

# 1 John 5:2 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

[INDEX FOR ALL VERSES ON 1 JOHN](#)

- [1 John 5:1](#)
- [1 John 5:2](#)
- [1 John 5:3](#)
- [1 John 5:4](#)
- [1 John 5:5](#)
- [1 John 5:6](#)
- [1 John 5:7](#)
- [1 John 5:8](#)
- [1 John 5:9](#)
- [1 John 5:10](#)
- [1 John 5:11](#)
- [1 John 5:12](#)
- [1 John 5:13](#)
- [1 John 5:14](#)
- [1 John 5:15](#)
- [1 John 5:16](#)
- [1 John 5:17](#)
- [1 John 5:18](#)
- [1 John 5:19](#)
- [1 John 5:20](#)
- [1 John 5:21](#)

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND HIS CHILDREN  
Click chart to enlarge  
Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission  
Another Overview Chart - [1 John](#) - Charles Swindoll

| BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP                    |                        | BEHAVIOR OF FELLOWSHIP                         |                         |
|--|------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Conditions of Fellowship               | Cautions of Fellowship | Fellowship Characteristics                     | Fellowship Consequences |
| Meaning of Fellowship<br>1 Jn 1:1-2:27 |                        | Manifestations of Fellowship<br>1 Jn 2:28-5:21 |                         |
| Abiding in God's Light                 |                        | Abiding in God's Love                          |                         |
| Written in Ephesus                     |                        |  |                         |
| circa 90 AD                            |                        |  |                         |
| From Talk Thru the Bible               |                        |  |                         |

## STUDY GUIDE

### 1 JOHN 5

What is this? On the photograph of the Observation Worksheet for this chapter you will find handwritten 5W/H questions (Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?) on each verse to help you either personally study or lead a discussion on this chapter. The questions are generally very simple and are stated in such a way as to stimulate you to observe the text to discern the answer. As a reminder, given the truth that your ultimate Teacher is the Holy Spirit, begin your time with God with prayer such as Psalm 119:12+

"Blessed are You, O LORD; Teach me Your statutes." (you can vary it with similar prayers - Ps 119:18, 26, 33, 64, 66, 68, 108, 124, 135, 171, etc) The questions are generally highlighted in yellow and the answers in green. Some questions have no answers and are left to your observations and the illuminating/teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. Some qualifying thoughts - (1) Use "As is" - these are handwritten and will include mistakes I made, etc. (2) They may not be the best question for a given verse and my guess is that on some verses you will think of a far superior 5W/H question and/or many other questions.

Dr Howard Hendricks once gave an assignment to his seminary students to list as many observations as they could from Acts 1:8. He said "So far they've come up with more than 600 different ones! Imagine what fun you could have with 600 observations on this passage. Would you like to see Scripture with eyes like that?" (P. 63 [Living by the Book](#) - borrow) With practice you can! And needless to say, you will likely make many more observations and related questions than I recorded on the pages below and in fact I pray that the Spirit would indeed lead you to discover a veritable treasure chest of observations and questions! In Jesus' Name. Amen

Why am I doing this? **Mortimer Adler** among others helped me develop a questioning mindset as I read, seeking to read actively rather than passively. Over the years I have discovered that as I have practiced reading with a 5W/H questioning mindset, it has yielded more accurate interpretation and the good fruit of meditation. In other words, consciously interacting with the inspired Holy Word of God and the illuminating Holy Spirit has honed my ability to meditate on the Scripture, and my prayer is that this tool will have the same impact in your spiritual life. The benefits of meditation are literally priceless in regard to their value in this life and in the life to come (cf discipline yourself for godliness in 1Ti 4:8+.) For some of the benefits - see Joshua 1:8+ and Psalm 1:2-3+. It will take diligence and mental effort to develop an "inductive" ([especially an "observational"](#)), interrogative mindset as you read God's Word, but it bears repeating that the benefits in this life and the rewards in the next will make it more than worth the effort you invest! Dear Christian reader let me encourage you to strongly consider learning the skills of [inductive Bible study](#) and spending the rest of your life practicing them on the Scriptures and living them out in your daily walk with Christ.

Although Mortimer Adler's advice is from a secular perspective, his words are worth pondering...

