

CORE COMPETENCIES

Core Beliefs

- Trinity
- **Salvation by Grace**
“I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace through faith in Jesus Christ.”
- Authority of Bible
- Personal God
- Identity in Christ
- Church
- Humanity
- Compassion
- Eternity
- Stewardship

Core Practices

- Worship
- Prayer
- Bible Study
- Single-Mindedness
- Biblical Community
- Spiritual Gifts
- Giving Away My Time
- Giving Away My Money
- Giving Away My Faith
- Giving Away My Life

Core Virtues

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness/Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-Control
- Hope
- Humility

It sure doesn't take much looking around to realize we are living in a world that is not oriented towards God. In many places there's much indifference—people live as if God does not exist or that He simply does not matter in their lives (unless they get in a serious trouble). There are others who are outright hostile to God and to the things of God—sometimes the people of God. And it's into this world that we as followers of Jesus are called to enter and live lives of love and impact for the cause of Christ. If we're not careful, we can get pulled into the world's system and end up more closely resembling the world than resembling Christ. On the other hand, our temptation can be to be overwhelmed by the ugliness and sin around us and to retreat from meaningful interaction with those who are lost and far from God. Thankfully, we're given wonderful truth to cling to in this passage in 1 John— we're not made to simply survive, but to overcome! In Christ, we are given all we need to overcome the world! I urge you to not simply dig into this passage, but to internalize its message. Let it permeate your whole life. The stakes are high, so let's be people of the light!

From One Overcomer to Another,

Richard Gotthardt, Pastor of Spiritual Formation

If you are new to using the Engage: There is a short guide that will give you the “Who, Why, What, and How” of using the *Engage* study Guide. You may access it through the Grace Community Church website at (www.gracecommunityaz.org). (Access the Spiritual Formation Ministry page and click “Resources” on the left panel.)

Review from last week's study of 1 John 4:7-21: We continued to see the connection between a full and proper understanding of who we are as God's beloved children and our ability, through our personal relationship to God, to supernaturally love other people. We saw the necessity that we live in dependence on God as our source of love, our example of love and our power to love. We observed that God's plan includes pouring His love in our hearts and that we in turn will love one another. In doing this, we allow God's love to be manifested through our loving one another, experiencing God abiding in us and having confidence for the future.

Memory Verse for this week

“Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves His child as well.” 1 John 5:1

Day 1 (1 John 5:1-12)

As we begin our study this week in the last chapter of 1 John, take time to thank God for giving you His Word, so you might better know and respond to His love. Thank Him for sending His Son to die for your sins and in so doing to provide the way for you to come into relationship with Him. Thank Him for the presence of His indwelling Spirit who teaches, guides and empowers you to walk in a manner worthy of being called His child.

This week, we will concentrate our time in the first 12 verses of 1 John 5. Read through these verses four times out loud...each time marking in your distinctive way one of the following key words and corresponding pronouns. Allow God's Holy Spirit to reveal His truth to your mind and heart as you read and mark.

God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, know

Add to your lists on the Godhead those truths that are revealed from these verses.

The Greek word for *know* in verse two is *ginosko* and indicates a knowledge that is grounded on personal experience. Add to your list on *know* what this verse promises that you will experience (*know*) and how you can experience (*know*) it. If you have been studying through the book of 1 John with us, many subjects in this passage are ones we have seen before.

By way of personal review, what recurring subjects do you observe? Did you notice any new subjects presented in this passage?

Take time to reflect on how God has revealed Himself to you today. Thank Him for patiently repeating those things He really wants us to know and experience! Ask Him to continue to draw you into a deeper love for Him and more consistent walk of obedience that comes from that love.

Day 2 (1 John 5:1-12, John 16:29-33, Romans 12:21, 1 John 2:13-14, 1 John 4:4, Revelation 12:7-11, Revelation 21:6-8)

Read or recite your memory verse. Begin your study time in prayer to a Heavenly Father who is the source of love. Take time to meditate on the wondrous truth of being His beloved child!

Today as you read through our Scripture passage, there are three key words or phrases that you should mark in unique ways. (If you have been studying and marking throughout 1 John, you may want to verify your previous markings in chapter two in order to be consistent.) Read through the verses three more times, marking the following words or phrases. *Love, commandments, overcomes the world.*

Add to your list on *love* those truths that answer a “who, what, when, why or how” question. As you review all that God has shown you about love so far in the book of 1 John, what is plain to you? Remember the plain thing is the main thing!

From your markings of the word *commandments*, what does 1 John 5:1-12 teach about commandments?

How does 1 John 3:23-24 confirm what you observe in 1 John 5:1-3?

Engaging the Greek

Overcomes, (*nikáō* in the Greek) To be victorious, prevail. Spoken of Jesus or His followers as victorious over the world, evil, and all the adversaries of His kingdom. ¹

First and third occurrences of this verb, in verses 4-5, are in the present tense, indicating a pattern or habit of life. The second usage in verse 4 is in the aorist tense, which indicates the action occurs at one point in time.

