

An Authentic Relationship with God - Part 2

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[0 : 00] Yeah, sometimes the words resonate, don't they? Take out your Bibles with me, please, and turn to 1 John chapter 1.

We're looking at 1 John 1, 10 through chapter 2, 6. 1 John is at the back of your Bible, find concordance, go to left, you find Revelation, go to left, you find Jude, and then 3rd, and 2nd, and 1 John, I think.

Someone like that. Alright, 1 John. This is his first letter that he wrote. John, of course, wrote the Gospel, according to John, which he wrote in about the 80s, mid-80s of the first century, some 50 years after Jesus' death.

Now he's writing this first letter about mid-90s. So John is quite elderly, quite old. In fact, they called him the elder.

So, and he's dealing with some issues that had come up by that time, different Gospels, different truths, you know, my truth, your truth.

[1 : 28] And dealing with really some dangerous thinking and philosophy. And so he's writing to his people, he calls them in chapter 2, verse 1, my little children, his flock.

And he wants to reassure them of their faith. And really, the whole book is about how to know if you really have eternal life. How do I know that I am truly saved?

How do I know I really know him? And so he's writing out some distinctions. Okay? So let's read from 1 John, chapter 1, verse 5, where he starts through chapter 2, verse 6.

If you're able, please stand for the reading. John writes in verse 5, If we say we have fellowship with one another, we lie and do not practice the truth.

But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus' Son cleanses us from all sin.

[2 : 53] If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. My little children, I'm writing these things to you so that you may not sin.

But if or when anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous one. He is the propitiation for our sins.

And not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.

Whoever says, I know him, but does not keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected.

[4 : 06] By this we may know that we are in him. Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

So reads the word. Let us pray. Father, help us to be careful with these words. Help us to read them rightly. Help us to read them in the manner in which John intended.

We want to hear your truth, not ours. We want to see clearly by your light.

So do, Father, shed light on us today. None of us here can say, Father, we walk perfectly in the light. But we are so grateful that when we walk in the light, that's when you cleanse us.

That's how you clean us and forgive us. Thank you for your grace, for your goodness. Help us to trust your word.

[5 : 09] We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated. Amen. So did you notice the last words of verse 6 there?

Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk. Ought to walk. Should walk. Must walk. Doesn't that sound a little legalistic?

Those are the legalistic language things. Ought, should, don't should on me, right? You know? Yet John uses ought. So I want to ask the question.

Do Christians have a duty to God? Are there things we as Christians ought to do?

Do we owe God? Do we have an obligation, duty?

[6 : 12] And if we don't do these things, is there a consequence? Or has grace set us free of all obligation?

There are some who speak this way. We are saved by grace alone. Through faith alone.

In Christ alone. It's not about us. And why does John say ought? So, if we have no sense of duty to God, what does that say about us?

We are not talking about legalism here. The oughts and shoulds, because you have to and you better. We are not talking about that.

The Bible doesn't speak that way. But it does say ought. Doesn't say it a lot. Right? So we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone, based on the scriptures alone.

[7 : 35] We continue to walk by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Right? So we continue to walk the same way we're saved.

Not by our works. But our works prove something. Our works demonstrate something. Our works don't earn anything. But our works say something about us.

How we live says something about us. And that's John's point. He's dealing with people that say, no, no, no, it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. I have fellowship with God, but then I can keep walking in darkness. See?

So the question is, not do we have a duty to God, but why? What's our motivation in our duty to God? Is it to earn a blessing? Is it, I gotta obey God so I can feel good about myself?

Why ought we walk as Christ himself walked? Well, John speaks about this obligation. He speaks about authentic Christianity that recognizes our duty.

[8 : 39] Remember what Jesus said. Come to me, all who are weary and heavy laden. Who the religious legalists have put things on your back.

Come to me. Come to me. I'll give you rest. That's legalism. That's wrong. Do you know what he said next? Come to me, all who are weary and heavy laden. I'll give you rest.

Take my yoke. Oh. There is an obligation. There is a yoke. There is a responsibility. Take my yoke upon you.

For, why? And learn from me, why? For I'm gentle. Meek. We learned last Thursday what meekness is. Meek and humble in heart.

And you will find rest for your souls. Why take my yoke? Because my yoke is easy. Good.

[9 : 41] Better translation. My yoke is good. And my burden is easy to bear. Not too much.

His commands are not burdensome. Because we have a different motivation. I'm not doing it to perform. I'm not doing it to earn something. I'm not doing it to feel better about myself.

To think now God will be happy with me. Right? Because I've done something. So what is it? So John starts, as we said last week, chapter 1, verse 5.

He starts with the message. He starts with who God is. God is light. God is light. He reveals what is. His light shows what is true. Right?

Dark room. The light comes on. We see what's actually there. Light shows truth. Jesus himself said, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not stumble.