*Strictly, all reading is active. What we call passive is simply less active. Reading is better or worse according as it is more or less active. And one reader is better than another in proportion as he is capable of a greater range of activity in reading.* (Adler's classic book [How to Read a Book is free online](#))

[John Piper](#) adds that "Insight or understanding is the product of intensive, headache-producing meditation on two or three verses and how they fit together. This kind of reflection and rumination is provoked by asking questions of the text. And you cannot do it if you hurry. Therefore, we must resist the deceptive urge to carve notches in our bibliographic gun. Take two hours to ask ten questions of Galatians 2:20+ and you will gain one hundred times the insight you would have attained by reading thirty pages of the New Testament or any other book. Slow down. Query. Ponder. Chew.... (John Dewey rightly said) "People only truly think when they are confronted with a problem. Without some kind of dilemma to stimulate thought, behavior becomes habitual rather than thoughtful."

*"Asking questions is the key to understanding."*

--Jonathan Edwards

That said, below are the [5W/H questions](#) for each verse in this chapter (click page to enlarge). This is not neatly typed but is handwritten and was used for leading a class discussion on this chapter, so you are welcome to use it in this "as is" condition...

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
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## 1 John 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments

**Greek** - en touto ginoskomen (1PPAI) hoti agapomen (1PPAI) ta tekna tou theou hotan ton theon agapomen (1PPAS) kai tas entolas autou poiomen (1PPAS).

KJV 1 John 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

BGT 1 John 5:2 ν το τ γιν σκομεν τι γαπ μεν τ τ κνα το θεο , ταν τ ν θε ν γαπ μεν κα τ ς ντολ ς α το ποι μεν.

NET 1 John 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God: whenever we love God and obey his commandments.

CSB 1 John 5:2 This is how we know that we love God's children when we love God and obey His

commands.

ESV 1 John 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments.

NIV 1 John 5:2 This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands.

NLT 1 John 5:2 We know we love God's children if we love God and obey his commandments.

NRS 1 John 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments.

NJB 1 John 5:2 In this way we know that we love God's children, when we love God and keep his commandments.

NAB 1 John 5:2 In this way we know that we love the children of God when we love God and obey his commandments.

YLT 1 John 5:2 in this we know that we love the children of God, when we may love God, and His commands may keep;

MIT 1 John 5:2 By this process we know we love the children of God—by loving God and implementing his commands.

GWN 1 John 5:2 We know that we love God's children when we love God by obeying his commandments.

BBE 1 John 5:2 In this way, we are certain that we have love for the children of God, when we have love for God and keep his laws.

RSV 1 John 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments.

NKJ 1 John 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.

ASV 1 John 5:2 Hereby we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and do his commandments.

**Amplified** - By this we come to know (recognize and understand) that we love the children of God: when we love God and obey His commands (orders, charges)—[when we keep His ordinances and are mindful of His precepts and His teaching].

**Wuest** - In this we know experientially that we are habitually loving the born-ones of God, whenever God we are habitually loving and His commandments are habitually guarding and observing with solicitous care.

- 1 Jn 3:22-24, 4:21 John 13:34,35 Jn 15:17
- [1 John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL AGAPE

**By this we know** ([ginosko](#) - present tense) **that we love** ([agapao](#) - present tense) **the children** ([teknon](#)) **of God** ([theos](#)) - **By** what (en touto)? **By** what follows, by observing God's commandments. **Know** is in the present tense signifying that we continually know or we have the constant experience of knowing we love God's children. Earlier John had written that love was a mark that one is truly born again - "We know that we have passed out of death into life ([regeneration](#), cp Jn 5:24+), because we **love the brethren**. He who does not love abides in death." (1Jn 3:14+) Lack of [agape](#) love is a mark of a person who has never been born again. **We love** ([agapao](#) - present tense - as the general habit of our life) **the children** ([teknon](#) - born ones) **of God** ([theos](#)) speaks of horizontal spirituality and is intimately connected with vertical spirituality (**we love God**). Horizontal [agape](#) love is only possible because of vertical [agape](#) love (Ro 5:5+, Gal 5:22+). This love is expressed best in actions not emotions (1Jn 3:17,18+). We don't just say we love them, we show we love them. Our life matches our lips! And remember that not only do **we know** but others **know** for Jesus said "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (Jn 13:34-35+) At the end of chapter 4 John gave a similar teaching writing that "If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God Whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who

loves God should love his brother also." (1Jn 4:20-21+)

