



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

Bible Reading: 1 John 5:4-13

- **4** For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. **5** Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?
- **6** This is he who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. **7** For there are three that testify: **8** the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree. **9** If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son. **10** Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son. **11** And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. **12** Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.
- **13** I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

1. Our faith overcomes the world – 5:4-5

- *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.*

a. The world

a. The world of the readers

- It is faith in Jesus as the Son of God that enables believers to overcome the world. In this context the influence of the “world” comes primarily through the secessionists and their false teaching (cf. 5:9-10.) To overcome the world, the readers must persist in their faith in him despite the propaganda of the secessionists.”
Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John* , pp. 187-8

- “Those who have been born of God are enabled to overcome the worldly tendency to satisfy their own sinful cravings (cf. 2:15-17) and to resist the pressure that comes from those of the world, in this case from the secessionists. NIV Zondervan Study Bible
- “By saying, “This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith,” the author defines what it is that enables those born of God to overcome the world. It is their faith.” Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John* , p. 187

b. The world we live in

a. Must be tolerant – “you do you”

- “You do You” is a pervasive saying in the culture today.... As Christians, there are some considerable downfalls to this mentality: For one, it implies that there is not a right or wrong decision to be made.... Moreover, declaring, “you do you,” actually implies that my main concern is me. I am going to do whatever serves me in this moment and you should feel free to do the same for yourself. But Christians are to live in community. When Jesus says, “Love your neighbor as yourself ([Mark 12:31](#)).” He means that as much as we care for ourselves, we should also care for others. The welfare of others is our business. After all, sacrifice is not alien to Christianity: the very foundation of our faith is Jesus’ sacrifice for all of us. “ [Catharine Griffin](#), [blogs.bible.org](#), *Christians and the “you do you” Culture*

b. “You do you” weakens community and leads to foolishness

- *“Indeed, a “you do you” world perpetuates the foolishness that comes when we downplay the collective wisdom of community and champion the autonomy of individuals to do what is right in their own eyes.” Brett McCracken, [crossway.org](#), *Unpacking “you do you.”**

c. It leads to moral decay

- “If “you do you” is as much as we can muster as a moral metric, we set society up to excuse all manner of sin under the banner of “being oneself.” ...For natural born sinners like us—prone to wander, self-deceive, and self-destruct —“you do you” is terrible advice.” Brett McCracken, [crossway.org](#), *Unpacking “you do you.”*

d. It leads to loneliness

- “ [Proverbs 26:12](#) captures why “you do you” leads not to fulfillment, but hopelessness: *“Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.”* Why? Because we are made to grow in interdependent community, sharpened by and accountable to others, not in isolation. We are created to flourish within our Creator’s laws and design, not to make our own rules and re-create ourselves as we wish.” Brett McCracken, [crossway.org](#), *Unpacking “you do you.”*

e. It leads to destruction

- “You’re in control of your own life.” “Self comes first.” “Do your thing, whatever you think is best, whatever is right for you .” These are the messages being preached by the “you do you” culture today—and it’s reflected in the lives of those who follow this principle....This is why *putting self first* seems right to our culture. The idea of not needing to give an account to anyone else for our decisions sounds like freedom, doesn’t it? No rules, no judgment, no morality... But that illusion of freedom is false. It’s the bait the enemy uses to capture souls and keep them from living for Christ and inheriting true life.... How can we walk away from the path of destruction? How can we attain true, eternal life and the pleasures that come from living in God’s perfect will? The answer is simpler than you might think: *“If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it”* ([Matthew 16:25](#)). “Give up your life” for the sake of Christ. Sounds like the total opposite of the “you do you” philosophy, don’t you think?” [Tessa Emily Hall](#), [ibelieve.com](#), *“There Is a Way That Seems Right to Man” – Why ‘You Do You’ Culture Leads to Destruction*

b. What is our faith that overcomes the world?

