



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

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

COLORADO

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*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.<sup>1</sup> 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." If obedience does not follow faith, it 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 openly and honestly. Is your life characterized by a desire to obey and please God?*

### I. ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN? TEST ONE: OBEDIENCE!

#### 1 JOHN 2:3-6: PART 2

*(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*

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. 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.

John wrote this Epistle so we can know whether we are a Christian. He offers three tests of true salvation beginning first with obedience, which reveals visible and objective evidence of true belief.<sup>2</sup> In 1 John 2:3-6, John introduces two types of men. One claims to know God, but does not 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 2:5-6 looks at this second man.

#### A. "BUT WHOEVER KEEPS HIS WORD"- 1 JOHN 2:5A

John contrasts this second man with the first. "But" or on the other hand, the one who is obedient to God's Word offers the clearest test of true faith in Jesus Christ.

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

#### B. "IN HIM THE LOVE OF GOD HAS TRULY BEEN PERFECTED"- 1 JOHN 2:5B

John affirms that those who sincerely keep God's Word, the "love of God has truly been perfected". This "love of God" could actually read, "love for God". A believer's obedience flows from that love for Him. God's love so captures our hearts that we make His pleasure the all-absorbing interest of our lives. And real love for God is demonstrated by doing His will.

"perfected" Greek "teleioken" means to bring the work to a finish, to a full and perfect completion. It is passive, which indicates another actor involved who took the initiative.

God took the initiative to open and transform our hearts, from darkness to light. It is He Who began a good work in our heart and it is God Who will continue to perfect and bring that work to a completion one day at a time. (Philippians 1:6) Because of God's work in our lives, only the one who is a true believer, can have a love for God and then reciprocate that love. We are able to truly love God and love others because of His work in us. And the one who truly loves God will keep His Word. Therefore, personal holiness and obedience is not the basis for our salvation, it certainly is the clearest assurance of our salvation. It reveals the transforming, perfecting, sanctifying work of God in every true believer to conform us to the image of Christ. (Romans 8:28-29) The cross of Christ is powerful to save and sanctify.<sup>3</sup>

Authentic Christianity, the real deal is obvious to all. A true believer is one who keeps God's Word because of the transforming work of God. That work is obvious to all by a love for God demonstrated through obedience. To walk as Jesus walked in love for God and others is not a condition for our salvation but it is a sign of it. A saving relationship with God expresses itself in obedience to God. It is a Christ like walk...with a limp of course!<sup>4</sup>

### 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

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

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### C. “BY THIS WE KNOW THAT WE ARE IN HIM”-

#### 1 JOHN 2:5C

John states that by obedience to God we can know that we are true believers, we are “*in Him*”. This phrase occurs frequently in the New Testament. Believers are described as being “*in Christ*”. What does that mean? As Christians, we are placed by the Father, in Christ Jesus. So profound! This simple phrase reveals our position before God when we become a believer. God sees us as “*in Christ*”. When He looks at us, He sees Christ and declares us righteous, not because we are righteous, but because Christ was righteous and atoned for our sins by His death on the cross. Are you in Christ? Has God done this redeeming work in the depth of your soul? Is this true in your life?

This is our position as a believer that John refers to; knowing Him, loving Him, and abiding in Him. And to abide in Christ is to remain in Him, not a temporary attachment or relationship, but a permanent, deep connection. Such abiding in Christ our Savior will characterize the life of a true believer who is in true relationship with God.<sup>5</sup> So John writes, “*by this we know that we are in Him.*”

### D. “WALK IN THE SAME MANNER AS HE WALKED.”-

#### 1 JOHN 2:6

*“the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.” 1 John 2:6*

The hallmark of Christ’s earthly life was glad submission and obedience to His Father. (John 6:38) John adds one more

illustration to his picture of what a true believer is. We must keep God’s Word and we must “*walk in the same manner as He walked.*” If we claim to abide in Christ, we will walk in the same way as Christ.

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“*walk*” Greek “*peripateo*” used figuratively of a manner of life, conduct, habitually live, present tense verb indicates a continual practice.

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So if we truly abide in Christ, we will walk as Christ, submissive and obedient to God. That is making Christ’s priorities our priorities. We cannot claim to abide in Christ unless we behave like Christ.

Now obviously the believer’s obedience will not be perfect and sinless as our Lord’s was. But, Christ established the perfect pattern for us to follow. If we claim to truly know Christ, it will be evident by our life, by the way we walk in obedience to God. This will not be out of duty, rather out of love, love for our Lord and desiring to please Him. We will have a love for the Lord of truth and a love for His truth. This gives evidence to true belief and assurance of a real salvation.<sup>6</sup>

If you are a Christian, be encouraged by the words of John Newton, the slave trader who came to know Christ and would later write the song “*Amazing Grace*”,

**“I am not what I ought to be; but I am not what I once was, and it is by the grace of God that I am what I am.”**

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<sup>1</sup> Hamilton, Ian, *Let’s Study the Letters of John*. The Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, UK, 2008. Pg. 13.

<sup>2</sup> MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary Series on 1-3 John*. Moody Press: Chicago, IL, 2007. Pg. 52-55.

<sup>3</sup> O’Donnell, Douglas Sean, *Reformed Expository Commentary: 1-3 John*. P&R Publishing Company: Phillipsburg, NJ, 2015. Pg. 39-40.

<sup>4</sup> O’Donnell, Douglas Sean, *Reformed Expository Commentary: 1-3 John*. P&R Publishing Company: Phillipsburg, NJ, 2015. Pg. 42.

<sup>5</sup> MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary Series on 1-3 John*. Moody Press: Chicago, IL, 2007. Pg. 60.

<sup>6</sup> MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary Series on 1-3 John*. Moody Press: Chicago, IL, 2007. Pg. 60.