**By this** (en touto) is used most frequently in the NT by John and by him most often in First John - John 9:30; 13:35; 15:8; 16:30; 1Jn 2:3, 4, 5 (twice); 1Jn 3:10, 16, 19, 24; 1Jn 4:2, 9-10, 13, 17; 1Jn 5:2

**When we love** ([agapao](#) - present tense) **God** ([theos](#)) **and observe** ([poieo](#) - present tense not perfectly but habitually keep) **His commandments** ([entole](#)) - What proves that we really **love the children of God**? When we love God and keep His commandments. Since the false teachers do not obey God (e.g., 1Jn 1:6-2:2+), their boasts about love are invalid (1Jn 4:20+). Notice that we can say we **love God**, but here John links what we **say** with what we **do** (cp 1Jn 3:18+). If we say we love God and do not keep His commandments we are deceiving ourselves (cf Jas 1:22-24+). We show we love God by keeping His commandments.

*Faith is the foot of the soul by which  
it can march along the road of the commandments.*

-- C H Spurgeon

Jesus issues the following command to His disciples in some of His last words before He dies "This I command you, that you **love** (present tense = keep on loving) one another." (Jn 15:17+) The only way a believer can keep on loving with self-less love is by continual reliance on (and filling by or control by) the Holy Spirit, Whose fruit is supernatural love (Gal 5:22+). Don't try to love others in your own ("Old Man") strength because you will fail and become frustrated. The only way to love like Jesus loved others is by relying on the same power source that Jesus relied upon, the Holy Spirit (cp Lk 4:14, 18-19, Acts 10:37-38 - see article on [Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)).

Divine love on the part of a saint for his brother in Christ is shown when that saint observes the commandments of God. Why so? Because obedience to the commandments puts that saint in right relationship to his Christian brother, which results in his acting in a loving manner toward that Christian. The converse also is true, namely, when a saint disobeys God's commandments, he is acting in an unloving way toward his fellow-saint and he is fooling himself thinking he can love his brother unconditionally and sacrificially.

**THOUGHT** - This truth seems to be so critical in the setting of the closest of all human interpersonal relationships, a husband and wife. If for example the husband is living in sin, in direct disobedience to God's commands, there is no way he can be loving his wife with that precious unconditional, sacrificial, death-to-self love that God commands husbands to practice continually (Eph 5:25+). How important then is it for husbands to go quickly to the throne of grace (Heb 4:16) to confess, repent, receive merciful forgiveness for their sins and the grace necessary to live the transformed supernatural life they are called to live as God fearing husbands (1Jn 1:9)! Wow! That is a convicting truth!!! And OH how deceived we are when we as husbands think that we can "toy" with sin as if in a vacuum and not affect EVERY interpersonal relationship we have! Look at the result of Jonah's defiant disobedience to God's clearly revealed will. His sin placed an entire shipload of pagan sailors in mortal danger (Jonah 1:4,14)!

**Daniel Akin** - Obeying God's commandments sets us free, it does not enslave. His commandments are a blessing because they free me to live not as I want, but as I ought, as I should. (**ED**: REAL FREEDOM IS NOT THE RIGHT TO DO AS YOU PLEASE, BUT THE POWER TO DO AS YOU SHOULD -- AND TO PLEASE YOUR FATHER!)

**Bruce Barton** - Just as believers' love for their brothers and sisters is the sign and test of their love for God, so their love for God (tested by obedience, 1Jn 5:3) is the only basis of their love for Christian brothers and sisters. John was not contradicting what he had written in 1Jn 4:20-21; rather, he was insisting that love for God and love for fellow believers cannot be separated. Christians cannot love God without loving their brothers and sisters in Christ; they can know that they love God, as well as other believers, if they are obeying him. John first urged the effect (love for others); now he urged the cause (love for God). (See [1, 2, & 3 John - Page 106](#))

**John MacArthur** writes that 1Jn 5:2 "is the corollary to the truth John expressed in 1Jn 5:1. Just as it is impossible to love God without loving His children (v1), so also is it impossible to truly love His children apart from loving Him (v2). Those twin priorities of loving God and other Christians mark all who have been born again.