- *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.*

a. Those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God

b. Jesus Christ came by water **and** blood

a. *6 This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood....*

- “It may be noted that in the Fourth Gospel the expression ‘with [by] water’ ... is used three times, each time in relation to the ministry of John the Baptist (John 1:26, 31, 33). Taking this as a clue, we could say that both the author and the secessionists agreed that Jesus underwent John’s baptism and, we might add, that Jesus was endowed with the Spirit at that time... Understood in this way, the statement that Jesus came ‘by water’ recalls his baptism in water by John and the concomitant endowment with the Spirit that he experienced. His coming by water would then mark the beginning of his ministry as his coming by blood (i.e., his death) marked its end.” Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John* , pp. 188-9
- “This text indicates two things: what was not in dispute (Jesus came ‘by water’), and what was in dispute (Jesus came ‘by water and blood’).” Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John* , p. 188
- “Jesus Christ... is the one who came by water and blood, not by water only, but by water & by blood. ...This is connected to Jesus Christ & his ‘coming’ ...the subject of 1 Jn. 4:2-3 & 2 Jn. 7, & [John’s] strong insistence that Jesus did not come by water alone but by water & blood seems...aimed at someone who denied this. It suggests that *for the secessionists Jesus came ‘in the water,’* whereas John insists Jesus came ‘in water **and** in blood.’ ‘In the water’ ...is...a reference to Jesus’ baptism & suggests that the *secessionists thought the incarnation took place with Jesus’ baptism* ... By contrast.... Jesus came ‘in water & in blood’ is best seen as a *reference to Jesus’ crucifixion & the water & blood* that flowed from Jesus’ side in Jn. 19:34. [John] insists on the significance of Jesus’ death ... against the secessionists.” Paul Trebilco, *Early Christians in Ephesus* ..., p. 290

- “John’s emphasis on not in water alone might then suggest that the significance of Jesus Christ is not in just his earthly life as a teacher and religious leader, but that his death is also significant and relevant.” Karen H Jobes, *Exegetical Commentary on the NT*, p. 218
 - “The author once more affirms that it is the historical Jesus who is the Christ, the Son of God. Although the false teachers may have acknowledged Christ as the Savior, the divine Son of God, they denied his true human existence. ... In this way they could deny that the Christ had ever been truly human and subject to suffering and death. John rightly regards this as a denial of the redemptive activity of God. It was the Son of God who came into the world. It was this same divine Son who was baptized and received the Spirit. It was the Son who, with the Father’s approval and in fulfillment of the Father’s intention, shed his blood on the cross to redeem humanity. God would not be involved in human redemption apart from the Christ’s true humanity, suffering, and dying. Water and blood become, therefore, the key words of the true understanding of the Incarnation. Once the author had arrived at his primary understanding, he likely saw in the incident of [Jn 19:34](#) a divine confirmation of it. He may also have seen the reference to the water in [Jn 4:10, 14](#) and to drinking his blood in [Jn 6:53](#) as confirmation. But these flow from the facts that are the historic base for them all. Jesus, the Son of God, came through the water of baptism. He came also through the Cross. This coming by water and blood is the basis of our salvation.” Expositor’s Bible Commentary (Abridged Edition): New Testament.
 - *The false teachers apparently believe something significant happened to Christ at his baptism (thus he came “by water”) but that his death was not something God was involved in (John thus insists he came by water and blood).* Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart. [How to Read the Bible Book by Book](#) , p. 415
- c. The Spirit testifies to the truth about Jesus – 5:6
- a. **...And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.**
- “John continues to affirm the role of the Spirit in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Here we see the necessity of holding together both the objective, historical event of Jesus’ atoning crucifixion, which is independent of any individual’s opinion about it, and the personal wooing and witness of the Holy Spirit, who applies that atonement to the individual believer.” Karen H Jobes, *Exegetical Commentary on the NT*, p. 217
 - “ The structure of the verse emphasizes that it is the characteristic work of the Holy Spirit to bear witness to the fact that Christ came (see [v. 6a](#)). It is the inward work of the Spirit in the heart of the believers to convict of sin and to open their eyes to see the truth of who Christ is and to understand the meaning of his atoning death for their sins (cf. [5:10](#)). Likewise, the indwelling presence of the Spirit is given to abide in believers and to teach them the truth of God’s Word ([2:27; 4:13](#)). ESV Study Bible
 - “How does the Spirit give witness in the living voice of prophecy? Presumably he does it inwardly and supernaturally. The Spirit opens eyes and ears to perceive what God is declaring through his proclaimed word (cf. [1Co 12:3](#)). He does not declare his own words, but through inward conviction he confirms the proclamation as being indeed the truth (cf. [Ac 5:32](#)). The Spirit provides what humanity is unable to acquire for itself. This witness of the Spirit accompanies every presentation of the word.” Expositor’s Bible Commentary (Abridged Edition): New Testament
- d. The Spirit, the water and the blood all testify the truth concerning Jesus
- “The gospel is not based on merely human testimony. John indicates that there are in fact “three that testify,” namely, the witness of the Spirit (cf. note on [v. 6](#)), the water baptism of Jesus (including the “Spirit descending on him like a dove” and the voice of the Father from heaven; [Mark 1:10–11](#) ; cf. [John 1:32–34](#)), and the blood (which “cleanses us from all unrighteousness”; [1 John 1:7](#)). These three agree, thereby providing persuasive confirmation for believing in Jesus as the “Son of God” ([5:10](#)).” ESV Study Bible
 - “In this passage the author speaks of the faith that overcomes the “world,” a faith in Jesus as the Son of God who “came by water and blood.” To the testimony of the water and the blood is added the testimony of the Spirit and of God himself. All who accept the testimony of God concerning his Son have eternal life, while those who do not accept it do not have eternal life.” Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John* , p 187
2. Those who reject, who do not believe – 5:10b, 12bz
- *10 ... Whoever does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because they have not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. ... 12 ... whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.*
- a. Make God a liar
- “John would not look favorably on the pluralistic, culturally centered view of religious belief that is so popular today, that one’s belief is what is true for you but has no claim on me. Precisely because the apostolic testimony about Jesus is God’s testimony, to hear it and not believe it entails making God a liar.” Karen H Jobes, *Exegetical Commentary on the NT*, p. 224
- b. Do not have the Son
- c. Do not have life
3. Those who accept, who believe – 5:9-13
- a. Accept the objective testimony
- a. The testimony of God

