

A Faith that Overcomes

John continues to focus on the themes of faith, love, and obedience taking us still deeper in our understanding of these things. He begins by talking about faith and love, then love and obedience, and finally overcoming and faith. Faith is what bookends this passage. The faith that believes that Jesus is the Christ (v. 1) ultimately is the faith that allows every believer to be an overcomer (vv. 4, 5).

Opening Discussion: As you were growing up did you tend to be a rule-keeper or one who bucked the rules?

Read 1 John 5:1-5

1. What sticks out to you in this passage?
2. The second half of verse 1 could literally be translated, “everyone who loves the one who begets also loves the one begotten of him.” In other words, if you love the father, you will love the father’s children. You will love EACH of his children without distinction. Are there any ways that you’ve given yourself an out on loving some of God’s children because of differences (i.e in theology, politics, or racial views, etc.)? Explain.
3. What in this passage (or the whole of 1 John) would suggest that you can love even these fellow believers who are hard for you to love?

Brian said:

Whether you are hesitant to submit your life to Jesus, or you are a younger person wondering if following Jesus is worth it, or if you are just anyone who is thinking that obeying God in some area of life just seems too hard; that the sacrifice is too much, let me say this as clearly as I can: God’s commandments are not burdensome. Everything He commands is for your good and you will find joy on the other side of obedience.

4. What does it mean to say that God’s commandments are not burdensome?

5. In what ways have you experienced the truth that though a command was difficult, it was not ultimately burdensome? How have you experienced joy on the other side of obedience?

6. What does John teach about overcoming the world?

Brian said:

John . . . is not describing a special class of believers. He is not saying there are some who are overcomers and some who are not. He is saying that "overcomer" is the name for everyone who has expressed faith in Jesus and is therefore born of God. If you have expressed faith in Jesus, you are an overcomer. Yes, you may be struggling in some ways right now. You may not feel like an overcomer right now, but this is who you are in Christ. And so, I would encourage you to meditate on this truth. You do have a faith that overcomes. This is your destiny in Christ.

7. Do you find it hard to believe that you are an overcomer? Why or why not?

8. What is the main point of application for you from this passage?