

Really Loving by Faith!
1 John 5:3b-15

And His commandments are not burdensome (1 John 5:3).

This joy of fellowship is only for those who abide in Christ by keeping His word—especially His foremost commandment to love one another (1:5-2:27). In his extended discourse on the confidence of the believer at Christ’s coming (2:28-4:19) John exhorts his readers to abide in Him by loving God and their fellow Christians with the pure love of God and promised that the maturity of this love would be a key source of confidence on that Day. In the final segment of his epistle, he applies all he has said about love to the everyday life of every Christian.

Without apologizing for his demanding teaching on the absolute necessity of loving our fellow Christians, the Apostle dedicates three paragraphs to removing every excuse believers offer for not loving one another with the love of Christ (4:20-5:17):

- Love every believer in Christ: If they confess Christ, they are your brother or sister—*love them because they are His children!* (4:20-5:3a)
- Love with the power you have already received: If you believed in Christ, you have the power to love—*love them because you can!* (5:3b-5:15)
- Love until God takes them home: If they are sinning, God will decide when to take them out—*love them to save their lives!* (5:16-17)

A common reaction to the absolute requirement to love every believer is, “You don’t know how difficult this will be for me. I can’t do this; it’s too hard to love that Christian!” Yes you can. Your faith in Christ made you a *world-conqueror*, a new creation with the capacity to keep every command by His grace. Only faith in Christ brings the new birth that makes obedience to God’s command an achievable goal:

Love the unlovely Christian because you _____!

Christ invites His weak and exhausted followers to a rest of obedience to His commands (Matthew 11:28-30). When we take on His yoke, He pulls with us. And we discover that His commands are not burdensome but easy, and His burden on us light.

- I. The only way to really love God is by trusting in Jesus as the Son of God, who answers prayers to do His will (1 John 5:3b-15).
 - A. Only those who keep His commandments (guard, keep watch over, observant, careful, attentiveness to God’s will), especially His command to love one another, truly love God (4:20-5:3a). ***But His commandments are not burdensome (oppressive so as to crush) (5:3b).*** John is repeating the teaching of Jesus—the Christian life (following Him) is not at all an overwhelming yoke if we will come to Him (Matthew 11:28-30).
 - B. Every Christian can keep His commandments—all who believe that Jesus is the Son of God have the power to overcome the world (*Metonymy*, substitution of one word for another with which it is associated, *of effect for cause*: the world is the evil world system in rebellion against Christ that is all about disobeying His commandments and every Christian is pressured by this world system headed by Satan to disobey, especially when it comes to not loving fellow Christians) (5:4-5).
 1. This fundamental understanding of the Christian life, that it is lived from the new nature (*whatever is born of God*), protects us from two extremes: 1) Viewing spirituality as a “new” version of the Old Testament requirement to obey commandments that the New Testament teaches was an impossible standard. 2) Compromising the absolute necessity to keep His commandments if we love Him.
 2. The only way to receive this new nature is by faith in Jesus as the Son of God who has overcome the world (John 16:33; 1 John 2:13; 4:4).

C. Faith in Jesus as the Son of God overcomes the world because He is the Son of God who gives life to all who believe and answers their prayers (5:6-15).

1. *Reason why faith in Jesus as the Son of God overcomes the world*—it is true that He is the Son of God: Three witnesses confirm the truth that Jesus is the Son of God (this seems to be confronting the heresy that Jesus was not fully God): Holy Spirit's teaching through the apostles and prophets, at Jesus' water baptism (Matthew 3:7; John 1:32-33, 34; plus God's voice, Matthew 3:17), and the blood of His crucifixion (John 19:35-37; plus the miracles). The heresy circulating in these churches was that the divine Christ that descended upon the human Jesus at His baptism left Him before the crucifixion (2:22). These witnesses refute this lie that God did not die for sin (6-8).
2. *Reason why faith in Jesus as the Son of God overcomes the world*—everyone who believes in Jesus in this way receives His overcoming life: Those who believe in the Son of God's name (the Christ, the Anointed One whom God promised to provide as a substitute sacrifice for the sins of the world) can know that he or she has this life—eternal life (9-13; John 1:12—*believe in His name*).
3. *Reason why faith in Jesus as the Son of God overcomes the world*—He answers believers' prayers to do His will: Since we are able to do His will (3b-13), we can ask for help as we do His will (14) and know that He is granting our request (15; John 14:13-14—*ask in His name*).

II. How to really love God by keeping His commandment to love one another:

A. Receive His life by believing in His name—the Christ who is the Son of God!

1. The life of God has the power to overcome the world and can only be received by faith in Jesus who is the Son of God according to all witnesses (John 1:12; John 6:47).
2. God promises that all who believe in the name of the Son of God (Christ, Anointed One sent by God as the sacrifice substitute) have this life (John 5:24; 20:30-31).

B. Release this life by trusting in His word and asking Him for strength!

1. Christ made you a *world-conqueror* (Colossians 1:13) when you believed in Him! You are not who you use to be and you do not have to live the way you use to live—especially in relationships (1 John 5:3b-13; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 2:6; 2 Corinthians 5:7, 17).
2. Christ will help you become the *world-conqueror* (*Overcomers* of Revelation 2 and 3) you were meant to be! You can know the petitions you ask for will be granted when they are according to His will—especially in relationships (1 John 5:14-15; John 16:23-24).

Break the chain of hatred in your marriage, your family, your church, and your world—write out a specific plan of action for loving the most unlovely child of God in your life today.

Confess—Father, I agree with your condemnation of my excuses for not loving _____.

Claim—Father, I know you have given me the power to love _____.

Commit—Father, I expect you to answer my prayer to help me love _____ and tell you now that when the answer comes, I will do what you say.