

1John 4:21–5:3  
God's Sweet Commandments

Thursday, June 6, 2024 • Read 1John 4:21–5:3

Questions from the Scripture text: What do we have from God (v21)? What must one who loves God also do? What is true of the one who is in a condition of believing in Jesus as the Christ (v1)? Whom does the born-of-God one love? What/whom are also loved by those who love Him Who begot? How can we know that we truly love the children of God—what/whom else will we love, and what will we do (v2)? What is the love of God (v3)? What does someone who loves Him in this way think of His commandments?

**How good are God's commandments?** 1John 4:21–5:3 prepares us for the second serial reading in public worship on the Lord's Day. In these four verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **God's commandments are such blessings as are designed to foster assurance that we are His.**

After considering how love for one another gives us boldness before God (4:17–20), the apostle turns back to the goodness of God's commandments. Surely, the one who finds God's commandments burdensome (v3) knows neither the nature of our God nor the nature of His commandments. How good they are!

In this case, the apostle is referring again to that "new commandment" from John 13, which is the commandment that the church has had from its beginning—the commandment that arises from that glorious event in which our Lord Jesus culminated His ordination to His "Great High Priest"-hood and offered Himself for us, once for all. Do we love Him? Then we must keep His commandments. And His commandment is that we must love our brother. So the one who loves God must love his brother.

And, of course, this love is more than just keeping His commandment. It is also bearing His image, being His child, being part of the family. There is no other way to come into saving faith (v1) than by a heavenly birth. But what does being begotten by God, spiritually fathered by God, necessarily produce? It produces love for this dear Father! And how can it produce love for Him, except that this love also extend to all who are fathered by Him? This love is not just God's command, but the characteristic family trait.

Finally, for those who have this genuine love, coming organically from being fathered by Him, we want to know if our love is genuine. It is not enough for us that others think that we love them, or that we think that we love them. We want to know that we love them in truth. So, the Spirit directs the apostle's hands to give us a proof: how can we know that we love God's children? The only place from which that particular love comes is the same place from which love for God comes, and therefore from which keeping His commandments comes—from which comes a view of His commandments that considers them all blessing and no burden. What grace, that we would so come to know God's law!

It's all or nothing. They all hang together, dear reader: being born of God, savingly believing in Christ, loving God, loving brother, keeping God's commandments, and counting those commandments blessing. They all hang together; it's all or nothing. The Lord grant that they would all hang together in you!

How do you think/feel about God's commandments? Toward what brothers do you harbor ill feelings or even ill will? How have you been making use of God's commandments to pursue assurance that you are His child?

*Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for so loving us that You would give us commandment for the very things that enable us to be bold in the day of judgment. But forgive us for how we have treated Your commandments as if they are burdensome. And forgive us that we have at times thought or acted as if we could love You without loving those who are born of You. Grant unto us increased life and growth from our heavenly birth, that by Your Spirit, we might live like Christ and love like Christ, we ask in His Name, AMEN!*

Suggested songs: ARP197 "Christian Unity" or TPH409 "Blest Be the Tie That Binds"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via [hopewellarp.org](http://hopewellarp.org))

1 John 4:21 through chapter 5:3. These are God's words. And this commandment we have from him. That he who loves God must love his brother. Also Whoever believes that Jesus is. The Christ is born of God. And everyone who loves him, who begot? Also loves him who is begotten of him?

By this, we know that we love the children of God. When we love God and keep his Commandments. For this is the love of God. That we keep his Commandments and his Commandments. Are not burdensome. So far the reading of gods inspired and And Aaron tort

As we have heard about the Fruit that genuine salvation. Genuine conversion. Produces in a believer's life. the letter first John we have heard about many things that go together. And each one then. Is an Assurance of the other ones. And so, as one increases the others increase, since the others increase the one increases, And these things are.

Believing that Jesus is the son of God that he came from God. That he is God. The son who came in the flesh. Believe in the Triune God, you believe in God, the son, you believe the Incarnation. if you don't believe these things, then you are not saved.

if you believe these things, then you are saved. Those who are saved. Love God. If you don't love God, then you're not saved. God is love. Love comes from him. It comes by being begotten of him. If you have a birth from him, then he is your father now.

Not only do you love him because he is the source of love but you love him because he's your father And you're his child. He is the begetter and you are The Forgotten. Well, if you love him with a love, that comes from him, Then you will love your brother.

