



*December 5, 2021*

*"His Resources"*

*Sunday school at 9:30, Service at 10:30 with King's Kids.*

**NEWS**

Wednesday Nights at Alêtheia 6:30 🛎 Christmas Party December 10, 6:00 - See Karen Dalton

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776

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Logical loops allow you to jump on \_\_\_\_\_, travel in either \_\_\_\_\_, and flow back to the starting point. Out of all the stops on the loop at hand, which one is experientially obvious?

What cannot be faked is actually \_\_\_\_\_ for another person when you know that you wouldn't do that normally.

A Christian allowing God's love to have His intended \_\_\_\_\_, will tangibly serve others from His abundance, not their own.

Verse 2 has complex hendiadys - can you see it? "When we love God and observe His commandments." Loving God and observing His commandments is a \_\_\_\_\_ thing, not two things.

To love requires being honest. It must be done from His \_\_\_\_\_, for Kingdom purposes, because of your God-informed character, otherwise it will not go well.

Show me a person who is dismissive of wait staff in a restaurant, and I'll show you a...  
There is a world of difference between complaining, and honestly trying to make things \_\_\_\_\_.

*Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.*

*God Bless You!*

**I JOHN 5:3&4**, <sup>3</sup>For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. <sup>4</sup>For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

If you want to show God love, obey Him. Obedience to God is love for God because it proves that we \_\_\_\_\_ Him.

Obedience to rules can be motivated by many things. Obedience to the commandments to love can only be accomplished by \_\_\_\_\_.

“Faith.” It’s the same root word as “Believes” in verse 1. Here it’s the noun πίστις (pēs-tēs), built on the verb πιστεύω (pēs-tü-ō), that gives us that amazing participle πιστεύων (pīs-tü-ōn), defining \_\_\_\_\_ Faith.

The idea here is that the battle to love has already been won by people who have enough \_\_\_\_\_ to act on their faith.

Again, love others by self-sacrificingly serving them out of your own \_\_\_\_\_ and energy and it will not end well.

To grow in your \_\_\_\_\_ with God requires you be stretched. You must step out in faith and do.

The correct amount of doing is probably right on the cusp of becoming \_\_\_\_\_.

You’re not supposed to be an \_\_\_\_\_, it’s okay to make mistakes.

Loving one another means getting with the \_\_\_\_\_ here in concrete ways.

It is once again faith in God’s \_\_\_\_\_ that makes obedience to love a task that is “Not burdensome.” He’s the one doing the lion’s share of the work - if we’re doing it right.

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

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Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_



1 John

Love one  another

**Advent**

**2021**

**2nd Sun.**

*For You  
are my hope,  
O Lord God*

*Psalm 71:5*



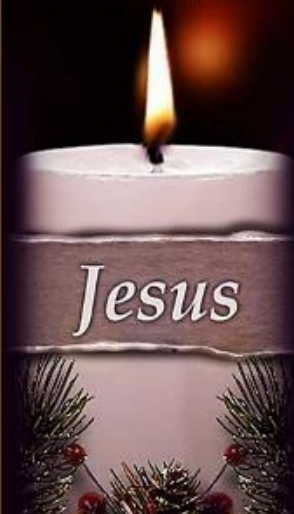
*For God so loved  
the world that  
He gave His only  
begotten Son*

*John 3:16*



*And the Word became  
flesh and dwelt among  
us, and we beheld  
His glory*

*John 1:14*



*And you will have  
joy and gladness,  
and many will  
rejoice at his birth.*

*Luke 1:14*



*"Glory to God in  
the highest, And  
on earth peace,  
goodwill  
toward men!"*

*Luke 1:14*







***“By this we know  
that we love the  
children of God***

***when we love God  
and observe His  
commandments.”***

Last week, we saw the larger logical loop from 4:21-5:2 and then the smaller one in just 5:2. Let me read that single verse again. “By this we know that we love the children of God when we love God and observe His commandments.”

Because it's a loop you can jump on it anywhere and go all the way around, just like a merry go round. Unlike a merry go round, you can go either direction. You can start with the idea brought up in verse 1 about loving the Father's Child. How do I know that I truly love Jesus? Going backwards it's because I love His Father. How do I know that? It's because I have been

born of God. How's that? Because I have Salvific faith, belief, trust in Jesus as the Christ, which is to say as my Lord and Savior - I'm a Christian. How do I know that? Back to the end of 4:21, because I love my brother. I love my fellow Christian whom I know. Why? Because God's Love fills me because I obey His commandment to love.

We could have jumped in anywhere in the loop and we could have gone in either direction from there to get us back to the starting point again. Out of all of those elements along the way, you will find out that there is only one of those things that's easily discoverable in quantifiable fact. Only one of the items is experientially obvious. Can you guess which one?

