



Eternal Life

A Study of 1 John



What do you think?

- How would you prove that you are alive?
 - Produce a birth certificate?
 - Tell stories from your past?
 - Maybe point out your signs of life?
- How would you prove that you are alive spiritually?

- John wants us to know that we have eternal life (1 John 5:13)
- Three *diagnostic* tests:

ETHICAL

SOCIAL

DOCTRINAL

Doctrinal Standard

1. Jesus Christ was the *manifestation* of God's *Life* in real space-time human history (1:1-3)
2. God is *Light* (1:5)
 - “No thought or action can be condoned which is inconsistent either with God's nature as light, pure and self-giving, or with his historical, palpable self-disclosure in Christ.” (John Stott)

Doctrinal Standard

1. Jesus Christ was the *manifestation* of God's *Life* in real space-time human history (1:1-3)
2. God is *Light* (1:5)
 - “**This is eternal life**, that they may **know** You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” (John 17:3)

How can we *know* that we know God?

Ethical Test

OBEDIENCE

LOVE

- Jesus is *the Christ*
- God is *Light*

1 John 2:3-6

- *Walking in the Light* (Part 2)
 - *Ethical Test*: Obedience to God demonstrates
 1. *Knowledge of God*
 2. *Love for God*
 3. *Abiding in God*

Obedience & Knowledge of God

- What does it mean *to know*?
 - Gnostics: knowledge is gained/possessed for its own sake -> *saved from ignorance*
 - Hebrew mindset: knowledge is *lived* – involves relationship and action (cf. Gen. 4:1)
 - E.g. – Jer. 22:15-16 (cf. Hos. 4:1-2)
 - Involves the intellect, heart, will, and body

Obedience & Knowledge of God

- To *be related to God* means to *do* what He wills (see Matt. 7:21-27; 12:46-50; John 4:34; 5:30)
 - “No other gods before Me” (Ex. 20:3)
- Therefore, if we really *know* God, we will be *doing* what He commands
- Therefore, we can know that we know Him if we are doing what He tells us to do (3)

Obedience & Knowledge of God

- *Keep – watchful care; observant obedience -> striving or habitual pursuit [overall direction]*
- *Commandments – orders, charges (see 1 John 3:22-24; cf. 1 Thess. 4:1-2)*
 - *Doing things pleasing in His sight; believe in His Son; love one another; abide in Him*

Knowing -> Obeying

Obedience & Knowledge of God

- Therefore, the one who *says* he knows Him but doesn't *pursue obedience* is a liar (4)
 - “Yeah, but... no one can do what God says *perfectly*, so aren't we all liars?”
 - What are you doing *habitually*?
 - God says to confess when we sin (1:9)
 - We should obey more and more (2:1)

Obedience & Knowledge of God

- Therefore, the one who *says* he knows Him but doesn't *pursue obedience* is a liar (4)
 - A wilful choice to not *keep* God's commands
 - He is purposefully communicating something that he knows to be false (a *Sunday Christian*)
 - He is proving that he is not walking in the light and the truth is not in him (1:6; cf. 2:21)

Obedience & Knowledge of God

- *and the truth is not in him*
 - *The truth* – God’s assessment of reality; the way things really are
 - Presented to man as a specific body of content (cf. 1 Tim. 2:4; 3:15)
 - *A guiding principle* for man to follow (John 3:21; 8:32; 17:17; 1 John 1:6)

Obedience & Knowledge of God

- *and the truth is not in him*
 - *The truth* – God's assessment of reality; the way things really are
 - It is related to God's *Light* (1:6)
 - It is to be put into practice (1:6) – meaning we should walk in it (2 John 4; 3 John 3-4)
 - It should be *in us* (1:8; 2:4; cf. Eph. 4:24)

Obedience & Knowledge of God

- *and the truth is not in him*
 - *The truth* – God's assessment of reality; the way things really are, as presented in...
 - *His word* – the total of what God reveals to man of the truth, including...
 - *His commands* – specific moral directives to live out His truth (walking in *Light* -> *Life*)

Obedience & Knowledge of God

- *and the truth is not in him*
 - Therefore, the one who does not keep God's commandments shows he does not agree with God's assessment of reality
 - "they exchanged the truth of God for a lie"
(Rom. 1:25)
 - God *gives them over* (Rom. 1:24)

Obedience & Love for God

- *but whoever keeps His word*
 - *In this one – the one who keeps His word*
 - *the love **of** God?*
 - *Love from God?*
 - *Love for God?*
 - *God's kind of love?*
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Obedience & Love for God

- *but whoever keeps His word*
 - “He who has My commandments and keeps them [that one] is the one who loves Me” (John 14:21)
 - “He who does not love Me does not keep My words” (John 14:24)
 - Cf. Ex. 20:6 -> Deut. 7:9; Neh. 1:4; Dan. 9:4

Obedience & Love for God

- *Perfected* love?
 - The one who habitually puts God's word into practice demonstrates that his love for God is *mature* and active (see 3:16-18)
 - "True love for God is expressed not in sentimental language or mystical experience but in moral obedience" (John Stott)

Obedience & Love for God

“And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.” (Phil. 1:9-11)

Obedience & Love for God

“For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Col. 1:9-10)

Obedience & Abiding in God

- *By this we know that we are in Him*
 - *Him* – God (F/S/HS), who is *Light* (1:5)
 - *In Him* – *fellowship*, intimate relationship (1:3; John 17:20-23; cf. John 14:23; 15:4-7)
 - Based on the truth communicated by (thru) the apostles (i.e. - “what you heard from the beginning” - 1 John 2:24)

Obedience & Abiding in God

- *the one who says he abides in Him*
 - *Abides – to be living, to be remaining (John 17:1-11)*
 - *A claim to intimate union with God*
 - *How can such a claim be verified?*

Obedience & Abiding in God

- *...ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked*
 - *Ought* – continual obligation; duty
 - *Walk* – how you conduct yourself
 - *In the same manner* – just as -> imitation; follow His example; active discipleship; choosing to do the kinds of things Jesus did

Obedience & Abiding in God

- *...ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked*
- “The test of our religious experience is whether it produces a reflection of the life of Jesus in our daily life; if it fails this elementary test, it is false.” (I. Howard Marshall)

So What?

- Do you see in yourself a desire to know God?
 - ...to obey, please, and be like God?
- Do you see yourself becoming more like Him?
 - ...pursuing righteousness, holiness, goodness, good works—according to His *Light*?
 - ...turning away from sin as you become aware of it in your life?