**W E Vine** explains that "What was stated in 1Jn 4:20-21, is purposely put in the opposite way in this verse. In the former passage love to God is the fulfillment of His commandments, which are shown to have their evidence in the love of His children. This same truth is stressed by being put in the converse way in the present passage. In other words, if we want to know whether we love our brother, it is necessary to ask if we love God, for the motive cause of love lies in God Himself, for "God is love." Here the test of our

love to God is the doing of His commandments, that is to say, in loving our neighbor. **Taken together, then, the two passages show that love to God and love to one another are essentially associated and mutually evidential.**" ([The Collected Writings](#))

*Trust and obey, love and obey:*

*for John these partners are never to be separated.*

-- Daniel Akin

**Colin Kruse** - One cannot love God and keep his commands without loving the children of God, and one cannot love the children of God without loving God and keeping his commands (cf. 2:7–8; 3:22–24; 4:21). (See [The Letters of John - Page 172](#))

**Simon Kistemaker** asks "What evidence is there for combining faith and love? John provides a ready answer. He writes, "This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands." Actually these words are almost a verbatim repetition of an earlier verse, "We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands" (1Jn 2:3)." ([Baker NT Commentary](#))

*It is by our love for one another*

*that we are assured of our love for God*

**J M Boice** has an interesting comment quoting from the work of C H Dodd - Verse 2 is not altogether unambiguous, however, as Dodd notes; for it can have two meanings. If the opening words "This is how" refer to what follows, as is generally the case in John's writings, the meaning would be that if we are uncertain whether or not we love other Christians, we may reassure ourselves by determining whether or not we love God the Father. In other words, love of God becomes the fixed point from which we may determine our attitude to others. It may be said in support of this view that John undoubtedly held that love of God and love of man belong together, so that one may begin at either pole and arrive at the other. But the problem is that this form of reasoning is the opposite of what has been affirmed throughout the letter. It is by our love for one another that we are assured of our love for God; this is John's reasoning. Besides, just a few verses earlier John has argued that we cannot love God unless we love others.

The words of verse 2 are capable of another meaning, however, as Dodd shows in his careful discussion of the passage. In this reading the words "This is how" refer to what comes before. So the passage may be translated, "This is how [namely, the truth that if one loves the parent he inevitably loves the child] we know that, when we love God, we love the children of God and keep God's commandments." The logic would be: (1) Everyone who loves the parent loves the child; (2) every Christian is a child of God; (3) therefore, when we love God we love our fellow Christians. Dodd concludes, "He [John] assumes the solidarity of the family as a fact of ordinary experience, and argues directly from it to the solidarity of the family of God. To be born of God is to be born into a family, with obligations, not only towards the Father of the family, but also (as part of our obligation to him) towards all his children." Love for others is therefore a direct result as well as an obligation of having become one of God's children. (Dodd [The Johannine Epistles](#)) (Borrow [Epistles of John page 154](#))

*the best thing a father can do for his children*

*is to love his wife and their mother.*

**Guzik** - Just as much as our love for the people of God reflects our love for God (as expressed in 1 John 3:10, 17), so our love and obedience to God is a demonstration of love to the body of Christ. It is sometimes said that the best thing a father can do for his children is to love his wife and their mother. Even so, the first way for a child of God to love his brothers and sisters in Christ is to love God and to obey Him. And, if you love the parent, you will love the child. It all works together. ([Enduring Word Commentary](#))

*When a saint disobeys God's commandments,*

*he is acting in an unloving way toward his fellow-saint.*

**Wuest** - **Love** (agape, divine love) on the part of a saint for his brother in Christ is shown when that saint observes the commandments of God, for obedience to the commandments puts that saint in right relationship to his brother Christian, which relationship results in his acting in a loving manner toward that Christian. The converse also is true, namely, when a saint disobeys God's commandments, he is acting in an unloving way toward his fellow-saint. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

