

1 John 5:3 Commentary

PREVIOUS

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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 1 Jn 1:1-2:27		Manifestations of Fellowship 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 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome

Greek - aute gar estin (3SPAI) e agape tou theou hina tas entolas autou teromen (1PPAS) kai ai entolai autou bareiai ouk eisin (3PPAI)

KJV 1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

BGT 1 John 5:3 ατη γ ρ σπι γ πη το θεο , να τ ς ντολ ς α το τηρ μεν, κα α ντολα α το βαρε αι ο κ ε σ ν.

NET 1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God: that we keep his commandments. And his commandments do not weigh us down,

CSB 1 John 5:3 For this is what love for God is: to keep His commands. Now His commands are not a

burden,

ESV 1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.

NIV 1 John 5:3 This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome,

NLT 1 John 5:3 Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome.

NRS 1 John 5:3 For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome,

NJB 1 John 5:3 This is what the love of God is: keeping his commandments. Nor are his commandments burdensome,

NAB 1 John 5:3 For the love of God is this, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome,

YLT 1 John 5:3 for this is the love of God, that His commands we may keep, and His commands are not burdensome;

MIT 1 John 5:3 For this is what love for God means: We comply with his commands, and that is not difficult.

GWN 1 John 5:3 To love God means that we obey his commandments. Obeying his commandments isn't difficult

BBE 1 John 5:3 For loving God is keeping his laws: and his laws are not hard.

RSV 1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.

NKJ 1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

ASV 1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

Amplified - For the [true] love of God is this: that we do His commands [keep His ordinances and are mindful of His precepts and teaching]. And these orders of His are not irksome (burdensome, oppressive, or grievous).

Wuest - For this is the love for God, namely, that we are habitually and with solicitous care guarding and observing His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

- **this**: Ex 20:6 Dt 5:10, Dt 7:9 Dt 10:12,13 Da 9:4 Mt 12:47-50 John 14:15 John 14:21-24 Jn 15:10,14 2Jn 1:6
- **and**: Ps 19:7-11 119:45,47,48, Ps 119:103,104,127,128,140 Pr 3:17 Mic 6:8 Mt 11:28-30 Ro 7:12,22 Heb 8:10
- [1 John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

James 1:25+ (WHY GOD'S COMMANDMENTS ARE NOT A BURDEN BUT A BLESSING!) But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does.

Psalm 1:2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.

Psalm 35:27 Let them shout for joy and rejoice, who favor my vindication; And let them say continually, "The LORD be magnified, Who delights in the prosperity of His servant."

Psalm 37:4 Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart.

Psalm 40:8 I delight to do Thy will, O my God; Thy Law is within my heart."

Psalm 112:1 Praise the LORD! How blessed is the man who fears the LORD, Who greatly delights in His commandments.

Psalm 119:14 I have rejoiced in the way of Thy testimonies, As much as in all riches.

Psalm 119:16 I shall delight in Thy statutes; I shall not forget Thy word.

Psalm 119:24 Thy testimonies also are my delight; They are my counselors.

Psalm 119:35 Make me walk in the path of Thy commandments, For I delight in it.

Psalm 119:47-48 And I shall delight in Thy commandments, Which I love. And I shall lift up my hands to Thy commandments, Which I love; And I will meditate on Thy statutes.

Psalm 119:70 Their heart is covered with fat, But I delight in Thy law.

Psalm 119:77 May Thy compassion come to me that I may live, For Thy law is my delight.

Psalm 119:143 Trouble and anguish have come upon me; Yet Thy commandments are my delight.

Psalm 119:165 Those who love Thy law have great peace, And nothing causes them to stumble.

Psalm 119:174 I long for Thy salvation, O LORD, And Thy law is my delight.

Matthew 11:28-30+ Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 "Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and YOU SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 "For My yoke is easy, and My load is light."

Deuteronomy 30:11+ "For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach.

OBEDIENCE IS EVIDENCE THAT WE LOVE GOD

For this is the love (agape) of God (theos), that (hina) we keep (tereo - present tense - attend carefully to) His commandments (entole) - For (gar) is a term of explanation. Always pause to ponder "What is the writer explaining?" "If in 1Jn 5:2 loving God and keeping his commandments is the key to knowing that we love God's children, it is important to define what the love of God involves, and this is what the author is doing in 1Jn 5:3." ([NET Note](#)) **Love of God** is objective genitive which means **our love** for Him (not His love for us), this love being demonstrated by **our obedience** to Him. 1Jn 5:2 supports this interpretation because this verse makes it clear that God is the object of the believer's love ("**we love God**"). **Keep** is in the present tense which speaks of one's lifestyle, of general direction, not of absolute perfection! The Spirit of grace will enable us to keep watch over (the sense of verb [tereo](#)) God's commandments as if they were a precious treasure (they are!), a treasure that we should continually seek to guard at all costs. **Wuest** adds **keep (tereo)** "*speaks of a watchful, solicitous guarding and care of God's commandments lest we disobey them, with the thought that we are concerned with His honor and glory and our Christian testimony to the same. It is a jealous safe-keeping of His commandments lest they be violated.*"

THOUGHT - The next time you are faced with the choice to obey or disobey, be motivated by the truth (and by the Spirit - 1Jn 4:13, Php 2:13NLT+) that obedience shows we love Him. Don't **say** you love God, **show** you love God. And do it out of **love**, not **legalism** (cp Ro 6:14, Ro 7:6)!

*Love is not so much emotional as it is moral,
not what you feel but what you do.*

-- Daniel Akin

Jesus repeatedly linked love and obedience...

"If you love Me, you will **keep (tereo)** My commandments." (Jn 14:15+).

"If you **keep (tereo)** My commandments, you will abide in My **love**; just as (JESUS GIVES HIS EXAMPLE DISCIPLES SHOULD IMITATE) I have **kept (tereo)** My Father's commandments, and abide in His **love**." (Jn 15:10+).

"He who has My commandments and **keeps (tereo)** 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** (emphanizo = manifest, cause to be seen openly) **Myself to him**." (Jn 14:21+)

Indeed obedience is the way to lay hold hold of one of this great promises of intimacy with Himself and His Father! Surely then obedience is not a duty (burden) as much as it is a delight (blessing)! It is our privilege to obey God, Who gives us the power to do so! Amazing grace indeed!

*Love provides the motive for obeying the commands of the law,
but the law provides specific direction for exercising love.*

-- [Jerry Bridges](#)

Daniel Akin - Loving God rightly, therefore, is not just external behavior and outward obedience. It is a longing to do His will from the heart, out of gospel gratitude for who He is and what He has done for us in Jesus. It is not an "I have to" obedience. It is an "I want to" obedience. I love to obey this King! (See [Exalting Jesus in 1,2,3 John - Page 125](#))

Barker comments that "The connection between love for God and obedience is meant as a protection against thinking of love for God as "emotional feelings" about God. True love (agapē) requires action." (See [The Expositor's Bible Commentary - Abridged Edition](#))

*God's commandments come
prepackaged with His enablements*

And His commandments (entole) are (present tense) (ou - absolutely) **not burdensome (barus** - crushing, heavy, oppressive) - They are not irksome. They do not irritate. They are not drudgery but our delight (See Ps 119:35, 47, 143). And another reason God's commandments are not **burdensome** is that God never asks us to do anything that He does not enable us to accomplish! God's commandments come prepackaged with His enablements (His indwelling Spirit)!

*"For My yoke is easy,
and My load is light."*
-- Jesus

Brian Bill - It's interesting that John refers to God's commands as **not burdensome**." This word means "heavy, severe, strict, stern, cruel and oppressive." Let's face it. Sometimes God's commands do feel constrictive but here's the deal. Because they are given in the context of love, they are for our benefit. The Pharisees were all about forcing man-made rules and regulations on people according to Matthew 23:4: "They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them." Jesus came to lift our load and through the new birth, His law is now written on our hearts (Jer 31:33+, Heb 8:10+) so that out of relationship, we will want to do what He wants us to do. If you labor under God's commands it might be because you don't love Him as you ought."

