

***THE FIRST LETTER OF JOHN TO THE CHURCH:***

**18. “Assurance of Salvation #5: Victory Over the World System!”**

I John 5:1 – 5

**Introduction:**

We are engaged in a study of the incredible letter John the Apostle, wrote to the churches of Asia Minor where he was living as an Overseer of a number of churches he dearly loved. When we read this letter, we can feel John’s love for the believers and deep desire to protect the flock of God he loved so much from the heretical teachings of the Gnostics!

John wrote this letter with a heart of a sincere pastor who was moved with intense love to **Protect the remaining Flock from the heresies.** John’s first concern is not to refute the false teachers who had split from the church and took nearly half of the church members with them. His first concern is pastoral! He defines his purpose clearly in the body of this wonderful letter.

Listen to his words as he writes to his dearly loved little children in the family of God that was still together after the ugly split! **Joy, Holiness, and Assurance** are what every pastor who has any character and truth about him or her deeply desires for the people who are part of their local fellowship of believers! This letter is a masterpiece in the art of edification of believers!

I John 1:4 “**We are writing these things so that** our joy will be complete.”

I John 2:1 “**My dear children, I am writing this to you so that** you will not sin. But if you do sin, there is someone to plead for you before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who pleases God completely.”

I John 5:13 “**I write this to you who believe in the Son of God, so that** you may know that you have eternal life.”

On or about 100 A.D. meant the church of the Lord Jesus was now 65 years old. There were people in the church who did not experience the early days of fiery love and evangelism that swept thousands of people into the kingdom of God in a short amount of time. Now the church was going through some difficult transitions. It is easy for us to idealize the early church and think what they walked in was so amazingly different than today. But the truth is the letter of I John tells us they faced issues very similar to what we face today!

**John Confronts Spiritual Complacency:** There were people in the church who knew the truth about Jesus and were part of the church because their parents were part of the church. But they did not have the fire of the love of God burning in their hearts. There was a sense of doing church because it is what we have always done, but passionate worship, heartfelt prayer, devotion to do the hard work of praying and evangelism. Not so much!

**John Proclaimed the Call to Be Holy:** Another central theme of the entire New Testament era in the Church of Jesus was the calling of the Lord to walk in purity, holiness of character and

conduct. **The word in the Greek language hagios, means “consecrated, set apart, holy, utterly different than.” The Christian life caused the believers to be very different from the world system they lived in,** and there were people who didn't like or want to be different from the world. They wanted to live like everyone else while claiming to know and walk with Jesus!

**John Confronts those who Thought they were Improving the Church:** The people John is writing to were not trying to destroy the church. In their view they were actually improving the church by making it more intellectually compatible with the ways the people of the world system thought in their day! What a word to the church in North America today, as we see people trying to improve the Gospel by making it more worldly!

I John 4:1 *“Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world.”*

**John Confronts the Heresy that Denied Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that Jesus was the Messiah of God, come to save the world from sins.** I John 2:22, 23 *“And who is the liar? The one who says that Jesus is not the Christ. Such people are antichrists, for they have denied the Father and the Son. Anyone who denies the Son doesn't have the Father either. But anyone who confesses the Son has the Father also.”* John held to his beliefs he heard and saw from the Lord Jesus that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah of God sent into the world to save us, to take away our sins, and make us right with God the Father!

**They denied the Incarnation event of Jesus, claiming that Jesus was merely a human who Seemed to be the Christ.** One of the major teachers of this movement denying the Virgin Birth and incarnation of Jesus the Son of God, and a chief adversary of John, was a man named Cerinthus. Cerinthus taught that the body was evil so Jesus merely seemed to be the Messiah because the Christ could never have inhabited an evil physical body. The only part of our human existence that was good was our spirit-being.

### **I. John's View of the World System of Things:**

I John 2:15 – 17 *“Do not love the world, or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world – the cravings of the sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does – comes not from the Father, but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.”*

In order to get a working definition of what the Bible refers to as “the **World System,**” we must understand the evil being behind it! The world system is under the direction of the one the Lord Jesus just referred to as the “**prince of this world.**” John 14:30, 31 *“I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, but the world must learn that I love the Father and do exactly what my Father commanded me.”*

Paul ties together Satan as the ruler of this kingdom and the world system of things the enemy uses to tempt and entice the heart of the followers of Jesus. Ephesians 2:1, 2 *“As for you, you*

*were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work among those who are disobedient.”*

When the Bible refers to the world system of things is ruled by the enemy Satan, it should not surprise the people of God that we are in a **Hostile Environment**, to faith and personal desire to know and walk with God. We must understand what the Scriptures teach us about the character and values “the world system” and its allure to us. Jesus told us to expect the world to stand in diametric opposition to us as we seek to know and walk with Jesus as our Lord and Master.

