

1 John 5:1-5

"The Birthmarks Of The Believer"

* I'm not sure why we're always so eager for some *new* insight. Some *fresh* revelation, as if we've already mastered everything written in God's word, we're ready for something more! The reality is that more than something *new*, what I need is the same readily available truth that's found in the scriptures to be rehearsed & set before me, time & time again that I might be consistent & faithful to the ways, the will & the word of God for my life. *

& Of course the Holy Spirit knows that, so we find the same principles, perhaps cut in a little different fashion all throughout our Bibles. & There are times that the authors would let you know, that *they* knew, that *you* knew, but you & me, we needed to hear it again!

Peter, in writing his 2nd epistle, was speaking to his readers of how they might have an *abundant* entrance into the everlasting kingdom of J.C. Listen, it wasn't Peter's heart, or Paul's heart or even *my* heart (I'm not putting myself beside them, but by way of greater to lessor) that you would have a meager, measly, sorta skimpy entrance into the kingdom. Listen, I want it to be that when you show up on that day, that there's flair, fanfare, people whooping & hollering. That all the things you've done while on the earth has gained you an incredible entrance, rewards unspeakable & all of heaven giving God glory for what He accomplished in your life! So Peter said, "For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease."¹

You know it, I know you know it, but I'm gonna write it down so that you never forget it! – I say all that to say this, we're not gonna learn anything "new" today. Jn has it set in his heart to *remind* us of some things he's already written in this little letter. He wants to make sure that the "nail" of these truths are driven deep into our sometimes forgetful hearts/minds.

Vs 1

You may or may not recall that in exiting Ch 4, Jn wrote these words: "& This commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also."

¹ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (2 Pe 1:12-15). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Here, he brings a little amplification, a little clarification (almost [seemingly] in anticipation) to the question (maybe even a little kickback), “Who is my brother?” So, Jn addresses it directly, “Anyone who is ‘born of God’ is part of the *family* of God (your brother, your sister in Christ).”

& Throughout his letter, he’s mentioned this phrase, “Born of God” again & again (1 John 2:29, 3:9, 4:7). & I suppose we should stop & acknowledge for just a minute; exactly how critical this phrase is! Because it’s an absolute prerequisite to ever seeing the kingdom of God! * Listen, if you’re not born *of* God, you don’t belong *to* God, you’re not a child *of* God which means there’s no inheritance for you in the *kingdom* of God!

Perhaps you remember the scene in your mind’s eye, there they are, Jesus & Nicodemus having that conversation under the cover of night. Nicodemus comes to Jesus & he says, “Rabbi, we know that You are a Teacher come from God, because no one can do the things that You’ve been doing unless God is w/him!” & Jesus said (essentially), “Look, there’s no reason to beat around the bush here Nick, I’m just going to tell you straight. Unless one is ‘born again’, he will never see the kingdom of God.”

Which begs the question, “How then is a person ‘born again’? Can they re-enter their mother’s womb? What does that mean, born-again?” & That was exactly what Nicodemus asked Him. & Jesus said, “Listen, when I say ‘born again’ I’m not talking about another *physical birth*, you’ve already been born once *physically*, but that’s not enough to gain you entrance into God’s kingdom. You have to be ‘born again’ *spiritually*.” Which leads us naturally to the *next* question, “How then does this transition, this transformation, (spiritual re-birth) take place?” Jesus told him right then & there & Jn essentially reiterates it here. “Whoever *believes* that Jesus is the Christ (the anointed One, the Messiah sent of God to take away the sins of the world) is born of God.”

You can’t be born again by crawling on your hands/knees over broken glass for 100 miles. You can’t be born again by giving a lot of money to the church or some godly organization. You can’t be born again by saying enough prayers, or doing enough good things. It’s not something that takes place through a physical transaction (being baptized, taking communion or any other “ritual”).

The Bible is clear that it’s w/the *heart* that one *believes* unto righteousness. Paul told the Ephesians, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”²

² [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Eph 2:8-9). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

To the Galatians he said it like this, “*For you are all sons (children) of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*”³ We’re born again through faith in J.C. believing & receiving Him as our Savior & our Lord. In Jn’s gospel he wrote, “*But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*”⁴ It’s not a physical transaction, it’s a spiritual transformation, regeneration. *

& Again, let me point out, it’s not just believing that Jesus was a historical figure, that He was a good teacher & all of that. “Whoever believes that Jesus is the *Christ* is born of God.” Ladies & gentlemen, JB got it right when he, seeing Jesus coming his direction through a crowd of people, pointed to Him & said, “*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*”⁵ & If you’ve not come to that realization, but something is resonating in you today, I’d urge you to believe on the Lord J.C. & be saved.