- **9** *If we accept human testimony, God's testimony is greater, because it is God's testimony that he has given about his Son.* **10** *The one who believes in the Son of God has this testimony within himself....* **11** *And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*
 - "Up until this point the author has emphasized God's witness concerning the person (came in the flesh) and work (came by water and blood) of the historical Jesus, but here he emphasizes God's testimony concerning the benefits made available to believers through him. Simply put, what is stressed here is God's testimony concerning the eternal life he gives people "in his Son." Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John* , p 196
 - "The testimony of God is firm, rooted in his character, revealed in his Son, and witnessed by the Spirit, the water, and the blood. John now brings his argument back to address the assurance he wishes his readers to have. God testifies, and he cannot lie, that he offers to all (2:2) what he gave to "us" who have believed his testimony about his Son, namely, the gift of eternal life that is found in no one other than God's Son, Jesus Christ." Karen H Jobes, *Exegetical Commentary on the NT*, p. 225
- b. The testimony of the Spirit
- " [1 John 5:11](#) The testimony supporting faith in Christ is not a vague spiritual inkling but has definite substance. It is the message of Jesus' incarnation, death, and resurrection, through which eternal life has been made available through faith in his Son." ESV Study Bible
 - "John continues to affirm the role of the Spirit in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Here we see the necessity of holding together both the objective, historical event of Jesus' atoning crucifixion, which is independent of any individual's opinion about it, and the personal wooing and witness of the Holy Spirit, who applies that atonement to the individual believer." Karen H Jobes, *Exegetical Commentary on the NT*, p. 217
- b. Have the subjective testimony
- a. Have the testimony within them – v. 10a
- **10** *The one who believes in the Son of God has this testimony within himself....*
 - "The Christian is, by John's definition, one who has heard the NT witness, has recognized it as God's interpretation of the significance of the life and death of Jesus his Son, and **has internalized it as their own belief** ." Karen H Jobes, *Exegetical Commentary on the NT*, p. 224
- c. Have eternal life now
- **11** *And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*
 - "In 1 John eternal life is not an unending extension of life as we know it; rather it is "having" Jesus Christ himself. Eternal life is identified with Jesus Christ. He, in fact, is eternal life (5:20), the eternal life that was with the Father from the beginning (1:2)." Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John* , p 196
 - "In 1 John eternal life almost always refers to a present experience as far as believers are concerned." Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, p 198
 - "In her book *Images of Salvation in the NT* , Brenda Colijn writes that the eternal life the Bible talks about is *not primarily marked by its duration. Eternal life is "qualitatively different from mortal human life. It is 'the life by which God Himself lives.'"*...Which means eternal life isn't just about the future. We can have it now. It's not just about there. We can have it here." John Ortberg, *Eternity is Now in Session* , p. 2
- d. Have the Son of God, have life
- **5:12** *Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.*
 - "Has the Son implies a faith that is evident in love for others and devotion to God. Whoever does not have life is subject to eternal punishment ([John 3:36](#))." ESV Study Bible
- e. Have the assurance that they have eternal life
- **5:13** *I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.*
 - "John summarizes and extends many things already discussed. "Know" occurs seven times in these verses, indicating his focus on the assurance and even certainty of Christian faith and salvation." ESV Study Bible
 - "Belief can be shaky, and John writes to believers who have seen their congregation split (cf. [2:19](#)). That you may know implies that it is possible for Christians to have assurance of salvation." ESV Study Bible
4. What we believe determines how we live
- a. We have the Son, we have life

- b. We know God and the love of God – 1 John 4:7-10
- c. Believers do not practice sin – 1 John 3:6
- d. Believers walk in the light – 1 John 1:7; 2:10
- e. Believers love each other – 1 John 4:7-8
 - a. Sacrifice for others
 - b. Care for and meet other's needs
- f. Believers overcome the world – 1 John 5:4