

The Collaboration of Love and Faith # 16

1 John 5: 1-5

Today we enter the fifth and final chapter of John's first epistle. Consistent with previous teaching, John continues to deal with love, a subject he has spoken of at length. We have considered much concerning our love for the Lord and our love for one another. This is a genuine characteristic that manifests itself in the lives of believers.

In addition to the characteristic of love, John also addresses the faith of believers in this passage. The Bible has much to say about faith. We know that it is impossible to please God without faith, [Hebrews 11:6](#). We also know that faith plays a significant role in salvation. [Eph.2:8 – For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:](#) As we journey through life we must walk by faith rather than by sight, [2 Cor.5:7](#).

This passage deals with the characteristics of love and faith within our lives. If we are all we should be, living according to God's desire and pleasing Him, we will exhibit both love and faith. Paul too understood the connection between faith and love. [1 Cor.13:13 – And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.](#) Let's take a few moments to consider the [certainties](#) John speaks of as we think on: [The Collaboration of Love and Faith](#).

I. Love Motivated by Faith (1-3) – In the opening verses, John discusses the interaction of love and faith within the lives of believers. This plays a significant role in:

A. Our Conversion (1a) – [Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.](#) Again John emphasizes the necessity of faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Savior of men. He spoke of this in [1 John 4:2, and 15](#). Some may find this a bit redundant, but John knew the significance of faith in Christ. It is foundational to salvation. We cannot know Christ as Savior without believing He is the Christ, born of God and come as the Redeemer of men's souls. Salvation is nonexistent apart from faith in Christ.

- Our love for Christ and even one another is certainly motivated by His great love for us. Apart from faith in Christ, one cannot really know, experience, or express love. Faith and love work together at conversion.

B. Our Compassion (1b) – [and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.](#) Here we are reminded again that our faith in Christ affects our love for the brethren. If we genuinely love the One who saved us, then we must also love others who are born again in Christ.

It is impossible to love Jesus and yet not love others. If we love Him, we will love others as well. [1 John 3:14 – We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.](#)

- Faith and love working together is evident in our compassion for one another. It is easy to love the Lord when we pause to consider all He has done for us and the hope we have in Him. However, loving others as we should isn't always that easy. We all have differences of opinion. We all have different desires and wishes. We have different personalities. It is easier to love those who share our views, but we tend to withhold such compassion from those who are different.
- We must remember that it takes each of us working together to accomplish the work we are called to do. Others may not approach it the same as we do. They may not share our passion for a particular area or need, but we must love them as Christ does.

C. Our Conformity (2) – [By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.](#) There is a tendency in each of us to be a bit selfish at times. We like what we like and we want things to go according to our desires. It is not within human nature to submit to the desires of another. The flesh wants to promote itself, even at the expense of others. In ourselves we do not desire to live according to the Word of God, keeping His commandments. The flesh always desires that which is contrary to the spirit.

- Our spiritual lives are a work in progress. We must learn to die to self daily in order to love others as we should and live lives pleasing to the Lord. Honestly we will never achieve such pursuits within our own means. We must have faith in the Lord to deny ourselves and live according to His will. I have never met anyone apart from Christ who willingly denied themselves in an effort to please the Lord. We cannot love our brother as we should apart from faith in Christ. There may be times when unbelievers are compassionate and helpful to others, but godly love is not present in their lives as it is in the lives of believers.

D. Our Continuation (3a) – [For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.](#) Lives submitted to the Lord, lived in light of His great love, are marked by obedience to His commandments. Our love for God is revealed through submissive, obedient lives. The word [keep](#) has the idea of "*watching over or guarding something viewed as great treasure.*" It is easy to talk of our love for the Lord, but the proof is in the pudding. Do our lives reflect our love for Him? Do we live in a way that brings honor to Him?

- As I considered this simple statement I thought of those who have been faithful to Lord throughout life. I thought of those who had served the Lord for many years, nearing the end of the

journey, and they remained committed to Christ. It is one thing to serve the Lord for a short while and quite something else to remain committed a lifetime. It is possible to serve the Lord throughout life, but faith in Him will need to remain strong. Our love for Christ will have to continue to grow if we are to remain committed for the long haul.