World (*kosmos* in the Greek) can be defined as an apt and harmonious arrangement or constitution, order or government. The definition also includes world affairs, the aggregate of things earthly; the whole circle of earthly goods, endowments, riches, advantages, pleasures, etc, which although hollow and frail and fleeting, stir desire, seduce from God and are obstacles to the cause of Christ. ²

¹Zodhiates, S. (2000, c1992, c1993). *The complete word study dictionary : New Testament* (electronic ed.) (G26). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

²Strong, J. (1996). *The exhaustive concordance of the Bible : Showing every word of the test of the common English version of the canonical books, and every occurrence of each word in regular order.* (electronic ed.) (G3306). Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.

Are you one who “overcomes”? In the spaces below, list what you learned about *overcoming the world* by asking the 5 W’s and an H questions.

WHO:

WHAT:

WHEN:

WHERE:

WHY:

HOW:

Read through the following cross-references and record any additional insights in your lists above.

John 16:29-33, Romans 12:21, 1 John 2:13-14, 1 John 4:4, Revelation 12:7-11, Revelation 21:6-8

How are you doing at “overcoming”? As you review how you should be overcoming, are there weaknesses in your armor that the enemy is exploiting? What are they? What steps do you need to take in order to be victorious in your daily battles?

Day 3 (1 John 5:1-12, Matthew 3:13-17, John 19:33-37)

Read or recite your memory verse. Begin your time in His Word once again by coming before Him in humble dependence for understanding, application and the desire and power to walk in obedience to what He reveals to you.

Read through our passage once again, this time marking in a distinctive way the words *testify*, *testifies*, *testimony*, [if you are using an older version of the NAS it may be translated *witness*]. This is the same Greek noun you saw in Revelation 12:11 concerning overcoming by “the word of their *testimony*”, and is a key word repeated in this passage.

Engaging the Greek

3141 The **noun** translated *testify or testifies* is the Greek word *marturia* and means a testifying, what one testifies, i.e. before a judge. It is that which someone witnesses or states concerning a person or thing. It is a declaration by a witness who speaks with the authority of one who knows. This testimony especially concerns Christ and is based upon a personal knowledge of Him.

3140 The **verb** translated *testimony* is the Greek word *martureo* and means to be a witness, to bear witness, to give testimony i.e. to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something, or that he knows it because taught by divine revelation or inspiration. To bear witness, to testify to the truth of what one has seen, heard or knows.

Zodhiates, S. (2000, c1992, c1993). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.) (G26). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

Strong, J. (1996). *The exhaustive concordance of the Bible: Showing every word of the test of the common English version of the canonical books, and every occurrence of each word in regular order.* (electronic ed.) (G3306). Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.

Who is referred to in this passage as giving testimony? What descriptive words are used to distinguish the various credibility levels of testimony? How would you list them in order of credibility (greatest to least)? What are the points of the testimony that is given by God, by the Spirit, the water, and the blood?

According to verse 10, who declares that God is a liar?

What else do verses 11 and 12 say about this person?

Read through the following cross-references and record any additional insights regarding the testimony as described in the 1 John 5 passage.

Matthew 3:13-17:

John 19:33-37:

Look at the results of a Barna Poll below.

- 56% say a good person can earn their way into Heaven
- 44% say if a person does not consciously accept Christ as savior, they will be condemned to Hell
- 44% say all people experience the same outcome after they die, regardless of their religious beliefs
- 34% say there are some sins that God cannot forgive
- 31% believe that Hell is a literal, physical place, 37% say it is separation from God
- 39% say it doesn't matter what faith you embrace because they all teach the same lessons
- 53% contend that if a person is good enough, or does enough good things for other people, they will earn their way into Heaven. One-third of all born again Christians (34%) accept this notion.

Barna Research Group, Ltd., Oxnard, CA ¹

What "testimony" does it give regarding eternal life?

According to the last point, what percentages of "born again Christians" are accepting the testimony of man rather than God?

Whose testimony do you believe?

What is the most profound thing that God has revealed to your mind and heart today? Remember that profound does not have to be difficult to understand!

Day 4 (1 John 5:1-12, John 3:16-18, Romans 5:1-2; 6:23; 10:8-13, Ephesians 2:4-9)

Read or recite your memory verse. As you begin today, thank your Heavenly Father that He has made salvation and the gift of eternal life quite uncomplicated and profound! Thank Him also for not leaving us without a current and living witness inside each of us as His children! Ask Him to continue to witness to you today through His Word and your teacher, the Holy Spirit.

Begin by reading through our core passage. As you are reading, mark each occurrence of the word *believe(s, ed)*. In a similar way, mark the word *faith* in verse 4. Today we will seek to better understand these words as well as the phrases "*has the Son has the life*" and "*does not have the Son of God does not have the life.*"

¹Galaxie Software. (2002; 2002). *10,000 Sermon Illustrations*. Biblical Studies Press.

Specifically, what are we exhorted to believe in this passage?