Now, how do you know that you’ve believed, that you’ve been “born of God”? Jn has been all about that “blessed assurance” all throughout his letter. Do you know because you’ve had some great, overwhelming experience? Is it through a sudden surging of the gift of tongues taking place? That’s not what the Bible says... Can those things happen? Sure, but I would place those things in the category of the exception, not the rule. **Jn tells us right here in black & white (& we’ve discussed this at length in previous passages of this letter). The fruit of the Spirit (of being born of God) isn’t tongues, it isn’t shedding tears of remorse & regret (though I’d never seek to diminish that). Jn says clearly that the evidence of being *born of God is love for the family of God.***

* If you’ve been born of God, Jn says, “First of all, you will love God.” Listen, love for God isn’t natural, it’s supernatural. Before you believe on Jesus, you may not even be sure you believe there *is* a God. Or perhaps you believe God exists, but you don’t spend time dwelling on it, or pursuing any kind of relationship w/Him. **But when you’re born again, you’re suddenly, almost intuitively aware of the fact that God is your heavenly Father. There’s relationship involved. You understand, God loves you... & you love God! It’s exciting, it’s exhilarating. But it doesn’t stop there.**

If you love Him who begot (Him who gave you life), you will also love others whom He’s given life as well. & I trust you understand something here but I’m going to say it just to ensure it.

³ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Ga 3:26]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Jn 1:12-13]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁵ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Jn 1:29]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

If you love God, you'll love the children of God. Not just the Christians you know, who are in your church, your denomination... Our common ground doesn't lie in our ethnicity, our native language, our culture, where we're at on the social ladder... or even our personal political persuasion! – *We live in a day of polarizing political positions! & What I'm about to say may shock you, but not every believer carries identical political persuasions! It's not a deal breaker! Politics isn't our common bond! What we share in common is the fact that we've been born again through faith in Jesus, & we share common ground under the Lordship of J.C. **

I would dare to say that outside of J.C. probably 90% of the people in this room would have nothing to do w/each other. Not because you think ill of anyone, but you just wouldn't have anything in common that would've otherwise brought you together. J.C. is our common bond. If you truly believe that Jesus is the Christ, you're going to love God & you're going to love others who've been born again of God as well.

Vs 2-3

*Do you see the full circle rationale that John is employing here? John says, "If you've been born of God, you'll love the *people/children* of God. & This is how you know you love the *children of God, you love God & keep His commandments.*"*

* True faith, a genuine "born again" experience will always result in love for God, love for His people & obedience to His word. These are what we might refer to as "birthmarks" of *every* believer. Love for God, love for God's people, obedience to God's word. *

Love for God will evidence itself in our love for His children (our brothers/sisters in the body of Christ). But what love for His children looks like, how it's demonstrated is through obedience to His word.

John has already told us (back in Ch 4) that if anyone says he loves God, but hates his brother (fellow believer) he's a liar. Because if you don't love your brother, whom you have seen, how then can you love God, whom you have never seen?

Now, John is hitting this principle from the other side. Don't tell me you love others (truly) if you don't love God, & the way your love for God is demonstrated to others is by doing what God tells you to do in His word. – *& We could take some significant time here & really develop this, but I'll just point you to 1 passage in Eph Ch 4. In that Ch alone we're commanded to lead a life of humility, gentleness, kindness, patience toward one another, we're exhorted to keep the spirit of unity in the bond of peace, to use our spiritual gifts to encourage/equip/edify one another.*

We're told to put off lewdness, uncleanness, greediness & deceitful lusts. We're told to speak truth, to be contributors rather than consumers. Paul says that we're to put away lying, corrupt communication, bitterness & malice... & We're to edify one another, forgive one another & be tenderhearted toward one another. – Now, love for God shows itself in love for others, love for others shows itself in obedience to God's Word (I trust you understand). (That's only 1 Ch in your Bible).

Jesus said, **"If you love Me, keep My commandments."**⁶ What we're learning here is that love for God isn't a mushy emotional experience, (though emotions may be involved) it's a moral commitment kept through the power of the Holy Spirit.

& I don't mean to sound harsh but a Christian who doesn't love God or keep His commandment is effectively useless in the body of Christ. I'm not saying that as an individual they have no value. I'm saying they're non-effective, & beyond that they're doing damage, dragging others down in their spiritual growth/development...