Loving God, loving His Child Jesus, obeying the commandments to love, even being reborn and accepting Christ are all easily faked. What cannot be faked is actually caring for another human being in your church family when you know that you wouldn't normally. You know that it is out of your human character, but you are supernaturally moved into action and help from your new character

That is the clear confirmation of all of the rest - that's the one thing. Your unnatural service to others motivated by the Holy Spirit. Some people are more agreeable than others. Some folks are so agreeable that we could call them people pleasers. They simply cannot say no, even when they really should.

For such a person to end up being the go-to member of the church where they do 10 times more work than they should is not proof of Christianity, let alone proof of Christian maturity. It's just proof of a defense mechanism that's going to wear them out.

I suppose if you're a self-centered jerk by nature it would be easier to see God's love working through you. The details of loving others depend upon the individual and the circumstances. The bottom line though, is that a Christian allowing God's love to have His intended effect for that love in them, will tangibly serve others from His abundance, not their own.

When that happens it is confirmation that you are His.

Verse 2 that I reread not only stands as part of a bigger loop, as a loop of its own, but is also a relatively

complex hendiadys. Remember that a hendiadys is two descriptors meaning one thing. I could say it is a stick and rudder airplane. Stick and rudder are two things but as a hendiadys I'm using them to describe a single thing. In this case, it's the airplanes handling characteristics.

Usually, a hendiadys is simple like Mark 11:24, where Jesus says, "All things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them". It is not two separate things pray and ask, but a way to add emphasis to the idea of asking in prayer.

Anyway verse 2 is a somewhat complicated example - can you see it? "By this we know that we love the children of God when we love God and observe His commandments." Loving God and observing His commandments is a single thing, not two things. We could rewrite the verse to say that "When we lovingly obey God's commandments to love, we have assurance that our love for our fellow Christians is good and correct and from Him."

To do this loving one another thing requires actually being honest. Honest with God, with others and with

yourself. If you serve in this way without honesty, you are setting yourself up for resentment. That becomes worse than if you'd never obeyed in the first place.

This must be done from His resources, for Kingdom purposes, because of your God-informed character, otherwise it will not go well.



One of the most cringe-worthy things in Christianity for me is when a lovely, somewhat idealistic Christian, comes to me and wants to serve in the church. It causes me a bit of pain because I know that as they put themselves out there, they will be abused by their fellow Christians. Many of the Christians whom I love in



this very church will be ungrateful, they will complain, they will deride, belittle and challenge. The once optimistic volunteer will be hurt and become disillusioned and eventually resentful. The state of the church will be worse in the end.

Many years ago we had two young moms with their own little kids decide to mentor and teach the teen girls of the church. They volunteered time they did not have to try to be positive influences of Christian womanhood to our teen girls. Within weeks the whole thing blew up with complaints. Not from the teachers, not from the girls, not from the pastor, the elders or the congregation in general, but from some of the moms of the teen girls.

It was nonsense and what I'll tell you now, that none of them attend here anymore is that it was driven by jealousy. Jealousy that younger, cooler, women were building better relationships with their daughters than they had.

Look, except for Stacey and me, everyone ministering here is not only a volunteer - someone generously giving of their own time for free - they are also not

trained professionals. They are you, except they are serving you by their choice to serve you. Treat them well, treat them better than well, especially if they're ministering to your children.

Show me a person who is dismissive of wait staff in a restaurant, and I'll show you a pompous toad... And they are being paid to wait on you. Now, our church is doing much better in this regard than we were years ago, but it's never as good as it could be. So be nice, be polite, be grateful and be involved. Join their ranks. It does not have to be the way I described it. In fact, it can be a beautifully wonderful environment where we all serve each other and honor each other for serving.

If you have a bone to chew, you have to complain about something, you can come to the two people being compensated. You can come to Stacey, or me. What I will gently, sweetly, say about that, is if you hurt Stacey, you will see me. This is a house of worship, not McDonalds.

There is a world of difference between complaining, protesting, burning down the community, and honestly trying to make things better. The first is what God calls

backbiting and it is a grievous sin. The second is called loving one another.

Recognize that when you put yourself out there to lovingly serve others here, you will likely encounter difficulty. What makes that so disillusioning is that it comes from your brothers and sisters. It's bad enough to be abused by non-Christians, but by your own family of Believers?

That's why we must all serve, so that we all understand the difficulties and it's why we must honestly assess our own ability to serve perfectly without ever making a mistake, as well as our own generosity, patience, and gratitude towards those serving. Do we always do right? Finally, we must also honestly ensure that we are serving from God's super-overabundant love, not from our own meager resources.

