

What does the word victory mean to you? I'm a big time Cubs fan, and a victory to me would be a world series ring! It hasn't happened since 1908 but this is the year! I've been saying that since I was 9. But for these professional athletes, victory usually means something like hard work. They might even say that hard work is the key to victory. The hard work is made up of elements like proper practice, consistency, and determination. So while hard work is the key it is made up of intricate details that are necessary to receive the victory.

This is much like an actual key we use in locks. Keys are made up of notches and grooves that are specific to the lock. You may have a key that you think will open a lock but if those cuts don't perfectly line up with it, you can't open it.

When it comes to our spiritual victory, it is much the same. Let's look at what John has to say about victory:

1 John 5:1-5 – We see here in **verse 4** that faith is the victory and it comes from being "*born of God*" as seen in **verses 1 and 4**. This idea of being born of God is having this connection with God. The connection leads to faith and victory!

I'm going to suggest tonight that faith is not only victory but is also a key, a way of gaining access to victory. Just like any key, inside are vital details that either allow access or deny access.

1. Belief (**verses 1, 5**)
 - a. John says that our belief is what puts us in this relationship with God that is said "*born of God*". Look over in **John 20:30-31**. Jesus did many miracles that we don't even know about but John says here that by believing in Jesus as the Christ we may have "*life in his name!*"
2. Love (**verses 1-3**)
 - a. John clarifies a lot about love in these verses. If we love God the Father, then we should love the son. If we love God, then we will do what he says and then we love the children of God. Look at **Luke 10:27**. This lawyer is absolutely right! Jesus says this is the first and the greatest commandment! If we have this, then everything else will fall in line.
3. Obedience (**verse 3**)
 - a. If we truly love God, then we will keep his commandments! It is our way to show him the love that we have for him. When it comes down to it, you either abide in God's law or you don't. Flip a few pages back to **1 John 2:15-17**. John says he who DOES the will of God abides forever. Not he who knows or he who says, he who DOES.

This key illustration works out perfectly. If you think about it, a key is very intricate. As you put the key into the lock, the lock almost has to pass several tests. If the first part doesn't fit, you can't unlock it. If the first fits and the second doesn't, you can't unlock it. Even if all of the key fits inside the lock, if the notches don't line up to the lock, you can't unlock it. The details of the key build on each other.

So does this key to victory! Without belief how can you love? And without belief and love, why would you want to obey? These are the building blocks of faith! This is what builds up faith! Without any one of these you can call it faith but it really isn't. If any one is missing, you can't unlock the door. 2 out of the 3 is not enough.

I was actually preparing for a different kind of sermon this week about David. Sometimes with lessons like this we just need to see this in action and David is a great example for us! After all, in **Acts 13**, David is described as a man after God's own heart! I'd say that's a description of the "*born of God*" idea.

1. Belief
 - a. **1 Samuel 17:26, 34-37** – There is no question that David believed in God! He puts his trust solely in the Lord of Hosts and David gets the victory!
2. Love
 - a. **Psalms 18:1-3** – David loved GOD!
 - b. **46-50** – He ends in the same manner he begins, praising God for all that he had done for him!
3. Obedience

- a. **2 Samuel 5:22-25** – God gives David very specific instructions and David had a choice to make. David could follow instructions or he could give his own instructions. He chose to do what God said and God gave him the victory!
- b. In **1 Kings 15:1-5**, it says that David didn't turn aside from anything God commanded him except for the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

So what happens when:

- You face obstacles, or challenges, or trials, but completely believe that God will carry you through?
- You are tempted to look out for yourself or follow others into worldly desires, but choose to completely love God?
- You have options on what to do, from what you want, to what others want you to do, but you choose to do what God says?

You receive victory through your faith! Here are some areas where we can make these choices in our lives:

- a. Private Convictions
 - a. We've made private commitments to God. One on one how we have decided to be for him.
 - i. The way we think – Having impure thoughts is something almost all of us deal with. (**Philippians 4:8**) We often get focused on things of this world and become full of lust and full of greed, but Paul tells us to meditate and focus on good things! The way we think is a good representation of our faith.
 - ii. Our attitude – It's so easy for us to get down when we go through our struggles. (**Philippians 3:8**) Nothing else of this world matters except for Christ. That's what Paul is saying! He says he has lost all things – and he counts them as trash, as nothing, that he may gain Christ. Our attitude toward the things of this world ought to be like Paul.
 - iii. Our time with God – I think everyone in here would agree they could spend more time with God. (**Philippians 4:6-7**) Paul says in everything by prayer and supplication make your requests known to God. What does everything mean in terms of time? Well, all the time! And Paul goes on to say that the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds! Who doesn't want to be free of anxiety? Spend time with God!

How do we truly be victorious over these challenges? The answer is faith but there's a lot that goes into faith!

We have to believe we can overcome with God's help. We have to love ourselves enough to hold to our commitments, love others enough to care about them, and to love God endlessly. We have to be obedient to God's authority and realize all of these things make up faith!

- b. Public Convictions
 - a. We have decided to live our life for God and it should show in our encounters with others.
 - i. The way we live – The way we live our lives is how we really demonstrate our faith. (**Titus 2:7-8**) Titus is specifically talking to young men here but it absolutely applies to everyone. Being an example and showing God's character in our lives does exactly what the end of **verse 8** says. (Read.) How we live our life is important.
 - ii. Our attitude – Our attitude toward ourselves and our attitude toward other people! (**Philippians 2:2-5**) This really goes back to the way we think. If we have our mind set on good things, then the good things will show in our attitude toward each other. Looking out for the good of each other, esteeming others better than ourselves, and doing nothing out of selfishness is how we show our faith.
 - iii. Confessing God – In public settings in the middle of adversity, we can proclaim God. (**1 Peter 3:15-16**) Not only do we confess God by how we live but we have to be ready to defend the truth! And to do it with love and a fire inside us that can't wait to tell others about the majesty and glory of God! But also with compassion – because this is an eternal soul! A soul created after God's own image and that is too beautiful of a thing to be wasted away because we express our faith incorrectly.

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Conclusion:

Let's take it back to where we started! **1 John 5**. Let's look at **verse 11-13**.

Eternal life in Jesus Christ.

We have to be in Christ if we want to receive the eternal victory! To do that we need to:

- a. Believe
- b. Love
- c. Obey

We have the key to victory! All we need to do is unlock the door and be in the Church and be in Christ!

As we talked about this morning – it is urgent! Belief is the first step of faith. **Verse 13** says for those who believe, they shall know that they have eternal life through Jesus!