Trust in God's Love
1 John 4:13-5:5
SS Lesson for 04/19/2015

Devotional Scripture: Rom 12:9-21

OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW AND KEY VERSE OF THE LESSON
Key Verse: 1 John 5:1
Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary

LESSON INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND
From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

TRUST BY CONFESSING LOVE (1 John 4:13-15)
Confessing love through power of Holy Spirit (13)
Love through the Holy Spirit because God poured out His love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5)
Love through the Holy Spirit because one of the fruit of the Spirit is love (Gal 5:22)
Love through the Holy Spirit through His empowering our inner being (Eph 3:16-17)
Love through the Holy Spirit because He is a Spirit of love (2 Tim 1:7)
Confessing of God's love who sent His son (14)
God's love was manifested by giving His Son so that we could have eternal life (John 3:16)
God's love was demonstrated by His allowing His Son to die for us (Rom 5:8)
God's love and kindness was proven through Jesus becoming our Savior (Titus 3:4)
God's love was made known to us by Jesus (John 17:26)
Confessing Jesus' love as being Son of God (15-16)
Salvation comes through confession of Jesus being the Son of God (Rom 10:9-10)
Confessing Jesus as the Son of God signifies being born of God (1 John 5:1)
Confessing Jesus as the Son of God can only be revealed from God (Matt 16:15-17)
Loving and obeying Jesus' teaching is a form of confessing Jesus as the Son of God (John 14:23-24)

TRUST BY HAVING CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S LOVE (1 John 4:16-21)
Confidence in God's indwelling love (16)
God's indwelling love is proven through obedience (1 John 3:23-24)
God's indwelling love comes through faith (Eph 3:17)
God's indwelling love results in eternal life (Jude 1:21)
God's indwelling love brings spiritual life to the human body (Rom 8:11)
God's indwelling love is provided through the Holy Spirit (2 Tim 1:13-14)
Confidence in God's love because of no fear (17-19)
No fear because through the Holy Spirit we have been freed from slavery of fear (Rom 8:15)
No fear because God is my helper (Heb 13:6)
No fear because God is my refuge and strength (Ps 46:1-3)
No fear of man because man cannot destroy the soul (Matt 10:28-31)
No fear because our trust is in God (Heb 2:13-16)
Confidence in God's love by loving our brothers (20-21)
Loving our brothers is the greatest commandment (Mark 12:28-31)
Loving our brothers comes from a pure heart, sincere faith and good conscience (1 Tim 1:5)
Loving our brothers should be the only debt we should have (Rom 13:8)
Loving our brothers sums up the Law (Matt 7:12)
Loving our brothers in everything we do (1 Cor 16:14)

TRUST IN GOD'S WAY TO LOVE (1 John 5:1-3)
Love through a foundation of faith (1)
Foundation of faith because it is through faith we become the loving children of God (John 1:11-13)
Foundation of faith because it is through faith that we know the God of love (1 John 4:7-8)
Foundation of faith because it is through faith we can say Jesus is our loving Lord (Rom 10:6-10)
Foundation of faith because it is through faith that God lives in us to love one another (1 John 4:12-14)

Love through a foundation of obedience (2-3)
Foundation of obedience because it is through obedience that God has promised His faithfulness (Deut 7:9)
Foundation of obedience because it is through obedience that God has a covenant of love with us (Dan 9:4)
Foundation of obedience because it is through obedience that we are part of God's family (Matt 12:46-50)
Foundation of obedience because it is through obedience that proves our love of God (John 14:15)
Foundation of obedience because it is through obedience that we walk in love (2 John 1:6)

TRUST IN THE VICTORY OF GOD’S LOVE (1 JOHN 5:4-5)

Victory through overcoming the world (4)
Overcoming the world by being more than conquerors (Rom 8:37-39)
Overcoming the world through victory over death (1 Cor 15:56-57)
Overcoming the world because God, who is in us, is greater than the one in the world (1 John 4:4)
Overcoming the world so that the second death will not hurt us (Rev 2:11)