**<sup>3</sup>FOR THIS IS THE LOVE OF GOD, THAT WE KEEP HIS  
COMMANDMENTS; AND HIS COMMANDMENTS ARE  
NOT BURDENSOME.**

**<sup>4</sup>FOR WHATEVER IS BORN OF GOD OVERCOMES  
THE WORLD; AND THIS IS THE VICTORY THAT HAS  
OVERCOME THE WORLD—OUR FAITH.**

I John 5:3&4, <sup>3</sup>For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. <sup>4</sup>For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

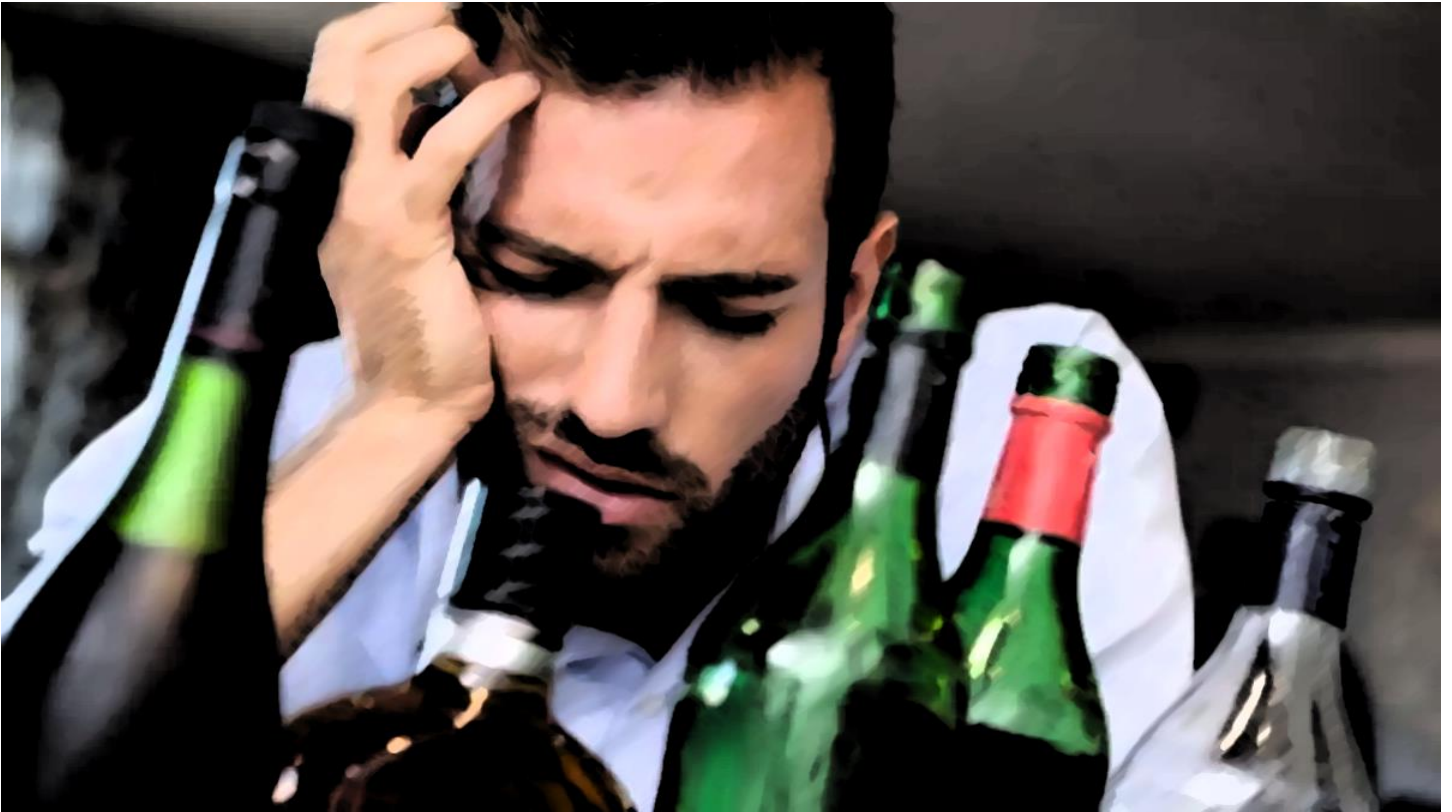
Right back around again. Everything is intertwined. In the continual rearranging of the particulars, we not only get emphasis, but clarification and elucidation. I like the simple way the Reader's Bible puts these 2 verses, <sup>3</sup>Here is what it means to love God. It means that we obey his commands. And his commands are not hard to obey. <sup>4</sup>That's because everyone who is a child of

God has won the battle over the world. Our faith has won the battle for us.

