

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John 5:1-5**

Chapter 25- Overcoming the World

226 Overcoming the World- Part 10

WAOY Thursday 07/31/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1 John**, and today we're going to continue to look at what John meant when he said, "Whoever is born of God overcomes the world". So, let's read **1John 5:1- 5** again together:

1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith.

5 Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Now over the last several broadcasts- we have been looking closely at just what John meant in verse 4, when he said:

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith.

So, as we look at John's command to us to overcome the world- and then we see such a contrast between what John says here and what we actually do—we can see many ways that love for this world and love for the things in this world work *against* us in trying to rob God of the love that only rightfully belongs to Him. And as we begin to realize that we will *never* overcome the world unless and until we stop loving the world- we need to ask ourselves a very important question:

Just where do all of these misguided loves come from?

Why do we love things and promote things and seek after things that the Bible clearly says are evil and sinful like the lust of the flesh; the lust of the eyes; and the boastful pride of life. Because, according to John- these are the most dangerous things on earth. John said if we love these things- then the Love of the Father is not in us. So, worldliness or loving what is passing away- is a real big deal isn't it?

You see, these other "loves" originate from an unbiblical and strange and yes, *sinful* urge- to glorify "self" as opposed to glorifying God. They are simply the desires of our flesh that *constantly* rebels against God's Authority, and which leads us all to condemnation.

This innate desire for lost people to love and glorify *themselves* is what theologians call "Total Depravity" or "Radical Ruination"- the Biblical Doctrine that says that all of us have been *radically* and *negatively* affected by the Fall.

And we all have been touched by this wrong dissatisfaction with God and a hostile and open rebellion against Him. And the examples that John uses here in this Passage are what the Christian Church *used* to call "worldliness". But over the last 150 years or so, that word; that term; that concept has almost entirely ceased from being spoken in the Church. So, what happened to it? Whatever happened to worldliness?

Sadly, in many, many modern Churches, the people of God have never heard worldliness mentioned a single time and so they really have no idea what it even means. And if you don't think this is true, go find a young Christian convert who is 25 years old or younger and ask him what "worldliness" means. See if he tells you *positive* things or *negative* things.

Worldliness is taking an *inferior* object and treating it as your final ultimate end. Whether those are the pleasures of your flesh; or riches or pride and arrogance; or the glory of human achievement- worldliness is the attraction that we have to these things and to have our heart bound up with them.

So, as we approach this verse in **1John** that tells us to *overcome* the world- we must honestly ask ourselves the obvious question: "*Am I worldly?*"

And get really serious with yourself and ask deeper, more penetrating questions like:

What do I do with my best time?

What do I do with my best thinking?

What brings me the most satisfaction?

Or you can turn the questions around and get the same answers:

What troubles me the most?

What causes me the most worry and anxiety?

What is my greatest fear?

For example, is your greatest fear; is what brings you the most anxiety that the Name of Christ be lifted up in every circumstance? Do you concern yourself with something that you may have done or said that may not have been glorifying to Jesus? How long has it been that you or anyone you know stayed up all night wrestling with the angel of greed or covetousness or lust or do those sins not trouble us enough to bother with them anymore?

Does the idea that we may love the world keep you up at night? Does *that* cause you to pace the floor and wring your hands? Are you truthfully more concerned about Christ being glorified in whatever situation the Sovereign God has allowed to come into your life or is it that you achieve your own safety and comfort?

Are we more worried about having enough money or having enough love for the Father? Are we more interested in padding our nests so that we are secure or that we have lived our lives in such a way that Christ is honored? You see, dear friends, worldliness may not be that long list of overtly wicked sins that God has rescued you from- but worldliness may be much more subtle- and worldliness may actually look very pretty and actually be desirable. And that is why John warns us so earnestly about it.

Let me tell you what I mean. We give ourselves with abandon to our worldly pleasures as though we would die tomorrow; while we build houses and accumulate things as though we will live forever. How inconsistent we are.

