

# Outline

## Love Conquers All! – I John 5

Have you been watching the Olympics over the last week? I don't know what it is about the Olympics but when they come around every 2 years, I am simply fascinated by them as is most of the world. And it must be something to do with the Olympics themselves, for there is no other time in my life when I think to myself, I really have a craving to watch gymnastics. Now, I have a very good friend in our Executive Administrator who loves gymnastics and he and his wife even own a very successful gym called Paragon and they are fascinated with gymnastics, but it takes the Olympics for me to watch gymnastics and this week I stayed up way past what is beneficial for me to get enough sleep to watch both the Men's and Women's gymnastic finals. I was glued and it was fascinating. I can't remember the last time that I had an overwhelming desire to watch swimming or beach volleyball or even cared about fencing. However this week I have watched all of those and read a very interesting article on fencing (surprisingly enough no post hole diggers are even used in that sport – who'd a thunk?).

But this week I have not been able to get enough Olympic competition. I am pretty sure many of you probably fall into that same category and have watched some or all of the Olympics and are taking an interest in sports that at other times carry no fascination for you. Why is that? I believe that we are fascinated with the human spirit – with the spirit of commitment that leads to excellence – identifying with our fellow countrymen taking on the rest of the world and somehow we feel that we are a part of that great effort and that as our heart rate rises awaiting the signal to run and leap off the vault or our breathing stills to near nothing as we anticipate our next synchronized dive or our spirit crumbles as we take an injury because of a fall and experience crushing defeat, we are one with the athlete in triumph and defeat – we are together in proclaiming our human spirit – we are together in attempting to conquer the world record and swim to more golds than anyone with Michael Phelps. We have built within us a desire to win, to conquer all and the Olympics remind us of this. And Visa wants us to know it as well and reminds us consistently that we are all Olympic Champions together every time we flex those muscular charge card wrist muscles and charge together.

Insert Michael Phelps "Go Visa" Commercial

As we conclude the study of the book of I John, God wants us to realize where a pursuit of Him ends. Love/God always wins! He cannot lose! [Love/God Conquers All!](#)

["This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God." I John 5:2-5 NIV](#)

God promises that if we will put our faith in Him and commit to fully devoting ourselves to pursuing a relationship with Him by obeying what He shows us will lead to a life of love, we will win, we will conquer this world, we will rule with Him! Notice the word that is used in this passage – "overcome." God promises us that no matter how hard life is, no matter what struggles that we will find in life, we will overcome. We will conquer all! his is a promise straight out of the Word of God. As a matter of fact, if you have your Bible with you right now, you should pull out a pen and underline this verse and put a Giant "P" next to it representing that this is one of the promises of the Bible. God promises that we can overcome in this life and in this world and in anything that we are going through!

However, the guarantee that we will overcome in this world, be victorious in this life, conquer, is not automatic. You will notice in this passage that it is part of a process. The process that leads to conquering in this life and winning the Gold in this life and the next is centered in what our whole study in I John over the last few weeks has found itself – Conquering all is dependent upon our willingness to submit our lives to God's commands, God's wisdom, God's control. He knows how to conquer in life, for He created us to conquer and He Himself has conquered life and death and sin and sorrow. This is how we conquer He says: by loving Him and carrying out His commands. And His commands are not

**August 17, 2008**

burdensome – they are not really that hard He is telling us – they are simply built around two things – love God with all your heart and soul and mind – love each other as He has loved us – and by doing this over the period of a life span, you will become an Olympic champion in the Life that He has given you. He knows the key to joy in this life and the next. He has abundant wisdom to lead you to an abundant life – He is the ultimate Bela and Marta Karolyi coaching Nadia and Mary Lou and Shawn Johnson to Olympic Gold.

I think that is another reason that we are so fascinated with Olympic athletes. We admire the hard work they put in over a long period of time to get to a point of having a chance to shine in their sport. We do not realize the life commitment that all of them have made to come to the place that they are the best in their sport, We do not see the endless hours of committed, boring training and repetition that lead to the champions they become. And, they love it! Not in one interview this week did I detect from an Olympic athlete: I wish that I had not done this – not from Michael Phelps who won so many golds, not from Alicia Sacramone who felt she disappointed her team and lost the gold medal for them by falling off the balance beam, not from the interview of Derrick Redmond **whose tragic Olympic failing has been chronicled in the Visa Gold commercials and** is the athlete voted as having the 2<sup>nd</sup> greatest Olympic moment of the last 100 years, but finished last in that Olympic Moment, and finds himself immortalized by Visa and Morgan Freeman.