If you want to show God love, obey Him. It's so simple. Obedience to God is love for God because it proves that we trust Him and His actual Command is to love, and the love we are to use can only come from Him. Of course, obedience is love.

Let me attempt to blow your mind. Obedience to rules can be motivated by many things. Fear of consequences, sense of duty, desire to repay, need for acceptance, self-aggrandizing, goodie two-shoe, holier-than-thou, competition - many things can motivate a person to obey rules.





If, as an example, I say the rule is no drunkenness, people can obey that rule for a whole host of reasons that have nothing at all to do with love. But that's not the command - sobriety is the consequence, not the command.

The command is love. Obedience to the commandments to love can only be accomplished by love. In my example, the one who truly loves their Heavenly Father and so loves like their Heavenly Father, would never overindulge in something that destroys their judgment. Most violent crimes, domestic tragedies, and senseless suicides occur when

judgment is impaired by intoxicants. Mature Christians refuse to get drunk because they love God, love others, and even love themselves, more than the temporary euphoria, or escape provided, by drugs and alcohol. Drunkenness is, by definition, immature selfish, and so unloving, overindulgence. It's childish and stupid and it is a sin because it is unloving.

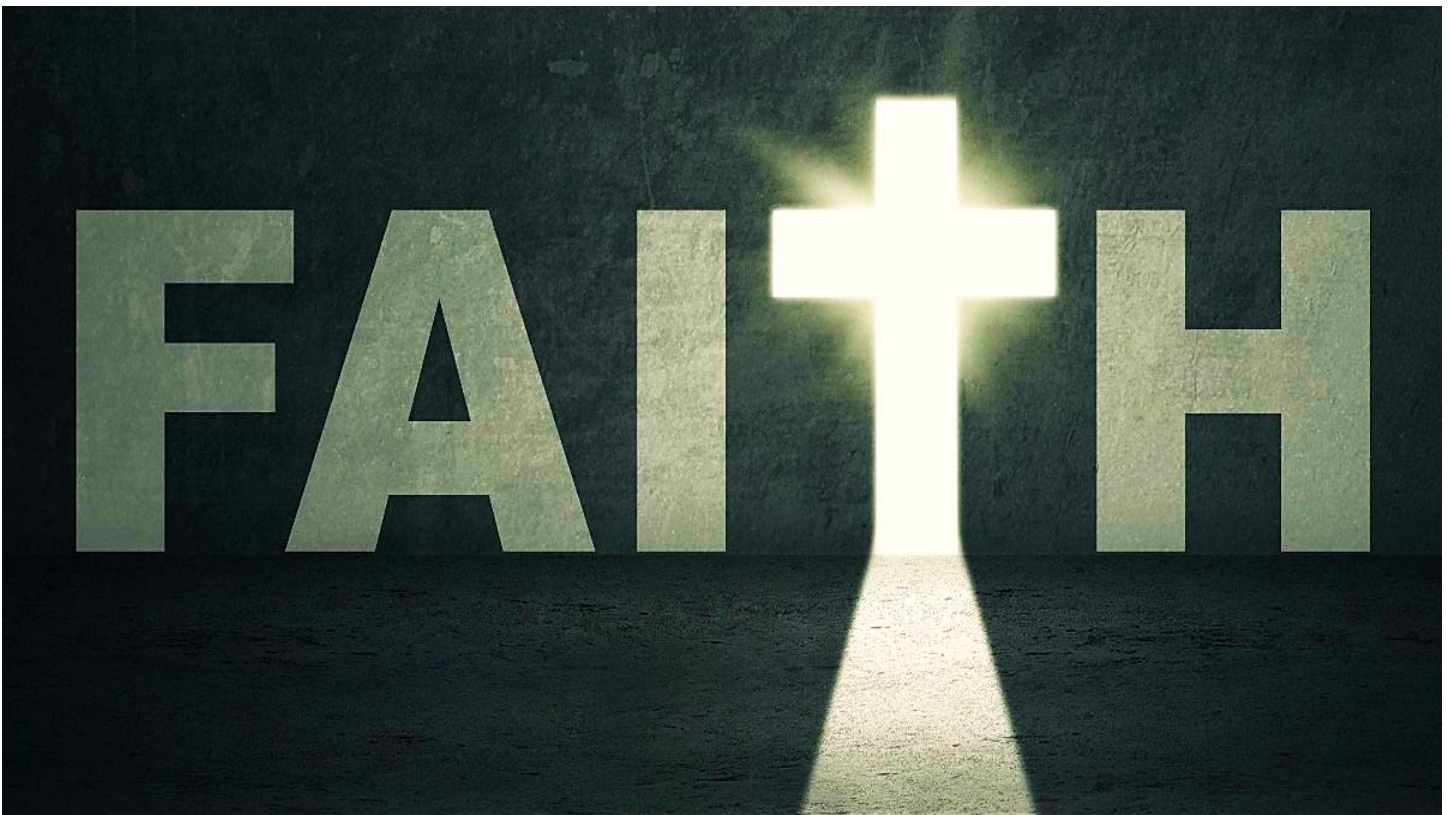


The command is love - we've seen it repeatedly over the last few weeks. Here God says that it's not difficult. What are you kidding? Not difficult? Is John insane? Is God mocking us? The commandments to love "Are not burdensome." "Are not hard to obey"? It is literally the most difficult thing there is to do - to put self aside like



that and self-sacrificingly love others is impossible! True, I agree, but that's why we need to keep reading.

The Battle has already been won. The battle against the old patterns of thinking, speaking and behaving has been won - the enemy has been defeated already by faith.



So now we have a new player. "Faith." Well, what's that all about?

It is precisely the same root word as "Believes" that we talked about extensively last week. Here it's the noun πίστις (pēs-tēs), built on the verb πιστεύω (pēs-tü-ō),

that gives us that amazing participle πιστεύων (pĭs-tü-ōn), defining Salvific Faith. This is really the same thing in a grand sense. Where the idea was introduced in verse 1, it had to do with defining whom we were to love as a brother or sister. It was Salvific Faith. It was a genuine, from the head, into the heart and out from the hands touching another belief.

The idea here is that the battle to love has already been won by people who have enough faith to act on their faith. In other words, if you truly believe that God has you no matter what and that it is His love that simply flows through you, this whole operation becomes far easier.

Again, love others by self-sacrificingly serving them out of your own resources and energy and it will not end well. Recognize yourself as a conduit for God to pour out His love on someone else through you and the entire thing becomes possible. In such a case you've already won the battle because you realize that Jesus has already won the war.

Ultimately, our loving one another proves that we are Christians because the love actually comes from God,

but the way we acquire that ability comes from our trust in Him... That's the faith we're talking about here.

You see the way we can freely give love away, as we saw last week, is to have an assurance that we ourselves will not only never run out of love, but will actually have more for ourselves. That requires trust in God's never-ending supply of love and so in Him Who turns the spigot. Trust in God - faith in His faithfulness - belief in His character. As we've repeatedly seen, trust/faith/belief in God comes from knowing God.

Now that we have clearly stated that it is ultimately faith in God and that enables love and that we seek that faith - that ability to love others by seeking deeper relationship with the Source of that love, let me give a corrective the other direction lest we become focused on our own faith and relationship.

In order to grow in deeper relationship with God, which automatically increases our faith, which enables us to share His love, we must be stretched.