John 15:18 – 21 *“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember the words I spoke to you: ‘No servant is greater than his master.’ If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obey my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me.”*

The Bible clearly portrays “the world” as a system of **Ungodly and unspiritual Values and Morals that are all around us**, which are diametrically opposed to the kingdom of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. The Bible calls us as His people to be in the world but not of the world. Jesus asks you and me to be His counter-culture kingdom in this world system.

When Jesus the eternal Son of God stepped out of heaven and came to the earth, He inaugurated a kingdom that has its origins in heaven, and is a demonstration of the **Values**, the **Desires**, and the **Ethics** of heaven here on earth! **The kingdom of God on earth is founded on holy, self-emptying, other-oriented love dwelling in human lives. It is the exact opposite of the ways and the values of this world system of things!**

Set in diametric contrast to this world system of things is the life that Jesus has redeemed, cleansed by His precious blood, a life that has been touched and **Made Alive** by the Spirit is being **Transformed** by the indwelling Spirit of God. II Corinthians 3:17, 18 *“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”*

John 16:33 *“I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart, I have overcome the world.”*

The worldly person looks on at the Spirit-led believer and hates what he sees. He says in his heart, “If Christians would just keep their religion to themselves in the world that would at least be tolerable. But it is the spreading of their views, this phony loving of others, this encouraging people to be like them that can’t be endured. They speak such condemnation to the good ways of the world that they ought not to be tolerated any longer for the way they live their lives.”

Jesus is telling His followers the hatred, the trouble, the hostility, and the persecution they can expect from those who buy into the world system are inevitable for we who love Jesus and seek to honor God in the choices we make in how to live. But Jesus didn’t buy into the world system

of things and how it sought to squeeze the love and the life of God out of His life. Because Jesus overcame the world system, He is able to grant you and me victory over it as well.

## **II. Love the Father, Love the Children:**

I John 5:1, 2 *“Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments.”*

John goes right back to his fundamental truth that he is seeking to ensure that his brothers and sisters in the churches know and understand. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, who came into this world to redeem us, to take away our sins, and to make it possible for us to be the sons and daughters of God. John proclaims the truth with every fiber of his being: *“Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God.”*

John takes the readers into a beautiful human picture of what Christians loving each other deeply looks like so no one can misunderstand the truth. John says in the same way that several human families love each other deeply as friends and fellow-believers, become like family to each other. Then when they begin to have children, the moms and dads who love each other deeply immediately take on deep love for the sons and daughters of their friends they cherish. **That is a natural picture of what Christian Love and fellowship is like. It is like Spiritual Family!**

But then John bumps the thought into the higher and more spiritual plateau. He tells his readers when in fact we have truly believed in Jesus as our Savior and Lord, the spiritual part of us that was dead in transgressions and sins, **our spirit-being, is Recreated, regenerated, Made Alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord!**

The Christian who is born of God or born of the Spirit of God is now the spiritually alive child of the Heavenly Father God. The Christian is duty bound to love God deeply from the heart for this amazing gift of new life, being regenerated by the invasion of the Holy Spirit. That love for God will issue forth in passion to know and walk with God in obedience to His good, pleasing, and perfect will for my life.

But remember, the Christian is regenerated, born into a family of believers! When we are aware that we have been made to be a child of God we have an immediate and deep love connection to our brothers and sisters in Christ who were similarly reborn. As it was with Jesus so it is with us. When Jesus was asked about His mother and brothers who were outside wanting to talk to Him, He responded, Mark 3:35:

*“And who are my mother and my brothers? And looking around at those who sat around him, he said, ‘Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.’”*

What the Christian has come to experience by faith in Jesus Christ is believing in Jesus Christ and being born of God motivates me to spend the rest of my life Loving the Father God who

gave me new life in Christ by His Spirit. And when I truly love God like this I will also choose to love others who are also begotten by God in Christ Jesus by the indwelling Holy Spirit!

### **III. Loving Obedience: Difficult but not a Burden:**

I John 5:3 *“This is love for God: To obey His commands. And His commands are not burdensome.”*

Over and over again in this letter John has given us a pattern of testing the authenticity of our faith relationship with the Lord. He gives us the three tests over and over in the letter: **Believing**, our faith in Jesus, our **Loving** God and each other, and our **Obedience** to God’s revealed will for our lives. He gives us the three tests in chapter 2, again in chapter 3, and here again in chapter 5, we see the three tests: Faith, love and obedience!

