



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

1 JOHN 2:3-6- ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN? TEST ONE: OBEDIENCE! PART 1

COLORADO

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John writes in his Epistle that we might know for certain and be assured as to whether we are truly believers in Jesus Christ or not. What does authentic Christianity really look like? How can you be assured of salvation? What is it that reveals authentic Christianity? What's the real deal? So many folks call themselves Christian, but are they really? That's what John looks at in the Epistle of 1 John. John answers by giving three tests that will reveal the genuine faith: the test of obedience, the test of love and the test of truth/belief. Essentially, is there a striving after Christ likeness and a growth in godliness? That's what John cares about because that's what Christ cares about. We have an Advocate and an example Who through the power of the cross, saves and sanctifies His own.

I. ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN? TEST ONE: OBEDIENCE! 1 JOHN 2:3-6: PART 1

(3) "And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. (4)The one who says, "I have come to know Him", and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; (5)but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: (6)the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked." 1 John 2:3-6

How can we know if we are saved? How can we have that assurance? Most Christians live between hope and fear like a ship tossed here and there regarding the certainty of the condition of their soul. So John writes to affirm how we can "know". Assurance of salvation does not come from attending a church or Bible study, walking an isle or signing a card, parroting a prayer or through baptism or confirmation. How can you be assured of your salvation?

2 Corinthians 13:5 calls us to examine our life, open and honestly. And that's what John is saying in this second chapter. If we examine our lives, if our salvation is real, first, we will see evidence of that by true obedience to God and His commands. There will be signs of the Holy Spirit at work both in our attitude and behavior. You could start with the list in Galatians 5:22-23.

John spelled out his purpose for writing this Epistle in 1 John 5:13 which says, "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life." So John addresses this question, that you may know whether you are a true Christian. He offers three tests of true salvation beginning from the perspective of obedience, which reveals visible and objective evidence of true belief.¹

A. "WE HAVE COME TO KNOW HIM"- 1 JOHN 2:3

"And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments." 1 John 2:3

John simply says that the only way we have come to know Christ is if we obey Him. It could not be any clearer. John states his case with certainty, not a hope or wish.

"know" Greek "ginoskomen" present tense to perceive, we come to see as a fact, something self evident.

"have come to know" Greek "ginosko" verb form that looks back on a past action (which would be saving belief in Christ) that has continuing results into the future. Does not refer to a knowing of facts, but to a knowing one in a personal, intimate, relationship sense.

John writes, "By this we know", with absolute certainty that "we have come to know Him." We can be absolutely confident that we have come to know Him only if we obey Christ. We can know our saving belief in Christ, which was a past action in our life, has continuing results revealed by obedience to Christ. John writes, "if we keep His commandments". Only if we obey Christ can we claim to know Him. John says that an external obedience provides evidence for an inward transformation of the heart. It reveals the reality of true saving faith. (Titus 1:16) What's in the heart is revealed by how we live. (Proverbs 23:7) We are not talking about a legalistic obedience; obey so that we can be saved. Rather, we obey because we are saved.

"keep" Greek "tereo" stresses the idea of observant, watchful obedience continually.

"commandments" Greek "entole" means order or commands, not laws, precepts or directives.

The gospel doesn't set us free from God's commandments, rather the gospel enables us by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit to keep them.² A righteous life is proof of a divine and supernatural working in our life if we obey Him. It is not natural for us to want to obey God. The practical evidence of authentic saving faith is a lifestyle of obedience shaped by God's commandments. John himself would write later in this Epistle in 1 John 5:3, "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome."

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS, GOVERNOR & SPOUSES: TUESDAY AT 7:15AM, CAPITOL BASEMENT, ROOM 0109

STAFF, LOBBYISTS, JOURNALISTS & SERGEANTS: TUESDAYS AT NOON, [SSB 1525 SHERMAN, RM #603-ACROSS COLFAX FROM CAPITOL](#)

Colorado

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B. “THE ONE WHO SAYS, “I HAVE COME TO KNOW HIM AND DOES NOT KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS”-

1 JOHN 2:4A

John introduces two types of men. One of them claims to know God, but doesn't keep God's commandment. John calls this one a liar because he says one thing is true but his life contradicts his words. The second man who obeys God also says that he knows God. 1 John 2:4 looks at this first man.

John Stott says that a man's words must be tested by his walk. If he disobeys God's commands as a habit of his life, then his claim to have come to know God is a lie. His conduct contradicts his profession of faith.

So John speaks to those who say they know Christ but they do not keep His commandments. Without obedience as observable evidence to a true confession of faith, there can be little doubt as to the genuineness of this faith. In America, it is easy to say that you are a Christian. And probably many think they are but their life gives no cause to know that their claim is true. I wonder how many would hold to that confession if their life was on the line for it.

C. “IS A LIAR”- 1 JOHN 2:4B

John doesn't mess with words but is rather clear as he states that this one is “a liar”. There can be no other conclusion. He said it before in 1 John 1:6. This claim to call oneself a believer without a life that bears no testimony of obedience is absolute falsehood. John has harsh words for this one and boldly exposes this danger of self-deception concerning salvation. This one is a charlatan and a fraud. He is branded by John as a liar.

D. “AND THE TRUTH IS NOT IN HIM.”- 1 JOHN 2:4C

These folks are blind and have not embraced the truth of Jesus Christ. Their empty pretense that they have “*come to know Christ*” has been exposed by John. James wrote in 2:17, “*Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.*” If obedience does not follow faith, that is a dead and useless faith. That faith saves no one. And John says further, “*the truth is not in him.*” This is the sad reality of the one who says they believe but does not obey God. Obedience to God is the first test of real and genuine faith in Jesus Christ. Examine your life open and honestly. Is your life characterized by a desire to obey and please God? Our next Bible study will add further insight to this truth.

¹ MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary Series on 1-3 John*. Moody Press: Chicago, IL, 2007. Pg. 52-55.

² Hamilton, Ian, *Let's Study the Letters of John*. The Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, UK, 2008. Pg. 13.