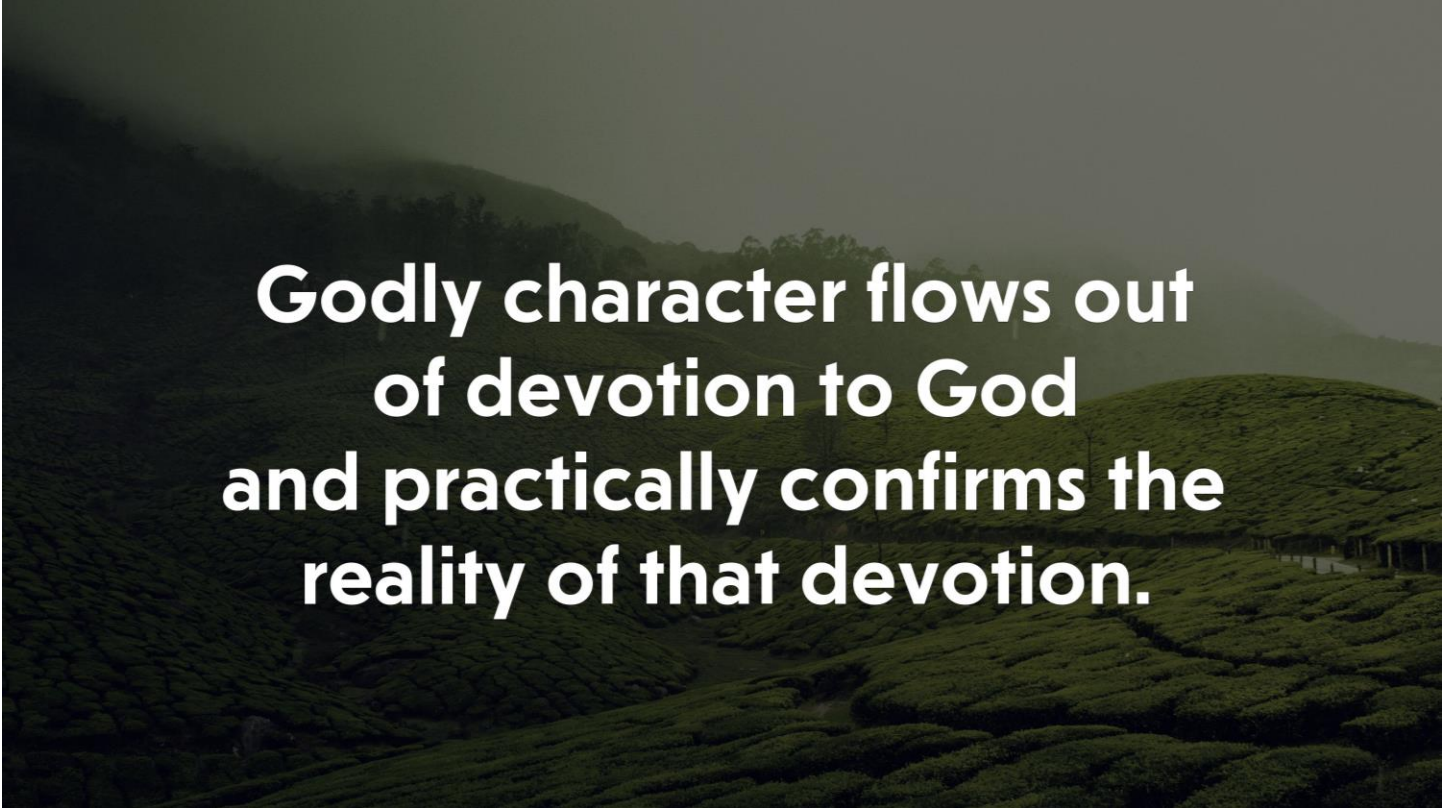


That means you must put this into action. You must step out in faith and do.

You cannot ooze into Christianity. On the one hand, do not do out of your own resources or you will become resentful. On the other hand, if you wait until you have full control over His resources you never will because it requires practice.

The correct amount of doing is probably right on the cusp of becoming resentful. If you start getting irritated back off and seek more alone time with God. Practice saying no politely, but honestly. Don't make up