How we may discern the truth of our love to God is in our holy obedience: *“When we love God, and keep his commandments,”* 1 John 5:2. Then we truly love God when we keep his commandments: *“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments;”* and the keeping of his commandments requires a spirit that has been born of God and a heart that has been deeply moved, inclined to long to obey God and delighting in obeying Him.

Then John makes the amazing statement for his readers: *“And his commandments are not burdensome,”* 1 John 5:3. He doesn’t mean that obedience to the will of God is easy to accomplish. Christians obeying the command to love each other deeply means that we will have to learn to forgive and release painful experiences that we cause each other, knowingly or unknowingly!

Jesus gave us an amazing contrast when He was talking to us about walking with Him in His burden, He has for us to share with Him. He talked about the Scribes and Pharisees laying heavy burdens on the backs of people, weighing them down with unrealistic legalism and humanly inspired laws that seemed overwhelming while they themselves did nothing to actually help them to carry the load they laid on them!

Jesus contrasted that with His words to His followers, calling us to get into a two-ox yoke with Him, to walk through life in step with Jesus, **that we may carry His Burden With Him**. Jesus said in Matthew 11:28 – 30: *“Come to me all 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.”*

The truth is when we deeply love God, we **Desire** to **Obey** His **will**, we desire to know the burden of Jesus for our lives. The Psalmist says in Psalm 119:31, 32 *“I cling to your testimonies, O Lord; let me not be put to shame! I will run in the way of your commandments when you enlarge my heart.”*

I found this beautiful illustration of love for God and others making the burden easier to bear. A man saw a young man, walking each day down the road to school, carrying a smaller child who was obviously crippled on his back as they went to school. The man said to the boy, “That seems

like quite a burden for you to bear each day as you go to school.” The boy replied, “He is not a burden; he is my little brother!”

#### **IV. Faith that Overcomes the World System:**

I John 5:4, 5 “*for everyone born of God **overcomes the world**. This is the victory that **overcomes the world**, even our faith. Who is it that **overcomes the world**? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*”

The truth is Jesus overcame the presence and the power of the world system of things because He was filled full of the holy, self-emptying, other-oriented love of Heaven while He walked the earth! John describes the way you and I are called to live in **Obedience** to God’s will and **Overcome** the world in our daily lives.

John describes this world-conquering faith as living in the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God believes that Jesus Came from God to be the Savior of the world. It is to believe in the incarnation of Jesus Christ as Word become flesh who came to live among us. If we believe in the incarnation of the Son of God then we believe that God cared so much about us that He shares His life and His victory over the world with us! **Faith that overcomes the world is the deeply held conviction that in Jesus God Cares and God Shares His life with us!**

The one who truly believes in Jesus sees that a wonderful part of the Savior’s work, and Jesus working in us to create our own salvation, means that we have been redeemed and rescued from this malignant world. “*Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world,*” Galatians 1:4.

The one who truly believes in Jesus is the partaker of the Holy Spirit’s work in our hearts creating deeply held passions and desires that could not ever satisfied with this world, passions and desires that look beyond what this world offers, and are striving and pressing toward the world in heaven. “*In this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven,*” II Corinthians 5:2.

Paul aptly describes for us how the Cross of Jesus is our **Victory** over the **World System**. Because Jesus had no worldliness in His life, He was able to take our worldly ways and thinking and put it all to death for us on the Cross. Paul writes to the Galatians, 6:14: “*May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.*”

The one who truly believes in Jesus **has a Defense System to Resist the malignant designs of the world system**. It is no secret that the world system of things is hostile to God and is on the attack against the true followers of Jesus Christ. But it is also true that we are endued with power from on high by the Holy Spirit to face head on and defeat the attacks of this world system because we walk with Jesus Christ by faith!

The one who truly believes in Jesus **possesses and indestructible Hope of the final Victory** – the outcome of this battle is as certain as the truth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God!

***“THE FIRST LETTER OF JOHN TO THE CHURCH:***

18. "Assurance of Salvation #5 – Faith that Overcomes the World!"

I John 5:1 – 5

**Introduction:**

We are in a study of the letter of I John to the churches of Asia Minor, written about AD 100 as John neared the end of his life on earth.

He wrote this letter to **P**\_\_\_\_\_ the remaining **F**\_\_\_\_\_ from the teachings of the heretics. John is writing with the heart of a pastor who loved his people deeply!

John writes about three themes every Jesus-loving pastor longs to see in the lives of the people they love: **J**\_\_\_\_\_, **H**\_\_\_\_\_, and **A**\_\_\_\_\_!

The problems John addressed in this letter are so important to us today!

John confronted the issue of **S**\_\_\_\_\_ **C**\_\_\_\_\_ as people knew truth but didn't have burning hearts of love for God and others!

