**Grace Group**

**1 John 5:1-5**

**You’re an Overcomer**

If there’s a guarantee I can make, it’s that the title of this Grace Guide would sell books. People love to be affirmed and encouraged. They love to be built up. They love to revel in the power of positivity. But, I’m not going to blow any smoke at you in this guide. I’m not going to tell you that having the right formula will guide you to a life of relative ease. In fact, as I write this, I’m thinking back on a couple of “overcomers” who we saw pass from our fellowship just in this past year. Still yet, we have more “overcomers” who are battling, this very day, debilitating and life-threatening illness.

Whatever chance I had of writing a bestseller based on my title has now gone down the drain. I think it’s hard for those who don’t know the Lord to reckon His truth when He said, “In this world you will have trouble, but fear not for I have overcome the world.” It almost sounds like an oxymoron to couple the word “overcomer” along with trouble or trial or anything that might denote hardship. What we have to remember though, is that our citizenship is not of this world nor is our treasure in this world. To say it a different way, our status as overcomers isn’t based on worldly circumstances. Rather, it is a promise of God to those who have put their trust in Jesus and the end result is eternal life.

Knowing what the end result will be and that the life of the overcomer will be marked by, as we saw on Sunday, faith, love and obedience, let’s zoom in on some verses that deal with obedience and discuss our own reactions to the commands of God and how we keep them.

Consider these verses -[**Psalm 1:2**](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Ps%201.2)**,**[**Psalm 40:8**](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Ps%2040.8)**,**[**Psalm 119:14**](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Ps%20119.14)**,**[**16**](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Ps%20119.16)**,24,70,**[**Psalm 119:77**](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Ps%20119.77)**,**[**Psalm 119:92**](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Ps%20119.92)**,**[**97**](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Ps%20119.97)**,**[**103**](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Ps%20119.103)[**Psalm119:174**](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Ps%20119.174)

**What other verses come to mind when you think about loving God’s law or His commands**?

Steven Cole shares three observations dealing with the task of obedience in the life of the believer:

***First, God’s commandments are not burdensome because we have a new nature that has the power to obey****.* That is the implication of “for” at the beginning of verse 4. (Some versions put a comma or semicolon at the end of 5:3, rather than a period.) God’s commandments are not burdensome because “whatever is born of God overcomes the world.” “Whatever” is a neuter in Greek, which probably focuses on our new nature that overcomes the world. Thus John emphasizes not “the victorious *person*,” but “the victorious *power*.” “It is not the man, but his birth from God, which conquers” - Alfred Plummer.

***Second, God’s commandments are not burdensome because they are the commands of God, not of man.*** The commandments of men are burdensome. Invariably they stem from an attempt to earn standing with God or status before men through a system of human works. The Pharisees had added their commandments to God’s commands, but Jesus called them “heavy burdens” (Matt. 23:4). Even God’s law, apart from the grace of Christ, was a heavy yoke that no one could bear (Acts 15:10; Gal. 5:1). But, God’s commandments come from an all-wise heavenly Father, designed for our good. Our gentle Savior said, “My yoke is easy and My load is light” (Matt. 11:30).

***Third, God’s commandments are not burdensome because they are given and received in the context of love.*** A loving father does not tell his child to stay away from a busy street because he wants to take away his fun, but because he loves him and wants to protect him from injury or death. An immature child may think that his father’s commandment is restrictive, but he needs to trust his father’s love and obey anyway.

An immature believer may view God’s commands as restrictive. But our heavenly Father knows that sin will damage and destroy us. If we have come to know His love in Christ through the new birth, then we must trust His love and obey His commandments. When we see that God’s commands stem from His love for us as His children, they are not burdensome.

**Have you ever found yourself in a place where you did something you were told not to do, only to find out later that command had been given for your own safety and well-being? How did that change your perspective on obedience?**

A September 8, 2000 copy of Our Daily Bread shared this – “When it comes to expressing our feelings, few of us are more honest than children. A father was having a struggle to get his 4-year-old son to obey. When asked why he wouldn’t do as he was told, the boy said, “Daddy, I just don’t *want* to!”

Many of us as Christians are not that honest. We make excuses for not obeying God’s will, when the real reason may be that we just don’t *want* to. For example, when our family lived in West Berlin, I began neglecting Bible reading and prayer. I honestly thought I lacked the time. Later, when we moved to Switzerland, I felt excited, not only because we lived near majestic mountains, but also because of the mountains of time I would have. Yet in spite of more time, I still didn’t read and pray regularly. My real problem was that I simply didn’t want to.

I found the answer to my dilemma in 1 John 5:3, which states, “This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.” As I repented of my long neglect of Him, He filled my empty heart with His forgiving love. Bible reading and prayer became a delight. My renewed love for God made doing His will more desirable than doing my own will.”

**Is there something you know is God’s will for you? Do you love Him enough to desire it and do it?**

*When we, O Lord, would turn aside
From walking in Your way;
Remind us of Your matchless love
That prompts us to obey. —DJD*

**Love is the heart of obedience.**

**What should a believer do when he feels that God’s commandments are burdensome? What steps should he take?**