[10 : 40] Because they'll see where they're going. In other words, walking in the dark, you stumble. You don't know where you're going. You're making things up. You're blind. So he not only is affirmation that God is light.

But the negation is that there is no darkness in him. He is pure. He's flawless perfection. And his light exposes darkness. And it reveals the standard.

So we talked about that last week. What's truth? Right? In our culture, truth is whatever you want it to be. Whatever you make it to be. Whatever you redefine it to be. But then you have to redefine who God is.

Because that doesn't match with my truth. But the fact is, God is light. God is the standard. God says what is.

God says what is. So, and who God is then distinguishes who we are. So we go from the message to the meaning in verses 6 through 9.

[11 : 43] We looked last week at two things. Authentic Christianity enabled by our relationship with God is distinctive. John is distinguishing real, authentic Christians from posers, from pretenders, from those who just claim things but do not live that kind of life.

He identifies four things. So we saw the first two last week. Verses 6 and 7. You know, if we say we have fellowship with him, we say I have commonness with him.

I'm a partner with him. That's what fellowship means. I'm on the same page with him. Yet we walk in darkness when he's light. Obviously, we're lying. Right? But, verse 7, if we walk in the light, we walk in the light as he is in the light.

We let his light shine on us. We let his light expose us. We let his light show who we really are. So we're authentic. Walking before him without denying our sin.

Right? Then, right? He says something surprising. Then we have fellowship with one another.

Because fellowship with God also means fellowship with his people. One and the same.

[12 : 51] Now, if I'm all alone and I can't help that, I can still have fellowship with God. But for us, if we're not fellowshiping with God's people, then we're not fellowshiping with him.

Right? So, then he says, so fellowship with God means walking in his cleansing light with one another.

So if I have a real relationship with God, I'll be walking in his light that cleanses me. I'll be doing it with one another. That's real fellowship with God.

Secondly, he said in verses 8 and 9, right? If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. We're self-deceived. When his light is shining and we're saying, oh, I'm clean.

I'm good. Or we're hiding in the darkness. We're deceiving ourselves. But if we confess our sins and we say, yes, I have sinned. I agree. Confess means to agree with God.

[13 : 53] To agree with what he said. Yes, I have sinned. In fact, I confess sins, not just my sinfulness. I confess my sins specifically. Then he's faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us.

So not just forgive us, not just to remove our debt, but then to purify us. And then he comes to a third one. So that's where we are today.

So walking with God. Fellowship with God means walking in his cleansing light with one another.

Walking with God. So going a next step, walking with God includes confession to cleanse our sins.

Now we go a third step. A third distinction is authenticity. That kind of confession, that kind of walking in the light, that kind of living in the light, being transparent, being honest.

Authenticity with God helps us conquer our nagging sin is what he's going to talk about next. So he starts with, in verse 10, 11, the false view.

[14 : 57] Again, again, a profession. If we say something, if we say we have not sinned.

Remember back in verse 8, he said, if we say we have no sin. So in other words, I don't have sinfulness.

Sin's not a problem in my life. Now he's getting more specific. Verse 10, if we say we have not sinned. If I have not committed acts of sin, and it's in the perfect tense, which means I have not in the past, and I continue to not sin.

I have not sinned. Which is another way of saying I've not acted sinfully, or I don't need forgiveness. I don't need a Savior. I'm good. So if we say that, he says we're making God a liar. Now notice the progression. In the first one, when we walk in darkness, and we say we have fellowship with him, we're just a liar.

Bad enough. The second one, if we say we have no sin. Sinfulness is not in my life. Then we're self-deceptive, right? So we lie, then we deceive ourselves.

[16 : 03] Now, he says, but if we say we have never sinned. We say we've got no sinful acts in our life. Then, we're not just a liar, not just deceiving ourselves. Now we're making God a liar.

Because he has said, you have sinned. You have sinned. You have sinned. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Just fact. That's what the old covenant proved.

The old covenant reveals our sin. Then, thou shalt, what? Have no other gods before me. Okay? Have we had no other gods?

Yeah? Huh? Thou shalt honor your father and mother. How'd you do at 13? All right?

On and on and on. And if that didn't do it for you, because remember Jesus met that guy who said, I've kept all the commandments from my youth. Jesus just kind of said, let me test that.

[17:07] You're a rich man, right? Yeah. Okay, give away all your riches and give it to the poor. What? Okay, now I see. Pride.

Selfishness. So, the law proves. Israel could not keep it. They could not keep it. They couldn't even keep it for 40 days. They made an idol, right?

And they had seen God's power and were scared of that power and didn't even want to hear that power. And yet, within 40 days, they kind of forgot and said, oh, okay, let's do our own thing.

Here's the God. What? Silly looking little calf over here. That's what we do. So, if we say we have not sinned, we make God a liar.

