ. If you follow John's logic here, it seems he is saying that the harder love should be loving the one you can't see. If a person can't possess the easier love for people they are in contact with daily, then how can they possess the harder love for a God they can't. John really can't put it any simpler than he does in verse 21. To love God is to also love His people. Loving God and loving your brothers and sisters in Christ can never be separated from each other.

This doesn't mean that we do not love those who are not saved. Certainly not! I believe the calling of the Great Commission means that we have such a deep love for Christ that that love overflows into a love for the lost and dying.

## **Read 1 John 5:1**

**What is the belief that all true Christians share in common according to this verse?**

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. That is a very simple statement, but it is very deep. Everything about the Christian experience comes back to Jesus. Everyone who is to be born of God must confess Jesus as the Messiah. Those born of God don't just believe in Christ once upon a time. They continually believe. Everyday. We are called to exhibit an active, daily faith in Jesus as the Christ.

We have experienced the new birth. We are new, and we are being transformed daily. To be born of God means we bear the birthmark of that transformation. We are identified with Christ and unified with his people. Those who are born of God love others who have been born of him.

How do we actively and practically demonstrate love for brothers and sisters in Christ?

## 2. Loving God Means Obeying His Word (5:2-3).

**What are God's commands to us that we are to obey?**

## **How does our obedience demonstrate our love for each other?**

### **According to v.3, how should we as Christians view the commands of God?**

In addition to loving His people, we are also commanded to show our love for God and for others by obeying His word. This is an interesting concept here in verse 2. John is saying that one of the ways we best love each other is by obeying God's commands. Our personal obedience is a display of our love for our brothers and sisters in Christ. The ESV Study Bible says that this is true because our love for "God's commandments shows believers the true way to do good for others. Love and law are complementary".

Those who love God are by definition commandment keepers. It is also part of our mission given to us by Christ. We are commanded to go to all the world telling them the good news of Jesus and teaching them all things he has commanded. A key part of discipleship is teaching people all that Jesus said to do. We don't do this just so believers can know what Jesus said to do, but so that they might actually do it!

John says in verse 3 that obedience built on love for God and others is no burden at all. How can John say this? I can think of two reasons. First, when compared to the manmade religious traditions of the Jewish leaders the commands of Jesus were burden free.

### **Read Matthew 11:28-30**

### **What does Jesus mean when he says his yoke is easy and his burden light?**

Secondly, the good news of the gospel is that there is freedom from our burdens. This freedom makes loving obedience a delight. For the Christian, delight and obedience go hand in hand and love is the motivating factor. It should also go without saying that we can't obey God's commands if we aren't daily in God's word.

### **How do you regularly remind yourself of God's commands?**

### 3. Loving God Means Conquering (Overcoming) the World (v.4-5).

### **Read 1 John 5:4-5**

### **What does it mean to "conquer" or "overcome" the world?**

### **How have we conquered the world?**

This word conquer in the Greek is *nikao*. This word is translated in other places as overcome or to prevail. The meaning is simply someone who is victorious over their foes or to carry off the

victory. The picture is of a soldier winning a battle and carrying of the spoils of his victory. He has overcome and prevailed, thus all that comes with victory belongs to Him. The tense of the word in Greek also gives the indication that we are conquering continually. In other words, conquering the world is a daily habit for those who love God and his people. Because we are in this world we are constantly having to wage battle against it. But because we are in Christ we are daily and continually victorious over it.

By trusting in Christ and declaring him Lord over your life, you have instantly become an overcomer. We are overcomers because by faith we are now hidden in the life, death, burial, and resurrection of the one who overcame death, hell, and the grave, for us. Ultimately all those who overcome the world daily now through faith will one day triumphantly overcome the world once and for all at the return of Christ when all who have trusted him will be raised to eternal life.

**How does knowing that in Christ you have overcome the world help you better understand what it means to be in the world and not of it?**

## APPLICATION

**If your love for God on display in the way you love your brothers and sisters in Christ?**

**What hinders you most in your obedience to the word of God?**

**How can you daily practice overcoming the world?**

## PRAYER

Write a prayer for your small group here.

## COMMENTARY

Write or insert any Bible study notes or commentary from your preferred sources.

### **1 John 4:20-21**

The Godward and human-directed aspect of love cannot be divided. They cannot be separated. They really are the bookends of all the commands. Our ability to actually love God is

wedded to the reality of our love for fellow human beings. And such a love is not sporadic or periodic. It is not occasional. It is continual. (Taken from Christ Centered Exposition Commentary of 1 John)

The love of God in Christ, in the hearts of Christians from the Spirit of adoption, is the great proof of conversion. This must be tried by its effects on their temper, and their conduct to their brethren. If a man professes to love God, and yet indulges anger or revenge, or shows a selfish disposition, he gives his profession the lie. But if it is plain that our natural enmity is changed into affection and gratitude, let us bless the name of our God for this seal and earnest of eternal happiness. Then we differ from the false professors, who pretend to love God, whom they have not seen, yet hate their brethren, whom they have seen. (Taken From Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary)

### **1 John 5:1**

The term believes conveys the idea of continuing faith, making the point that the mark of genuine believers is that they continue in faith throughout their life. Saving belief is not simply intellectual acceptance, but whole-hearted dedication to Jesus Christ that is permanent..."born of God", This is a reference to the new birth and is the same word taht Jesus used in John 3:7. The tense of the Greek verb indicates that ongoing faith is the result of the new birth and, therefore, the evidence of the new birth. (Taken From MacArthur Study Bible NASB)

### **1 John 5:2-3**

Love for God is not separated from keeping his commands. God's commands teach his people how to do what God accepts as pleasing. Knowledge of God transforms the human will, making what was once a burden light and easy to carry. (Taken from CBS Study Bible)

### **1 John 5:4-5**

Self-denial is required, but true Christians have a principle which carries them above all hinderances. Though the conflict often is sharp, and the regenerate may be cast down, yet he will rise up and renew his combat with resolution. But all, except believers in Christ, are enslaved in some respect or other, to the customs, opinions, or interests of the world. Faith is the cause of victory, the means, the instrument, the spiritual armour by which we overcome. In and by faith we cleave to Christ, in contempt of, and in opposition to the world. Faith sanctifies the heart, and purifies it from those sensual lusts by which the world obtains sway and dominion over souls. It has the indwelling Spirit of grace, which is greater than he who dwells in the world. The real Christian overcomes the world by faith; he sees, in and by the life and conduct of the Lord Jesus

on earth, that this world is to be renounced and overcome. He cannot be satisfied with this world, but looks beyond it, and is still tending, striving, and pressing toward heaven. We must all, after Christ's example, overcome the world, or it will overcome us to our ruin. (Taken from Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on the Bible)

"overcomes". John clearly defines who these overcomers are: they are all who believe that Jesus is God's Son, and all that means...the word [overcome] reflects a genuine superiority that leads to overwhelming success. The victory is demonstrable, it involves overthrowing an enemy so that the victory is seen by all. (Taken from MacArthur Study Bible NASB)

You can even search our library of studies to find commentary, then just copy and paste it here.