If fact, on the basis of everything we're learning, I think we're justified in asking the question, "Are you really even a Christian at all?" To say, "I'm a Christian" doesn't make anyone a Christian. The "Birthmarks" are love for God & love for God's people demonstrated by obedience to His word.

*** "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome."** They're not oppressive, or cruel or grievous... I wrote this down, "Love lightens the load." We're reminded of Jacob falling in love w/Rachel. There he was, he wanted to marry her. But he didn't have any dowry to offer her father Laban. (Dowry was essentially alimony in advance). Laban says, "I'll tell you what, you want to marry my daughter Rachel, you can on this condition. You work for me for 7 yrs w/no pay before you can have her."

Now, how many of you fellas (no hands please ☺) upon seeing your wife & desiring to marry her would've made the deal. Her dad says, "Fine, but work for me for 7 yrs, no pay..." "What! I mean, I love you & all, but there's other fish in the sea!" (Not me, I'd take the deal, & feel that I got the bargain! ☺ But you get my point).

Jacob, he didn't bat an eye, didn't think twice, he took the deal. & We read this, **"So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed only a few days to him because of the love he had for her."**⁷ Love lightens the load...

⁶ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Jn 14:15). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁷ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ge 29:20). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

When you love God, His word isn't heavy, it's not a drudgery, it's a delight. You find yourself echoing the words of the Psalmist, "*I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law* (Your Word) *is within my heart.*"⁸ *

So, this speaks to our attitude toward obedience. * I think we'd all readily agree that disobedience to God's will/word is tragic. But so is reluctant, resentful obedience. Remember what Paul wrote about giving? He said that when it comes to giving to God, our attitude should be, "*not grudgingly or of necessity;* (well, I guess I have to...) *for God loves a cheerful giver.*"⁹ That same mentality applies to our obedience.

I just want to throw this out there, if your mentality is, "Why do I have to do this..." or "Can't I just do that instead?" There's something wrong there. You might want to write it down & look it up later, Ps 139:23-24. *

Now, *religion* will be *incredibly* burdensome. Always trying to please God by crossing this "t" & dotting that "i". Again, Matt 23, the Pharisees would bind heavy burdens, hard to bear & lay them on men's shoulders.

Contrast that w/the words of Jesus. "*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*"¹⁰

* The commandments of God aren't coming from a crusty old man who just can't stand the idea of you having fun. They're coming from a loving/wise Father who wants to see you live the most meaningful, fulfilling, eternally impacting life possible. *

Vs 4-5

Again, John comes full circle. He began by telling us that whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. He rounds out our time by saying, "The one who walks in victory & over comes the world, is the one who believes that Jesus is the Christ." * It's a simple, but powerful principle. If you're born of God, you'll overcome the world. The overcomer isn't some special class of super spiritual Christian. It's the common result *in & reward of every child of God!*

If you're born of God, you'll overcome the world (that system that stands *against* & in hostility *toward* J.C. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, & the pride of life).

⁸ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Ps 40:8]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [2 Co 9:7]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹⁰ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Mt 11:28-30]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Ladies & gentlemen, the thought that anything born of God could be defeated by this world was strange to John and it should be strange to *us*. How could this world in any way, shape or form overcome God or anything (anyone) born of God? It's simply impossible.

"& This is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith." It makes sense doesn't it? If the key to being born of God is to believe on J.C. through faith, then that faith is the key to victory. Not only in that initial, "come-to-the-altar-and-get-saved" way of faith, but that consistently abiding faith, that ongoing reliance and trust in Jesus Christ.

Close How do I overcome the pressures, persuasions & temptations of this world? It's not by confidence in *my own* strength or ability. It's through depending *completely* upon J.C. Through faith in Christ. We abide *in* Him, & gain victory *through* Him. Jesus said, *"In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."*¹¹

So, Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, (recognize your utter/complete dependence upon Him), & you will walk in victory & God will be glorified in your life. Amen? *

Prayer Points:

Father, we thank You the clarity of Your word. May Your fingerprints be readily seen upon our lives. Love for you, love for others, obedience to Your word. We delight to do Your will O God. Be glorified in our lives.

Perhaps you're here & you've not given your life to Christ, you don't know what it means to overcome, you feel like you're constantly *being* overcome. Pressures, temptations always getting the best of you. Forgiveness of sin, victory awaits you in J.C. who died for you that you might have life in Him.

¹¹ [*The New King James Version*](#). (1982). (Jn 16:33). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.