And we're denying what God has said about all men. So, what's the true view? So, now he comes in chapter 2 to verse 1. He's not starting a new subject. He's still dealing with the same thing.

[18:13] He's talking about those that say and those that do. But now, he does change his tone a little bit. Because in chapter 2, verse 1, he now is addressing his children directly.

He's been talking about things. Now, he's going to say to them, my little children. My children. So, here comes out his pastor's heart. My children. This is what I want for you.

I'm writing these things. Why? So that you may not sin. So that you may not sin. Because now that you're a believer, you don't have to sin anymore.

Did you know that? It's not an ought. It's just a can. Before you were saved, you did not have the Holy Spirit. Before you were saved, you're dead in your sin.

Before you were saved, you had free will to do what you wanted to do. What did you want to do? Sin. I want to do whatever I want to do. When you're saved, what happens? You get a change of heart.

[19:12] You get a change of value. You get a change of want-tos. Before I'm saved, his commandments are burdensome. Remember Pilgrim's Progress? Remember that big load he's carrying?

Trying to do the law. Comes to the cross and lays the burden down. Jesus gives me a different yoke. A different burden.

But that one's not. It's not like. It comes down to two things, doesn't it? What's Jesus' command? What's the new commandment Jesus gave?

You shall love one another as I have loved you. So that's new. The old was you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Okay? Different standard.

You shall love your neighbors as you love yourself. And you do love yourself. You might twist that around a little bit, but you still pay attention to yourself. Jesus said now it's not as you, not love your neighbor as yourself.

[20:14] Now it's love your neighbor as I have loved you. There's the definition of love. Not your twisted view of love, but my standard of love, which means laying down your life, sacrificing, giving to meet the need of another.

Now that's the standard. That's the law. That's the new law. That's the new commandment. It goes along with the greatest commandment ever given, right? You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul.

It goes heart, soul, ma'od. Everything.

Your strength. It usually translates strength. Heart meant mind in Jewish thought, right? Heart is your thoughts and intentions. Soul is that deep down effect.

That's where we get messed up. My strength is, that's the great command. That, by the way, Paul says covers all the Old Testament commands.

[21:25] Those two things. Jesus says it's really just one. Really just love one another as I have loved you. Because if you do that, you prove the first one. You'll never do that one if you don't do the other one.

You haven't done the other one. So really Jesus just kind of says, okay, take all those 666 commands. I got you one. Keep it nice and simple. Right?

Simple. Easy, right? Oh, simple. Okay. So for the true Christian, verse 1, he says, I'm writing that you may not sin.

I want you to have victory. I want you, you know, he's not saying that you shall never sin. And he's saying, I want you, that you may not. That you recognize you have a choice not to sin anymore.

Now that you have my spirit, you've changed heart. Now I know you want to do what I want you to do. The commandments aren't burdensome because you want to do that.

[22 : 29] Because you have a different heart. You have a different value. You have a different desire. I still have the old desires, by the way. Because we still sin.

Right? And John says, he doesn't expect us to be perfect here because he does say, well, if we're honest, we're still sinning. So when you do sin, though, I want to give you some help. I want you to know that when you do sin, when you do fall, God provides incredible help for you.

Remember, you're already walking in his light. You're already confessing your sin. And now you're walking with authenticity before him.

In his light, he helps us. So how does he help us? We have two things here, he says. Verse one. If anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

What's an advocate? It's actually a legal technical term for a counselor for the defense. A lawyer.

[23 : 35] An advocate. Somebody who stands up for us. Someone who stands before the judge. He says it's with the Father. And pleads our case. He is a defender.

He's one called alongside. He's one who pleads our case, intercedes for us, enters a plea of not guilty. The debt has been paid. He's our helper.

So the same term advocate here that John uses, he uses in his gospel to refer to the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said, do not worry. You know, it's to your advantage that I go away.

Because when I go away, I will send you a helper, an advocate, a paraclete, a one called alongside. There's all kinds of words that go.

He's a comforter. He's a counselor. He's a helper. Right? So it's to your advantage. Because when I go away, I will send him to you and he will be with you forever.

[24 : 37] He will not leave you. He will be constantly with you. So Jesus promised us an advocate on earth as we walk. John is saying we also still have an advocate in heaven.

Because before the Spirit was our advocate, Jesus was our advocate. Because when he said, I'm going to give you a helper, he said, I'm going to give you another helper like me.

But even better, because he's with each of you always. So Jesus is our defender in heaven.

Holy Spirit's our defender on earth. Jesus is our defender in heaven. Let me read. We're going to, oh, no, we're not singing this song. We have sung this song written by Charles Wesley.

He wrote a lot of good stuff, Wesley. And he captures this in this hymn called Arise, My Soul, Arise. Arise, my soul, arise. Shake off thy guilty fears.

[25 : 36] Isn't it interesting that he felt guilty fears too? Christians feel guilty fears. Shake them off, he says. Arise, my soul.