E. Our Consolation (3b) – *and his commandments are not grievous*. The world looks at the believer in astonishment and unbelief. They wonder why we would live as we do. They do not view faith as joyful and liberating, but restricting and burdensome. They view the Christian life as being bound by a set of rules that deprive the follower of all joy in life. John declares the commandments of God are not *grievous*; they are not *heavy, burdensome, or the cause of affliction*.

- We know the natural man views them as grievous, but the believer embraces His commandments, viewing them as necessary and beneficial. That is not to say the flesh will never want to rebel against the commandments and desire of God for our lives, but spiritually we know God is working in our lives for our benefit.
- One cannot embrace the commandments and will of God apart from faith in Christ and love for Him. However, when one is born again in Christ, indwelt by the Spirit, there is an understanding of God's great love and His desire for us to be conformed to the image of His Son. It is not a burden to serve the Lord. I do not view Christian service as dreadful, but a genuine joy. We are privileged to have the opportunity to serve the Lord and follow Him.

II. Life Managed in Faith (4-5) – John now shifts his focus to the faith believers possess and the great benefit it has in our lives. He speaks of:

A. Our Vitality (4a) – *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world*. We must bear in mind the context for this epistle. The church was in its infancy. False teachers were abundant. Many of the Jews maintained loyalty to the Old Testament teachings and refused to embrace Christ as the Messiah. The church faced many obstacles and daily struggles. Many were likely tempted to abandon their faith. John encouraged them of the great strength and help they had in the Lord.

- You will have to agree that we too face many struggles and obstacles as well. The faces and philosophies may have changed, but the battle remains largely the same. These are the most difficult times the American church has faced since the Revolution and it is only going to get worse. Society as a whole no longer embraces our faith. There is a push to silence our voice and force us to abandon biblical conviction for political correctness. The very fundamentals of our faith are being challenged daily.

- As difficult as this day is, we can overcome in Christ. He is not surprised by what we face. He remains seated at the right hand of God. He is still sovereign and in charge of this world. We will face opposition and adversity, but we are not defeated. [1 John 4:4 – Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.](#) [Rom.8:35-37 – Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?](#) ^[36] [As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.](#) ^[37] [Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.](#)

B. Our Victory (4b) – [and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.](#) I can imagine the early believers asking John how they were to respond to the difficulties they faced. How will we make it through? Is there any hope for us in such a volatile environment? John encouraged them to persevere through faith in Christ. They would be able to overcome and endure by faith.

- This truth has not changed and it never will. We too face difficulties and it seems at times as if we may lose our religious freedoms. Many worry about being arrested or sued for their faith. I can't tell you these things won't happen. In fact, it is likely they will; and when they do, we must persevere by faith. Whatever we face is no match for the power our Lord possesses. We may be persecuted for our faith, but faith will allow us to rise above in victory! Society may abuse us or even take our lives, but they cannot destroy our faith and our security in Christ.

C. Our Virtue (5) – [Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?](#) We know by reading the prophetic passages of Scripture that things are going to wax worse and worse. We know the stage is being set for the Lord's soon coming. We are not without hope though. Those who have put their faith in Christ, being born again in Him, will overcome. There may be some difficulty along the way, but we will one day enter His presence for eternity!

- The world doesn't share our hope. They do not have the promise of victory over the world. We know the antichrist will come and bring suffering and despair to those who remain upon the earth apart from Christ. I rejoice to know I belong to Him and this creates a greater burden for those who are unsaved. We are secure in Christ and they remain outside His grace.

Conclusion: It is evident that faith and love work together in our lives. Both are vitally important to our Christian lives. Faith motivates love and it manages life. Do you possess faith in Christ? If so, do you exercise it as you should? Is your life lived in order to please the Lord, serving Him and others? If faith is lacking in any way, Christ is the source of faith and answer for the needs we face. Come to Him for the need in your life!