

1 John 5: 1-5 “This Is How We Know”

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. **2** This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. **3** In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, **4** for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. **5** Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

Lets break this down verse by verse.

Verse 1 "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves his child as well."

If you believe that Jesus is Christ, you are God's child!!!

If you love the Father, then you also love Christ. They are one and the same!

Verse 2 "This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out His commands."

We have seen how we prove our love for God to others. We do it by the way we LOVE EACHOTHER. We do it by the way we treat each other and follow the Lord's commands.

John 13: 34

34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

But how do WE know if we truly love others? We prove it to OURSELVES by loving God, and by carrying out His commands.

Actions speak louder than words! It is easy to claim that you love each other, but the challenge comes in proving it.

Mark 12: 30-31

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.[a] 31 The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' [b] There is no commandment greater than these."

Its so simple, its difficult. What does Jesus mean, "As yourself?" In each situation, don't think about how you should best treat that other person. Think about how you would best treat yourself! And do that for the other person.

Here's an example. And this is something that I am definitely guilty of.

How about a friend is over at your house, and suddenly their stomach starts to grumble and they mention how hungry they are. Well, in the back of YOUR mind you're thinking "I got that DiGiornio in the freezer, but I don't wanna get up and cook that now." So

instead, you tell them all the great places that deliver or have carry out near your house. BUT! What would you do if YOU were hungry? YOU WOULD COOK THAT FREAKING PIZZA!

OR!

Lets say a friend calls you, complaining that they are stuck out in the middle of nowhere with no ride! What do you generally do? You help them figure out who can give them a ride, you tell them to look up a taxi company, or find a bus line! Thats nice, you spent time helping them find a solution, right?

What would you do if YOU were stuck in the middle of nowhere with no ride? You call yourself a taxi, or you beg a friend to come and get you. Afterall, when its you who is in the middle of a problem, its not inconvenient. But when its just a friend, its way too inconvenient to call one for them! Well, not anymore!!

Verse 3 and 4 " In fact, this is love for God: to keep His commands. And His commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith."

Okay, here comes the encouraging part! The Father's commands may seem difficult and impossible to fulfill! But THEY ARE NOT BURDENSOME! Because everyone that is born of God, and we know we are born of God if we believe that Jesus is Christ!, is empowered to overcome the world. What empowers us? THE HOLY SPIRIT!

The Gospel is riddled with stories of Christ giving impossible commands.

Matthew 9:6

But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the paralyzed man, "Get up, take your mat and go home." 7 Then the man got up and went home.

Luke 6:6 and 6:10

"On another Sabbath he went into the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was shriveled."

"He looked around at them all, and then said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He did so, and his hand was completely restored."

You wanna talk about difficult or impossible? How about telling a paralyzed man to walk, or a man with a crippled hand to stretch it out?

I have been paralyzed my whole life, and you want me to walk just because YOU say so?

My hand has been deformed and shriveled for years, and you want me to stretch it out just because you say so?

JESUS GAVE THEM A COMMAND THAT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE, PREPOSTEROUS TO THEM, BUT HE EMPOWERED THEM TO FULFILL IT!

Verse 5 "Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God."

So, its as if John decided just to make it obnoxiously clear. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the people that believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Why? Because if you believe that, then you are a child of God. If you are a child of God, you are strengthened by the Holy Spirit to overcome the world and sin!

So lets summarize this real quick.

To prove to others that we love God, we treat each other with love and respect. To prove to ourselves that we love others, we love God and carry out His commands! It is just like any other talk about love...it is a choice! The action comes first. The emotion comes second. Follow God's commands, love the Lord your God with all of you, and love others as you love yourself. THEN your love for the children of God will be formed!

Shannon McKeel, a girl in the youth group, posted something on her blog that peaked my interest.

"I am tired of living day-to-day rather than opportunity-to-opportunity!"

Especially in reference to the thought about carrying out God's commands. It can be so difficult to do this if we look big picture. Thinking about it like, "I have to spend my entire life caring for others and going out of my way!! This is so hard!" can be so discouraging! And that discouragement makes us feel selfish and evil, as if there is something wrong with us!

So rather than setting ourselves up for failure, why not take a different perspective?

"Whatever the next opportunity is that God places in front of me to care for someone else, I am gonna do it! I don't care what it is, or who it is. If its today, if its tomorrow, if its in an hour! I don't care! But the next opportunity, I will fulfill God's command!"

Live out your life opportunity-to-opportunity. Take it one chance at a time, and do the best you can in THIS chance. Don't think too hard, don't look off to the next opportunity while you are still in the middle of this one! Just take them as they come, one by one.

Do the best you can right now.