Victory through an overcoming Savior (5)
We have an overcoming Savior because Jesus overcame the world (John 16:33)
We have an overcoming Savior because Jesus has driven out the prince of this world (John 12:31-32)
We have an overcoming Savior because Jesus is preparing a place for us in heaven (John 14:1-3)
We have an overcoming Savior because Satan is under the feet of Jesus (1 Cor 15:26-27)
We have an overcoming Savior because Jesus disarmed powers and authorities through the cross (Col 2:15)
We have an overcoming Savior because on one can take Jesus' life from Him (John 10:16-18)
We have an overcoming Savior because no one has power over Jesus (John 19:10-11)

CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

Commentary Thoughts from Steven J. Cole
Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary
Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator
Introduction

Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson reminds us that we should always Trust in God’s Love. The study's aim is to grasp and understand the depth of God’s love and how it is demonstrated through the loving expressions of believers. The study’s application is to demonstrate consistent love to God and to others. (Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary).

Key Verse: 1 John 5:1

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him.

Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary

The high watermark of the epistle was reached in 4:11-19. But the experience described there, with its astounding concept of boldness on the day of judgment, can be reached only in a most practical way. In his conclusion, John crystallized what he meant by love and how that love can be realized in one’s life. The brief but climactic statement of 4:19 mentioned love for God for the first time (following most Gr. mss.). But a claim to love God cannot be substituted for love for other believers. This furnished John with his point of departure.

Anyone who claims to love God, yet hates his brother makes a false claim: he is a liar. John often pointed up false claims by using the word “liar”: 1:10; 2:4, 22; 4:20; 5:10 (cf. “lie” in 1:6). Love for the unseen God (cf. 4:12) can only be concretely expressed by love for one’s visible Christian brother. Furthermore, God’s command (v. 21; cf. 2:3; 3:23-24; 5:3) has joined together the two kinds of love—love for God and love for one’s brother.

If one asks who his Christian brother or sister is, the answer is that everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God (cf. “born of God” in 3:9; 4:7; 5:4, 18). Whether or not a believer exhibits an admirable life, he should be an object of his fellow Christian’s love. This love does not spring from something lovable in the person himself, but from his paternity, since everyone who loves the Father loves His child as well. Moreover, love for God’s children is not mere sentiment or verbal expression (cf. 3:18), but is inseparable from loving God and obeying His commands (5:2; cf. 2:3; 3:22, 24; 5:3). If a further question is asked about what it means to love... God, the answer is, to obey His commands. Thus the apostle, by this series of statements, reduces love for God and one’s fellow Christians to its fundamental character. A person who obeys God’s commands is doing what is right, both toward God and toward his fellow believers and is thus loving both God and them. But it must be remembered that this includes the willingness to sacrifice for one’s brother (cf. 3:16-17).

If love for God and one’s fellow Christians is at its core obedience to God’s commands, how can these be carried out? Are they beyond the capacity of a believer? In this section John pointed to faith as the secret of a victorious, obedient life. As a matter of fact, God’s commands are not burdensome (cf. Matt. 11:30). This is because the principle of victory resides in everyone born of God. Every such person has already overcome the world (cf. 1 John 4:4). His faith in Christ, by which he was regenerated, constitutes a victory over the world system which is satanically blinded to the gospel (cf. 2 Cor. 4:3-4). Who is it then that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. With these words, the writer affirmed that a believer is a world-conqueror by means of his faith in Christ. This suggests that such faith is the secret of his continuing victory and, for that reason, obedience to God’s commands need not be burdensome. But the object of this faith must always be the One who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. It is simplest to take the term “water” as a reference to the baptism of Jesus by which His public ministry was initiated (Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22). “Blood” would then refer to His death, by which His earthly work was terminated. John’s insistence that He did not come by water only,
but by water and blood, suggests that he was refuting a false notion of the type held by Cerinthus (see Introduction). Cerinthus taught that the divine Christ descended on the man Jesus at His baptism and left Him before His crucifixion. Thus he denied that one Person, Jesus Christ, came by both water and blood. Cerinthus was doubtless not alone in such views, which John regarded as utterly false and contrary to the true testimony of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and the three are in agreement. The Spirit’s witness may be thought of as coming through the prophets (including John the Baptist). The Spirit’s witness, then, was augmented by the historical realities involved in “the water” and “the blood.” Both the baptism and the crucifixion of Jesus are strongly attested historical facts (cf. John 1:32-34; 19:33-37). All three witnesses (“water” and “blood” are personified) “are in agreement” that a single divine Person, Jesus Christ, was involved in these events. One therefore has no reason for not accepting God’s testimony to the person of Christ. If man’s testimony can be accepted when adequately attested (Deut. 19:15), God’s testimony, being greater, ought also be accepted. The NIV’s words, because it is the testimony of God, which He has given about His Son, are perhaps better taken as commencing a new thought which involves a slight ellipsis. It might be paraphrased “Here then is God’s testimony about His Son (which we ought to accept because of its greatness).”