He's talking to his soul. Shake off thy guilty fears. The bleeding sacrifice on my behalf appears.

Before the throne, my shorty stands. Before the throne, my shorty stands.

My name is written on his hands. He ever lives above for me to intercede. His all redeeming love, his precious blood to plead. His blood atoned for all our race.

His blood atoned for all our race. And sprinkles now the throne of grace. Five bleeding wounds he bears, received on Calvary. They pour effectual prayers.

They strongly plead for me. Forgive him, oh, forgive him, they cry. Forgive him, oh, forgive, they cry. Nor let that ransomed sinner die. The father hears him pray.

[26 : 36] His dear anointed one, he cannot turn away the presence of his son. His spirit answers to the blood. The spirit answers to the blood. And tells him, I am born of God.

Jesus said, I died for him. And the spirit says, I gave him new birth. My God has reconciled his pardoning voice I hear. He owns me for his child.

I can no longer fear. With confidence now I draw nigh. With confidence I now draw nigh. And Father, Abba, Father, I cry. That's what he's doing.

That's what Wesley's expressing there. So he says he's our helper, verse one. Then verse two, he says he's also our propitiation.

P-p-p-p-p-propitiation. That's a word you use weekly, right? Put that on your vocab list and just start, see if you can put that into a conversation this week.

[27 : 36] I don't even know what it means. I'm going to, what's propitiation? Well, he's interceding.

He's our helper, our defender interceding because he's also our propitiation. In other words, he interceded because he himself paid for our sin.

He's a propitiation, which means he's a sin offering for us. Propitiation technically means to appease the wrath of a god.

So some people are offended by that term because it has pagan associations with it. But it's actually an Old Testament view as well. Day of Atonement is the day they go, they went in once a year, the high priest finally went inside the veil, right, to the Holy of Holies and a rope tied, right, bells around, you know, in case he's not clean because if he goes in unclean, it's over. So he goes in, he's going to sprinkle the blood on the mercy seat on the ark, right, where God's presence is. Fear and trepidation because you only go once, only one guy gets to go. [28 : 53] So, but then, you know, next year you've got to do it again because we're still sinning. So the blood there is propitiating, it's appeasing, it's atoning.

But the Old Testament atonement wasn't a removal of sin, it was a covering of sin. So you had to do it again and again and again. That's the Old Covenant.

And by the way, James, which sins are covered there? All of our sins? Which ones? Unintentional sins are the only ones covered there. So David, when he commits adultery and murder and coveting and stealing and, you know, when he broke all the commandments pretty much in a couple of weeks there, he said, I can't offer a sacrifice.

There's nothing I can do. I just plead for mercy because I'm a dead man. Nothing unintentional that I did there with Bathsheba.

Oh, I didn't mean that. I didn't mean to send him into battle and get him killed. I didn't mean to mislead. But here in the New Testament, in the New Covenant, it's a different cover.

[30 : 12] It's not covering, it's taking away the sin. There's real forgiveness once for all. So then he makes a little interesting statement.

I'm not going to spend a lot of time on it. He's a propitiation for our sins, not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world. There you go. Everybody's saved. If he's the propitiation, if he's the satisfaction, if he's the atonement for sins, not for ours only, but for those of the whole world, if in fact he did that on the cross, if when he died on the cross, it was an actual justification for others, an actual payment for others in a real sense, then this means, if the whole world means each and every person ever lived in the world, then everybody's covered.

But we know the Bible doesn't teach that. So we have many, the popular view in Christianity, good, authentic Christianity, believes that his death creates an opportunity for others.

So his death is a potential death because it depends on if you believe and receive or not. That's the other view. Or a view.

My personal belief is the whole world doesn't mean the whole world. All doesn't always mean all. Entire doesn't always mean entire in the scriptures.

[31 : 38] Which is hard because I'm a literalist, you know, so I want all to mean everything. I grew up with that. But if I, so I looked at the other phrases, I'll try to do this quickly, where the whole world, that phrase, the whole world, just those three words are, where else are they in the New Testament?

They occur in five other situations. They occur more than five times, but some of them are repeating the same thing. So they occur in five other places. So how is it used there?

So it's used here for all, propitiation for all our sins. It's used again in 1 John 5, 19. The next last verse, or second to next to the last verse, or almost last, okay.

5, 19. He says, we know that we are from God, and the whole world, the whole world, lies in the power of the evil one. The whole world. Is that each and every person in the whole world?

Does it mean the whole world? What does it mean? Okay. Can mean. Revelation 12, 9. Remember the dragon. He deceives, guess who? The whole world.

[32 : 47] Does he? Is everyone in the world deceived? Does he? He uses it in Matthew 16. He talks about the person that, that wants to save his soul in this world.

Right? So he forfeits his soul to gain the whole world. So are you gaining the whole world? Or is it just a, you're gaining a whole, but you're going after a lot of things.

