

1 John Lesson 11 Articles

Most people in the world do not know what a Christian is or how they can become Christians. They trust in religious works and good intentions, depending on the energy of the flesh. God says that a Christian is someone who has been born again. It is faith in the finished work of Christ that makes a child of disobedience into a child of God (see John 1:12–13; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:3). John uses the phrase “born of God” seven times in his first epistle and describes the “birthmarks of believers”: (1) they practice righteousness, 2:29; (2) they do not practice sin, 3:9; (3) they love other Christians, 4:7; (4) they overcome the world, 5:4; and (5) they keep themselves from Satan, 5:18.¹

Only when we try to obey God through our own power do His commandments feel burdensome. When we rely on His Spirit to enable us to do what we can’t, we find great joy in obedience.²

The word “keep” (vs 3) is different from “observe” in verse 2. Here the term carries with it the idea of an *internal and external* (but not merely outward) obedience. To put it very simply—walk with God in *heart obedience* as well as external conformity. Again the verb is present tense, giving the habitual or ongoing sense.

What are God’s commandments? (Ps. 119:172; 2 Jn 9; Luke 11:28; John 17:17) Love for God and obedience to the Bible are one and the same—not grudging, burdensome obedience, but faith-driven obedience, motivated from love.³

The battle is against worldly thinking. God’s commandments are an unbearable burden to this world we live in. God’s Word becomes a burden to us when we buy into the world’s mindset. Worldly thinking tells us that it is *not* in our best interest and for our ultimate good that we obey God’s Word. But the truth is that God wants only the very best for us.

and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith—

When a person comes to Christ at conversion (through faith), God gives him or her the power to gain victory over the world and its mindset. Faith (submissive trust in Christ) conquers worldly thinking.⁴

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). *Wiersbe’s expository outlines on the New Testament* (pp. 776–777). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

² Stanley, C. F. (2005). *The Charles F. Stanley life principles Bible: New King James Version* (1 Jn 5:3). Nashville, TN: Nelson Bibles.

^{3 4} Kress, E. E. (2002). *Notes for the Study and Exposition of 1st John* (p. 111, 112). The Woodlands, TX: Kress Christian Publications.