I like what **Glenn Barker** says about **not burdensome** - We who have been born of God have within us a desire **ED**: Php 2:13NLT+) and a yearning for the Father. Seeking and hungering after righteousness becomes our joy. Living the life of love becomes our delight. The commands of God bring us the freedom and the liberty (Jas 1:25+) we so ardently long for. (See [The Expositor's Bible Commentary - Abridged Edition](#))

D Edmond Hiebert adds that "Love-prompted obedience is not a crushing burden that exhausts the believer's strength and destroys his sense of freedom in Christ. He finds that the new life in Christ makes obedience possible and has implanted in him a desire to do the will of God (**ED**: AND GIVEN HIS SPIRIT WHO ENERGIZES THIS OBEDIENCE - cf Php 2:13NLT+); for he realizes that God has given His laws for the believer's own protection and highest welfare. He finds in them guidance concerning "what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect" (Ro 12:2+). For him "the statutes again become songs, and the commandments prove to be the stepping-stones to freedom." As Dodd points out, John "does not mean that God's demands upon us are less exacting than we supposed, but that they are accompanied by the assurance of power to fulfil them." God's commandments become burdensome whenever a Christian desires to do something inconsistent with His directives; when a believer attempts to carry out his own will, God's commandments seem cruel and restrictive and fellowship with God is broken. Then he finds that he must come back to a loving obedience."

Phil Newton says that "If we cringe at obedience then we know nothing of the new birth. God's commandments are not "burdensome" or 'irksome,' rather, as Marshall explains, "*They are not beyond our ability to keep*". That ability is rooted in the new birth (**ED**: AND ENERGIZED BY THE SPIRIT WHO GIVES US THE DESIRE AND POWER TO KEEP THEM - Php 2:13NLT+). While the commands of the scribes and Pharisees were "heavy burdens" that they laid on other's shoulders, what Jesus commands is "light" since we're yoked with Him in our obedience (Matthew 23:4; 11:29-30). That doesn't mean that we don't have to fight ourselves to obey (**ED**: THAT'S Php 2:12 WHICH COMMANDS US TO WORK OUT OUR SALVATION IN FEAR AND TREMBLING - THAT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY BUT MYSTERIOUSLY IT IS STILL ENERGIZED BY THE SPIRIT.). That's part of personal discipline. But it means that God gives grace (**ED**: AND SUPERNATURAL ENABLEMENT BY HIS SPIRIT OF GRACE) for those He has birthed into His family to walk in obedience to Him."

*The genuine proof of love is obedience,
so the genuine proof of faith is love*

MacArthur writes that "In these five verses (1Jn 5:1-5), John weaves faith, love, and obedience all together inextricably. They exist mutually in a dynamic relationship, i.e., as the genuine proof of love is obedience, so the genuine proof of faith is love. The word **keep** conveys the idea of constant obedience (cf. John 8:31, 32; 14:15, 21; 15:10).

*When the world knows for Whom we stand,
they watch how we walk! Does our life match our lips?*

The call for saints to keep God's commandments permeates the entire Bible - see Deut 13:4, 1Sa 15:22, Eccl 12:13, Jer 7:23, etc. John repeatedly mentions the idea of obedience - Jn 14:21, 14:23-24, 15:10, 15:14. **Jesus** taught that "whoever **does** the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother." (Mt 12:50) and "blessed are those who hear the word of God, and observe it." (Lk 11:28)

John MacArthur has an excellent pragmatic summary statement noting that "The obedience that characterizes a true child of God is not external, ritualistic, legalistic compliance. Nor is it unwilling, partial, inconsistent, or grudging. Loving obedience is from the heart (Dt. 11:13; 30:2, 10; Ro 6:17), willing (Ex. 25:2; 1Pe 5:2; cf. Lev. 26:21), total (Dt. 27:26; Gal. 3:10; James 2:10), constant (Phil. 2:12), and joyful (Ps. 119:54; cf. 2Cor. 9:7).

*The commands of God become burdensome
only when we desire to do something else*
-- James Montgomery Boice

Timothy Peck - "You see, John knows that disobedience to God's commands is a far more crushing weight than obedience is. Christians often talk about the cost of discipleship, how following Jesus Christ does indeed cost us. But people rarely talk about the cost of non-discipleship, that a Christian who chooses a path of disobedience to God chooses a much more painful and difficult path, because the weight of disobedience is a crushing weight." (Sermon Central)

*Every commandment that is laid upon us
provides another chance to show our love.*

William Barclay on **burdensome** - "For love no duty is too hard and no task is too great. That which we would never do for a stranger we will willingly attempt for a loved one. That which we would never give to a stranger we will gladly give to a loved one. That which would be an impossible sacrifice, if a stranger demanded it, becomes a willing gift when love needs it... *Difficult* the commandments of Christ are; *burdensome* they are not; for Christ never laid a commandment on a man without giving him the strength to carry it; and every commandment that is laid upon us provides another chance to show our love."

Sam Storms - The reason why his commandments are not **burdensome** is because we now have the power, by virtue of the new birth and the resultant "seed" of God and indwelling Holy Spirit, to keep them!...This "**faith**" is our faith in Christ, in particular, our faith in who he is (God in human flesh = the incarnation) and what he has done (propitiation for our sins = atonement). But what precisely is the "victory" or "overcoming" that we experience? Is it 1) conversion (hence a victory over sin and death); 2) decisive rejection of the false teachers; 3) an ongoing victory over the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life; 4) an ongoing victory over the temptation of the world; 5) victory over Satan? Or is it all of the above?

Craig Keener on **burdensome** - God's commandments had never been too heavy for those in whose hearts they had been written (Dt 30:11-14). Many Jewish teachers regarded some parts of the law as "heavier" or "weightier" than others (as in Mt 23:23), but they meant that some were more crucial for daily life, not that any of them were too hard to keep. (See [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament - Page 714](#))

Pulpit Commentary says burdensome "is a relative term, depending upon the relation between the thing to be done and the powers of the doer of it. The Christian, whose will is united with the will of God, will not find obedience to that will a task."

*Our Father's commandments
should not our burden but our delight!*
-- [See Scriptures above](#)

David Guzik explains why God's commandments are no longer difficult to bear...**His commandments are not burdensome** when we see how wise and good the commandments of God are. They are gifts from Him to show us the best and most fulfilling life possible. God's commands are like the "manufacturer's handbook" for life; He tells us what to do because He knows how we work best. God's commands are not given to bind or to pain us, or because God is like an irritated old man.. His commandments are not burdensome because when we are born again, we are given new hearts—hearts which by instinct wish to please God. As part of the New Covenant, the law of God has been written on the heart of every believer (Jeremiah 31:33+). His commandments are not burdensome when we compare them to the religious rules men make up. John is not trying to say obedience is an easy thing. If that were so, then it would be easy for us to not sin, and John has already acknowledged that we all do sin (1 John 1:8+). John is thinking of the contrast Jesus made between the religious requirements of the religious leaders of His day, and the simplicity of loving God and following Him. Jesus said all the rules and regulations of the Scribes and Pharisees were as heavy burdens (Matthew 23:4). In contrast, Jesus said of Himself, My yoke is easy and My burden is light (Matthew 11:30+). Instead of the

burdensome requirement to keep hundreds of little rules and regulations, Jesus simply says to us, "Love Me and love my people, and you will walk in obedience." (ED: AND OF COURSE HE MAKES THIS IMMINENTLY POSSIBLE BY GIVING US HIS SPIRIT WHICH MAKES SUCH SUPERNATURAL LOVE A VERY REAL POSSIBILITY. WHILE THE SPIRIT WILL NOT FORCE US, HE WILL ENABLE US TO EXERCISE OUR VOLITIONAL CHOICE TO OBEY GOD AND TO LOVE GOD AND OTHERS. WE ARE MOTIVATED TO OBEY NOW OUT OF LOVE NOT LEGALISM!) His commandments are not burdensome when we really love God. When we love God, we will want to obey Him and please Him. When you love someone, it seems little trouble to go to a lot of difficulty to help or please that person. You enjoy doing it, though if you had to do it for an enemy, you would be complaining all the time. Just as the seven years of Jacob's service for Laban seemed only a few days to him because of the love he had for her (Genesis 29:18), so obeying God's commands does not seem a burden when we really love Him. An old proverb says, "Love feels no loads." ([Enduring Word Commentary](#))