What does it mean? Again, in Romans 1, 8, he says to the Roman church, your faith is proclaimed in the whole world. Was it?

Literally? So is it a phrase? You decide. And does it matter? Not on the big screen.

Okay. Not on the big picture. And for those of you like me who wrestle with this kind of, what does that mean?

[33 : 50] Okay. Dig. Dig. Dig. Wrestle. And you'll probably go, you get short hair like me, I don't know what I mean. I haven't figured out, but you're going to ask me privately what that means.

Doesn't mean I'm right. Okay. Huh? Yeah, let's talk about ifs. So, I think the whole world, he means it in a limited way.

Right? God so loved the world. So how does John use that phrase, the world? God so loved the world that what? He gave his only son. Why? That whoever believes, well, that's not everybody. You can go on all day. You can line up verses, you know. My pastoral counsel, don't worry about it. If it bugs you, dig in.

Read. But pastoral counsel, just don't get hung up on that. It's okay. Okay. Besides, it's God's business, not ours. Okay.

[35 : 04] I don't have to know that. All right. Let's get to something more applicable. How's God appeased God's holy wrath for sins? How, how, how did Jesus do that?

We know it's about his blood. We know it's about his death. How does that make us susceptible, acceptable to him? So listen to Hebrews seven, talks about Jesus and the change that he brought. Remember, Jesus lived under the old covenant. The old covenant is the 10 commandments. It is the commands that you must obey and you must fulfill. If you obey those 10 commands, God will bless you, multiply you, make you fruitful, keep you healthy, wealthy, and all the other, right?

But if you do not keep those commands, it's an if or covenant. If you do not keep that covenant, every single, nobody did, every single part of it, then he will curse you.

And you will be poor and you will be oppressed and you will be, what? Opposite of healthy, wealthy, and you know, your, your crops will fail. And by the way, you're going to be moved out of promised land.

[36 : 16] And so how'd Israel do with it? Right? They kept getting, right? They couldn't do it. Couldn't do it. Jesus could. So Jesus starts a new covenant, which was prophesied in Jeremiah 31.

So here's what Hebrews says, Hebrews seven. This whole thing makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant than the old one. The former priests were many in number because they were prevented by death from continuing office.

You know, old Aaron, he could have kept going as priest, but then he died. You know, what are you going to do? But he holds, but he, Jesus holds his priesthood permanently because he continues forever.

However, consequently, he, Jesus is able to save to the uttermost. Those who, who, who does he say? Those who draw near to God through him.

And he's able to do that. Why? Because he always lives to make intercession for them. So he's that mediator. He's that interceder. He's that advocate. For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.

[37 : 35] He has no need like those other priests to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people. Since he did this offering once for all, when he offered up himself.

For the law, the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, God's promise, which came later than the law, appoints a son who has been made perfect forever.

The old covenant revealed our sin, exposed our inability, showed our need for mercy and grace.

The old covenant, all it produced was death. It cannot save us.

The new covenant that God brings with his son forgives, actually forgives sin, doesn't just cover it up for a while, but actually removes sin, forgives it, because Christ, the son, the holy, righteous one, was a substitute for sinners.

Righteous for unrighteous, and paid our debt, and reconciled us to God. And who experiences this good news? All who draw near to him. All who draw near to him.

[38 : 53] What does that mean to draw near to him? Well, I'm walking in light, right? What does light do? It shows who I am. What do I do when I see, when I'm exposed?

Yep, you're right. See? Pretty sinful. Okay. In fact, no, not just pretty sinful, not joking around about it, but, oh. Oh yeah, I forgot about that stain, Lord.

Thank you for showing me that. I admit that. Lust, I admit that. I admit that gossip. I admit that pride. I admit that selfishness. I admit that, oh, I was rebellious.

I was like David. I was like another person right there. Lord, I confess that. I admit that. Right? So, he comes to those who draw near, who repent of their sins, and turn to him, who deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Christ.

So, authenticity with God helps us conquer our sins, because he, he's our helper. He's our answer. But it only comes to those who walk in the light.

[40 : 06] There's a fourth distinction he shows now in chapter two, verses three to six. A little different language this time, but really talking about the same thing. So, we go, we go from fellowship with God, right?

Means walking in his cleansing light. Walking with God includes confession to sin. Confession to cleanse our sin. Confession to sin. Confession to, well, sometimes it's confession to sin. That's sometimes where confession starts. I confess, Lord, I want to sin. It's actually quite powerful. And then authenticity, that walking in the light, that confession, authenticity with God helps us to conquer our nagging sins.

Because it's not just that we confess our sins, but then we're working to conquer our sins. And then the last part he now brings up in two, three to six is knowing God. Now he's going to talk about it on a different level. Knowing God.

Knowing God. Actually having a relationship with God is confirmed by keeping his word. The fact that I know God. How do I know I really know him? Well, that's confirmed and proven by my keeping his word.

