

1 John 5:1-5
“The Bible is a love letter”

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I. Intro

This morning we shall take a bit of a more detailed look at these first 5 verse of the 5th chapter of 1st John. The apostle John had at this point in life looked back at what he believed to be **the most important truth in life the possibility of: Fellowship with God!!!** It is clear that **John didn’t want people to miss out on fellowship with the Living God.** So, the Holy Spirit led John to write **of three tests that the professing believer could take to determine if they were indeed in fellowship with God. These three tests didn’t test a person’s knowledge or intellect instead they tested a person’s change in their behavior, their transformation.**

1. **Moral:** 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 then we will operate in this love that is called out from us towards others not “***because of them but instead in spite of them***”.
3. **Relational:** If we have come in contact with the Living God who is true; then we will agree with the way in which He has chosen to reveal Himself to us.

The Apostle John in this chapter addressed the question of: **What are the characteristics of a person who has fellowship with God, or if you will what is a Christian?** These are discovered in the text under **three chorus of words or phrases that John presents.**

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.* The only way a person becomes a Christian is by being BORN **of GOD.** It is **supernatural!** But this supernatural New Birth doesn't make these characteristics invisible; instead, they are very visible as they show up in our TRANSFORMATION!

2. Vs. 1-3 **Loves Him/God:** Second, John brought out the truth that the person who has fellowship with God will be visible in both "**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.
 - B. **How they love:** But not just "what they love" will be visible but "HOW THEY LOVE"! They won't love one another in a selfish way based upon "**how the person makes us feel**". They will love the way God loves us!
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. Though the Christian is not immune to the difficulties and adversities of life they nonetheless live a joy filled life. This isn't accomplished by avoidance nor an outcome that we deem favorable. The victorious life comes about due to three truths:
 - A. 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 these trials are not "**Random Attacks**" instead they are "**Planned Acts**" to which we CAN "*rejoice in the beauty they*

will produce”!

- C. Lastly, 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.**

II. Vs. 1 Born of God to love like God

Vs. 1 The Gnostics denied the identity of Jesus as the Messiah by denying His incarnation. John writes that to do so is to deny the ONLY person that can give a person fellowship God. What John was writing about wasn't mere intellectual assent to the fact of the incarnation but a "**heart dependance**" upon this truth. A person may "**know**" that they need air to breath but what John describes here is the person who is dependent upon consistently taking a breathes which demonstrate that they believe with all their heart the truth as to the identity of their Messiah. It is this "**heart dependance**" that has resulted in being "Born of God". Furthermore, it is only the person who has been "born of God" that has the divine opportunity to Love their brothers and sisters with the same kind of love that God has loved them with. We have a "Common Father" who sustains us by His continual love that enables us to love others with this love. It is possible that the Christian may try to escape this opportunity by posing a question, "What is a Christian look like that I am supposed to love?" It is a sad reality that much evangelism is never attempted because the believer fails to love the people enslaved to sin. But it is equally true that Christians often fail to love even those who share the same fellowship with God. So, John gives them the answer to the excuse posed by that hypothetical question. Love with God's love those that have been born of God because the "**heart dependance**" on the person Jesus, God the Son! The Baptist, the Pentecostal, the Calvinist and the Arminianist, none of these divisions should ever keep the follower of Christ from operating in God's love towards those who are "Born of God"

even though we differ of theological equations. It would do all those “*Born of God*” to read the Bible NOT as a TEXTBOOK but instead as a “LOVE LETTER”!

III. Vs. 2-3 God’s love lightens the load

Vs. 2-3 The words “*by this*” are in the Greek “IN THIS” and John’s use of the word IN tells the reader that what he wrote about was not a mere sentiment but the VERY REASON why we can now love as the Children of God. Our loving God’s children with God’s love comes from our FIRST loving God seen in our obedience to His Word. When we allow God’s Word to penetrate the hardest substance known to humanity, “our own heart” than we place ourselves in the right position to loving God’s children with God’s love! Loving with God’s Love is NEVER divorced from loving God and obeying His word in our own lives. The love of God is not some mushy emotional sentiment. It is “Truth demonstrated in actions” and those “commandments” John declares are NOT “Burdensome” and the word used here in the Greek is “*grievous*” or “*heavy*”. The reason for this is that God’s love for us makes them “*lifting light*” and a delight instead of a burden. Jesus never laid upon a person to carry a commandment without first equipping them and enabling them to carry it. To carry the commandment is another demonstration of God’s love through us. The opposite is also true according to the apostle John in that: “*If the Christian disobeys the God’s Word they will soon lose the security that such a life produces, and this will cause a loss of confidence towards God Himself.*” This will lead to a dishonesty and bitterness towards God and His people! In the end all that will be left from this disobedience will be only the burden of religion by which this poor person has been reduced to trying to please God in their own power. What we learn is these two truths:

- God’s love lightens the load whereas disobedience to God’s word adds weight that we

cannot move!

- God's perfecting love produces a joy filled obedience!

John reminds his readers that fellowship with God is one that practical and relational and not a “*loveless intellectualism*” that was characteristic of the law.

IV. Vs. 4-5 Victory over the world

Vs. 4-5 The reason that God's commands are not “heavy” is due to the reality that they came after “New Birth” instead of a prerequisite too New Birth. God changed us before we were given the blessed opportunity to live out what we have been transformed to do. It is this very new birth that causes us to be victorious in our new life in Christ. The word “victory” in verse 4 is the Nike which today is a tennis shoe brand. The context of the use of the word here is that of God's maturing love and John's point is that God's maturing love “overcomes” all obstacles. The reason for this is that with just our flesh we find it natural to disobey God's commands but because we are born of God and given His nature it is now natural for us to obey His word by His spirit! Thus our “Victory” comes about by our faith and trust in His nature and His spirit within us. Our faith must be in who Jesus is not and that is God the Son not what the false teachers wanted to make Him. There is NO power in the name of Jesus if is merely a good teacher, prophet, created being or any other person other than God the Son! If not than our faith would be miss placed in a big case of mistaken identity. When we trust in THE person and THE work of the Son of God our trust is rewarded. Someone could recommend a mechanic for my car that doesn't run by saying, “*You need to go so Fred, he is the best mechanic ever and He can fix your car and get you going.*” That may very well be true but what if you towed your car to where you thought was Fred's shop only it wasn't the right place but it the owner shared the

same name. *You would have to identify specifically who Fred was to ensure that he could make new what wasn't running!* Faith **IS NOT** "*Believing in spite of EVIDENCE, it is instead OBEYING in spite of CONSEQUENCES*". Our foe is the "world" that would include anything and anyone apart from God. With a transformed life comes a far easier lift of the commandments of God when compared to the bondage of the world! Our victory is guaranteed because of New Birth through our continued trust in the same Son of God that saved us being more than able to sanctify us as we travel towards Him being more than able to glorify us.