C H Spurgeon on the godly man in Ps 1:2+ - His delight is in the Law of the Lord" - He is not under the law as a curse and condemnation, but he is in it, and he delights to be in it as his rule of life; he delights, moreover, to meditate in it, to read it by day, and think upon it by night. (Ed: How do you know he delights in it?) He takes a text and carries it with him all day long; and in the night-watches, when sleep forsakes his eyelids, he muses upon the Word of God. In the day of his prosperity he sings psalms out of the Word of God, and in the night of his affliction he comforts himself with promises out of the same book. "The law of the Lord" is the daily bread of the true believer. And yet, in David's day, how small was the volume of inspiration, for they had scarcely anything save the first five books of Moses! How much more, then, should we prize the whole written Word which it is our privilege to have in all our houses! But, alas, what ill-treatment is given to this angel (messenger) from heaven! We are not all Berean searchers of the Scriptures (Acts 17:11+). How few among us can lay claim to the benediction (blessing) of the text! (cp Rev 1:3+) Perhaps some of you can claim a sort of negative purity, because you do not walk in the way of the ungodly; but let me ask you—Is your delight in the law of God? Do you study God's Word? Do you make it the man of your right hand—your best companion and hourly guide?

*What you desire to do with your whole heart
is not burdensome to do.*

-- [John Piper](#)

John Piper writes that "Sometimes people equate keeping commandments with loving God. Often they quote John 14:15: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." But this text clearly distinguishes loving Christ from obeying his commandments. If you love me—that's one thing—then you will keep my commandments—that's another thing. The one leads to the other. If you have the one, you will do the other. Love and commandment-keeping are not identical. It's not wrong to say that loving Jesus, or loving God, includes doing what he commands. But that's not all it is. Which is why John says in 1 John 5:3, "And his commandments are not burdensome." Loving God is not just external obedience; it means having a heart for God that doesn't find his commandments burdensome. And if the commandments are not burdensome, what are they? They are desirable. What you desire to do with your whole heart is not burdensome to do. Listen to the psalmist. Psalm 40:8: "I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart." Psalm 119:24: "Your testimonies are my delight; they are my counselors." Psalm 119:35: "Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it." Psalm 119:92: "If your law had not been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction." Loving God means admiring and valuing and treasuring and desiring him with such ardency and authenticity that his will is our delight and is not burdensome." ([What Happens When We Are Born Again](#))

P G Matthew - If we complain to God, "Your yoke is heavy and your commands are grievous," then the love of God is not animating us. When God's love truly fills our hearts, we will agree with the Bible that his yoke is easy, his burden is light, and his commands are a joy.

Love (26)(**agape**) is a love that impels one to sacrifice one's self for the benefit of the object loved and speaks of a love which is awakened by a sense of value in the object loved, an apprehension of its preciousness. **Love of God** calls for denial of (death to) self. **Agape** is unconditional, sacrificial love and Biblically refers to a love that God is (1Jn 4:8,16), that God shows (Jn 3:16, 1Jn 4:9) and that God enables in His children (fruit of the Spirit - Gal 5:22+). Agape is a self-sacrificing, caring commitment that shows itself in seeking the highest good of the one loved. While [agape](#) is not primarily a feeling, it is certainly not without feeling. It might be called "caring commitment." While it is a command to love one another, and it is thus a "duty," it is also and predominantly a delight. Agape is an attitude manifest by actions, caring, committed actions. **Agape** often involves sacrifice, and is supremely exemplified by Jesus' sacrifice of Himself on the Cross. Agape love impels one to sacrifice one's self for the benefit of the object loved... (it) speaks of a love which is awakened by a sense of value in the object loved, an apprehension of its preciousness. MacArthur writes that "agapē (love) is the love of self-sacrificing service (Phil. 2:2–5; Col. 3:12–14; cf. Rom. 14:19; 1 Cor. 10:23–24; 13:4–7), the love granted to someone who needs to be loved (Heb. 6:10; 1 Peter 2:17; cf. Rom. 12:15), not necessarily to someone who is attractive or lovable."

Agape love does not depend on the world's criteria for love, such as attractiveness, emotions, or

sentimentality. Believers can easily fall into the trap of blindly following the world's demand that a lover **feel** positive toward the beloved. This is not **agape** love, but is a love based on impulse. **Impulsive love** characterizes the spouse who announces to the other spouse that they are planning to divorce their mate. Why? They reason "I can't help it. I fell in love with another person!" Christians must understand that this type of impulsive love is completely contrary to God's **decisive love**, which is decisive because He is in control and has a purpose in mind. There are many reasons a proper understanding of the truth of God's word (and of the world's lie) is critical and one of the foremost is Jesus' declaration that "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have **love** (agape) for one another." (John 13:35⁺).

Agape in 1 John - 1 John 2:5, 15; 3:1, 16-17; 1Jn 4:7-10, 12, 16 (3x), 1Jn 4:17, 1Jn 4:18 (3x) 1Jn 5:3 (Also in 2John 1:3, 6; 3John 1:6)

Keep (5083) (**tereo** from **teros** = a guard or warden - this should help give you an idea of the sense of the verb **tereo**) means to keep an eye on, to keep something in view, to hold firmly, to attend carefully or to watch over (Jesus' ask His Father for His watchful care for His disciples in Jn 17:11). **Tereo** speaks of guarding something which is in one's possession. It means to watch as one would some precious thing. The idea is to observe attentively, to heed, to keep watch over and to retain in custody.

Tereo with the meaning of obey - Mt 19:17, Mt 23:3 (**tereo** = observe), Mt 28:20, Jn 8:51, 52 (one who keeps Jesus' Word = a believer = one who will never see the second death in hell), Jn 9:16 (keep = observe the Sabbath), Jn 14:15 (description of a genuine disciple - love is not just with one's lips but is validated by one's life lived in loving obedience to God), Jn 14:21, 23, 24 (no love = no obedience = not a believer - Note Jesus is not talking about legalistic obedience but Spirit enabled obedience which is the only obedience that pleases the Father!), Jn 15:10 (used twice), Jn 15:20 (used twice), Jn 17:6 (the 11 disciples), Acts 15:5, 1Ti 6:14, James 2:10, 1Jn 2:3, 4, 5, 3:22, 1Jn 3:24, 1Jn 5:2, 3, Rev 1:3 (heed), Rev 2:26, 3:3, 3:8, 3:10, 12:17, 14:12, Rev 22:7 (heeds), Rev 22:9.

Tereo with meaning of keep watch or guard - Mt 27:36, 27:54, Mt 28:4 (guards = **tereo**), Jn 17:11, 12, Jn 17:15 (with nuance of protection from Satan), Acts 12:5, Acts 12:6 (watching), Acts 16:23, Acts 24:23, 25:4, 25:21 (held in custody), 1Jn 5:18, Jude 1:1, 6,

Keep (5083) (**tereo** from **teros** - a guard or warden) means to keep an eye on, to keep watch over or or to attend carefully. The idea is guarding something which is in one's possession, watching as one would some precious thing. Jesus uses **tereo** in his "job description" of a genuine Christ follower (disciple) in Mt 28:20 ("teaching them **toobserve** all that I commanded you").