*"If love to men proves the worth of our love to God,*

*love to God proves the worth of our love to men"*

-- G G Findley

**Williamson** - Love is by nature reciprocal. It originates in God, because "God is love" (1Jn 4:8, 16). It circles back to the Creator, as believers worship him and love others (1Jn 4:19–21). The evidence that one truly loves God is demonstrated in carrying out (lit. doing) His commands. ([NBBC, 1, 2, & 3 John- A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition](#))

*No doubt the author holds that love to God and love to man are so inseparable that the presence of either is evidence of the other.*

-- C H Dodd [The Johannine Epistles](#))

**Guzik** - When our love and obedience for God grows cold, we do not only harm ourselves - we harm our brothers and sisters also. The damage is done, at the very least, because we are a "drag" on the spiritual progress of God's people. If we will not love and obey God for our own sake, then we should at least do it out of love for others. ([Enduring Word Commentary](#))

**J M Boice** comments on the **three tests** in 1 John 5:1-5 - When a birth takes place the individual involved is not born into isolation, nor is he a totally unique individual in the sense that his characteristics and attributes have no connection with those of people who have gone before. For one thing, he is born into a family and into family relations. For another, he possesses at least some of the characteristics of the one who has engendered him. Spiritually, this means that the child of God exhibits those characteristics about which the letter has been teaching. The first characteristic is love, both for the parent and for the other children. Earlier John has said that it is a characteristic of the child of God to love, since God is love (1Jn 4:7-8). Now he shows equally that it is a characteristic of the child of God to be loved by those who are also members of God's family... (**Ed: Test 2 Obedience**) Love divorced from obedience to the commands of God is not love, however. So John immediately passes from love to the matter of God's commandments, saying, "This is love for God, to obey his commands." (1Jn 5:3)... **The third of John's tests** is expressed in these verses as belief. Indeed, it is with this concept that the section both begins and ends (vv. 1, 5). Between belief that "Jesus is the Christ" and belief that "Jesus is the Son of God" is found John's discussion of both love and obedience. The implication is that, just as it is impossible to have love without obedience or obedience without love, so also is it impossible to have either love or obedience without belief in Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God. It was to lead men and women to this twofold confession that John's Gospel was written (John 20:30-31). (Borrow [Epistles of John page 154](#))

**Adam Clarke** - Our love of God's followers is a proof that we love God. Our love to God is the cause why we love his children, and our keeping the commandments of God is the proof that we love him.

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**We know** (1097)(**ginosko**) refers to knowledge gained by experience, a knowing intimately and not just intellectually. For example, John uses **ginosko** to describe those who refused to believe in Jesus writing "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world **did not know** Him." (Jn 1:10, see context Jn 1:11-13) After most of the followers departed from Jesus in Jn 6:66, Jesus confronted the twelve disciples asking "You do not want to go away also, do you?" (Jn 6:67) to which Peter replied "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. And we have believed and **have come to know** (**ginosko**) that You are the Holy One of God." (Jn 6:68-69) Notice that John links believing in Jesus with knowing Him. John writes "the world does not know (**ginosko**) us, because it did not know (**ginosko**) Him." (1Jn 3:1)

**GINOSKO IN FIRST JOHN** - 1 Jn. 2:3; 1 Jn. 2:4; 1 Jn. 2:5; 1 Jn. 2:13; 1 Jn. 2:14; 1 Jn. 2:18; 1 Jn. 2:29; 1 Jn. 3:1; 1 Jn. 3:6; 1 Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 3:19; 1 Jn. 3:20; 1 Jn. 3:24; 1 Jn. 4:2; 1 Jn. 4:6; 1 Jn. 4:7; 1 Jn. 4:8; 1 Jn. 4:13; 1 Jn. 4:16; 1 Jn. 5:2; 1 Jn. 5:20; 2 Jn. 1:1

**Love** (25)(**agapao**) means to love unconditionally and sacrificially as God Himself loves sinful men (John 3:16), the way He loves the Son (John 3:35, 15:9, 17:23, 24). Note that **agapao** is a verb and by its verbal nature calls for action. This quality of love is not an emotion but is an action initiated by a volitional choice."expresses the purest, noblest form of love, which is volitionally driven, not motivated by superficial appearance, emotional attraction, or sentimental relationship." (John MacArthur)

