



Preparing for Small Group: Read the passage below, and answer the following questions.

- (1) What do these verses tell me about God?
 - (2) What do these verses tell me about sinful humanity?
 - (3) What do these verses tell me about Jesus?
 - (4) What does God want me to know?
 - (5) What does God want me to do?
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“Love = Obey”

1 John 5:1-5

Main Idea: By faith, loving God leads to victory in obeying God in your life.

Truths about loving and obeying God:

Loving other believers happens when we love and obey God (1-2).

John continues to hammer the all important theme of love, emphasizing the two sides of the love coin: Love of God and love of other believers. Verse one points to the reality of new life that comes through faith in Jesus Christ, and this new life connects the life of the believer to their heavenly Father as well as to their Father’s family. Love of God and love of other children of God is essential in the life of a believer, and love should be in the result in the heart of a believer when that believer loves and obeys God. That’s the point in verse two. If a believer truly loves God, then his/her love will lead to a desire to please God through obedience. Love and obedience to God will result in love of the children of God in the life of a believer.

1. Why has John spent so much time in this letter discussing the issue of love within the church? Discuss, and then discuss why this is still a critical issue in our church today.
2. Read verse 2. Why does God say that loving and obeying God are the key to “knowing” that you love the children of God?
3. What does it mean to love God? What does it mean to obey God? Why are these two things necessarily connected?

Obeying God is the proof of loving God (3a).

What does it look like to love God? John makes it simple to understand: “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments” (1 Jn. 5:3a). The reality of a believer’s love for God is displayed in the reality of the believer’s obedience to God. If obedience pleases God and disobedience displeases God, then it’s only logical that a believer who loves God would desire to please God and to not displease God. This is the case in human relationships! A husband or wife — if they truly love their spouse — doesn’t seek to displease their spouse; instead, they strive to do things that please their spouse. It’s no different in our relationship with our heavenly Father. If you truly love God, then you’ll strive to please God through obeying God.

1. Examine your life carefully, is there anything in your life that you know isn’t pleasing to God? If so, what is it? Confess to your group, and discuss what you need to do to step in obedience in this area of your life.

2. Do you believe that obedience is directly connected to the reality of love for God in a person's life? Discuss why, or why not. Why do some people struggle with seeing or believing this connection?
3. What are some things that are necessary for obedience?

Obeying God is freeing and not constraining (3b).

From the beginning, Satan's lie has been that God's commandments are too hard and are too harsh in keeping good things from His children. This was the lie in the garden of Eden, and it's the lie still today. Many people think that God's commandments are burdensome and that those who obey His commandments have to miss out on the fun and enjoyment of this life. Nothing could be farther from the truth! In a simple and clear statement, God makes it clear that His commandments aren't hard or heavy. God's commandments are for the good of His children. In fact, for His children who have experienced the blessing of surrender and obedience to God's commandments for their lives, they know that His commandments bring true freedom and joy. His commandments aren't heavy and burdensome. God's commandments don't constrain our ability to enjoy life; rather, they free us to experience true joy in life!

1. Read the second half of verse 3. Discuss what burdensome means.
2. Have you ever thought of God's commandments as burdensome? Why?
3. Do you know anyone who sees God's commandments as burdensome? How can you share this truth from this passage with them? Discuss, pray for them, and make plans to share the glorious truth of the Gospel with them this week.

Faith is the key to victory in loving and obeying God (4-5).

Just because God's commandments aren't burdensome doesn't mean that obeying God's commandments isn't at times difficult. In fact, the world — the world's system that's driven by the enemy and by the flesh — is relentless in its attack on obedience to God. Loving and obeying God in the world is stepping into the spiritual warfare that's serious and that's real. For the believer, God's encouragement is clear: You have victory in the battle through faith in Jesus! The way to victory in loving and obeying God in the life of the believer is to live that life by faith that Jesus is the Son of God. Faith is the key to victory in love and obedience in your life as a follower of Jesus Christ!

1. Read verses 4-5. How many times does God's Word use words related to "victory" or "overcoming?" What does this repetition mean?
2. What does God mean in talking about victory and overcoming?
3. How does God connect faith in Jesus to victory in obedience in the life of a believer? What does faith in action through obedience look like? Why is faith required for obedience?
4. Break into groups of two to four, and spend time praying for God's victory through faith for the glory of God in your lives this week!