

## Overcoming the World

1 John 5:1-5

*“God’s people are identified by many designations in Scripture, including believers (1 Thess. 1:7), Christians (Acts 11:26), children (Matt. 18:3), children of God (John 1:12), children of light (Eph. 5:8), children of promise (Gal. 4:28), sons of the day (1 Thess. 5:5), sons of the kingdom (Matt. 13:38), friends of Jesus Christ (Jn. 15:15), brethren (Matt. 28:10), sheep (Jn. 10:1-16), saints (or holy ones; Acts 9:13), soldiers (Phil. 2:25), witnesses (Heb. 12:1), stewards (1 Peter 4:10), fellow citizens (Eph. 2:19), lights in the world (Phil. 2:15), the elect (Matt. 24:22), the chosen (Matt. 22:14), the called (Rom. 1:6-7), ambassadors of Christ (2 Cor. 5:20), heirs (Rom. 8:17), branches in the vine ((Jn. 15:5), members of the body of Christ (Rom. 12:5), living stones (1 Peter 2:5), the beloved of God (Rom. 1:7), followers of Christ (Mark 9:41), sons of Abraham (Gal. 3:7), disciples (John 15:8), letters of Christ (2 Cor. 3:3), servants of Christ (1 Cor. 7:22), the godly (2 Peter 2:9), people of God (Heb. 4:9), a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9), the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13), vessels for honor (2 Tim. 2:21), the righteous (Matt. 13:43), aliens and strangers (1 Peter 2:11), and members of God’s household (Eph. 2:19).*

*Like a multifaceted diamond, each of those names reveals something of the character, blessings, and privileges of believers. But John reveals yet another title for Christians in this passage: overcomers.” MacArthur*

- The phrase “I identify with” means to recognize, distinguish, categorize, or label oneself as a part of something be it a movement, people group, or a designation of anything that has personal meaning. It has in many ways become a catchphrase that people use today as a designation of whatever they feel they are whether valid or not. For many, truth doesn’t matter, feelings do. To identify as a cat, dog or tree does not make someone a cat, dog, or tree because it’s not based on truth. To say that I am believer means that we identify as Christians. It is a designation based on objective truth, which comes from the Word of God. The only way one can identify as Christian is to be born again, there is no other way. The evidence is seen in the transforming power of a new birth that is shown by the fruit of spiritual regeneration. That is what makes someone a Christian.

**5:1a** Πᾶς (everyone) ὁ πιστεύων (who believes) ὅτι (that) Ἰησοῦς (Jesus) ἐστὶν (is) ὁ Χριστὸς (the Christ), ἐκ (out) τοῦ Θεοῦ (of God) γεγέννηται (is born).

*Christ = "anointed" Christ was [and is] the Messiah, the Son of God.*

- It is no accident that the Bible uses the image of birth in speaking of how God has called men and women into his spiritual family.

**John 3:3** *“I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”*

**John 3:6-7** *Flesh give birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to the spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘you must be born again.’*

- He has given human birth as an illustration of what the new birth means.
- In human birth, there is first a conception where the seed of the father unites with the egg of the mother to begin new life. Then there is a period of gestation to bring about the development of the child in the womb. And finally, there is the actual birth where the first cries of the baby are heard with rejoicing.

**Luke 15:10** *In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”*

*“In the same way, men and women become God’s children when God the Father of his own will takes the seed of his Word and plants it within the heart, causing it to unite with **the ovum** of saving faith.”*  
Boice

**1 Peter 1:23** *For you have been **born again**, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.*

**James 1:18** *He chose to **give us birth (apokyéō)** through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.*

**Literally, to engender or give birth to.** In other words, it is the Father’s choice to beget a child spiritually, as well as on the human level.

**ἀποκυέω apokyéō**, *to bring forth from the womb, give birth to, produce, to generate (figuratively)*  
Strong’s

**John 1:12-13** *Yet to all who received him to those who believed in his name, he gave **the right** to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.*

- The verb **born (gennáō)** in **born of God** in **1 John 5:1** is in the perfect tense. Which means that being born of God is a once and for all event that has **continuing positive consequences**.

**γεννάω gennáō**, *figuratively, to regenerate:—bear, beget, be born, bring forth, conceive, be delivered of, gender, make, spring.* Strong’s

*“In none of the English versions is the full sense of the verse adequately communicated, for the differences in tense are not as striking in English as in Greek. In the Greek text the word “believe” is present tense indicating a present continuing activity. The word “born” (in the phrase ‘born of God,’ also translated ‘is a child of God,’ RSV) is the perfect tense. The perfect tense indicates a past event with continuing consequences. In other words, as Stott writes, ‘Our present, continuing activity of believing is the result, and there the evidence of our past experience of new birth by which we became and remain God’s children.’ We believe and , in fact, do everything else of a spiritual nature precisely because we have first been made alive. If this were not the order, then the tests of life [moral, spiritual, theological] would have no value as indicators that an individual is truly God’s child.”*  
Boice

- Is it possible for a believer to become unborn of God?

