

Lesson 33- The Perfected Love of God

We are continuing our study of 1 John, and today we will be looking at, **1 John 4:17-5:5**. This is the second part of a larger section that spans from 4:4 – 5:5, with the focus being centered on our Fellowship with God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, rooted in the perfected Love of God. And This large section is bracketed by two verses that talk about our being overcomers in Christ, **1 John 4:4; 5:4-5**. The idea of this section is that those who have Fellowship with God have overcome the evil one and have Eternal Life in Christ Jesus.

So lets begin with verse 17...

<p>17 Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.</p>	<p>¹⁷ ἐν τούτῳ τετελείωται ἡ ἀγάπη, μεθ' ἡμῶν, ἵνα παρρησίαν ἔχωμεν ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς κρίσεως, ὅτι καθὼς ἐκεῖνός ἐστι, καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐσμεν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ.</p>
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The word order of the original Greek is a little different, and it places the phrase ἐν τούτῳ, **in this...** at the beginning of the sentence, linking it to his previous statement in verses 15 and 16. 1 John 4:15-17- “¹⁵ *Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.* ¹⁶ *And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.*”... ¹⁷ **in this, love has been perfected with us.** Therefore, whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, in this, love has been perfected.

The statement, “**has been perfected**” is teteleiotai, τετελείωται, to be brought to its final goal. Love has been brought to its final goal when we accept and receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior. Perfected love is Fellowship with Him, its abiding in Him. This was the mission of Love. Look at 1 John 4:9... “*In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.*” This was the purpose of Love... to reconcile us with God and that purpose is fulfilled when we accept Jesus and have Fellowship with Him.

In 1 John 4:17, John uses two little words that are so staggering... ἐν τούτῳ τετελείωται ἡ ἀγάπη, μεθ' ἡμῶν..., **In this the Love has been brought to its final goal with us.** By adding the words, “with us”, John is focusing on our Fellowship with God. This is what Paul was saying in Ephesians about the body of Christ being the fullness of Him, **Ephesians 1:22-23**. We are the fullness of Him because the fullness of His Love is brought to completion with us. It is Fellowship with us that completes His Love. The Father was working in Christ to reconcile us to Himself by sending His Son to us, **2 Corinthians 5:18-19**. This is the work of Love and it is completed when we receive His Son.

Look at what John says in his gospel, John 1:4-5-⁴ *In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.* ⁵ *And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it,* καταλαμβάνω (didn't receive it down in their heart)... ¹² *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:*

That's how you receive Jesus... you believe in His name.

Let's go back to 1 John 4:17... In this, when we received His Son by confessing and believing in Him... Love has been perfected with us... **so that we might have boldness in the Day of Judgment...**

This word, “**boldness**” is the word parresia, παρρησία, a boldness of speech. John used this same word twice back in **1 John 2:28; 3:21**. We can have confidence and not be shamed away from Him because of the blood of the Lamb cleanses us from all sin. Through Jesus we have a clean conscience that allows us to come boldly to the throne of Grace, **Hebrews 4:16**. This boldness is Fellowship. And it's because of the blood of Jesus that we can have boldness in the Day of Judgement.

There is coming, in the future, a final Judgement on sin. This is the Day of Judgement that John is speaking of. Also known as the Day of the Lord. It is a very common term used throughout Scripture, 2 Peter 3:7, 10-13; Jude 14-15; Isaiah 2:12; 13:6, 9; Jer 46:10; Joel 1:15; Zeph 1:18; also reference Lesson 17 of 1 John study. This Day of Judgement begins the 7-year Tribulation at the end of this age. It is a time of Divine Judgement and Wrath on sin. Namely, a Judgement on all those who have rejected Jesus Christ and His Words of Life.

Judgement is the word krisis, κρίσις and John talks about this Judgement in his gospel, **John 12:44-48**. In John 12:48 he says, “*He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges*, krino, κρίνω, *him—the word that I have spoken will judge*, krino, κρίνω, *him in the last day.*” This is the Day of Judgement that John is describing in 1 John 4:17.