But before specifying the content of God’s testimony (which is done in 1 John 5:11-12), John paused parentheticaly to remark that accepting this testimony internalizes it for the one who believes. Each believer has God’s truth in his heart. By contrast, anyone who disbelieves God has made Him out to be a liar (cf. 1:10). For John there was no middle ground, no suspension of opinion. One either believes or he impugns God’s veracity. Having said this, John returned to the content of the testimony, which is that God has given us eternal life (cf. 5:13, 20) and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. In the light of 2:25-26, John’s statement of God’s testimony is probably directed against a claim by some antichrists that the readers did not really have eternal life through God’s Son. But God has directly affirmed that eternal life is precisely what He has given in His Son. To deny this is to call Him a liar. John wrote these things... so that his believing readers would know that they had eternal life (cf. vv. 12, 20). The words “these things” are often wrongly taken to refer to the whole epistle. But similar expressions in 2:1, 26 refer to the immediately preceding material and the same is true here. What John had just written about God’s testimony (5:9-12) aims to assure his readers that, despite anything the antichrists have said, believers do indeed possess eternal life. It may be pointed out, in fact, that the assurance of one’s salvation always rests fundamentally and sufficiently on the direct promises that God makes to that believer. In other words, one’s assurance rests on the testimony of God. After the words that you have eternal life, most Greek manuscripts add the words found in the KJV: “and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” Perhaps this statement seemed redundant to some early scribe or editor and for that reason was eliminated from his manuscript. But it actually prepares the ground for the discussion about prayer which follows by inviting continued faith in God’s Son on the part of those who already have received eternal life through Him. Prayer too is an expression of trust in the name of God’s Son (see comments on 3:23). One who believes in the name of Jesus Christ has an assurance (parrēsia) in approaching God in prayer (cf. 3:21). Requests made in accordance with God’s will are heard by Him and a believer can be certain of receiving answers to them. Naturally, Christians today discern God’s will through the Scriptures and ask accordingly. But the unit of thought that commences with 5:3b has focused on the truth that God’s commands are not a burden because faith in God’s Son is the secret of spiritual victory over the world. In this context, then, it is natural to suppose that John was thinking especially, though not exclusively, of a Christian’s right to ask God for help in keeping His commands. That kind of prayer is transparently according to His will. Thus in victorious living a Christian is relieved of any burden through prayer that is based on faith in the name of God’s Son.
Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

One of the most memorable scenes in theater comes from William Shakespeare’s tragic drama Julius Caesar. In the climactic scene of Caesar’s murder by a gang of Roman senators, the final blade is plunged into him by Marcus Brutus, a person whom Caesar believed to be his friend. As Caesar suffers this personal betrayal, he speaks these famous words to Brutus: “Et tu, Brute?” That phrase means, “You too, Brutus?” Shakespeare, the dramatic master, used the Latin wording to transport the English-speaking audience back to Latin-speaking Rome. The fuller, implied meaning is something like, “You, my friend Brutus—have you turned traitor as well?” There seems to be a regular parade of public figures in the news who have betrayed the public trust in one way or another. In my blog, I often comment on these failures under the title, “Et tu, ______?” as I fill in the blank with the name of the latest offender. We are shown all too often whom we cannot trust. Whether they exhibit dishonesty, pride, or sloth, our heroes often have feet of clay. Whom can we trust in a world of Brutuses? Where can we place our trust and not worry about having an Et tu? moment? (Compare Psalm 41:9.) Christian faith is a system of trust, and today’s lesson shows us several aspects of the nature of this trust. God is no Brutus, and we will never have an Et tu? moment with our Savior, Jesus Christ. Instead, we can have confidence that leads to fearless and victorious living.

