

Chapter 5 finishes the First Letter of John. The objective this evening is to explore 3 of the more challenging passages John presents to us.

**#1**  
**The first passage is a challenge, not because it is so hard, but because it is so easy. We tend to gloss right over it.**

1 John 5

, <sup>4</sup> for ***everyone born of God overcomes the world***. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. <sup>5</sup> Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who ***believes that Jesus is the Son of God***.

The question is; what exactly, does God overcome? If we look through the New Testament, and specifically into John's writing, what do we see God overcoming, and not overcoming?

**Let's start with what God does not promise to overcome.**

- ***God doesn't promise to overcome our challenges in personal desires or needs.***

They are the first motivation to prayer. We feel an acute need; we need healing, or finances, or a certain outcome, so we pray. It may well be that God answers positively, such prayers, but there is no guarantee. In the larger picture, there may be a better reason not to grant such prayers.

- ***God doesn't promise to overcome our inactivity.***

Although the axiom; God helps those who help themselves, is unbiblical; we are called to "Do." As a matter of fact, all of John's letter deals with the person with God within, doing God's commandments of active belief, and active love for others. There are different reasons for not engaging; distraction, fear, just plain laziness, but everything John writes is based on living up to what we know in God. God can fire us up inside, but He leaves us to choose to engage.

- ***The third thing follows on this; God won't overcome your freewill.***

It is tempting to ask God to take away desires; God just make me so I can't get angry or desire an addiction, or some other negative thing. But the word, "parakletos" means one who walks ALONG SIDE, not makes you do. In love, we struggle to surrender faults and sins to God, but love demands that we have the choice.

**What God does overcome:**

- ***God overcomes lies with truth.***

John started his letter by distinguishing between people who walk in the light, and those in the dark. When there is only darkness, there is no choice. Consider how many untruths enslave people: you're worthless and always will be; you might as well be promiscuous because no one will ever love you; life must be full of fear and anxiety; success is when you get your way or get all you want materially; there is no God, so there really isn't any right or wrong, or purpose; there are so many lies that take us in the wrong direction.

If we will listen, **God ALWAYS reveals the truth.** His Word is always true; even when we struggle to understand parts of it. Consider for a moment, the hope it brings that God guarantees, with Him, **you will never live a lie!**

- **God has overcome the dark with light.**

Darkness is more than the lies of this world, Satan, and even ourselves. Darkness includes all the desires, deception, fears, and evil that the human heart can hold. Salvation, and sanctification deliver us from those traps.

- **God has overcome our bondage.**

John told us we don't have to sin, whatever that sin may be in our case. We are no longer enslaved. And even when we do, we have an advocate. We are not enslaved by our old nature, and we are not enslaved to failures along the way either. -Even when our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts!

What God has overcome has far bigger implications than just our immediate need; even though God is there as well.

#2

It's amazing how much debate among scholars this next verse as generated!

<sup>6</sup> **This is the one who came by water and blood —Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood.**

Originally, when John wrote this, it was a direct response to the Gnostic heresies that were plaguing the church, especially by a teacher by the name of Cerinthus. Basically, Cerinthus taught that at the water of baptism, the man, Jesus was endowed with the spirit of Christ. At the spilling of His blood on the cross, the spirit of Christ separated back to eternity and the man Jesus died.

The **first implication of John's statement is that the two events happened to the same individual.** The person of Jesus Christ did what was necessary. As we said this morning, if Jesus Christ isn't fully man, and fully God, the cross really doesn't mean anything. The divinity of the Christ gave the credentials to save; the humanity of Jesus allowed Him to save humanity.

The water in Christ's baptism **also implies the genuine obedience** of Christ to the Father. Jesus Christ was doing exactly what needed to be done, not His own thing. It also **satisfied prophecy**, as did the blood of the cross. Anything but a balanced, whole belief in Jesus Christ is not the truth of God.

#3

This one can cause a lot of confusion if we don't take a balanced Biblical view:

**There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that you should pray about that. <sup>17</sup> All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death.**

<sup>18</sup> We know that **anyone born of God does not continue to sin;**

Here's how modern Bible scholars respond to this verse:

The sin that leads to death is neither a specific sin, nor even a 'backsliding', but a total apostasy, the denial of Christ and the renunciation of the faith.

They refer to verses such as:

### Hebrews 6

(NIV) <sup>4</sup> It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, <sup>5</sup> who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age <sup>6</sup> and who have fallen away, to be brought back to repentance.

### Hebrews 10

(NIV) <sup>26</sup> If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left.

This fits with what John has been saying, he has warned about the spirit of antichrist that came out from among the church family, but it was never really part of the family.

John emphasizes that no one can persist in a nature and routine of sin and have God within. Tyndale commentary refers to **Mark 3:28** which says:

(NIV) <sup>29</sup> but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin.”

How they explain the spiritual principle is like this:

**The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. This sin, committed by the Pharisees, was a deliberate, open-eyed rejection of known truth. They ascribed the mighty works of Jesus, evidently done ‘by the Spirit of God’ (Matt. 12:28), to the agency of Beelzebub. Such sin, Jesus said, would never be forgiven either in this age or in the age to come. He who commits it ‘is guilty of an eternal sin’. It leads him inexorably into a state of incorrigible moral and spiritual obtuseness, because he has willfully sinned against his own conscience. In John’s own language he has ‘loved darkness instead of light’ (John 3:18–21)**

In the original Greek, two words were used for sin, “*adikia*” (v. 1:9) meaning INJUSTICE; and “*anomia*” meaning LAWLESSNESS (v. 3:4). Both words speak to a moral standard, and to the will of God. Sin, nature or action, violates both.

Remember, the Gnostics believes there really wasn’t any physical standard, because spirit and body never merged. The body was inherently evil so there could be no physical standard (how convenient).

Just in case we think the premises of Gnosticism are dead issues, here’s an excerpt from a recent article:

Gnosticism is experiencing something of a revival, despite its status within church history as a vanquished Christian heresy. The magazine *Gnosis*, which bills itself as a “journal of western inner traditions,” ...

Of course, these exotic-sounding enclaves of the esoteric are minuscule when compared to historic Christian denominations. But the real challenge of Gnosticism is not so much organizational as intellectual. Gnosticism in its various forms has often appealed to the alienated intellectuals who yearn for spiritual experience outside the bounds of the ordinary. ... These groups share an emphasis on esoteric teaching, the hidden divinity of humanity, and contact with nonmaterial higher beings called masters or adepts.

(Esoteric; meaning- These groups share an emphasis on esoteric teaching, the hidden divinity of humanity, and contact with nonmaterial higher beings called masters or adepts.)

Sounding wisely intellectual; stroking the ego that not just anybody can get this, and those who do have their own inner god, you'll be masters of good and evil. And best of all, you don't have to follow the moral standards of ordinary stiffs! It goes all the way back to the garden and it will continue to the return of Christ.

One closing thought, it is not that Christianity is anti-intellectual, it is simply doesn't find pride in human intellect. God is God, and we are not. And whenever we come up with a "new way" to refute this, it's the same old song that leads to death. John's letters are timeless!