

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
1 John: True, Fulfilling Fellowship With God
Part XVII: Identifying True Fellowship With God By The Ease Of One's Obedience To God
(1 John 5:3b-15)

I. Introduction

- A. A revealing signal of false spirituality is the inability of a party to obey the Word of God on an issue, for this circumstance signals he is functioning by the spiritually powerless sin nature, Romans 8:3a.
- B. However, true fellowship with God finds one experiencing ease in obeying God's commands, that such commands are not burdensome as 1 John 5:3b claims, and 1 John 5:3b-15 explains such a state as follows:

II. Identifying True Fellowship With God By The Ease Of One's Obedience To God, 1 John 5:3b-15.

- A. By fellowship with God, in contrast to one who operates by his sin nature as described in Romans 8:3a and Romans 7:15-17, the godly believer finds God's commands not burdensome, 1 John 5:3b NIV.
- B. Exactly how such godly ease in obeying the Lord is attained is described in 1 John 5:4-15 as follows:
 - 1. First, the basis for finding God's commands not burdensome is found in one's faith in Christ for salvation: when one trusts in Christ as his Savior, he positionally overcomes the world, 1 John 5:4. So, in introducing verse 4 with the Greek term, "*hoti*," "because," John "suggests that such faith is the secret of his continuing victory" in his walk, "and, for that reason, obedience to God's commands need not be burdensome," Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 901; U. B. S. Greek N. T., 1966, p. 823.
 - 2. Nevertheless, and this is so important, the *object* of the believer's faith must **NOT** be in his **own** power or in the power of some **other Christian entity**, be it another believer, group of believers or Christian institution, but **ONLY** in the "One who came by water and blood -- Jesus Christ," 1 John 5:5-6a NIV.
 - a. John meant by this description that Jesus came as Christ both at His water baptism by which His ministry was initiated (Matthew 3:13-17) as well as by His blood, a reference to the cross, *Ibid*. This statement counters the error of Cerinthus who taught that "the divine Christ descended on the man Jesus at His baptism and left Him before His crucifixion," *Ibid*. The Holy Spirit Who testified through the ministry of John the Baptist that Jesus was the Son of God and Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world at the cross (John 1:29) was in union with the "water" and the "blood," and these three -- the "Spirit, water and blood" -- agree that Jesus Christ was the same Person at His baptism as well as at His death. [Note: the words "in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth" in 1 John 5:7b-8a in the KJV appear only in post sixteenth century A. D. Greek manuscripts and the Latin Vulgate, cf. *ftn.* to 1 John 5:7-8 NIV. They are held by conservative Christian scholars to be "spurious and have no right to stand in the New Testament," Bruce M Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, 1971, p. 716-718]
 - b. John added that since God through the Holy Spirit has testified about the credibility of Jesus being His Son both at His baptism and the cross, we should believe it, 1 John 5:9. Faith in this divine witness about Christ leaves one with this witness within himself as the Spirit thus indwells him, where rejecting such a belief makes one treat God as a liar, 1 John 5:10.
 - c. Also, as eternal life is embodied in God the Son, he who believes in Christ has eternal life by virtue of having Christ in his heart, and he who does not believe does not have eternal life, 1 John 5:11-12.
 - d. John added he wrote these 1 John 5:4-12 statements about Christ's identity and faith in Him to show that his readers who trusted in Christ possessed eternal life, and wanted them to know it, 1 J n. 5:13.
 - 3. Then, continuing with his theme of finding ease in obeying God's commands, John wrote that if we who have trusted in Christ for salvation in similar faith in Him in our Christian walk ask the Father through Jesus' name any thing according to His will, He hears us, 1 John 5:14; cf. John 14:12-14.
 - 4. If God hears us, then we know we have answers to our petitions to Him, especially the petitions of the power to obey His commands with ease versus seeing them be burdensome, 1 John 5:15; *Ibid.*, p. 902.

Lesson: *Obeying God with ease occurs as one who trusts in the God Incarnate Lord Jesus applies that faith to rely on Christ in his daily walk for the power to obey God, and asks God for help to that end.*

Application: *May we live and pray by faith in Christ to find God's aid in obeying God's Word with ease.*