Paul uses **tereo** in charging Timothy "in the presence of God, Who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, Who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you **keep** (**tereo**) the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1Ti 6:13-14-note)

In some of Paul's last written communication he uses **tereo** when he says "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have **kept** (**tereo**) the faith." (2Ti 4:7-note)

James says "This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to **keep** (**tereo**) oneself unstained by the world." (James 1:27-note)

Jude commands believers "**keep** (**tereo** - **aorist imperative** = conveys a sense of urgency! Just do it! Don't delay!) yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously (**prosdechomai**) for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life." (Jude 1:21-note)

Later James adds "whoever **keeps** (**tereo**) the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all." (James 2:10)

In the Revelation John writes "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and **heed** (**tereo** in the **present tense** = as our general practice) the things which are written in it; for the time is near." (Revelation 1:3-note, cp Rev 22:7-note) **Note** that the **blessing** is not **hearing** the word but **heeding** (doing) the word (cp James 1:22-note). God always blesses obedience!

John writes "Here is the perseverance of the saints who **keep** (**tereo** in the **present tense**) the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus." (Revelation 14:12-note)

John uses **tereo** several times, some describing the marks of authentic Christianity (that we truly know Him) and once the condition of answered prayer...

"And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we **keep** (**tereo** in the **present tense** = as our general practice) His commandments." (1Jn 2:3-note)

"The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep **keep (tereo in the present tense** = as their general practice fails to guard) His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." (1Jn 2:4-note)

"but whoever **keeps (tereo in the present tense** = as one's habitual practice) His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him." (1Jn 2:5-note)

"and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we **keep (tereo in the present tense** = as our general practice) His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. (1Jn 3:22-note)

"And the one who **keeps (tereo in the present tense** = as our general practice) His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And we know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us." (1Jn 3:24-note)

If you struggle with the doctrine of eternal security, take some time today and study John's uses of **tereo** which frequently are used in the description of a genuine follower of Christ. **TEREO is translated** continue(1), guard(1), guards(1), heed(2), heeds(1), held in custody(1), keep(27), keep watch over(1), keeping(1), keeping guard over(1), keeps(9), kept(12), kept in custody(3), observe(3), preserve(1), preserved(1), reserved(4), watching over(1).

- Jn 8:51,55, Jn 14:15, Jn 14:21, Jn 14:23, 24, Jn 15:10, 20, Jn 17:6],
- 1Jn 2:3, 4, 1Jn 3:22, 24, 1Jn 5:2, 1Jn 5:3, 6 in the Revelation
- Rev 1:3, Rev 2:26, Rev 3:3, Rev 3:8, Rev 3:10, Rev 12:17, Rev 14:12, Rev 22:7

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).

Commandments (instructions, orders, requirements)(1785)(**entole**) from **en** = in, upon + **tello** = accomplish, charge, command) refers to some type of demand or requirement. A general injunction, charge, precept of moral and religious nature. Of the 67 uses, all but three (Lk 15:29; Col 4:10-note; Titus 1:14-note) refer specifically to divine commandments.

The New Testament repeatedly commands believers to love like Jesus loved (Eph 5:2-note, Eph 5:25-note) -- John 13:34-35; 15:12, 17; Gal 5:13; 1Th. 4:9-note; Heb 13:1-note; 1Pe 1:22-note.

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

Burdensome (926)(**barus** from **baros** = weight, something pressing on one physically or emotionally) literally means heavy but in the NT is used figuratively of rules and regulations that are difficult to obey and thus are burdensome or oppressive (Mt 23:4, 1Jn 5:3) or of sins likened to a heavy burden (ever felt that weight? I have!!!)(Ps 38:4). The idea of burdensome is that the keeping of the laws is grievous. In Acts 25:7 the idea is "weighty and serious" charges. **Wuest** - "The word (barus) speaks of that which is burdensome, severe, stern, violent, cruel, unsparing. Love for God makes the keeping of His commandments a delight rather than a burden." **BDAG** adds that **barus** alludes to "a source of difficulty or trouble because of demands made" as in Paul's letters (2Cor 10:10). **Barus** can pertain "to being important because of unusual significance. In positive affirmation of certain legal directives weighty, important (Herodian 2, 14, 3; Jos., Ant. 19, 362 of administrative responsibilities) and the more important provisions of the law (Mt 23:23) or serious charges (Acts 25:7)." **BDAG** adds that **barus** can pertain "to being of unbearable temperament, fierce, cruel, savage" (Acts 20:29).

In Exodus 17:12 Moses' hands were **heavy** (Lxx = barus). In Ex 18:18 of Moses "the task is too **heavy**" ("heavy a burden" is the idea). In Numbers 11:14 Moses said "I alone am not able to carry all this people, because it is too **burdensome** (figurative, for bearing or carrying the people means being responsible for all their needs and cares) for me." In 1Sa 4:18 Eli fell and died because "he was old and **heavy**." Figuratively used to describe a "**heavy** yoke" (of Solomon on the people) (1Ki 12:4, 1Ki 12:11, 2Chr 10:4, 11). Job said "Even today my complaint is rebellion; His hand is **heavy** despite my groaning." (Job 23:2) David said "For my

iniquities are gone over my head; As a **heavy** burden they weigh too much for me." (Psalm 38:4) "A stone is **heavy** and the sand weighty, But the provocation of a fool is heavier than both of them." (Proverbs 27:3) The wise men told Nebuchadnezzar that "the thing which the king demands is **difficult**" (Da 2:11)

Moses addressed heavy commandments - "For this commandment which I command you today is **not too difficult** for you, nor is it out of reach. 12 "It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' 13 "Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' 14 "But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it.

Barus - 6x in 6v - Usage: burdensome(1), heavy(1), savage(1), serious(1), weightier provisions(1), weighty(1).

Matthew 23:4 "They tie up **heavy** burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger.

Matthew 23:23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the **weightier** provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.

Acts 20:29 "I know that after my departure **savage** wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;

Acts 25:7 After Paul arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many and **serious** charges against him which they could not prove,

2 Corinthians 10:10 For they say, "His letters are **weighty** and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible."

1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not **burdensome**.

Barus - 28x in Lxx - Gen 48:17; Exod 17:12; 18:18; Num 11:14; 20:20; Judg 20:34; 1 Sam 4:18; 5:11; 1 Kgs 3:9; 10:2; 12:4, 11; 2 Kgs 6:14; 18:17; 2 Chr 9:1; 10:4, 11; 25:19; Neh 5:18; Job 6:3; 15:10; 23:2; 33:7; Ps 35:18; 38:4; Prov 27:3; Dan 2:11; Nah 3:3

Steven Cole on God's commandments are not burdensome - He does not mean that obedience to God's commandments is always easy or effortless. The warfare terminology of "overcoming" and "victory" shows that obedience is often a battle. The world, the flesh, and the devil are formidable foes that we must constantly fight against. So in what sense are God's commandments not burdensome?

First, God's commandments are not burdensome because we have a new nature that has the power to obey.

That is the implication of "**for**" at the beginning of verse 4. (Some versions put a comma or semicolon at the end of 1Jn 5:3, rather than a period.) God's commandments are not burdensome because "whatever is born of God overcomes the world." "Whatever" is a neuter in Greek, which probably focuses on our new nature that overcomes the world. Thus John emphasizes not "the victorious person," but "the victorious power." "It is not the man, but his birth from God, which conquers" (Alfred Plummer, cited by Stott, p. 174).

Second, God's commandments are not burdensome because they are the commands of God, not of man.

The commandments of men are burdensome. Invariably they stem from an attempt to earn standing with God or status before men through a system of human works. The Pharisees had added their commandments to God's commands, but Jesus called them "heavy burdens" (Matt. 23:4). Even God's law, apart from the grace of Christ, was a heavy yoke that no one could bear (Acts 15:10; Gal. 5:1). But, God's commandments come from an all-wise heavenly Father, designed for our good. Our gentle Savior said, "My yoke is easy and My load is light" (Matt. 11:30).

Third, God's commandments are not burdensome because they are given and received in the context of love.