[41 : 14] So in verse three, he starts with the truth again. Here's this phrase. He's going to say over and over again in first John, by this, we know here's the test. Here's the measurement. Here's the standard by this.

We know that we have come to know him. If we keep his commandments. So there's the test. How do we know? We really know God. What do you mean by no God?

Well, not know about God. I can, I can know about Richard Nixon. I don't know why I'm thinking of Richard Nixon. I know about Richard Nixon because there's a lot written on him.

I can, I can read all about him. I can even read his memoirs. Not that I want to, but I could, but never really know him.

Charles Coulson, on the other hand, knew him. He lived with, you know, he, he, he had a relationship with him. So, so I can know a lot about God. I can study God. I can know a lot about God and never know him.

[42 : 12] You know, the scary words Jesus says to some people who say, Oh, we're doing all this for Jesus. And then Jesus says, I never knew you. What are you talking about? We did all this for you. Didn't know you.

Didn't person, didn't have a personal relationship with you. You're doing your own thing. So, so what does it mean? So it means a personal experiential relationship. That's what it, this word for knowledge doesn't mean I just know in my head.

It means I've come to experience. I've come to, to learn by acquaintance. I've come to personally experience this God. I know, you know, it says David was a man after God's own heart.

How did he, how did he become a man after God's own heart? Cause, cause he walked with him and talked with him and heard from him and, and knew what God loved and knew what God hated. knew, knew what, right?

That that's, so when I know somebody, I know my wife, although not lately. Well, I still know, I still know.

[43 : 14] So, you know, so I walk in the house, I walk through the house and I know, she wouldn't like it like this. Why do I know that? Because I know her.

Are you listening dear? Right? You know, you, you, you, you walk with a person, you, you know them. Right?

That's what we're talking about. How do I really know I know God? And it's not just kind of this head knowledge. Because I, I keep his commandments. Simple, straightforward.

We cut, we know we've come to know him if we keep his commandments. And it's, it's in the present tense. It means I, I keep keeping. I keep keeping. I continually and intentionally work at keeping them.

Do I keep them perfectly? No. He's already showed that in chapter one. We already know. We can't say, I have not sinned. We can't say, I've always kept his commandment. Because we'd be a liar.

So it doesn't mean perfectly.

[44 : 15] John's not a legalist. He's saying, but we're, we're learning to. And I'm, I'm growing in that. I'm striving to. I fall all the time, but, but I want to, right?

It's a pattern of my life. At the end of the day, where are you? So if I have a bad day, maybe I have a bad month. Or I'm walking away from God. How am I doing?

Well, there's this Holy Spirit helper inside of me. Right? Gently pulling me back. Whereas the devil's going, shame on you.

You just, you're a loser. You're not a Christian. He's trying to get me to move away from God. The Holy Spirit's trying to gently bring me back. Right?

But there's a pattern in my life. So I might stumble for a while, like David. I might stumble for a while. I might even be a whole different person for a while. Because, because I have darkness still.

[45 : 19] I still have old stuff. Right? I have weakness. That for some reason, he won't just take away. Sorry.

Didn't mean it in that tone. Sometimes I do. But at the end of the day, do I fight against sin?

So the difference between someone who's keeping his commandments and one who's not keeping his commandments is one, I care about it. Because if I'm not keeping his commandments, I don't care.

I care. But if I want to keep his commandments, I care. Even when I'm not. And I fight it. Am I fighting it? Am I bothered by it?

That's a good indication that I'm a keeper. Right? I fail a lot at it, but I care about it. I fight for it. I hate my sin.

[46 : 23] I have to love it, but at the end of the day, I hate it. I hate what it does. Does that make sense? Contrast, verse 4, the liar, right?

Whoever says, I know him, but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and there's no truth in him. He's walking in darkness. He's a liar. Whoever says, I know God, but is not keeping his commands is a pretender, opposer.

How can you really know God yet continually to, continue to dismiss him and disregard him and, in fact, hate his commands?

There's no truth. You're not even trying, not even fighting. Verse 5 and 6, he gives reassurance. So he's going to say the same thing as verse 3, but here he's going to, going to give a little more insurance, okay?

Verse 5, but whoever keeps his word, whoever is keeping his word, whoever keeps working at following him, in him truly the love of God is perfected.

[47 : 26] What does that mean? Because there's a promise, there's a reassurance that if I'm keeping the commandments of God, the love of God is perfected. Well, is that God's love for me that's perfected, completed?

Or is it my love for him that's completed? Oh, I think so. The proof that I love him becomes completed, mature, when I keep his commandments.

Every time, I do it right. Every time I walk by faith, every time I walk by the spirit, and I keep his command, right? My love for him is proven.

And he's smiling, right? I love that. And then he says, one more thing, I want, here's another test, by this we may know that we are in him.