**Vine** writes that "Love can be known only from the actions it prompts. God's love is seen in the gift of His Son, 1 John 4:9, 10. But obviously this is not the love of complacency, or affection, that is, it was not drawn out by any excellency in its objects, Ro 5:8. It was an exercise of the divine will in deliberate choice, made without assignable cause save that which lies in the nature of God Himself." ([Collected Writings](#))

**Wuest** says agape "speaks of a love which is awakened by a sense of value in an object which causes one to prize it. It springs from an apprehension of the preciousness of an object. It is a love of esteem and approbation. The quality of this love is determined by the character of the one who loves, and that of the object loved." ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

**AGAPAO USES BY JOHN** - Jn. 3:16; Jn. 3:19; Jn. 3:35; Jn. 8:42; Jn. 10:17; Jn. 11:5; Jn. 12:43; Jn. 13:1; Jn. 13:23; Jn. 13:34; Jn. 14:15; Jn. 14:21; Jn. 14:23; Jn. 14:24; Jn. 14:28; Jn. 14:31; Jn. 15:9; Jn. 15:12; Jn. 15:17; Jn. 17:23; Jn. 17:24; Jn. 17:26; Jn. 19:26; Jn. 21:7; Jn. 21:15; Jn. 21:16; Jn. 21:20; 1 Jn. 2:10; 1 Jn. 2:15; 1 Jn. 3:10; 1 Jn. 3:11; 1 Jn. 3:14; 1 Jn. 3:18; 1 Jn. 3:23; 1 Jn. 4:7; 1 Jn. 4:8; 1 Jn. 4:10; 1 Jn. 4:11; 1 Jn. 4:12; 1 Jn. 4:19; 1 Jn. 4:20; 1 Jn. 4:21; 1 Jn. 5:1; 1 Jn. 5:2; 2 Jn. 1:1; 2 Jn. 1:5; 3 Jn. 1:1; Jude 1:1; Rev. 1:5; Rev. 3:9; Rev. 12:11; Rev. 20:9

**Paul** like John also frequently commented on **love** of saints for their brethren -

Ephesians 1:15-16-**note** For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which [exists] among you, and **your love for all the saints**, do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention [of you] in my prayers;

Colossians 1:3-4-**note** We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and **the love which you have for all the saints**;

1Thessalonians 1:3-**note** constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and **labor of love** and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father

**Observe** (4160)(**poieo**) means we perform or do God's commandments with the **present tense** speaking of this as one's lifestyle and conveys the idea of accomplishing, carrying out or practicing God's commandments. Be careful. Do not try to obey "legalistically" or you will become very frustrated. Law and grace are like oil and water. They don't mix! Jettison self reliance and lean on the Spirit's provision of grace to do **supernaturally** what is absolutely impossible **naturally**! Supernatural fruit requires a supernatural Source!

Note that the older manuscript used for the KJV, the **Textus Receptus**, has the verb **tereo** not **poieo**, the latter being in more modern Greek manuscripts (Nestle-Aland). The modern manuscripts do have **tereo** in 1Jn 5:3, this verb conveying the sense of keeping watch over or guarding. MacArthur distinguishes these two verbs noting that "**poieo** refers to action, **tereo** to the heart attitude that prompts obedience." Most of the other mentions by John of love shown by keeping His commandments use the verb **tereo**. (Jn 14:15, 21, 23, 24, Jn 15:10, 20)

**Commandments** (instruction, order, requirement)(1785) **entole** from **en** = in, upon + **tello** = accomplish, charge, command) - **Entole** refers to some type of demand or requirement. A general injunction, charge, precept of moral and religious nature. Commandments are those given by our Lord either personally while on earth or through His apostles in the New Testament Books. Of the 67 uses, all but three (Lk 15:29; Col 4:10; Titus 1:14) refer specifically to divine commandments. Keeping God's commandments is the way we show that we love Him (we can say it, but our actions need to authenticate our words. (Jn 14:15, 21, 1Jn 2:3).