The group of men who lived during the 16th and 17th Century called The Puritans were great about meditating about things like this. So, while I may preach this one sermon on worldliness, Jeremiah Burroughs wrote a very deep and powerful book about this very issue called *A Treatise on Earthly Mindedness*. And I encourage you to get this book. Now be aware that this book- *A Treatise on Earthly Mindedness*- is not like the best sellers of our day. It is deep, serious and soul uplifting. This book will not entertain you; it will not tickle your ears- but it will edify you.

Written in the seventeenth century, it spans 260 pages talking about the way that a man lives his life completely abandoned to the cause of Jesus Christ is the *real* measurement of what he believes- not his worldly possessions or his earthly accomplishments.

In this book- Jeremiah Burroughs asks and answers the question:

How do we combat these other “loves” that entrap us and that keep us from overcoming the world?

Burroughs said that we as Christians have to become aware of our own thoughts. Burroughs wrote that we should pursue humility over our own sins; befriend godly people; help ourselves to understand God’s Will by becoming familiar with God’s Word; Constantly remind ourselves that we are going to have to stand before God and give an account of what we did in this life; pray without ceasing; be quick to repent; and ask God for the gift to be able to accurately see our own heart.

Burroughs suggested that every morning, we read **Hebrews 12:2&3** that says:

2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Ian Murray, the great English preacher and theologian, wrote about worldliness and said,

“Worldliness is departing from God. It is a “man centered” way of thinking; It proposes objectives which demand no radical breach from man’s fallen nature. It judges the importance of things by the present and material results. It weighs success by numbers. It covets human esteem. It wants no unpopularity. It knows no Truth for which it is worth suffering. It declines to be a fool for Christ sake. Worldliness is the mindset of the unregenerate. It adopts idols. It is at war with God.”

My friends, we are not called to have the love of the word, but we are called to know and possess the Love of God. This same John writes a little later in **1John 4:7**:

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

So, we see that the kind of Love that we are *supposed* to have comes only from God. You can’t work this up in yourself. You can’t take the two sticks of your own righteousness and your own will power and rub them together and produce this Love for the Father. No, this kind of Love *for* God is a gift *from* God.

Now as we examine worldliness and we honestly endeavor to overcome the world, please do not misunderstand what I am saying. I am not saying- and John is not saying that *all* cravings and *all* desires are bad. They aren’t. Jesus said in **Luke 22** that He “desired” to eat the Lord’s Supper with His disciples. Luke used the very same word here that John used- that English translations translate as “desires” or “cravings” or “lusts”.

Paul used the same word in **1Thessalonians 2** to describe his “longing” to see the Thessalonian believers.

Neither of these desires or longings were bad- they were good desires and good longings. So, we can easily see that not *all* desires are bad. In fact, John used this very same word to describe our desire or longing or craving or Love for the Father.

So please understand that God is not trying to make us all to be stoics who have no desires whatsoever- but we are to have an enflamed desire or passion or love or craving for God- the very desire or Love that we were all made in His Image to have.

During the first century- in John’s day- in the Middle East- around the region of Ephesus- most of the people of that region were

taught that life is all about what we as humans do for the gods. So, all they knew and all they were taught was summed up in one statement- *“What have we done for the gods?”*

But that is not at all the way it is with the one true living God of the Bible. You see, we do not rejoice that we love God- but we rejoice that God loved us! Christians, you see, are so filled with Joy because we know that all of this is about what God has done for *us*- not what *we* have done for God.

So, we have to realize that overcoming the world and not being worldly is all about Love- Who do we love- God or this present evil world?

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

© 2007- 2023 by Enjoying God Ministries, Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America
Enjoying God Ministries, Inc. PO Box 147 Saucier, Mississippi 39574 www.covenantofpeace.net

Scripture quotations, except those noted otherwise, are from The New American Standard Bible © 1995 by The Lockmann Foundation. Used by permission.

This is a single transcript in a larger series of teachings taken from a verse by verse Journey through the Epistle of 1John. You are free to reproduce it and distribute it as the Lord leads you- without cost or reimbursement to us with the stipulation that you may not add anything or take anything away from this transcript without the express written permission of The Covenant of Peace Church and that this complete copyright statement be at the end of all copies.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.