And John uses the same word in John 3:18–19–¹⁸ “*He who believes in Him is not condemned*, krino, κρίνω; *but he who does not believe is condemned*, krino, κρίνω, *already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*” ¹⁹ *And this is the condemnation*, krisis, κρίσις, *the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*”

Romans 8:1 tells us- *There is therefore now no condemnation*, no katakrima, κατάκριμα, (no judgement to hell), *to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

There is no condemnation to the believer because the judgement was placed on Jesus Christ at the cross. And Righteous Judgement passes over all those who are covered by the blood of the Lamb. But for those who do not believe in Jesus, the Words of Life will condemn them because they chose not to accept them.

But we who have accepted the Word of Life; we who have received Jesus, in this, Love has been perfected with us... so that we might have boldness in the Day of Judgement... **because just as He is, so are we in this world**. John wants us to know and have the confidence that God is abiding in us right now. His Love has been perfected in us, and **greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world**, 1 John 4:4.

This sets up the foundation for the remainder of this section through 5:5. Let's look at verse 18...

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

¹⁸ φόβος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ, ἀλλ' ἡ τελεία ἀγάπη ἔξω βάλλει τὸν φόβον, ὅτι ὁ φόβος κόλασιν ἔχει· ὁ δὲ φοβούμενος οὐ τετελείωται ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ.

John is not speaking of the superficial emotion of fear. His thought of Judgement is still carrying through from verse 17. John is speaking of the fear of standing before a Righteous God in the Day of Judgment. Those who are not abiding in God and don't have Fellowship with Him are fearful to stand before Him. And those who fear the Judgement of God are not perfected in love.

There is no fear of condemnation for those who believe in Jesus. When we have a relationship with our Father, we are not afraid of Him. We respect Him and reverence Him, but we don't fear Him. We are not shamed away at His coming, 1 Jn 2:28, but rather we run to His arms crying out, “Abba Father... Daddy!”, Rom 8:15. We yearn for His Fellowship and as we grow in the Grace and knowledge of our Lord, 2 Pet 3:18, and as we comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height and we know the love that God has for us, and as we grow up in all things into Him, Eph 3:18-19; 4:15, we yearn to be with Him. This is perfected Love and this is Fellowship without fear.

John continues with another test of Love with verses **19-20**...

19 We love Him because He first loved us.

¹⁹ ἡμεῖς ἀγαπῶμεν αὐτὸν, ὅτι αὐτὸς πρῶτος ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς.

This is an emphatic we... ἡμεῖς ἀγαπῶμεν. We who abide in God and know God and we whom God's love has been perfected in us... we are continually loving Him because He first loved us. **While we were still sinners Christ died for us**, Romans 5:8.

20 If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

²⁰ εἴ τις εἴπῃ, ὅτι Ἀγαπῶ τὸν Θεόν, καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ μισῇ, ψεύστης ἐστίν· ὁ γὰρ μὴ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ὃν ἑώρακε, τὸν Θεὸν ὃν οὐχ ἑώρακε πῶς δύναται ἀγαπᾶν;

John is referring back to what he said in **1 John 4:12-14**. No one has seen God at any time, but we have seen Him through the manifestation of His Son. Jesus said, “If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father”, Jn 14:9, because

His Son was manifested to us through His Love, 1 Jn 4:9. We can know the Father through His Son, who is also His Word, and we know He abides in us and we in Him through His Spirit whom He has given us, 1 Jn 3:24; 4:13. John is making it clear that we have seen the Father and we know the Father because God is abiding in us. Therefore, going back to verse 20 with that thought... if someone says they love God, but they hate their brother, then they are a liar. Because if you hate your brother, who is born of God, who you can see, you are in essence hating God, because God abides in that brother. Love for one another is loving God because you see God in the Brethren. This is the bond of perfection we have in Love, and it is a result of loving God. This is why we are drawn to love one another, because a true believer is born of God and is a child of God and we have a common love for God.

Take this thought into verse 4:21...

21 And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also. 21 καὶ ταύτην τὴν ἐντολὴν ἔχομεν ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ, ἵνα ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν Θεὸν, ἀγαπᾷ καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ.

Loving God is inseparable from loving each other because when we love one another we are showing our love to God, because God dwells in us and our Brethren. This is the commandment we have from Him... *to believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another*..., and John makes this point in 5:1...