In 14 passages **entole** is associated with agape love. (e.g., love one another is a repeated commandment - Jn 13:34 = described as a "new commandment", Jn 15:12, 1Jn 3:23, 2Jn 1:5). God's commandments "flush out" sin so to speak, showing the heinous, destructive nature of sin (See Ro 7:8, 9, 11, 13) **Entole** sometimes refers to commandments from men (not God) (Titus 1:14) Entole can sometimes mean an order authorizing a specific action (Jn 11:57).

**Ralph Martin** - The word commandment (entole) is featured prominently in both 1 John and 2 John (1 Jn 2:3, 4, 7, 8; 1Jn 3:22, 23, 24; 1Jn 4:21; 1Jn 5:2-3; 2 Jn 4, 5, 6), and in every case it appears that the commandments of God rather than Jesus are intended (see esp. 1 Jn 5:2-3; 2 Jn 4). John teaches that those who truly know God keep his commandments (1 Jn 2:3-4). (Dictionary of the later New Testament and its developments).

**Commandment** (Webster) - a law, edict, or statute; authoritative directive; a mandate; an order or injunction given by authority; charge; precept.

**ENTOLE USES BY JOHN** - Jn. 10:18; Jn. 11:57; Jn. 12:49; Jn. 12:50; Jn. 13:34; Jn. 14:15; Jn. 14:21; Jn. 15:10; Jn. 15:12; 1 Jn. 2:3; 1 Jn. 2:4; 1 Jn. 2:7; 1 Jn. 2:8; 1 Jn. 3:22; 1 Jn. 3:23; 1 Jn. 3:24; 1 Jn. 4:21; 1 Jn. 5:2; 1 Jn. 5:3; 2 Jn. 1:4; 2 Jn. 1:5; 2 Jn. 1:6; Rev. 12:17; Rev. 14:12

**Children** (5043) (**teknon** [4x 1Jn = 1Jn 3:1, 2, 10; 5:2] from **tikto** = to bring forth or bear children ) literally refers to those who are "born ones" and in the plural (**tekna**) refers to descendants, posterity or children, those viewed in relation to their parents or family. Here **teknon** is used figuratively to refer to those who have by grace through faith been born (by the Spirit - Jn 3:5, 6, 7, 8, Ep 2:8, 9-note) spiritually (Jn 1:12). How can we be certain we are children of the Living God? (See 1Jn 2:29, 3:7, 9, 10, 5:2, et al - (present tense = as one's general lifestyle!) The Holy Spirit bears testimony to our human spirit that we are children of God, and our Spirit-energized spirit thus joins the Holy Spirit in a joint-testimony to that fact (Ro 8:16, 17±)

Note that **children** (**teknon**) occurs while the related word "**little children**" (**teknion**) occurs in 1Jn 2:1, 2:12, 2:28, 3:7, 4:4, 5:21.

Love is to be directed by law. God, our maker and redeemer, has revealed the unchanging pattern of response that He requires, and that man needs if he is to be truly himself. The pattern is both an expression of God's own moral character—an indication of what He approves and disapproves—and a clue to man about his own nature and that of his neighbor. By adhering to the pattern, we express and further our own true humanness on the one hand and true love for our neighbor on the other. Our fellow man is always something of an enigma to ourselves, but our Maker, who knows our true nature and needs, has told us how we are to do ourselves and each other real good. So love and law keeping are mutually entailed.

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**Jerry Bridges - THE ACCEPTABLE MOTIVE (See [Holiness Day by Day: Transformational Thoughts](#))**

We love God and obey his commandments. (1 JOHN 5:2)

Although obedience is the primary way we express love to God, it's not the same as love. Love is essentially a motive. "Love is a verb, not a feeling," the saying goes. Indeed, Jesus said we're to love our enemies (Matthew 5:44).

In another sense, however, love is not a verb but the motive that prompts and guides other verbs—certain actions. I love my enemies first by forgiving them for their harmful actions toward me, then by seeking their welfare in appropriate ways. Love needs other verbs to give it hands and feet. This can be seen in 1 Corinthians 13 where Paul used love as a noun, the subject of a whole list of action statements: Love is patient, love is kind, it does not envy, it does not boast, and so on.