#### **Insert Derrick Redmond Visa Gold commercial**

That is a great example of “overcoming the world.” Like the Olympic athletes, God promises us that we will overcome the world if we follow the same process. He does not tell us what our victory will look like, but that we will win, be fulfilled, and finish the race strong, even in the midst of trial. What is the process? It is loving Him with all my heart and soul and mind. What does that mean? It means that I will pursue knowing Him and train to know him over the long haul just like the Olympic athlete trains. I will buy into His championship vision and trust that the Coach does know what is best to lead to Victory. I will obey His commands that are not burdensome. I will have victory that overcomes the world – and what is the victory that overcomes the world - my faith - my faith that Jesus is the Son of God.

**“And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, 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.” I John 5:11,12 NIV**

There are some prerequisites that must be in place to conquer all, to overcome, to be victorious in this life. And just like the Olympic athlete – no shortcuts can happen. There is a word for the athlete that is not willing to train for the Olympic team, to put in the effort to become great, to cheat – CUT. The same is true for being on God’s team of Over-comers, God’s team of Conquering. And He spells it out here.

#### **Prerequisites to Overcoming the world and Conquering All:**

- 1. Put your faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior from sin.**
- 2. Identify with Jesus by obeying his command to follow by being baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit**
- 3. Pursue a relationship with Him through Bible Study, Prayer, Fellowship, Service**
- 4. Never, Never, Never give up on pursuing relationship with Him!**

Conversely the opposite is also true. Failure to pursue God and fully devote myself to learning His love will result in failure and a life that leads to death.

**“If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to**

**August 17, 2008**

death. I am not saying that he should pray about that. All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death.” I John 5:16-17 NIV

God will allow us to live life however we want to pursue it, but He is the creator of the world and the creator of Love. He knows the principles that lead the sunflower seed to grow into a sunflower rather than into an oak tree and He knows the principle of how love is produced in a life. He knows what will lead to overcoming the world and what will lead to a life of defeat. However, just like the Olympic athlete, He will allow us to pursue our own training regimen. You know the interesting thing about the Olympics – it is an open competition for the whole world. Sure there are qualification rounds and there are competitions that one has to win to make it there, but it is open to you and to me. For all we know, four years from now, the next Olympic Champion in fencing may be sitting in this auditorium (I have your post hole digger right here – come and get it after the service and we will begin training on the new fence that I want to put around my back yard!). Seriously, you and I both have a chance to be an Olympic champion. We simply have to change our diet, give up sleep, go to the gym several hours a day, practice mindlessly the same intricate miniscule movement hundreds of thousands of times a day and this moment could be yours and mine in the next Olympics:

**Insert the footage from the Mens' 4x100 Gold medal relay.**

Most of us will not make it, for we prefer our Oreos, sleeping in and are allergic to self-induced pain and stress. And that is ok – as long as we do not want to be an Olympian. In the same way, God leaves our “overcoming” choice to us as well. We can overcome if we will follow His regimen as outlined in the Coaching Manual (Bible), and talk to the Coach on a frequent basis to get His counsel and advice on Overcoming and Conquering all. However, He, like all Olympic coaches will let us decide and leave us to our own wisdom. Only problem with that is if the athlete doesn't follow the coach's advice it will lead to the death of their Olympic dreams. And for you and me the consequences are greater: It will lead to death – the death of an abundant life, the death of our relationships, the death of our joy – and even the death of our spiritual lives for eternity. There is a sin at some point that will lead to your spiritual death. It is not a specific sin. It is a lifetime of pursuing sin over the Savior and it will lead to the death of your soul forever.

Therefore, why not seek to obey what He commands in His Word and pursue the Creator and Definer of the “L” Word? Why not choose today to begin a lifetime of truly seeking to live a life that experiences, and is able to help others experience, love.

As a matter of fact two promises accompany those who will seek after God's definition of love:

[He will give us what we ask for.](#)

“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.” I John 5:14,15 NIV

[We will know God/Love.](#)

“We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true.” I John 5:20 NIV

Please listen to the next song and think about making a true commitment to God today. It is not a commitment to be perfect – it is a commitment to pursue perfection – pursue love – pursue God. Just like the Olympic athlete pursues that same perfection, that same love, that same Gold medal, your decision to obey God's commands specifically on a daily basis over a lifetime of training will lead to you

overcoming the world and being a part of a LOVE/GOD that conquers all. If you are willing to make that commitment today, write that out on your tear off. Here are some choices to meditate on during the song:

I commit to pursuing God/Love and obey His training by:

- Praying and asking God to forgive me of my sins
- Identifying with Him by being Baptized on August 31 at church
- Making a commitment to read His Word and obey what I read
- Consistently attending Church and getting the fellowship and training to grow
- Joining a LIFE Group at Ni River to get the fellowship and training to grow

**August 17, 2008**