Engaging the Greek

The verb translated *believes* or *believed* in this passage is from the Greek word *pisteuo*, which comes from the Greek noun *pistis*, which in verse four is translated "*faith*." To *believe* means to think to be true, to be persuaded of, to credit, or place confidence in. It is used in the NT of the conviction and trust to which a man is impelled by a certain inner and higher prerogative and law of soul.

The noun translated *faith* in verse four is the Greek word *pistis*, and in the New Testament means a conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the predominate idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it. It is the conviction that God exists and is the creator and ruler of all things, the provider and bestower of eternal salvation through Christ. A strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through whom we obtain eternal salvation in the kingdom of God.

Zodhiates, S. (2000, c1992, c1993). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.) (G26). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

Strong, J. (1996). *The exhaustive concordance of the Bible: Showing every word of the text of the common English version of the canonical books, and every occurrence of each word in regular order.* (electronic ed.) (G3306). Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.

Keeping in mind what you saw yesterday as the points of testimony of God and the Greek definitions above, state in your own words what it means to believe what we are told to believe in 1 John 5.

Before you stop for the day, look closely at verses 11 and 12. What two things are unquestionably linked together in these verses?

The verb translated "*has*" or "*have*" in verse 12 is the Greek word *echo*. Do you notice a resemblance to an English word? One of the elements of the meaning is to hold one's self to a thing, to lay hold of a thing, to adhere or cling to.² What further insight does that give you into this promise from God?

Read through the following verses and note what they have to say about having Jesus and having eternal life.

John 3:16-18:

Romans 5:1-2:

Romans 6:23:

Romans 10:8-13:

Ephesians 2:4-9:

²Strong, J. (1996). *The exhaustive concordance of the Bible: Showing every word of the text of the common English version of the canonical books, and every occurrence of each word in regular order.* (electronic ed.) (G2192). Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.

Back to 1 John 5:1-12, list everything that you see in these verses as a promise to the one who *has* Jesus. And if this describes you—“rejoice in the Lord, and again I say rejoice!”

Day 5 (1 John 5:1-12)

The Core Competency that we will reflect on this week is the belief in **Salvation by Grace**. Our creed says, “I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace through faith in Jesus Christ.”

Ephesians 2:8,9 *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.”*

The four statements listed below are ones that you can use to assess your own personal Christian experience.

1. I believe that that I will inherit eternal life because of what Jesus has done for me.
2. I believe that nothing I do or have done can earn my salvation.
3. I believe that salvation comes only through Jesus Christ.
4. I believe that people are saved because of what Jesus Christ did, not what they do.

As you take time to reflect on those truths that God has shown you from His Word this week, our core competency, the creed, the supporting Scripture passage, and the personal assessment statements, how is God speaking to your mind and heart this week? How have you been exhorted, corrected, trained in righteousness and equipped for every good work that He calls you to?

How C. S. Spurgeon Found Christ

I thought the sun was blotted out of my sky—that I had so sinned against God that there was no hope for me. I prayed - the Lord knoweth how I prayed—but I never had a glimpse of an answer that I knew of. I searched the Word of God; the promises were more alarming than the threatenings. I read the privileges of the people of God, but with the fullest persuasion they were not for me. The secret of my distress was this: I did not know the gospel. I was in a Christian land; I had Christian parents; but I did not understand the freeness and simplicity of the Gospel.

I knew it was said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,” but I did not know what it was to believe in Christ.

I sometimes think I might have been in darkness and despair now had it not been for the goodness of God in sending a snowstorm one Sunday morning, when I was going to a place of worship. When I could go no further I found a little chapel with fifteen people. The minister did not come that morning because of the snow. A poor man, a shoemaker went into the pulpit to preach.

His text was, “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.” There was, I thought a glimpse of hope for me in his text. He began thus: “My dear friends, this is a very simple text indeed. It says, ‘Look.’ Now that does not take a deal of effort. It isn’t lifting your foot or your finger; it is just ‘look.’ Well, a man need not go to college to learn to look. Anyone can look; a child can look. But this is what the text says. Then it says, ‘Look unto me.’ Many of you are looking to yourselves. No use looking there. You’ll never find comfort in yourself.

Then the good man followed up his text in this way: “Look unto Me; I am sweating great drops of blood. Look unto Me; I am hanging on the Cross. Look! I am dead and buried. Look unto Me; I rise again. Look unto Me; I ascend; I am sitting at the Father’s right hand. Oh, look to me! Look to Me!”

Then He turned his attention to me. He said, “Young man, you look very miserable. And you will always be miserable—in life and in death if you do not obey my text. But if you obey, now, this moment, you will be saved.”

Then he shouted, “Young man, look to Jesus Christ; look NOW!” He made me start in my seat; but I did look to Jesus Christ.

There and then the cloud rolled away, and that moment I saw the sun. I could have risen that moment and sung with the most enthusiastic of them of the precious blood of Christ, and the simple faith which looks alone to Him. Oh, that somebody had told me that before—trust Christ, and you shall be saved!

Source unknown ³

³Galaxie Software. (2002; 2002). *10,000 Sermon Illustrations*. Biblical Studies Press.