falsehoods of commission or omission to ease your way out of simply saying I will not at this time. Now, if you are not getting irritated much at all - if you think, we'll this is not too bad - you need to press in and serve more. You're not doing enough.



**Godly character flows out  
of devotion to God  
and practically confirms the  
reality of that devotion.**

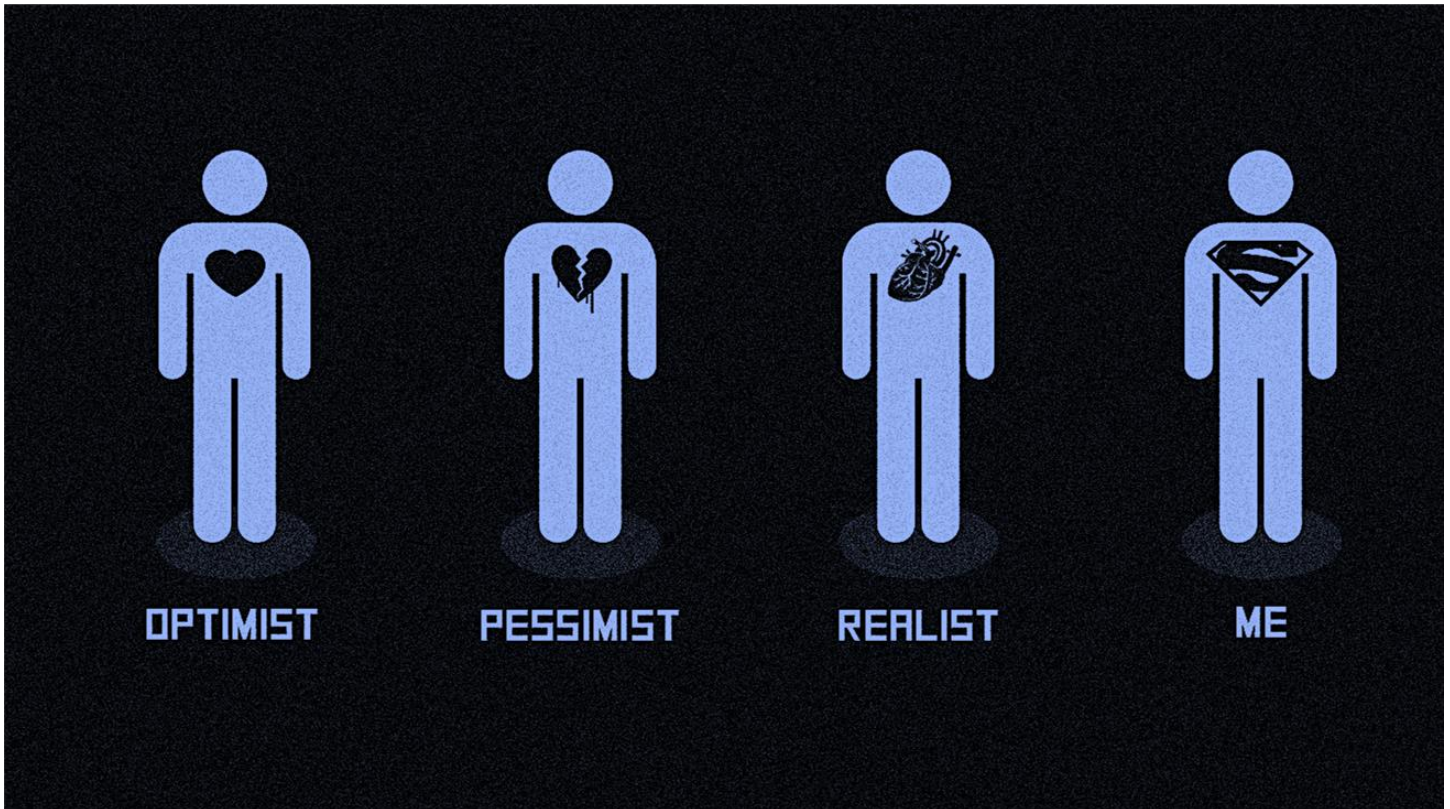
So again, it's about honestly assessing where you're at. Don't serve to please God, don't serve to please me, or anyone else, don't serve to please the recipient of your service and especially don't serve to please yourself. Serve because it's who you are in Christ, and you know that His love is meant to be spent.



