

**1 John 5:1-5**  
**“Characteristics of a Christian”**

**I. Intro**

**II. Vs. 1-5 What is a Christian?**

**I. Intro**

The apostle John throughout this letter has established what he believed to be **the most important truth in life the possibility of: Fellowship with God!!!** John described this in an encounter that had happened to him as a young man some 70 years prior, but he says that he had enjoyed the lasting effects throughout his life! **Even though he had lived in Judaism throughout his young life prior to his encounter with God; the religion that had been created by the leaders had obscured the truth of the revelation of God that the Word had revealed.** But that encounter with Jesus that day by the Sea of Galilee changed his life forever. The Light of the world, the Word of God became visible and dwelt among those disciples for 3 ½ years! As we close this letter, it is clear that **John didn't want people to miss the single most important thing for all humanity...fellowship with the Living God.** John understood this **not to be religious instead relational.** **To aide in this desire John wrote of three tests that the professing believer could take to determine if they were indeed a true follower of Christ. Interesting enough these three tests didn't test a person's knowledge or intellect instead they tested a person's change of behavior, their transformation.**

1. **Moral:** Having encountered the Living God who by His very nature is Holy has our “New Birth” produce a change in what we practice morally? If there has been no change in our behavior then we have not come into a relationship with our Holy Father!
2. **Social:** If we have come into a relationship with God who is loving, and such love has transformed us then this love will operate through us towards others in a love that is called out from us towards others not “because of them” but instead “in spite of them”.

3. **Relational**: Finally, if we have come in contact with the Living God who is true; then how He has chosen to reveal Himself to us we will agree with even if it went against what our religion taught us. This related to the person and work of the Messiah, the Son of God who at His incarnation humbled Himself to dying of a cross for our sin.

## II. Vs. 1-5 What is a Christian?

At the close of this letter the Apostle John will again address those three tests only from a different angle this time by asking indirectly: **What are the characteristics of a Christian?** Look now at these **five verses and note the three chorus John presents as they will provide the outline to the passage as well as John's definition of the characteristics of a person Born of God.**

1. Vs. 1, 4 **Born of God**: Here we note that the first and primary characteristic of a Christian is **NEW BIRTH**. *A Christian's is not a person who becomes one by education, environment, or effort.* John also informs his readers that a Christian is "Born that way" but **not by natural means** such as a person being born into the right lineage, a Christian home or nation. The only way a person becomes a Christian is by being BORN **of GOD**. It is **supernatural!** Just because it is supernatural this doesn't mean that the characteristics are invisible; instead, it is the opposite, because since we are Born of God this New Birth is by its very nature **TRANSFORMATIONAL!**
2. Vs. 1-3 **Loves Him/God**: Here John brings up the truth that the person who has come into contact with the Living God will see a transformation in "**What they love and how they love**".
  - A. **What they love**: They will awake after New Birth with a new love and that will be for the things of God and no longer a thing of the former life and

world. Oh, they may stumble in the former loves as a child learns to walk but they will no longer want to live in the loves of the flesh! Their appetites will change as they mature and come to realize how great God's love for them truly is. This will produce a security that is greater than any other thing or any person they have ever loved. The Christian is never asked to first leave that which they have loved instead they discover that the things they have loved only keep them from enjoying Him who has loved us in spite of us and security this alone brings.

B. **How they love:** It will also transform the WAY we love as we are changed by God's love that has so loved us in spite of us and not because of us we will begin to love one another the same way. We won't love one another in a selfish way that only precipitates love "*because of how they make us feel*". Instead, we will start loving the way God loves us! This love will grow "*because His love is perfected in us, and we will love in spite of who they are and because of Who God is*".

3. Vs. 4-5 **Over comes the world:** The final characteristic the apostle John points out is a simple observation that the Christian just lives victoriously. The Christian does is not immune to the difficulties and adversities of life if anything they are made more difficult by their New Birth. It isn't the avoidance nor the outcome that causes the Christian to live a victorious life. The Christian isn't living in the prison of looking for better situations and circumstances to produce happiness. Instead, the Victorious Christian has come to realize that it isn't the situations and circumstances that produce joy it is instead joy that changes US in the midst of adverse situations and circumstances. The victorious life comes about due to three:

- A. The victory comes **NOT** from avoidance nor is it limited to our expectations of things working according to our plan and timing. The Victorious Christian has a victory that cannot be defeated by those limitations and instead has the understanding that NOTHING will ever be successful in separating us from the only PERSON we MUST have, our Lord whom we are told will Never Leave Us nor forsake us!
- B. The victory also comes by the truth that even during adverse situations and circumstances there is a WORK in them that is perfecting us. These trials are not “**Random Attacks**” instead they are “**Planned Acts**” that are designed for our maturity and growth. Victory does **not ask** us to enjoy the “*planned process*” but to instead “*rejoice in the beauty it will produce*”!
- C. The victory also comes by the truth that the three things that hinder us: **The Devil, the world system, and our fleshly old nature, will be defeat once for all**. The Victorious Christian has the hope that awaits us that all we face now that hinder us it but a blink of the eyes and that we will enter a NEW and glorious sphere where now of those three things shall ever keep us down again and will enjoy for eternity an existence that escapes earthly descriptions.

We will take up these five verses in more detail next week but as we have much to reflect upon this morning and we have communion and think this will serve as a reflective introduction as we celebrate the One our Lord Jesus who has made becoming a Christian possible!