In the writings of John, the word world is used in a specific way. The Greek word behind that translation is kosmos; this is the source of our English word cosmos. We combine it with other roots to make various words. An example is cosmopolitan, one meaning of which is “having worldwide rather than limited scope.” The ancient Greeks did not think of kosmos in geographical terms; they would not have equated it with planet Earth in a physical way. For them, the kosmos was the ordered world, the society and culture that had been built by humanity. This was the framework within which people lived in cities and villages, farmed the land, spoke common languages, and engaged in commerce. Their kosmos included government structures and religious institutions. Perhaps the closest equivalent for us today would be the concept of civilization. For the apostle John, the world (kosmos) is a hostile, dangerous place that is in rebellion against God. It has rejected God’s standards and embraced sin instead. To use John’s metaphors, the world is a place where people love darkness rather than light (John 3:19). This is not the world God created, but the world that has strayed far from its Creator. God loves the world despite this rebellion (John 3:16; compare 13:1). God’s created children have rejected his kingly reign, but he seeks to save them from their chosen fate of eternal death nonetheless. God’s plan for this is centered on the sending of his beloved Son, Jesus, to be a sacrifice for sin and to call people to lives of love and holiness. Rather than crushing ungrateful humanity like a bug, God seeks to rescue it from its self-created pit of rebellious sin. Last week’s lesson addressed the world’s hatred of Christ’s disciples, which should be an understandable state of affairs given the world’s hostility toward God himself. But God’s victory (and ours) in this great cosmic battle is assured.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Trust by Confessing Love (1 John 4:13-15)

13 By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.
14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.
15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.
Confessing love through power of Holy Spirit (13)

_Love through the Holy Spirit because God poured out His love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5)_

5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

_Love through the Holy Spirit because one of the fruit of the Spirit is love (Gal 5:22)_

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

_Love through the Holy Spirit through His empowering our inner being (Eph 3:16-17)_

16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,

_Love through the Holy Spirit because He is a Spirit of love (2 Tim 1:7)_

7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

Confessing of God's love who sent His son (14)

_God's love was manifested by giving His Son so that we could have eternal life (John 3:16)_

16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

_God's love was demonstrated by His allowing His Son to die for us (Rom 5:8)_

8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

_God's love and kindness was proven through Jesus becoming our Savior (Titus 3:4)_

4 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared,

_God's love was made known to us by Jesus (John 17:26)_

26 I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

Confessing Jesus' love as being Son of God (15-16)

_Salvation comes through confession of Jesus being the Son of God (Rom 10:9-10)_

9 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

_Confessing Jesus as the Son of God signifies being born of God (1 John 5:1)_

5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well.

_Confessing Jesus as the Son of God can only be revealed from God (Matt 16:15-17)_

15 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.
Loving and obeying Jesus' teaching is a form of confessing Jesus as the Son of God (John 14:23-24)

23 Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24 He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

Trust by Having Confidence in God's Love (1 John 4:16-21)

16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.
17 Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.
18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.
19 We love Him because He first loved us.
20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?
21 And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.

Confidence in God's indwelling love (16)

God's indwelling love is proven through obedience (1 John 3:23-24)

23 This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. 24 The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

God's indwelling love comes through faith (Eph 3:17)

17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,

God's indwelling love results in eternal life (Jude 1:21)

21 Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

God's indwelling love brings spiritual life to the human body (Rom 8:11)

11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

God's indwelling love is provided through the Holy Spirit (2 Tim 1:13-14)

13 Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. 14 Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.

Confidence in God's love because of no fear (17-19)

No fear because through the Holy Spirit we have been freed from slavery of fear (Rom 8:15)

15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."

