1 John 5:3 Commentary

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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

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)

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 19:7-11 119:45,47,48,103,104,127,128,140 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

OBEDIENCE IS EVIDENCE THAT WE LOVE GOD

For (**gar**) is a **term of explanation**. Always pause to ponder "What is the writer explaining?" The **NET Note** writes that in this context this **term of explanation** (**gar**) "draws an inference based on the preceding statements, particularly the one in 1Jn 5:2b, regarding the love of God. 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 - This is objective genitive which gives us the sense "the love for God," ***our love*** for Him (not His love for us) which is 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**"). 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)!

Jesus said the same thing - "If you love Me, you will **keep** (**tereo**) My commandments." (Jn 14:15) adding that "If you **keep** (**tereo**) My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." (Jn 15:10). Indeed obedience is the way to lay hold hold of one of the great promises Jesus made "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). 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 (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.

That (**hina**) is a **terms of purpose or result**, which should prompt a pause to ponder the purpose or result. In this case the purpose clause makes clear, loving God consists in keeping his commandments.

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 to **observe** all that I commanded you"). Note that **tereo** 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 God's commandments as if they were a precious treasure (they are!), a treasure that we should continually seek to guard at all costs.

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**)

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

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**)

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**)

Wuest adds that **tereo** in the present context "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." (Word Studies)

> **THOUGHT -** 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). (**1-3 John- MacArthur New Testament Commentary**)

OBEDIENCE SHOULD BE A DELIGHT NOT A DREAD

Commandments (instructions, orders, requirements)(1785)(**entole**) from **en** = in, upon + **téllo** = 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**.

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**." (1 John Commentary - W Edmond Hiebert)

His commands are not burdensome - They are not irksome. They do not irritate but in fact delight. 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! In short, His commandments come with His enablements (His indwelling Spirit)!

It is said that when John was old and too feeble to walk, he would be carried into the church, and when he spoke would always say, "Little children, love one another. It is the **Lord's commandment.**"

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. Dallas Willard writes, 'To depart from righteousness is to choose a life of crushing burdens, failures, and disappointments, a life caught in the toils of endless problems that are never really solved' (The Spirit of the Disciplines 2)." (Sermon Central)

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. (**Word Studies**)

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).

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

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.

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. (The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament)

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***! (Ps 1:2, Ps 40:8, Ps 119:14, 16, , 24, 70, Ps 119:77, Ps 119:92, 97, 103 Ps 119:174)

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 "manufacture'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)

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?

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." (Finally Alive - What Happens When We Are Born Again)

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

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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**.

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; Matt 23:4, 23; Acts 20:29; 25:7; 2 Cor 10:10; 1 John 5:3

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)

The Freedom Of Structure - Our Daily Bread - 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).

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 - Our Daily Bread

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).

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 - Our Daily Bread

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?

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 - Our Daily Bread

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.

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 - Our Daily Bread

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.

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 - Our Daily Bread

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."

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.

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

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