“ You make  
**MISTAKES.**  
Mistakes don't  
make you. ”

When you begin moving down this path realize that you're not supposed to be an expert. It's okay to get in over your head, it's okay to under commit, and it's okay to make mistakes. Stand up, brush yourself off, ask for forgiveness with sincere repentance, accept that God has forgiven you fully, and try again.





One last corrective, loving one another does mean getting with the program here in concrete ways. I really love the way Greville Lewis put it in his commentary, “It is easier to be enthusiastic about Humanity with a capital “H” than it is to love individual men and women, especially those who are uninteresting, exasperating, depraved, or otherwise unattractive. Loving everybody in general may be an excuse for loving nobody in particular.”

It is once again faith in God’s goodness that makes obedience to love a task that is “Not burdensome.”

He's the one doing the lion's share of the work - if we're doing it right.



Another way to look at it is found in this sentiment:

“Choose your hard.” The quote is, “Marriage is hard. Divorce is hard. Choose your hard.

Obesity is hard. Being fit is hard. Choose your hard. Being in debt is hard. Being financially disciplined is hard. Choose your hard.

Communication is hard. Not communicating is hard. Choose your hard.

Life will never be easy. It will always be hard. But we can choose our hard. Pick wisely.”





Our son Scotty earned a biological engineering degree from the best school in the state and accepted a Commission in the Air Force. Then he earned his pilot wings flying supersonic razorblades. A few years back I told him that his younger sister and her husband had accumulated enough experience to get on with a commuter airline like SkyWest or Horizon and that in a couple of years there they would move up to the heavy iron at Delta or Alaska. Scotty was somewhat shocked and said, "I thought I was on the fast track." I laughed and said, "No, buddy, you're on the fun track; they're on the fast track." Choose your hard.

To obey God and love is hard, but it's a much better hard than the alternative and so, it is not a burden, but a privilege. That brings us to the Apostle Paul and his Letter to the Romans. In chapter 6 of that Epistle



Paul basically says that Christ has freed us to choose whether we will continue to serve death by remaining in slavery to sin or whether we will live in accordance with our rebirth serving life as slaves to righteousness.



By the time we get to the end of Romans chapter 8, we have, 37But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 38For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