No fear because God is my helper (Heb 13:6)

6 So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"
No fear because God is my refuge and strength (Ps 46:1-3)

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, 3 though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.

No fear of man because man cannot destroy the soul (Matt 10:28-31)

28 "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. 29 "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30 "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 "So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.

No fear because our trust is in God (Heb 2:13-16)

13 And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again he says, "Here am I, and the children God has given me." 14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — 15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

Confidence in God's love by loving our brothers (20-21)

Loving our brothers is the greatest commandment (Mark 12:28-31)

28 One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" 29 "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

Loving our brothers comes from a pure heart, sincere faith and good conscience (1 Tim 1:5)

5 The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

Loving our brothers should be the only debt we should have (Rom 13:8)

8 Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.

Loving our brothers sums up the Law (Matt 7:12)

12 So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Love our brothers in everything we do (1 Cor 16:14)

14 Do everything in love.

Trust in God's Way to Love (1 John 5:1-3)

1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.
Love through a foundation of faith (1)

*Foundation of faith because it is through faith we become the loving children of God (John 1:11-13)*

12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

*Foundation of faith because it is through faith that we know the God of love (1 John 4:7-8)*

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

*Foundation of faith because it is through faith we can say Jesus is our loving Lord (Rom 10:6-10)*

6 But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) 7 "or 'Who will descend into the deep?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8 But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: 9 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

*Foundation of faith because it is through faith that God lives in us to love one another (1 John 4:12-14)*

12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. 13 We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.

Love through a foundation of obedience (2-3)

*Foundation of obedience because it is through obedience that God has promised His faithfulness (Deut 7:9)*

9 Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.

*Foundation of obedience because it is through obedience that God has a covenant of love with us (Dan 9:4)*

"O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands,

*Foundation of obedience because it is through obedience that we are part of God's family (Matt 12:46-50)*

47 Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." 48 He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" 49 Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. 50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

*Foundation of obedience because it is through obedience that proves our love of God (John 14:15)*

15 "If you love me, you will obey what I command.

*Foundation of obedience because it is through obedience that we walk in love (2 John 1:6)*

6 And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.

**Trust in the Victory of God's Love (1 John 5:4-5)**
4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith.
5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Victory through overcoming the world (4)

*Overcoming the world by being more than conquerors* (Rom 8:37-39)
37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from

*Overcoming the world through victory over death* (1 Cor 15:56-57)
56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Overcoming the world because God, who is in us, is greater than the one in the world* (1 John 4:4)
4 You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

*Overcoming the world so that the second death will not hurt us* (Rev 2:11)
11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.

Victory through an overcoming Savior (5)

*We have an overcoming Savior because Jesus overcame the world* (John 16:33)
33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

*We have an overcoming Savior because Jesus has driven out the prince of this world* (John 12:31-32)
31 Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. 32 But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself."

*We have an overcoming Savior because Jesus is preparing a place for us in heaven* (John 14:1-3)
2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

*We have an overcoming Savior because Satan is under the feet of Jesus* (1 Cor 15:26-27)
26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death . 27 For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ.

*We have an overcoming Savior because Jesus disarmed powers and authorities through the cross* (Col 2:15)
15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross .

*We have an overcoming Savior because one can take Jesus' life from Him* (John 10:16-18)
17 The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life — only to take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."
We have an overcoming Savior because no one has power over Jesus (John 19:10-11)

10 "Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?" 11 Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Steven J. Cole

Practicing the love of Christ gives us confidence in the day of judgment (4:17-18)

John makes four points here:

1. THERE WILL BE A DAY OF JUDGMENT AND IT IS ESSENTIAL TO HAVE BIBLICALLY BASED CONFIDENCE AS YOU FACE THAT DAY.

From beginning to end, the Bible is clear that there is a coming day of judgment. Jesus spoke often about the judgment to come (e.g., Matt. 7:21-23; 11:21-24; 25:31-46). The apostle Paul, preaching to the philosophers in Athens, declared (Acts 17:31) that God "has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." When he talked with the Roman governor Felix, Paul discussed "righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come" (Acts 24:25). Death, which is common to the human race, is a judgment for our sin, but it is not the final judgment. Hebrews 9:27 declares, "And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment..." Hebrews goes on to describe it (10:27) as "a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries." The Revelation calls this the "second death, the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:14). You can debate about whether the fire is literal or figurative, but either way, you don’t want to experience it for all eternity! You want to have a biblically based confidence as you face that certain day. John shows us here one such basis for confidence:

2. ONE BASIS FOR CONFIDENCE IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT IS WHEN WE SEE GOD’S LOVE FLOWING THROUGH US TO OTHERS.