**5:1:b** Being born of God means that there are certain characteristics which show we are indeed begot or born of God. The first characteristic is love, the second obedience, and the third faith.

- The first characteristic of being born again is having and showing love.

- Anyone born out of God *has been given* the powerful personality trait or attribute of God's love. John puts emphasis on living agape love one more time, but in the context of being born of God. We were begotten out of love and given his love.
- As soon as our spiritual eyes were opened, we saw and experienced true love for the first time. Notice that being born again and loving God are inseparable. If we are born again then we love God and from that is to flow love for one another.

**1 John 4:7-8** *Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.*

**5:2-3** A second characteristic of being born again is obedience to God's commands. Jesus makes it clear that if we love God, then we will keep His commandments.

- If we don't love one another, then chances are we don't love God and the pattern of holiness he gave us.

**John 14:21** *Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."*

*"Christians frequently attempt to turn love for God into a mushy emotional experience, but John does not allow this in his epistle. Love for the brethren means love that expresses itself with 'actions and in truth'(3:18). Similarly, love for God means love that expresses itself in obedience to his commandments." Boice*

*"Observe translates a present tense form of the verb poieō, which has the connotation of 'to accomplish,' 'to carry out,' or 'to practice.' The present tense indicates that believers' obedience is to be continuous. It will always be the direction, though not the perfection, of their lives. A different word, a form of the verb tēreō, is translated **keep** in verse 3. It has the connotation of keeping watch over, guarding, or preserving. One who truly loves God will view His commandments as precious treasure, to be guarded at all costs (2 Tim. 1:14). Poieō refers to action, tēreō to the heart attitude that prompts obedience." MacArthur*

**2 Tim. 1:14** *By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.*

- God never intended His commandments to be burdensome. What becomes burdensome are the consequences that come from disobeying them, which is what He wants to protect us from.

*"Difficult the commandments of Christ are; burdensome they are not; for Christ never laid a commandment on a man without giving him the strength to carry it; and every commandment that is laid upon us provides another chance to show our love.' Barclay*

**Matthew 11:28-30** *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

**5:4-5** The third characteristic of being born again is seen in having an enduring, uncompromising faith in Christ that **overcomes** *everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of the eyes and the boasting of what he has and does* (1 Jn. 2:16).

- Anyone who has been born out of God has been given the ability and power to **overcome** this evil world system, its sinful pattern of life, and the devil's schemes (Eph. 6:10-12).
- **Overcomer** is a very descriptive term that tells us that being an **overcomer** is a part of our God given nature.
- Twice in **verse 4** and once in **verse 5** believers are identified as those who have **overcome** the world.

**5:4** *for everyone born of God overcomes (nikao is victorious over, conquers, comes off as victorious) the world. This is the victory (nike) that has overcome (nikao is victorious over, conquers) the world, even our faith.*

**“nikaō (verb)**-- to subdue (literally or figuratively):—conquer, overcome, prevail, get the victory.

1. *Of Christ, victorious over all His foes.*

**John 17:33b** *In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*

2. *Of Christians, that **hold fast their faith** even unto death against the power of their foes, and temptations and persecutions.” Strong’s concordance*

**nikē (noun)** – victory

➤ The verb **nikaō** occurs seven times in the first three chapters of the Book of Revelation.

**Rev. 2:7** *Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious (overcomes), I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.*

**Rev. 2:11** *Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who is victorious (overcomes) will not be hurt at all by the second death.*

- The ability to overcome the world is only given to those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ to save them. It is only given to those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

*“Look at any Greek lexicon you like, and you will find that the word [faith or believe] does not merely mean to believe, but to trust, to confide in, to commit to, entrust with, and so forth; the very marrow of the meaning of faith is confidence in, reliance upon.” (Spurgeon)*

*“The new birth—by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone—removes us from the ranks of the world and places us into God’s family. In that new relationship, which comes solely by grace through faith, we have been given the possibility of keeping the commands of God to love. We’ve been equipped with an inner enablement. God not only gives us the commands, but He also works in us to observe them by the power of the Holy Spirit. No wonder Paul can exclaim, ‘Who will separate us from the love of Christ? will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?... But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer [hypernikaō] through Him who loved us’ (Rom. 8:35,37).” Swindoll*