A loving father does not tell his child to stay away from a busy street because he wants to take away his fun, but because he loves him and wants to protect him from injury or death. An immature child may think that his father's commandment is restrictive, but he needs to trust his father's love and obey anyway.

An immature believer may view God's commands as restrictive. But our heavenly Father knows that sin will damage and destroy us. If we have come to know His love in Christ through the new birth, then we must trust His love and obey His commandments. When we see that God's commands stem from His love for us as His children, they are not burdensome.

CONCLUSION - The very first test given to a newborn in the delivery room is called the Apgar score. The test was designed to quickly evaluate a newborn's physical condition after delivery and to determine any immediate need for extra medical or emergency care. It measures things like muscle tone, heart rate, reflexes, skin color, and breathing rate. Our second daughter came out of the womb with blue skin, and I was very alarmed. The doctor calmly cleaned the mucus out of her nose, and in a minute she was pink and crying. She didn't get a very high Apgar score, but thankfully, she was alive. If she had not started breathing, we would have been overwhelmed with grief, not filled with joy. The vital signs of birth are essential! A true child of God will have a spiritual Apgar score. We could probably come up with more, but John gives us three vital signs of the new birth: faith in Jesus Christ, love for others, and obedience to God's commandments. If you claim to be born again, you may want to check your spiritual Apgar score. If the vital signs of new life in Christ are not there, you need to get down on your knees and plead with God to cause you "to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet. 1:3). ([Vital Signs of the New Birth 1 John 5:1-5](#))

Greek Word Study

Barus

Burdensome (916)(**barus** from **baros** = weight, something pressing on one physically or emotionally) literally means heavy but in the NT is used figuratively of rules and regulations that are difficult to obey and thus are burdensome or oppressive (Mt 23:4, 1Jn 5:3) or of sins likened to a heavy burden (ever felt that weight? I have!!!)(Ps 38:4). The idea of burdensome is that the keeping of the laws is grievous. In Acts 25:7 the idea is "weighty and serious" charges.

Wuest - The word (**barus**) speaks of that which is burdensome, severe, stern, violent, cruel, unsparing. Love for God makes the keeping of His commandments a delight rather than a burden. ([Word Studies from the Greek New Testament](#))

BDAG adds that **barus** alludes to "a source of difficulty or trouble because of demands made" as in Paul's letters (2Cor 10:10). **Barus** can pertain "to being important because of unusual significance. In positive affirmation of certain legal directives weighty, important (Herodian 2, 14, 3; Jos., Ant. 19, 362 of administrative responsibilities) and the more important provisions of the law (Mt 23:23) or serious charges (Acts 25:7)." BDAG adds that **barus** can pertain "to being of unbearable temperament, fierce, cruel, savage" (Acts 20:29).

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thing which the king demands is **difficult**" (Da 2:11)

Daniel Akin - For many years sports fans in America would tune in to ABC's "Wide World of Sports." Spanning the globe they brought into our homes sports of every imaginable variety. Yet regardless of the sport, whether it was baseball, football or basketball; track & field, golf or tennis; figure skating, hockey or horse racing; who can forget the tragic fall and accident of that ski jumper with those now famous words echoing in the background: "THE THRILL OF VICTORY AND THE AGONY OF DEFEAT!" In sports there will always be winners and losers, those who seize victory and those who taste defeat. 2) The apostle John was determined that his spiritual children would taste the thrill of victory and avoid the agony of defeat. Just as a great athlete needs strength and speed, skill and training, John knew great Christians need the new birth and love, obedience and faith. Indeed John is committed to the proposition that "faith is the victory." 3) We used to sing a hymn entitled Faith is the Victory. Ira Sankey (1840-1908) the music leader for D. L. Moody put the words of this song to music. Taking portions of different stanzas; and with a slight adjustment, there is a wonderful word of confidence and assurance that rises from this song:

FAITH IS THE VICTORY

"His banner over us is love, our sword the Word of God;
We walk the road the saints above, with shouts of triumph trod;
Against the foe in vales below, let all our strength be hurled;
Faith is the victory we know, that overcomes the world."

Encamped along the hills of light,
Ye Christian soldiers rise,
And press the battle ere the night
Shall veil the glowing skies;
Against the foe in vales below
Let all our strength be hurled;
Faith is the victory, we know,
That overcomes the world.

Faith is the victory!
Faith is the victory!
O glorious victory,
That overcomes the world.

His banner over us is love,
Our sword the Word of God;
We tread the road the saints before
With shouts of triumph trod.
By faith, they like a whirlwind's breath,
Swept on o'er every field;
The faith by which they conquered death
Is still our shining shield.

On every hand the foe we find
Drawn up in dread array;
Let tents of ease be left behind,
And onward to the fray.
Salvation's helmet on each head,
With truth all girt about,
The earth shall tremble 'neath our tread,
And echo with our shout.

To him that overcomes the foe,
White raiment shall be giv'n;
Before the angels he shall know
His name confessed in heav'n;
Then onward from the hills of light,
Our hearts with love aflame,
We'll vanquish all the hosts of night,
In Jesus' conqu'ring name.

[The Freedom Of Structure](#)

Concert pianist Jeannette Haien believes that the structure of a fine musical composition actually provides great freedom for the person who plays it. "Within the strictures of so-called form," she says, "is all the freedom in the world."

It's easy to feel confined by structure in our faith because we have a natural resistance to rules. But God's commands are given to enhance our lives rather than restrict them.

First John 5:3 states, "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome." Instead of weighing us down, they protect us from the burden of sin. As we follow His commands, we experience liberty.

Speaking of an excellent musical composition, Jeannette Haien says, "Under the laws of structure you have the freedom to work in the freest way imaginable. What [the composer] has written is that which I honor."

The Bible is our sheet music for living. Today, we can play the song of life as God has written it, and we can discover anew the promise of Jesus to those who believe in Him: "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Lord, help us to value the freedom
Of life we receive from Your love,
A life of obedience and service,
Kept safe by Your hand from above.
—K. De Haan

True freedom is found in obedience to Christ.

[Lessons Of Obedience](#)

Read: 1 John 2:1-11

This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. —1 John 5:3

When young Kofi came home after Sunday school, his mother asked him what he had learned that morning. His quick reply spoke volumes: "Obedience ... again!"

Although I'm many years older than Kofi, I agree that obedience to God is a lesson that we must, sometimes reluctantly, learn over and over again.

Oswald Chambers wrote: "The Lord does not give me rules, but He makes His standard very clear. If my relationship to Him is that of love, I will do what He says ... If I hesitate, it is because I love someone I have placed in competition with Him, namely, myself."

When we are obedient, we show God that we love Him and have more faith in Him than we do in ourselves. Arthur W. Pink said that love is "a principle of action, and it expresses itself ... by deeds which please the object loved." To obey God means to relinquish what we want and to choose to do what He asks.

God requires the obedience of His followers, and Jesus placed great importance on it. He asked, "Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). And He issued this challenge: "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

To say we follow Jesus Christ
Without attempting to obey
Reveals our lack of faith that He
Will lead us right in every way.
—Sper

Obedience to God is an expression of our love for God.

[When You Don't Want To](#)

When it comes to expressing our feelings, few of us are more honest than children. A father was having a struggle to get his 4-year-old son to obey. When asked why he wouldn't do as he was told, the boy said, "Daddy, I just don't want to!"

Many of us as Christians are not that honest. We make excuses for not obeying God's will, when the real reason may be that we just don't want to. For example, when our family lived in West Berlin, I began neglecting Bible reading and prayer. I honestly thought I lacked the time. Later, when we moved to Switzerland, I felt excited, not only because we lived near majestic mountains, but also because of the mountains of time I would have. Yet in spite of more time, I still didn't read and pray regularly. My real problem was that I simply didn't want to.

I found the answer to my dilemma in 1 John 5:3, which states, "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." As I repented of my long neglect of Him, He filled my empty heart with His forgiving love. Bible reading and prayer became a delight. My renewed love for God made doing His will more desirable than doing my own will.