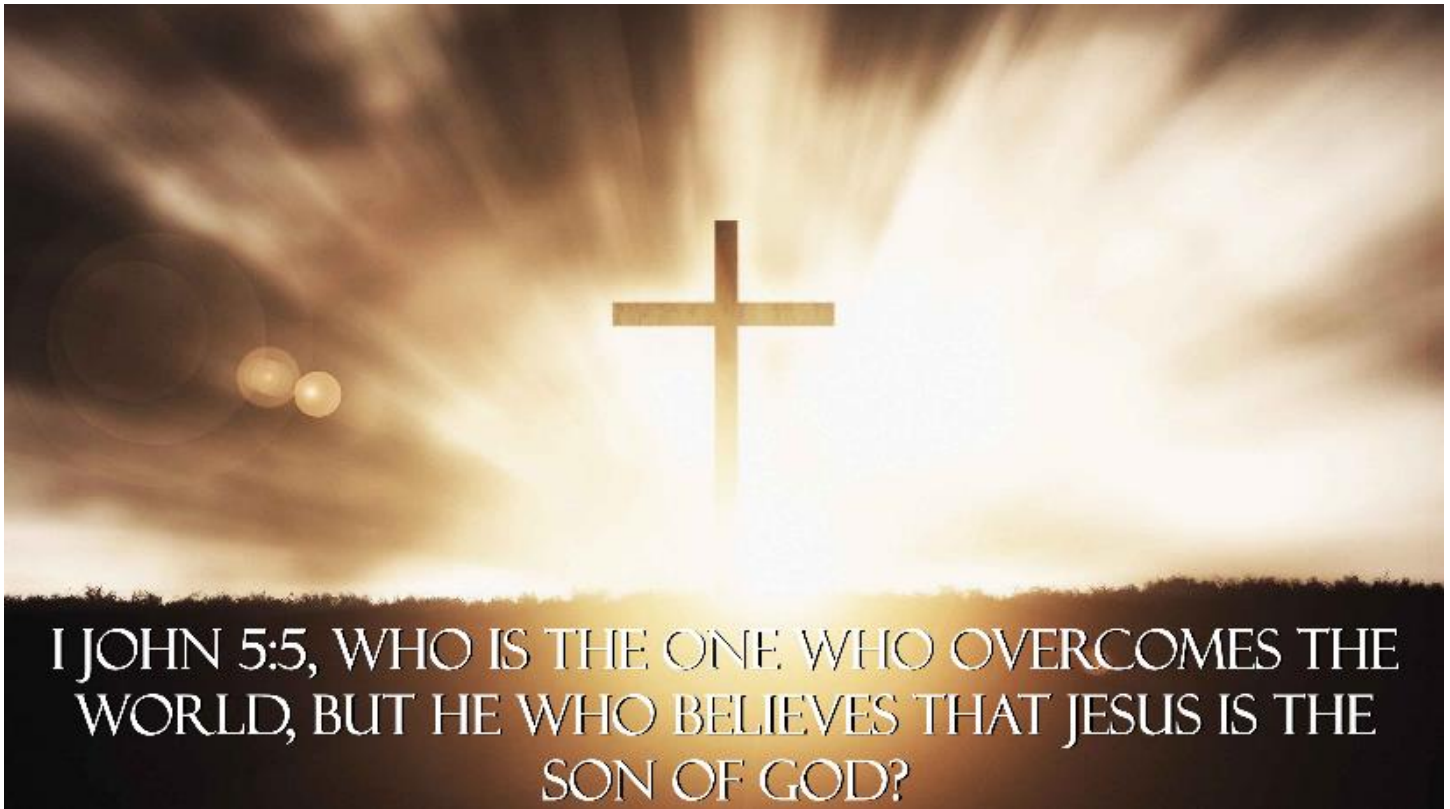
The victory we have is over the world. In this sense it is what is opposed to God’s desire. Remember the Kingdom of Heaven is wherever God’s rule and reign - His desire - is completely unopposed. Our victory is

over that which is opposed to God. It starts with us. It must start with us, with you, with me, with us.

To build His Kingdom is to obey personally regardless of what everyone else is doing. Build His Kingdom by obeying His commandments to love.

That war has been won. It's often hard to see that, but it is over. Private John Williams is generally considered to have been the last soldier killed in the American Civil War. He died 4 days after the South surrendered. The war was over. The North had full victory, but there was still a fair bit of fighting before everyone accepted the outcome. Our situation is somewhat analogous. The enemy hasn't received the word that they have already lost, but we know.

Therefore, we are victors already, that is not in doubt. The only thing in doubt is whether we will act like it or not.



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

We finish today with this. It wraps up the subsection we've been in and opens the next subsection. As such it will give us some new things to chew on next week. For now, we see another logical loop wrapping us back around to the idea of Believing in Jesus. As we saw in chapter 3, verse, 23, "That we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ," as we saw in verse 1 of this chapter, "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God," and now, "He who believes that Jesus is



the Son of God, is the rhetorical answer to Who is the one who overcomes the world”?

At the end of the day, the only thing that matters is Jesus. He is the Savior of the world. No one comes to the Father except through Jesus. That’s what the Bible plainly and unambiguously proclaims.

The question facing mankind is will you accept the Savior God sent or not. The question facing those of us who have already accepted Jesus is will we act like it or not.