John proclaimed the **C**\_\_\_\_\_ to be **H**\_\_\_\_\_. The Greek word means "consecrated, set apart for sacred use, utterly different than the world."

John confronts the people who thought they were **I**\_\_\_\_\_ the **C**\_\_\_\_\_ by making it compatible with secular philosophical thinking of the day! This letter speaks profound truth to the church in North America!

John confronts those who denied Jesus was the **M**\_\_\_\_\_ of God, come to save the world from sins. I John 2:22, 23

John confronts those who denied the **I**\_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus coming into the human arena, that He was a human being who **S**\_\_\_\_\_ to be Christ. I John 4:2, 3

**I. John's View of the World System of Things:** I John 2:15 – 17

In order for us to get a working definition of the **W**\_\_\_\_\_ **S**\_\_\_\_\_ we must clearly see the evil that is behind it!

It should not surprise believers in Jesus the world is a **H**\_\_\_\_\_ **E**\_\_\_\_\_ to our faith and our desire to walk with God!

Jesus came into this world to inaugurate a kingdom of the heart that is the exact opposite of the world. His kingdom is a demonstration of the values, desires and ethics of Heaven here on earth. Set in direct opposition to the world, is the one who had been **M**\_\_\_\_\_ **A**\_\_\_\_\_ by and is being **T**\_\_\_\_\_ by the Holy Spirit, II Corinthians 3:17, 18

**II. Love the Father, Love the Children:** I John 5:1, 2

Jesus came into this world to make it possible for us to be the sons and daughters of God.

John uses a human picture of several families who love each other as a picture of Christians loving each other.

We become **S** \_\_\_\_\_ **F** \_\_\_\_\_

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John tells his readers when we truly believe in Jesus, our spirit is **R** \_\_\_\_\_, made alive to God in Christ Jesus. We are called to love God and to love the people God has poured out His love into!

**III. Loving Obedience: Difficult but not a Burden** I John 5:3

John gives us three tests of our spiritual adoption over and over in the letter: **B** \_\_\_\_\_, **L** \_\_\_\_\_, and **O** \_\_\_\_\_. How we discern our love is in our obedience to His will, I John 5:2

John makes the amazing statement: I John 5:3. Jesus gave us a striking contrast between the burdens laid on people by the Scribes and Pharisees and His calling to get into a two-ox-yoke with Him, that we may carry His **B** \_\_\_\_\_ **W** \_\_\_\_\_ Him. Matthew 11:28 – 30

The truth is when we deeply love God from the heart we **D** \_\_\_\_\_ to **O** \_\_\_\_\_ His will for our lives, Psalm 119:31, 32

**IV. Faith that Overcomes the World System:** I John 5:4, 5

John describes the way you and I are called to live in **O** \_\_\_\_\_ to God's will and **O** \_\_\_\_\_ the ways and values of this world.

John describes world-conquering faith in Jesus that overcomes the world as the deeply held conviction; in Jesus God **C** \_\_\_\_\_ and God **S** \_\_\_\_\_

Jesus works in us to create our salvation experience that sets us free from the designs of this world system, how the Cross of Jesus is our **V** \_\_\_\_\_ Galatians 6:14

The one who truly believes has a **D** \_\_\_\_\_ **S** \_\_\_\_\_

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The one who truly believes has an indestructible **H** \_\_\_\_\_ of **V** \_\_\_\_\_

**Concluding Thoughts:**

### Discussion Starter Questions for Home Groups

1. John wrote about three themes in this letter, things that are important to all of us. What are they and why are they important to us today?
2. What is John confronting in this letter as he seeks to protect his flock from heresies? Why is it important for us to know these truths today?
3. How do we discern the difference between two Biblical meanings of the word, “the world:” That God loves the world so much that he sent his Son to be our Savior and the world hating us, being hostile to us?
4. There are striking differences between the ways and the values of this world system and the kingdom of Heaven Jesus came to inaugurate. What are these differences and why are they important for us to know today?
5. John says if we love the father we will love the children. What is his illustration and what point he is making?
6. John describes love for God and believing in Jesus demonstrated by our obedience to His will for our lives. What contrast did Jesus draw concerning burdens from the human and walking in His burden?
7. How would you explain to someone faith that overcomes the world as an assurance of your salvation in Jesus?
8. Read together aloud Jesus’ words in John 15:18 – 27 and discuss insights you have regarding the hostility of the world to the believers in Jesus.
9. Read together aloud John 16:25 – 33 and discuss insights you have regarding how Jesus’ victory over the world system is our victory too.
10. Do you know for certain, with confident assurance that you have been invaded by the Spirit of God? How do you know His salvation has impacted your life? What is the evidence you see?