With the love that comes from him too. Because he became God's Child by God's love for him. And, you will love your brother. Not only with the love that comes from God. In you for your brother but you'll love your brother because he belongs to God. Just as you love God, not only with love that he put in your heart but love for him because he is your father.

You love your brother with love that, God put in your heart. And because he's your brother. And so these things are true but they're not just true. They are a commandment. You see how good? The Commandments of God are. Sometimes because of our remaining sinfulness and Its effect on our mind and our heart.

View one or another of the Commandments of God. From our remaining flashlighthness. As burdensome. But who can consider the command to love our brother to love God. Burdensome. Surely someone who felt like a command to love. God was a burden. was not safe. Does not. Begotten, of God is not his child.

It's not United to Christ. It's not indwelt by the spirit. Oh, we feel the burden of our sin. We feel the agony of. Wanting to love him more and not loving him more. We feel the agony of not wanting to love him more, as much as we should.

So we want to want to love him more. But the command is not a burden. Especially coming out of last week's portion in verses 17 through 20. When our love for him. And our love for our brother, but especially our love for him. gives us boldness in the day of judgment verse 17.

Takes away all fear of Torment. Because as he increases our Assurance, By increasing our love for him. He is taking away our fear and giving us boldness. We say. What a

sweet and generous command. That God would command us to love him, that he would command us to love our brother.

That he would command us to the very things. That take away our fear. And give us confidence assure us that we are his already. So that we can behold what manner of love. He has shown unto us that we should be called as children and that is what we are.

To assure us that we are his already and to assure us that in the last day when we come to the Judgment, What's God will declare about us, is that we are his still Because we cannot be his now and then be on his later. That can't be undone.

And so it's a sweet commandment. It's a good commandment. Remember, it's the Commandment. That was the new commandment. That came especially with the cross to love one another as Jesus has loved us and giving himself up for us, that was a new thing. God had never become a man and died for men before.

And so that new thing came with a new commandment to love one. Another as Has loved us. And that is the great. Christian commandment. Then Not that there are any other Commandments that? or Required or less indicative. but this is the one that is really at the heart of Christianity.

So it's both a new commandment and as he said earlier, the Commandment that we have had from the beginning. And so he gives us this little little section. That comes from. the boldness that comes from loving one, another And so it comes from verse 21. This commandment we have from him and it goes to the end of verse 3, his Commandments are not burdensome And this is, Exhibit a for how his Commandments are not burdensome.

Then we never come or never to come. To any of the other Commandments, whether it's one of the Ten Commandments or any commandment from scripture. Which has some wonderful Commandments. Like, do not fear and do not worry. fret. Not do not be anxious. But when we come to his Commandments to worship only as he has said in the second command or commandment to keep the Sabbath, To keep the Lord stake to count it a delight.

Or any of the other Commandments of God. Do they not all come from the same generosity? And from the same love towards us, do they not all have. do they not all similarly have glorious and good benefits to us? Do they not all increase our enjoyment of God and our fellowship with him?

How can such things be considered burdensome? Someone who considers the Commandments of God's law to be a burden. Or maybe we should put it better. Whenever we from our flesh are considering God's law to be a burden. We are. greatly mistaken. About the law of God. Which is very sad.

Because to be greatly mistaken about the law of God. Is to be greatly mistaken about the god of the law. And to treat him as if he is. Tyrannical. And mean, Which of course was how Isaiah 58 started. The thought the command was a burden. And we must not think that about any command.

And when we do, we can remind ourselves. Of first, John 4 verse 21 through 5 verse 3 and say Don't you remember? How the commands that we have from him, are the very ones? That make us know that he is our father that we are his children. That our brothers and sisters, our brothers and sisters, not just in some United effort or movement, but in the family of God, With a begetting, a fathering that comes from God himself by his spirit in his son.

God's commands are wonderful. And so he who loves God must love his brother. Also, what a good command What a good commandment. Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. And to everyone who loves him, who begot, Also loves him who has begotten of him. Why is it so difficult to convince people in their heart and their mind that Jesus is God?