So before he talked about we know that we know him, now he's saying, by this we know that we're in him. We're actually living in him. We're walking in him. We're relying in him. Whoever says, verse six, he abides in him, I'm relying on him, I'm abiding in him, ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

[48 : 43] There comes that legal word. Ought to walk. Whoever says, if you say you abide in him, you better walk in. No. Whoever says, I'm abiding in him.

Remember Jesus talked about abiding, it's the vine and the branches? Here's the best illustration, I think, for what abiding looks like. Because he said, you know, if the branch is attached to the vine, then it bears fruit.

If the branch is removed from the vine, it will not. Apart from me, you can do nothing. Apart from me, you will not bear any fruit. The only way you can bear fruit is by being attached to Jesus, by drawing your life from him, by, you're the bearer, he's the producer, you're drawing from him.

Does that make sense? And so, how do I prove that I'm abiding in him? I walk in the same way in which he walks. I follow him. Like he said, right, if you're going to follow me, what do you do?

Deny yourself. Take up your cross, follow me. Not about you. Deny yourself. I don't want to deny myself.

[49 : 57] Right? Take up your cross, follow me. What will you find? Life, peace, joy. I know a quicker way. It doesn't last.

You ought to walk. Ought, this word means owe him. You are in debt to him.

This word ought to walk as Christ means duty. It is your duty and obligation. If you say you abide in him, it is your duty and obligation to walk in the same manner as he walked.

But that sounds like legalism. I had a guy that used to come to our church, a friend of mine, that hated any of that kind of language. You know, don't say ought, have to, should, must.

He would say, I don't have to do anything. I don't know about that. I think you do. No, that's a legalist. It depends on your motive.

[51 : 03] If your motive is, yeah, to feel better about yourself. If your motive is to earn something, right, or to measure, you gotta, I gotta measure up so all these other people can approve of me. If that's your motive, yeah, that's legalism.

It's all about external works, right? But there's a different kind of obligation. There's a different kind of duty to God that's pure. It comes from, huh?

Out of love. Out of love. Oh, you just stole my thunder. No. Thank you, Jerry. It's actually better when it comes, right? No, I'm just teasing you.

I'm teasing. Different motive. Absolutely. So here's what Jesus, you read ahead, didn't you? John 14. So Jesus said this, right? He said it to his disciples. Where did John, where did John get all this stuff, by the way?

Jesus. Okay. So John 14, he says almost the same exact thing. Why ought we to keep his commandments? Why is it our duty? Jesus said, John 14, 15, if you love me, you will keep my commandments.

[52 : 09] Period. It's not, if you love me, it's, do you love me? You'll keep them.

I'm not worried about you. If you love me, you'll keep my commandments. That's what he's saying. And then look what happens. And I will ask the Father and he will give you another helper, paraclete, advocate.

Who's that? To be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him.

But you know him. You know the Holy Spirit. Why? Because he dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you by the means of the Holy Spirit.

Yet a little while, the world will not, this is right before he's going to die, right? So a little while, the world will see me no more, but you will see me because I live. You also will live.

[53 : 04] In that day, you will know that I am in my Father and you in me and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. Again, that's the proof of your love for me.

I know you love me because you keep my commandments. Not perfectly. Peter. James and John, sons of thunder. Stop trying to kill those people.

And he who loves me, here's, oh, look at this. He who loves me will be loved by my Father and I will love him and I'll manifest myself to him. Judas, not Iscariot, said to him, Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us and not to the world?

Jesus said, if anyone loves me, he will keep my word and my Father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him. Wow. So it's not just the Spirit.

If you keep my commandments, in other words, you're proving your love for me. Oh, my Father's love's gonna swell, my love's gonna swell and we're gonna come to you. We are gonna come to you.

[54 : 15] I make our home with you. Wow, wow, wow, wow, wow, what is that? Whoever does not love me does not keep my word, period.

That's, and by the way, the word that you hear is not mine, but the Father's. This is, I'm, John's telling what Jesus said, Jesus telling what the Father said, so it's, we're all on the same page.

Keeping his word proves our love for him. It's the evidence of our relationship. Jesus said, if you follow me, you'll deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me.

You will walk as I walk. You know that little story Jesus told in Luke 17? It talks about duty there. It helps perspective. Jesus said, will any of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep, sheep, sheep, I guess they could be keeping sheep, ships, sheep.

Sorry. So you have a servant, okay, they're out there in the world, they're out there working. Would you say to him when he has come in from the field, come and sit and recline at the table with me?
[55 : 29] Would you do that? Your servant? Will he not rather say to him, prepare supper for me and dress properly? You know, you smell, come on, get cleaned up. I mean, prepare supper for me, dress properly and serve me while I eat and drink and afterward you will eat and drink.

Yeah, that's what you would do with a servant. Does he thank the servant because he has done what he commanded? Then Jesus gives the application.