The converse truth is that love gives validity to my actions and makes them acceptable to God. I can seek my enemies' welfare so they won't harm me again. That's manipulation, not love. It's looking out for my welfare under the guise of looking out for theirs.

Love for God is the only acceptable motive for obeying Him. This love may express itself in reverence for Him and a desire to please Him, but those expressions must spring from love. Without love, my apparent obedience may be essentially self-serving. I may fear God's punishment or His withholding of blessing, or I may conform to a certain standard of conduct because I want to fit in with the Christian culture around me. I might even obey simply because I have a compliant temperament.

All these motives may result in outward obedience, but not obedience from the heart. Only conduct arising from love is worthy of the name obedience.

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Johnny Hunt - JOHN 5:2, 3

Most people have little knowledge of any language other than their own. That's why it is difficult to comprehend the abilities of a person such as the eighteenth-century Italian linguist Mezzofanti. He was fluent in 114 languages and dialects. We certainly admire men of great knowledge. But we as Christians know one language that stands above all others: the language of love. It is essential for communicating the gospel. It is our responsibility to share our knowledge of the Savior, but if we fail to demonstrate care and compassion, we are wasting our breath.

In his book *Dropping Your Guard*, Charles Swindoll told an alarming true story: "It concerned a man who had been walking along a pier when suddenly he tripped over a rope and fell into the cold, deep waters of that ocean bay. He came up sputtering, screaming for help, then sank beneath the surface. For some reason he was unable to swim or stay afloat. His friends heard his faint cries in the distance, but they were too far away to rescue him. But within only a few yards was a young man lounging on a deck chair, sunbathing. Not only could the sunbather hear the drowning man plead, 'Help, I can't swim,' but he was also an excellent swimmer. The tragedy is that he did nothing. He only turned his head to watch indifferently as the man finally sank and drowned." (Borrow [Dropping your guard](#))

This is a sorrowful picture of believers casually watching the unsaved sink into a Christ-less eternity. We know that Jesus is the only way to life! May we have a love that will reach out to those around us who are dying in sin.

## LOVING GOD OBEYING GOD

Scripture repeatedly links love of God with obedience to God. Has the modern evangelical church missed this basic truth? I sometimes wonder. And by the way, to reiterate, the only way to obey God's commandments, is to dependent on the Spirit's enabling power (cp Ro 8:13, Phil 2:12, Phil 2:13). To try to obey in our own power is to become a modern day "Pharisee!"

Exodus 20:6 but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who **love** Me and **keep** (Septuagint =



**phulasso** in the **present tense**) My commandments.

Deuteronomy 5:10 but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who **love** Me and **keep** (**Septuagint** = **phulasso** in the **present tense**) My commandments.

Deuteronomy 7:9 "Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who **love** Him and **keep** (**Septuagint** = **phulasso** in the **present tense**) His commandments;

Deuteronomy 10:12-13 "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and **love** Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 [and] to **keep** (**Septuagint** = **phulasso** in the **present tense**) the LORD's commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?"

Daniel 9:4 And I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed and said, "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who **love** Him and **keep** (**Septuagint** = **phulasso** in the **present tense**) His commandments,

Matthew 12:47-50 And someone said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You." 48 But He answered the one who was telling Him and said, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" 49 And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Behold, My mother and My brothers! 50 "For whoever **does the will** of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."

John 14:15 "If you **love** Me, you will **keep** My commandments.

John 14:21-24 "He who has My commandments and **keeps** them, he it is who **loves** Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him." 22 Judas (not Iscariot) \*said to Him, "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us, and not to the world?" 23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone **loves** Me, he will **keep** My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him. 24 "He who does not **love** Me does not **keep** My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.

John 15:10; 14 "If you **keep** My commandments, you will abide in My **love**; just as I have **kept** My Father's commandments, and abide in His **love**. 14 "You are My **friends**, if you do what I **command** you.

1 John 2:3-6 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if **wekeep** His commandments. 4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not **keep** His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; 5 but whoever **keeps** His word, in him the **love** of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: 6 the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked (How did Jesus walk - in obedience to His Father! cp Jn 15:10).

2 John 1:6 And this is **love**, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should **walk** in it.