Is there something you know is God's will for you? Do you love Him enough to desire it and do it? (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

When we, O Lord, would turn aside
From walking in Your way;
Remind us of Your matchless love
That prompts us to obey.
—DJD

Love is the heart of obedience.

The Power To Obey

During the 1995 International Composers Festival in London, a computer was chosen to perform two piano pieces said to be too difficult for human hands. Seated on a piano stool and wearing a bow tie, the Sibelius 7 computer flawlessly played the formidable works of Hungarian composer Gyorgy Ligeti.

Many people feel that God's commands are like those unachievable piano pieces. Using mere human strength, they are. But with the life and power of God within us through faith in Christ, we see His commands in a whole new light.

The apostle John wrote, "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome" (1 Jn. 5:3).

The next verse gives the key: "Whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith" (v.4).

We are not spiritual computers capable of a flawless performance. But the life of the perfect Son of God inside can enable us to obey His commands. God the Father has composed the "music" for our lives in His Word. Through His Son and His Spirit, He has given us the power to play it with confidence and joy. (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Although we cannot "play the tune"
God gave to Moses long ago,
Our Lord performed it perfectly,
And now through us His power can flow.
—Hess

Assignments from God always include His enablement.

Taking Orders

A sergeant in the Indiana National Guard was demoted and sentenced to 4 days in jail because he refused to take off his cap.

It really wasn't that simple. The incident occurred during winter training exercises when temperatures were well below freezing. The man wore a soft cap with ear flaps under a regulation helmet. The previous spring he had suffered burns to his face and ears, and

doctors had advised him to wear a cap to protect his sensitive skin.

At this point you're probably feeling sorry for the guardsman. But there's more to the story. In the official report, there was evidence that the man was intoxicated, and this incident of insubordination had been preceded by two other warnings about proper headgear.

The soldier was not excused, though he thought he should have been. Like so many of us, he made the mistake of thinking he was within his rights to dismiss the orders of someone in authority.

In the family of God, we too are apt to think we know what is best for us. But no one is in a better position to understand our needs than the Lord. His commands are given with an understanding of the outcome. They are for His honor, the good of others, and our eventual joy. (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Master, make me ready
When Thy voice is truly heard,
With obedience glad and steady,
Still to follow every word.
—Havergal

To love God is to obey God.

Hit The Switch

This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. —1 John 5:3

I can't get Steven to turn off the light when he leaves his bedroom. It's frustrating to have to tell him time after time to hit the switch on the way out.

When I consider the situation, I come to these conclusions: Steve is able to turn off the light. I've instructed him to do so. He knows it's a good idea. But he just can't seem to get into the habit of hitting that switch.

Sounds a bit like most of us, doesn't it? Think of the things God has told us in the Bible that we should do. For example, "Rejoice always" (1 Th. 5:16). We are able to rejoice. We've been instructed to demonstrate the joy of the Lord. We know it's a good idea. But we can't seem to make it a habit.

Just as Steven needs to train himself to flick that switch each time he leaves his room, so we need to train ourselves to give God thanks, praise, and honor in every situation.

Think of some of God's other specific commands: Trust in the Lord (Prov. 3:5). Be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). Pray without ceasing (1 Th. 5:17). Be holy because He is holy (1 Pet. 1:15-16).

Are we taking God's commands seriously? Are we relying on Him for the ability to do what He wants us to do?

Let's train ourselves to "hit the switch." (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Obedient to the Lord's direction,
Doing what His Word commands,
I joyfully will follow Jesus
Willingly with heart and hands. —Hess

Servants of Christ must be masters of themselves.

Warren Wiersbe - 1 John 5:3 - THE SECRET OF JOYFUL OBEDIENCE

Everything in creation—except man—obeys the will of God. "Lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds . . . do his bidding" (Ps. 148:8). In the Book of Jonah, you see the winds and waves, and even the fish, obeying God's commands; but the prophet stubbornly wanted his own way.

Disobedience to God's will is a tragedy—but so is reluctant, grudging obedience. God does not want us to disobey Him, but neither does He want us to obey out of fear or necessity. What Paul wrote about giving also applies to living: "not reluctantly or under

compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7).

What is the secret of joyful obedience? It is to recognize that obedience is a family matter. We are serving a loving Father and helping our brothers and sisters in Christ. We have been born of God; we love God, and we love God's children. And we demonstrate this love by keeping God's commandments. (See [Pause for Power: A 365-Day Journey through the Scriptures - Page 150](#))

Joseph Stowell - TRUE LOVE - GOD IS LOVE. WHOEVER LIVES IN LOVE LIVES IN GOD, AND GOD IN HIM.—1 John 4:16

We love God by giving ourselves willingly to Him, His Word, and His will.

"This is love for God: to obey his commands"
(1 John 5:3).

But loving God is also expressed by extending love toward others. In fact, loving others is the proof of our commitment to Christ (John 13:34–35). These upward and outward directions of love are brought together in Christ's command that we are to first love God and then our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:34–40).

The opposite of love is not always hate. It is more often self-centeredness rooted in a fear of loss, of being taken advantage of, of being misunderstood, of becoming vulnerable, or of losing control of our own destiny. Fear turns our attention inward. It thrives on self-centeredness—on our concern for our own welfare. When we are fearful, we refuse to surrender to God's control and are afraid to reach out to others.

Yet John reminds us that "perfect love drives out fear" (1 John 4:18). Love loves in the face of our fears and expels fear from our hearts. When I trust God to protect and prosper me, I have nothing to fear and am free to love. I am free to yield lovingly to God regardless of my circumstances and to unconditionally love others without seeking to protect my own interests. Paul helps us understand how foreign fear is to authentic faith: "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love" (2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV). A conscious commitment to true love will dispel fear and help drive out other fear-inspired enemies, such as anger, jealousy, and hatred.

A loveless life is often a life that has been victimized by fear. Trust Him to cover your fears and risk an act of love that tells Him how much you love Him. Reach "up" to Him in trust and "out" to others.

Start to love today by choosing one concrete way to express your love to God by loving someone you know who is in need

Jerry Bridges - CRUISE CONTROL OR RACE CAR? (See [Holiness Day by Day: Transformational Thoughts](#))

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. 1 JOHN 5:3

If we're to love God with all our heart and soul and mind, and if obedience is a major part of such love, it follows that we're to obey Him with all our heart, soul, and mind. We're to put everything we have into obedience to Him.

Most of us believers practice what I call a "cruise-control" approach to obedience. We press the pedal of obedience until we've brought our behavior up to a certain level or speed, which is most often determined by the behavior standard of other Christians around us. We don't want to lag behind them, nor are we eager to forge ahead. We want to just comfortably blend in. Once we have arrived at this comfortable level of obedience, we push the cruise-control button in our hearts, ease back, and relax. We don't have to watch the speed limit signs in God's Word, and we certainly don't have to experience the fatigue that comes with striving to obey Him with all our heart, soul, and mind.

By contrast consider race-car drivers. They wouldn't think of using cruise control. They're not interested in blending in with those around them. They want to win the race. So they're totally focused on their driving. They try to push their car to the outer limits of its mechanical ability and endurance, and press themselves to the limits of their skill. They're driving with all their heart, soul, and mind.

This is what it means to love and obey God with all our heart, soul, and mind. It means striving for holiness, in the words of Hebrews 12:14. It means making every effort to add to our faith the various facets of Christian character, in the words of 2 Peter 1:5–7.

Robert Hawker - And his commandments are not grievous.—1 John 5:3.