The son. Who became a man in order that he might be Prophet priest. And King, whenever you see the word Christ, Think anointed but think, especially Prophet priest and King. These are what he has been anointed to be. So, whoever believes That God, the son Yahweh saves. As prophet priest and King, Whoever has come to that conviction about the Triune God, and And the Son of God, and his Incarnation, and, and his anointing as our Prophet praising.

The only way, That they come to that conviction. Is by having a birth from above a new birth from God. So, There's, there's ways that you can reason with them that God May bless to them and use us. It's right. And good to persuade. The Bible gives us example and command to do so.

But we must not be surprised though. We ought to be grieved. When there are those who refuse to believe it, who can't believe it? Because they aren't born of God, but whoever does believe it has been born of God. And so if they're born of God, what do they do?

Well, they love God. If they've been born of God and they love their brother, So everyone who loves him, who begot the one, who gave them this birth to believe in this Christ? Also loves him who has begotten of him. And by this, we know that we love the children of God, you see all of these proofs Hang together.

By this, we know that we love the children of God and he could He could add anything here. any of the proofs he could add he believes that Jesus. The Son of God has come in the flesh as the Christ.

you picks here. By this, we know that we love the children of God, we gives us two of them, right? We love God and we keep his Commandments and then he adds a third This is the love of God that we keep his Commandments. And his Commandments are not burdensome.

It's gonna say, I love God. I just hate obeying him. No, you don't. You have a false view of love and you have a false view of God. Because genuinely loving the genuine. God means you love obeying his Commandments. If you say, I love God. But I hate obeying him.

people usually don't say it that way. They use other words to mean the same thing. I love God, but I'm not a legalist like those who care so much about keeping his Commandments. That's just saying I love God, but I hate obeying him. And all you proved by that is You don't know what love is.

You don't know what God is. So when you say I love God, it's utter gibberish. It's just spiritual sounding gibberish or Christian sounding gibberish. Genuine love of the genuine, God produces obedience to his Commandments and it doesn't produce obedience to Commandments, that are viewed as some horrible weight that we have to carry and get rewarded for doing so good at.

Or even good. But miserable weight? That we have to carry, are we? No. Genuine love for the genuine God doesn't just come with obedience. It comes with a view of his law, that says His Commandments. Our generosity from him. A blessing from him. I have the remaining burden of my sin but that burden stays are numbered.

Because I've been adopted by the father. And I've been United by to the son and I've been indwelt by the Holy Spirit and I have all of these brothers and sisters, who all have God as their father to. And they're all United to Jesus, do, and they're all indwelt by his Spirit too.

And we love him, and we love his Commandments and they're not a burden to us.

Rutherford said, The sorts of burdens like sales artist ships and wings aren't Birds.

So, praise God. For the wonderful goodness. That he shows us in his good Commandments. That as he uses them to Increase our likeness to him. Our Conformity to our son, our bearing, the family resemblance, by the spirit of the family. Who is the spirit of the father and the son?

As he gives us Commandments and gives us to increase in keeping them. Is increasing our Assurance. Is increasing our certainty, that we will have boldness in the day of judgment. He's casting out our fear. By his love that is achieving its end in Is being perfected with the language of being perfected.

Makes it sound like there are Things wrong with it. No, there are nothing's wrong with it. That language. Remember, from last week means It is achieving its end in. And casting out our fear. So, my dear children, my dear family. May the Lord give us. Not to feel like his Commandments are a burden.

And when we find that rising in our hearts, Let's kill it. Let's give it no air. Let's give it no food, let's give it no quarter. Because feeling like his law is a burden comes from the flesh. It doesn't come. From our new birth. Let's pray.

Our Father, how we thank you. For loving us so much from before the foundation of the world. Loving us, even With the love that you have within yourself. Oh God Father, Son and Holy. So that you father have loved us with the love that you have for the son and for the spirit You Lord, Jesus have loved us as the son, from all eternity.

With the love that you have for the father. And for the spirit You blessed Spirit who have come. Dwell in us and give us to live our life and fellowship with you and pour out God's love in our hearts, that you have loved us. From all eternity with the love that you have for the father and the son.

Oh our God. What have we found ourselves in? That you have brought us into. And so, we thank you for your law. We thank you for your Commandments. We thank you that, loving you and one. Another itself is a commandment That we have from you help us to see.

By use of this commandment, how good? All of your Commandments are So that we will never consider them a burden. Grant that your spirit would continue this work in. We ask in Jesus name, amen.