



Daily Devotionals

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1 JOHN 5:1-5 FAITH AND LOVE

¹ Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. ² This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. ³ This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, 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 he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

Faith and love are as inseparable in the Christian life as the two sides of the same coin. In our relationship with God, whom we cannot see, we must believe in his revelation of himself before we can love him. That faith in God dictates both our knowledge of his existence and the content of our relationship with him. Without such faith it is impossible to love him, while the only valid expression of that faith is to love him.

Again, when it comes to our response to God, love and faith cannot be separated. Our actions, how we live, betray what we truly believe. When it comes to potential objects of faith we are presented with a choice that is illustrated by the markings on many of our electronic appliances. Often the switch on your coffee maker, sound system or hair dryer will have a curious marking: “0/1.” For those of us who were around for punch cards in the early days of computer programming, that marking is reminiscent of the binomial nature of electronic logic. In programming, each card represented a series of simple decisions answerable by either a “1” that meant “yes,” or a “0” that meant “no,” indicated by a punch or no punch. Likewise, the switch on your appliance gives you only a simple choice: “on” (1) or “off” (0). Faith works like that. When presented with a potential object of faith there is only one choice “yes” (1) or “no” (0). Just as the simple switch on your appliance does not allow you to turn it partially on, to have faith in something is an all-or-nothing phenomenon. And like turning on your appliance, the choice is manifested in an action. In the case of faith, that action is obedience, which is the only appropriate response to belief in the sovereign God. After all, when one is acknowledged as sovereign he is known to be “in charge” of all things, and therefore in the binomial logic of our world and in the face of sovereignty the only choice is obedience or rebellion – “yes” or “no.”

If God has revealed himself as both loving and sovereign, then simple logic dictates that if we believe that then we will respond in love and obedience. In addition, if he reveals that the shape of our obedience to him is to love him and our neighbor, then if we truly have faith in him our lives will be lives of self-giving service – acts of loving obedience. Since Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God’s nature in a form we can understand and with which we can identify – the physical and see-able manifestation of the unseen God – then it follows that both our faith and our love must be predicated on our belief in Jesus Christ as the incarnation of the eternal Son of God.

Protect me, Lord God, from this world of relativity where demands are made that I hold nothing as absolute. Constantly remind me of the Truth. Open my eyes to your reality so that I might see through the distorted thinking of the world around me and stand firm in the faith you have given. In my relationship with you and the world may my response always be simply “yes” or “no.” Amen.

Chuck+

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