Is it so, my soul, that the commandments of thy Lord are not grievous unto thee? Surely it is; for though thou carriest about with thee a body of sin and death, which is everlastingly harassing thee, yet thou canst, and dost say, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man;" yea, in the very moment that thine old unrenewed nature, when evil is present with thee, is tempting thee to break through the hedge of divine precepts, in thy regenerated part thou truly lovest and delightest in the holiness of thy Lord's

commandments. And are there not seasons in thine experience, when, in spite of sin, and Satan, and the world, thou canst adopt the language of one of old, and say, "Oh, how I love thy law; it is my meditation all the day!" And is it not joy to thy heart, and a blessed part of thy faith, that the law of thy God was so sure and so strict, that rather than that a jot of it should pass unfulfilled, or the smallest breach of it go unatoned for, Jesus must and did die? And is it not one of the sweetest and most satisfying principles to thee in the gospel, that Jehovah did not, and would not clear the guilty, but by an equivalent; so that, both in obedience and by sacrifice, the law is magnified by thy great Surety, and made honourable? Precious Jesus! It is wholly by thee, and in thee, as my soul finds the commandments of my God to be not grievous. By faith I behold them all fulfilled in thee, as my glorious head; and by virtue of my union with thee, I feel the gracious principle of thy quickening Spirit inclining my soul both to love thy commandments, and most earnestly desiring to fulfil them. "Lord, enable me to run the way of thy commandments, now thou hast set my soul at liberty!"

These commandments, he says, are not burdensome. They may seem so to those who have not experienced the new birth. To the Christian, the commandments of Christ provide the pattern of the new life that he desires to follow by the empowering of the Holy Spirit. He recognises in them the Master's instructions for the very best kind of life.

It was John, the apostle of a later day, who wrote, 'His commandments are not grievous', 1 John 5:3, and this was certainly true of the commandment given to Adam. How many trees were there in Eden? Scores? Hundreds? Thousands? We are not told, we cannot tell, but we can be sure that there was an ample supply for man's physical need, and the prohibition pertained to one tree only! Man must obey Him who was greater than he and as an intelligent creature he should have known that boundaries were necessary in the creation. Sadly, he disobeyed. He ate what was forbidden and he forfeited Eden. He died to it. He died spiritually to his Creator too, and began that very day to die physically also. - John Bennett

If we love God, we will obey his commandments (1 John 5:3) and thus do what is pleasing to him. We will love God, not the world (1 John 2:15), and we will do all this because he first loved us (1 John 4:19). It is one of the most amazing facts in all Scripture that just as God's love involves his giving of himself to make us happy, so we can in return give of ourselves and actually bring joy to God's heart. - Wayne Grudem

*With this joy set before us
the commandments of God will not be burdensome*

The challenge before us ... is not merely to do what God says because he is God, but to desire what God says because he is good. The challenge is not merely to pursue righteousness, but to prefer righteousness. The challenge is to get up in the morning and prayerfully meditate on the Scriptures until we experience joy and peace in believing "the precious and very great promises of God" (Rom. 15:13; 2 Peter 1:4). With this joy set before us the commandments of God will not be burdensome (1 John 5:3) and the compensation of sin will appear too brief and too shallow to lure us. - John Piper - [How Dead People Do Battle with Sin](#)

Daily Light on the Daily Path - His commandments are not burdensome.

"This is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life."—Whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.

"My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."—"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. . . . Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."

Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding. . . . Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.—Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble.—I delight in the law of God, in my inner being.

This is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another.—Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

1 John 5:3; John 6:40; 1 John 3:22; Matt. 11:30; John 14:15, 21; Prov. 3:13, 17; Ps. 119:165; Rom. 7:22; 1 John 3:23; Rom. 13:10

John says God's commands distinguish love from sin and are not burdensome (see 1 John 3:4; 5:3). The world says God's commands are chains to be broken and shackles to be thrown off (see Psalm 2:3). Which attitude characterizes you?

Matthew Henry - 1 John 5:3

True love for the people of God, may be distinguished from natural kindness or party attachments, by its being united with the love of God, and obedience to his commands. The same Holy Spirit that taught the love will have taught obedience also; and that man cannot truly love the children of God, who, by habit, commits sin or neglects known duty. As God's commands are holy, just, and good rules of liberty and happiness, so those who are born of God and love him, do not count them grievous, but lament that they cannot serve him more perfectly. Self-denial is required, but true Christians have a principle which carries them above all hindrances. Though the conflict often is sharp, and the regenerate may be cast down, yet he will rise up and renew his combat with resolution. But all, except believers in Christ, are enslaved in some respect or other, to the customs, opinions, or interests of the world. Faith is the cause of victory, the means, the instrument, the spiritual armor by which we overcome. In and by faith we cleave to Christ, in contempt of, and in opposition to the world. Faith sanctifies the heart, and purifies it from those sensual lusts by which the world obtains sway and dominion over souls. It has the indwelling Spirit of grace, which is greater than he who dwells in the world. The real Christian overcomes the world by faith; he sees, in and by the life and conduct of the Lord Jesus on earth that this world is to be renounced and overcome.

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous.—1 John 5:3.

His commandments grievous are not,
Longer than men think them so;
Though He send me forth, I care not,
Whilst He gives me strength to go.

FRANCIS QUARLES.

For nothing is grievous or burdensome to him who loves. They are not grievous, because love makes them light; they are not grievous, because Christ gives strength to bear them. Wings are no weight to the bird, which they lift up in the air until it is lost in the sky above us, and we see it no more, and hear only its note of thanks. God's commands are no weight to the soul which, through His Spirit, He up bears to himself; nay, rather, the soul, through them, the more soars aloft and loses itself in the love of God. "The commandments of God are not grievous," because we have a power implanted in us mightier than all which would dispute the sway of God's commandments and God's love, a power which would lift us above all hindrances, carry us over all temptations, impel our listlessness, sweep with it whatever opposes it, sweep with it even the dullness or sluggishness of our own wills,—the almighty power of the grace of God. EDWARD B. PUSEY.

David Jeremiah - His commandments are not burdensome. (See [Life-Changing Moments with God: Praying Scripture Every Day](#))

Father God, who sent Jesus, it is Your will that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life. Whatever I ask I receive from You, because I keep Your commandments and do those things that are pleasing in Your sight.

Jesus' yoke is easy and His burden is light. If I love Him, I will keep His commandments. I have His commandments and keep them, and I love Jesus. And if I love Him I will be loved by You, Father, and Jesus will love me and manifest Himself to me.

I am happy—I have found wisdom, and gained understanding. Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes me to stumble. I delight in Your law, Lord God, according to the inward man.

This is Your commandment: that I should believe on the name of Your Son Jesus Christ and love others. Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

When You call, Almighty God, You empower. Empower me, I ask, to obey Your commandments.

1 JOHN 5:3; JOHN 6:40; 1 JOHN 3:22; MATTHEW 11:30; JOHN 14:15, 21; PROVERBS 3:13, 17; PSALM 119:165; ROMANS 7:22; 1 JOHN 3:23; ROMANS

Moravian Daily Texts

The love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. 1 John 5:3

O my God, be ever near me;
for your rest, for your feast,

more and more prepare me.
Still assure me of my calling;
keep me near, in your care,
saved from final falling. (568)

Lord, we often forget your expectations of us. While we try to live by your commands, often we fail. Help us this day to listen for your voice that helps guide and direct us. May we be reminded to trust in your mercy and love this day and always. Amen.

John Piper Devotional - Embracing Jesus

This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith. (1 John 5:3–4)

The eighteenth-century pastor and theologian Jonathan Edwards wrestled with this text and concluded, “Saving faith implies ... love... Our love to God enables us to overcome the difficulties that attend keeping God’s commands — which shows that love is the main thing in saving faith, the life and power of it, by which it produces great effects.”

I think Edwards is right and that numerous texts in the Bible support what he says.

Another way to say it is that faith in Christ is not just assenting to what God is for us, but also embracing all that he is for us in Christ. “True faith embraces Christ in whatever ways the Scriptures hold him out to poor sinners.” This “embracing” is one kind of love to Christ — that kind that treasures him above all things.

Therefore, there is no contradiction between 1John 5:3, on the one hand, which says that our love for God enables us to keep his commandments, and 1John 5:4, on the other hand, which says that our faith overcomes the obstacles of the world that keep us from obeying God’s commandments. Love for God and Christ is implicit in faith.