5:1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. 5:1 Πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ Χριστὸς ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ γεγέννηται· καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν γεννήσαντα ἀγαπᾷ καὶ τὸν γεγεννημένον ἐξ αὐτοῦ.

John makes it very clear who is a child of God. Whoever... all who believe. This is universal. Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. And we love the Father because He first loved us and sent His Son to us. And everyone loving the Father, who is the One who begets or gives us our new birth, loves also the one who has been born out from Him. John is simply saying, we love each other because we love God.

5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. 5:2 ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκουμεν ὅτι ἀγαπῶμεν τὰ τέκνα τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὅταν τὸν Θεὸν ἀγαπῶμεν, καὶ τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ τηρῶμεν.

5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. 5:3 αὕτη γάρ ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἵνα τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ τηρῶμεν· καὶ αἱ ἐντολαὶ αὐτοῦ βαρεῖαι οὐκ εἰσὶν.

We love the children of God because we love God and God abides in us. Love for one another and keeping His commandments are simply the fruit of loving God. We do these things because we love God. Jesus said in John 14:15-*“If you love Me, keep My commandments.”* If you love Me, you will abide in Me and you will do those things that please Me.

This is Fellowship, not Legalism. I have seen good teachers turn these words of John into a list of rules to follow and they miss the point of Fellowship completely. Legalism is the farthest thing from John’s mind. He is simply talking about abiding in Him and bearing fruit as a result of being attached to the rich sap of the Vine. Notice what John says in 1 John 5:3... *And His commandments are not burdensome*. This word “burdensome” is *barus*, βαρύς. Jesus uses this same word in *Matthew 23:4* describing the scribes and Pharisees.

John is not giving us a weighty load of rules to follow. He is simply saying, when you love God, you want to do those things that are pleasing in His sight, 1 Jn 3:22. This is holding fast His commandments as precious. It is continually believing in Jesus, 1 Jn 3:23, continually loving one another, 1 Jn 3:23; 4:7, 11-12, 21; 5:1-2, and continually holding fast His Word as precious, 1 Jn 2:3-5. We do this because we love Him.

Then John wraps up this entire section by giving us the assurance that we are overcomers in Christ...

5:4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. 5:4 ὅτι πᾶν τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ νικᾷ τὸν κόσμον· καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ νίκη ἡ νικήσασα τὸν κόσμον, ἡ πίστις ἡμῶν.

5:5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? ⁵ τίς ἐστὶν ὁ νικῶν τὸν κόσμον, εἰ μὴ ὁ πιστεύων ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ;

John says, if you are a child of God, then you have overcome the world. And how do you become a child of God? John just told us in 5:1- *Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.*

Verse 4... **This is the victory that has overcome the world...our faith.** Our action of faith, our “faithing” that Jesus is the Christ gives us the victory. Verse 5... **Who is he who overcomes the world, is it not he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?**

Our victory isn’t by anything that we have done, but only by the saving work of Jesus on the cross. Jesus is our Hero, the captain of our Salvation, Hebrews 2:10, and our faith is what connects us to His saving work.

Being an overcomer is not measured by worldly success. It’s not how prosperous you are in this life, or how much money you have or how nice your house is or any of that. An overcomer is one who has overcome eternal death by receiving Eternal Life in Jesus Christ. That is the definition of an overcomer. John tells us specifically that an overcomer is the one who has overcome the deceptions of the enemy.

1 John 2:14-... *I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one.*

1 John 4:3-4-³ *and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.* ⁴ *You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*

John 16:33- ... *In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*

Revelation 5:1-10- The Lamb of God has overcome!

Revelation 12:11 says, “*they overcame by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives even unto death.*”

Physical death is not defeat. It’s just the path to eternal glory. Our victory is overcoming eternal death through the Eternal Life Jesus gave us in His blood. Eternal Fellowship with Him is the victory. And we apprehend Eternal Life through faith in Jesus Christ. This is the victory that overcomes the world... our faith in Jesus as the Son of God and Savior, and the Father wants nothing more than for us to receive His Son, **Revelation 3:20-21.**

This is what overcoming is: it’s receiving Him; it’s the Love of God perfected with us;
it’s Eternal Fellowship with Him