Listen. So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, you say, we are unworthy servants, we have only done what was our duty.

That's the attitude of a servant. A lot different in our world, isn't it? I think I deserve a raise.

I don't like how my boss treats me. He never says thanks. Is that part of the deal? Yeah, that would be a good boss. That would be a nice boss. That would do that. But does he have to do that?

[56 : 40] It depends on how you're raised. Now, if you're a boss, I bet you say thank you to your servants.

You don't even think of them as servants, you probably think of them as friends. But Jesus is making a point. If you have a master-servant relationship, would a master ever say, oh yeah, come on, sit down and eat with us?

No. He's hired to do a job. After he's done his job, then he, and he's not going to expect a thank you. He's going to say, I've just done what I'm supposed to do.

That's my duty. Is that your attitude toward God? That after you've done everything he's, he's called you to do, are you looking for a thank you?

There will be a day, well done. It's not that he won't say thank you. He thanks us by his love and his, right? Interesting to think about.

[57 : 47] Okay? Why ought? Why obligation? Why ought we to walk in the same way in which he walked? Because we owe him everything.

Because we belong to him. He saved me from destruction. He saved me from myself. He saved me from my guilt and my shame.

He didn't save me so that I could just go do what, he saved me to be his. He saved me to walk like him and be a witness and a light to others.

That's why we owe him everything. It's not an ought duty to earn points or because he would cut me off if I didn't or because he won't answer my prayers if I don't do what he says.

It's a duty because I love him because I want to please him and if I don't keep his commandments, you know what that says about me? I don't love him. And then there was a result when I do his commandments, he loves me again more and I'm loved by the Father and they come and make their home with me.

[59 : 03] In other words, there's an even closer, more intimate relationship. Wow. So what if I don't do as I ought? What if I'm a believer and I'm walking in darkness and I don't do, you know, I'm not working at his commandment.

I'm not, I'm in a bad way. Is he going to punish me? I don't see any head shaking.

Okay, good. Might he discipline me? Okay, yeah. As a father to a son. Yeah. Is he mad at me?

No. But he feels something, doesn't he? Grief. He's grieved. Right? When we sin, we grieve the spirit.

That's not anger. That's pain. Right? Still with us? But if, if I do his commandments and I, and I grow closer to God, God comes closer to me in some kind of intimate way, if I don't do his commandments and not showing I love him at the time, what's the consequence?

[60 : 33] Maybe there's some distance. There's a broken fellowship. Not an abandonment. Okay? If you're truly saved, he's not going to abandon you. but he may step back.

Well, who's moved, right? I've stepped back. So there's this. Get that right because he's still pursuing me. He's still pursuing me.

Holy Spirit's still with me. He's not going to take his spirit away. But we don't have to pray like David. Remember David and he said, please don't take your Holy Spirit away from me. I mean, he didn't have that promise of Jesus in his life.

He had that Holy Spirit, right? And then when he committed all this, his first thought was, okay, when Saul disobeyed, you took the Holy Spirit away from him and gave him to somebody else.

Please don't take the Holy Spirit away from me.

Oh, it's my only hope. Interesting. We said we don't have to worry about that. Well, there's another thing, though.

[61 : 35] If I don't do his commandments, and I'm a Christian, that might mean loss of fellowship, but if I am always not doing his commandments, if I'm never fighting my sin, what does that say?

It not only says I don't love him, but it may say I'm not his at all. I may be self-deceived because I prayed a prayer or I walked an aisle or I followed him for a while, like the seed in the rocks or like the seed in the thorns, and maybe the world choked it out or maybe the persecution was too much and I walked away from him.

Maybe it was never real. Maybe it was never authentic because authentic Christianity walks in his cleansing light with one another. Authentic Christianity confesses our sin.

Authentic Christianity means I'm real with God, always real with him and I fight sin with him and knowing him is confirmed by my keeping his word.

Knowing him proves that I love him by keeping his word. We're going to sing Power to Redeem and some of the words from that song we're going to sing next is God takes what is and makes it beautiful.

[63 : 06] His love floods in and we're restored. Only by the blood are we set free. With mercy strong to carry shame he nailed it to a tree.

Rejoice, O child of God, lift up your eyes to see with every morning sunrise. Again, we are redeemed.

Again, we're renewed. Again, we're cleansed. Again, we're his mercies are new every morning. Let's pray. Father, thank you for the word. Lord, thank you for the truth, the distinction between what's true, what's false.

We need to hear it from you because we hear so much from the world that blurs everything. we thank you, Lord, for John setting it before us, not in a harsh way, not in a legalistic way, but as we read him carefully, we see he's tender.

He's a father. He wants us to improve. He wants us so that we may not sin so much. So, help us to walk this right road.

[64 : 21] Help us to honor you. help us to prove our love for you. We ask in Christ's name, amen.