

**I JOHN: TRUE SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP**  
**XVI. Readily Keeping God's Commands By His Power**  
**(1 John 5:3b-15)**

**I. Introduction**

- A. When John wrote 1 John, he implied in 1 John 1:3 that a number of his readers did not enjoy spiritual fellowship with the Apostles, with God the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ!
- B. This lack of true fellowship occurs with many believers today as Christ predicted in Revelation 3:14-22 for our era. We thus view 1 John 5:3b-15 on readily keeping God's commands by His power (as follows):

**II. Readily Keeping God's Commands By His Power, 1 John 5:3b-15.**

- A. Having mentioned that true spiritual fellowship with God is defined objectively by a believer's heeding His commands with a high level of motivation from the heart (1 John 5:3a), John added the very important claim that God's commands are not "burdensome, difficult to fulfill [of regulations, demands]" (*barus*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 133-134), 1 John 5:3b. The same Greek word *barus* is used in Matthew 23:4 where Jesus critiqued the "heavy burdens" of extra-biblical legalistic rules the Pharisees placed on the people to bear (Ibid.), so John meant that God's commands are **not legalistically burdensome**.
- B. However, such commands **would** be burdensome to the ungodly, so in 1 John 5:4-15, John explained **how** we believers in Christ are to find God's commands **not burdensome** (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 901-902):
  - 1. First, everyone who has been "permanently born, begotten" (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 823; *gegennemenon*, perfect passive participle of *gennaō*, "beget, bear," The Analyt. Grk. Lex., 1972, p. 76; Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 154-155) of God overcomes the world, 1 John 5:4a. [Note again the emphases on eternal salvation security taught in the **perfect** tense coupled with the grace of God taught in the **passive** voice where God and not the believer produces the new birth.] A believer "is a world-conqueror by means of his faith in Christ," so "such faith is the secret of his continuing victory and, for that reason, obedience to God's commands need not be burdensome," Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 901. Obedience will be feasible **IF** one heeds them as an ongoing act of faith in God for His help in doing so, Ibid.
  - 2. Second, this faith is based on belief that Jesus is the Son of God, and specifically, that He is "the one who came by water and blood," 1 John 5:5-6a; Ibid. John added that He came "not by water only but by water and blood" (1 John 5:6b), and in its simplest form in this context, "water" refers to Jesus' baptism and "blood" refers to His death by which his earthly work was terminated, Ibid. Evidently, John here refutes the error of heretic Cerinthus who "taught that the divine Christ descended on the man Jesus at His baptism and left Him before His crucifixion," Ibid. The true testimony of the Holy Spirit agrees with the truth that Jesus Christ always was divine and that a single Person was involved in His baptism and death as testified by John the Baptizer in John 1:32-34 and the Apostle John in John 19:33-37. [Note: 1 John 5:7b-8a are not in any ancient Greek manuscript, but appear in later Latin ones, so verse 7 should end with "record" and verse 8 start with "the spirit," (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to 1 John 5:7-8.)
  - 3. Third, the witness of men that the same Person was involved in Christ's baptism and death is given besides the greater witness that comes from the Father, 1 John 5:9, and if anyone does not believe His witness, he has made the Father out to be a liar, 1 John 5:10. That witness of the Father is that He has given us eternal life, and that life is in His Son. He who does not have the Son does not have eternal life, and he who has the Son has eternal life, 1 John 5:11-12. This witness apparently countered claims by some antichrists in John's era who taught that believers do not really have eternal life through faith in God's Son, Ibid., p. 902.
  - 4. Fourth, John added that he wrote these things about Christ that they might know in an **absolute** sense (*oida*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T., p. 825) that they had eternal life by faith in Christ, and that they might continue to trust in Christ for victory in their Christian walk, 1 John 5:13; Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T.
  - 5. Fifth, and finally, John wrote that if we believe in the Name of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, we have assurance in approaching God through faith by prayer that God will grant our requests, 1 John 5:14-15. These requests in the context refer to petitions for God's help in obeying His commands, 1 John 5:3b; Ibid.

**Lesson:** *God's Biblical commands are not burdensome if we are truly saved by faith in Christ as God's Son, for that faith is the pattern for a life of faith especially as applied in praying for God's help in keeping His commands.*

**Application:** *If we were saved by faith in the true Christ, may we apply that faith to living a life of faith in Him to be able to keep His commands via petitions in prayer by faith so that our efforts to obey Him are not burdensome.*