1John 5:5 defines the **faith that obeys** as “the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.” This faith is “embracing” the present Jesus Christ as the glorious divine person he is. It is not simply assenting to the truth that Jesus is the Son of God, because the demons assent to that (Matthew 8:29). Believing that Jesus is the Son of God means “embracing” the significance of that truth — that is, being satisfied with Christ as the Son of God and all God is for us in him.

“**Son of God**” means that Jesus is the greatest person in the universe alongside His Father. Therefore, all He taught is true, and all He promised will stand firm, and all His soul-satisfying greatness will never change.

Believing that he is the Son of God, therefore, includes banking on all this, and being satisfied with it. ([Embracing Jesus \(4-18-2015\) - John Piper Devotional - Bible Gateway Devotionals](#))

BEEN THINKING ABOUT NEW TESTAMENT COMMANDS - It is clear that our Father places considerable emphasis on Commands in Scripture, for there are at least 1642 commands in the New Testament alone.

As followers of Jesus Christ, our obedience to God's commands is one tangible way to say "We love you Lord!" Jesus repeatedly stated this principle - "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments....If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word...He who does not love Me does not keep My words." (John 14:15, 23, 24)

Beloved, we dare not miss Jesus' point! Love is not a sentimental emotion, as often portrayed in modern day Christianity. Adrian Rogers once quipped "Now, folks, when people truly love God, you don't see it just when they stand in the congregation and sing "Oh How I Love Jesus," but they obey Him." Yes, God is love (1 Jn 4:8, 16), but God is also Light (1 Jn 1:5). Love and Light counterbalance one another. We cannot say we love God and choose to walk in the darkness! John says "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth, but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." (1 Jn 1:6-7) The way we live our life, the choices we make each day, will ring forth loudly in heaven either as "I love You Lord" or "I don't love You Lord"! There is no middle ground regarding love of Jesus and love of the world (1 John 2:15), of walking in the light versus walking in the darkness.

But praise God, Jesus knows that our old "Adamic" flesh nature (still present in all believers) continues to tempt us, on one hand, to run from God's commands (thus leading to licentiousness) or, on the other hand, to attempt to carry them out in our own fleshly strength (which leads to legalism and frustration). But "thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 15:57) for He has given us the Helper, "the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (Php 1:19b, Jn 14:16, 26) Who indwells every believer (Romans 8:9) and Who provides us with both the DESIRE and the POWER (cf Php 2:13NLT = "giving you the DESIRE to obey Him and the POWER") to walk in His Spirit and to not carry out the desire of the flesh (Gal 5:16). Our part, our responsibility

under grace not law (Ro 6:14), is to daily work out our "salvation with fear and trembling," making choices that are pleasing to God (Php 2:12). Notice that even the DESIRE for such "holy" choices must be "energized" or enabled by the Spirit. Or to say it another way, every commandment of God includes the enablement by His Spirit. As Spurgeon said "Love is a practical thing; love without obedience is a mere pretense. True love shows itself by seeking to please the one who is loved. May God the Holy Spirit work in us perfect obedience to the commands of God, that we may prove that we really do love Him! The obedience which God's children yield to Him must be loving obedience. Do not go about the service of God as slaves to their taskmaster's toil, but run in the way of His commands because it is your Father's way. Yield your bodies as instruments of righteousness, because righteousness is your Father's will, and His will should be the will of His child." And as an aside, the best way to know God's will is to say "I will" to God.

In addition to His Spirit, the love of Christ compels (urges, impels) us (2 Cor 5:14) to choose to obey His commands, "for this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments and His commandments are not burdensome." (1 John 5:3). And Oh what a reward Jesus promises us in John 14:21 declaring that "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose (manifest) Myself to him." Adrian Rogers explains "disclose Himself to us" by asking "Aren't we talking about the manifest presence of God? Do you see how the Bible links the manifest presence of God with keeping the commandments of God? Because, when we disobey God, we grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30); we quench the Holy Spirit (1Th 5:19). The Holy Spirit of God is in us to make God real to us...Can you say: "And He walks with me, and He talks with me, And He tells me I am His own, And the joy we share as we tarry there, None other has ever known?" Do you know why Jesus is not real to many of us? We're just not obeying His word. Do you want Him to manifest Himself to you? Would you like for Jesus to be real? There's no way apart from obedience!"

When we obey we partake of Jesus' promise that "If you keep My commandments, you will abide (dwell, live experientially) in My love." (Jn 15:10) "We must keep our Lord's command if we would bask in His love. If we live in sin, we cannot live in the love of Christ. Without the holiness which pleases God, we cannot please Jesus. He who cares nothing for holiness knows nothing of the love of Jesus. Conscious enjoyment of our Lord's love is a delicate thing. It is far more sensitive to sin and holiness than mercury is to cold and heat. When we are tender of heart and careful in thought, lip, and life to honor our Lord Jesus, then we receive tokens of His love without number. If we desire to perpetuate such bliss, we must perpetuate holiness. The Lord Jesus will not hide His face from us unless we hide our face from Him. Sin makes the cloud which darkens our Sun: if we will be watchfully obedient and completely consecrated, we may walk in the light, as God is in the light, and have as sure an abiding in the love of Jesus as Jesus has in the love of the Father. Here is a sweet promise with a solemn "if." Lord, let me have this "if" in my hand; for as a key it opens this casket." (Spurgeon) Trust and obey for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, than to trust and obey!

The highest motive for obeying Christ is to obey because we love Him. As Spurgeon said "Obedience must have love for its mother, nurse, and food. The essence of obedience lies in the hearty love which prompts the deed rather than in the deed itself." A working mother returned home one wintry day to discover the driveway cleared of snow, the rugs vacuumed, and the dishes washed and put away. This was far more effort than the list of chores had required. "What got into you?" the amazed mother asked her children. "We just wanted to show you we love you, Mom," was their answer. Obeying out of love takes the burden out of doing what God requires. And so we see that love and obedience are intimately intertwined -- Obedient love and loving obedience! As our obedience expresses our love for God, it enables us to experience His love for us.

Master, speak, and make me ready,
When Thy voice is truly heard,
With (loving) obedience glad and steady,
Still to follow every word.
—Havergal

One final thought -- EVERY encounter with each of the more 1600 NT commands is an opportunity to jettison self-reliance and to yield to the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. Supernatural commands from the supernatural God can only be carried out with reliance on His supernatural power! The Spirit is called the Helper, but don't let His Name mislead you. To say that we need His "help" is to imply we have some ability of our own to obey and are in need of just a little "spiritual push" so to speak. It is better to say that we need Him to "enable" us to obey divine commands, for the word "enable" indicates that without His power we cannot obey (cp this same principle in Jn 15:5, 6:63). Webster says "enable" means "to supply with power, physical or moral, to furnish with sufficient power or ability!" In Philippians 2:12-13, Paul describes the incomprehensible, mysterious synergism between man's free will and God's sovereign provision of His Spirit! To say it another way followers of Jesus are 100% dependent on His Spirit (Php 2:13), while at the same time are 100% responsible to obey (Php 2:12)! We'll discuss this "100/100 principle" in greater detail in a future post.

Lord, with my lips I say "I love You," but with my life I behave as if I don't. When these two are in conflict, I know that it is my life that is speaking the truth. I don't want this conflict, Lord. By learning to depend on the Spirit's enabling power, I desire to prove with my life that I am speaking the truth when I say, "I love You Lord."

We love You, Lord Jesus," we often will say,
But are we as ready His will to obey?
Let's heed what God's Spirit would have us to do—
That's how we show Him a love that is true.
—D. De Haan

To love God is to obey God.

How much we are willing to obey is the measure of our love.

Does my life say "I love You Lord?"

[O The Deep, Deep Love of God](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPXapfFfesA>

1 John 5:2 Commentary <> 1 John 5:4 Commentary