John’s emphasis here is on love being perfected in us. He first used that phrase in 2:5, where he said, “but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected.” He used it again in 4:12, “if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.” In 4:13-16, John elaborates on the first part of that statement, repeating the concept of God’s abiding in us and we in Him three times. Now, he repeats three times (4:17, 18 [twice]) the concept of perfect love. What does he mean? The Greek word translated “perfect” does not mean, as in English, to be without any flaws or shortcomings. Rather, the idea is to reach its complete development or intended goal, or to be mature. A helpful reference is James 2:22: “You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected.” James means that works complete faith or bring faith to its intended goal. So when John talks about God’s love being perfected in us, he means that His love has reached its intended goal in us. “Perfect” love is not just nice thoughts or words, but action (1 John 3:17-18). John Piper paraphrases the first clause of 4:17, “In this, that is in your love for each other, God’s love is put into action and so reaches its appointed goal. It does not remain at the imperfect stage of mere talk, but reaches the stage of action.” So John is saying that when we see God’s love flowing through us to others in practical good deeds, it is one basis for confidence in the day of judgment. In this regard, he is saying essentially the same thing as he said in 3:14, “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren.” The presence of God’s love in your life, not just in words, but in deeds, is evidence that His life is in you and that you are in Him. This is also what John meant in 4:12, “if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected [has reached its goal] in us.” This does not mean that you always love everyone perfectly, without any shortcomings. No one does that! Rather, it means that the direction of your life is growth in love, and not just humanly explainable love, but rather, God’s love, which may be defined as, “a self-sacrificing, caring commitment that shows itself in seeking the highest good of the
one loved.” This implies that you are involved in close relationships with other believers, where you are committed to work through misunderstandings and hurt feelings. I often talk with people who are struggling in their Christian walk. I discover that they do not know any other believers well enough to meet regularly to help them work through their problems. To love one another, we must get to know one another and also be committed to work through difficulties in our relationships. When you see that kind of love increasing in your life, it gives you confidence in the day of judgment. John goes on to explain why this is so:

3. GOD’S LOVE THROUGH US TO OTHERS GIVES CONFIDENCE IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT BECAUSE IT SHOWS THAT WE ARE LIKE JESUS.

John adds (4:17b), “because as He is, so also are we in this world.” Commentators offer several different interpretations of that phrase, but in the context it seems to mean, as B. F. Westcott states (The Epistles of St. John [Eerdmans], p. 158), “The ground of boldness is present likeness to Christ.” John Piper explains (ibid.), The assumption is that at the judgment day God won’t condemn people who are like his Son. Living a life of active love shows that we have the Spirit of Jesus. It shows we belong to the family of God. And that gives us confidence before God. You can’t live at odds with the character of Jesus and then expect to have any confidence when you stand before his Father at the final judgment. Note that John does not say, “so should we be,” but rather, “so are we in this world.” Each of us needs to ask, “Am I at all like Jesus?” Does my life display any resemblance to the love of Jesus in this world? Would others, especially those who live with me, say that they see the love of Christ in my daily behavior? As I said, such love will not ever be an exact representation of Christ’s love, even in the most godly of saints. Love is a fruit of the Spirit, and fruit always takes time and nurture to grow. But, if there’s no evidence that the fruit is growing, we need to examine the root to find out if the whole tree is bad. As Jesus said (Matt. 12:33), “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit.” If you are not growing in love, you need to ask, “Am I truly born of God?” John goes on to examine the negative side of things:

4. IF WE FEAR THE DAY OF JUDGMENT, IT IS EVIDENCE THAT WE HAVE NOT LOVED OTHERS AS GOD INTENDS.

John writes (4:18), “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.” John is not saying that we should not fear God in the sense of regarding Him with respect and reverence. There is a proper sense of fearing God as the Judge. Speaking in the context of the final judgment, Jesus said (Luke 12:4-5), “My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!” But in our text, John means that you cannot draw near to God in love and run from Him out of fear of judgment at the same time. God wants His children to know that “there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1). The phrase, “perfect love,” as we’ve seen, means, love that has reached its goal, or love that is expressed in action. If you still fear God’s judgment, at the very least, you are not practicing biblical love for others as you should be doing. That’s what John means when he says, “the one who fears is not perfected in love.” All of us, at one point in life, should have experienced the fear of God’s judgment. But as you grow in grace and godliness, that fear is replaced by God’s love. The 18th century commentator, Bengel, gives the proper course of growth in the spiritual life: “neither love nor fear, for neither love without love, both fear and love, love without fear” (cited by Westcott in Latin, p. 160; translated in James Boice, The Epistles of John [Zondervan], p. 148). Most unbelievers have neither the fear of God or the love of God in their lives. Often such lack of fear stems from ignorance. Children are often unaware of danger because they are not aware of the severity of the danger. Concerning people in their natural state, Paul states (Rom. 3:18, citing Ps. 36:1), “There is no fear of God before their eyes.” Unbelievers are a heartbeat away from eternity in the lake of fire, but they don’t fear God! Then, as the Holy Spirit brings conviction of sin and judgment, they become terrified of God’s wrath and their guilt before Him. At this point, it is “fear without love.” God often uses this to drive them to the cross, where, still trembling, they experience both fear and love. Then, as they grow assured of His grace and see His love working itself out in their lives, they cast out fear and grow into love without fear. John Newton aptly put it, “‘Twas grace that caused my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved” (“Amazing Grace,” stanza 2). So John’s point is that as God’s love grows in your life, it casts out the fear of judgment that existed before. God’s
love flowing through you is evidence that you are born of God and that evidence removes the fear of God’s judgment.

(Adapted from URL: https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-21-facing-judgment-confidence-1-john-417-21)

**Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

Romantic relationships can be sabotaged by fear. What begins as an exploratory friendship may blossom into a committed relationship, but then one or both persons in that relationship may become wary. Perhaps there has been a crushing betrayal in a past relationship. Perhaps there are clues to personality quirks that seem undesirable. Perhaps there is a natural reticence, with an unwillingness to disclose oneself to the other. What if there could be relationships without reserve, without protective tactics, without fear? What if there could be a giving of oneself without holding anything back, a fearless love? Today’s lesson features the memorable line “perfect love drives out fear.” As we analyze this truth, we understand why our relationships are imperfect: we fear. If we were to love without limits, there would be no fear. If we could lay our fears aside, we would have full, rich relationships of love. This might be too much to ask for human relationships, but not for our relationship with God. It is difficult if not impossible to imagine God being afraid of anything, and there was nothing held back in his plan to redeem sinful and rebellious humanity. God sent his Son, his only Son, his beloved Son, into the enemy camp to die in order to save us from certain death, eternal death. It is this God-like, fearless love that we are called to in today’s lesson. Are there fearful things in your relationship with God? Are there hidden closets you don’t want him to see into? Fear not, he already knows what is in those places! He knows every nook and cranny of your heart. He knows, but he loves you anyway. Your relationship with God will always be stunted if you hold back. Today may be the day when your love for your loving God overwhelms those fears. When that happens, you will begin to overcome the world.

**Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator**

1. The Holy Spirit at work in the believer’s life proves that person belongs to God (1 John 4:13)
2. The Holy Spirit reveals the gospel of Christ so that we may witness to the world (vss. 14-15)
3. Believers can trust the love of God, who lives within us (vs. 16)
4. With God living within, the believer has no reason to fear judgment (vss. 17-18)
5. As God loves us, He enables us to love Him (vs. 19)
6. If we truly love God, we will love those created in His image (vss. 20-21)
7. Faith in Christ gives us victory over the world (5:1-5)