

Obedience the Key to Fellowship  
I John 2:3-6

INTRO: For the child of God, obedience is not optional; it is necessary for fellowship. You will not have fellowship with God apart from obedience to the commands of God.

Although the words obey and obedience do not appear in I John 2:3-6, it is easy to see that the undercurrent that flows through this section is obedience to the commands of God found in His Word. We see this undercurrent in these three expressions:

1. Obedience in keeping His commandments. "...we know him, if we keep his commandments (vs 3)."
2. Obedience in keeping His Word. "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected...."
3. Obedience in our walk. "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (vs 6).

I. VSS 3-4, OBEDIENCE IN KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENTS

A. Vs 3, John opens this verse by saying: "hereby we know that we know him...."

1. There are several important truths that we learn here:
  - a) We can know God the Father.
  - b) We can know that we know God.
  - c) Assurance of knowing God personally comes through obedience to His commands.
2. "Hereby" means "in this." In this verse, it means: "Here is the test by which we can make sure that we know God: do we keep His commandments?"
  - a) The Greek word for know is *ginosko*: "To know by experience."
    - (1) John says: "hereby we do know that we know him...." Hiebert says: "Here the double use of the verb....denotes assured knowledge; the present tense followed by the perfect tense declares that we have the continuing realization that we have entered into an abiding knowledge of him" (79).
    - (2) The knowledge of a person, not a concept, is in view because of the use of the pronoun "him."
    - (3) John makes it clear, if you are a believer, you know it! If you are born again, you know it! If you have been saved, you know it! If you don't know then get into the Gospel of John and read and seek God's face.
  - b) The Word of God plainly teaches that you can know that you are saved. Yes, you can know that you know that you know. "He that believeth on him is not condemned...." (John 3:18). "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life..." (John

3:36). “He that believeth on me hath everlasting life” (John 6:47). “I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish” (John 10:28).

3. “If we keep his commandments.”
  - a) The Greek word for “keep” is *tereo* meaning, “go guard carefully, to observe, to be on the watch as to obey and fulfill.” The child of God guards the truth because it is precious to him, a treasure. We are not saved because we keep His commandments; we keep His commandments because we are saved.
  - b) This keeping of God’s commandments is a continuous action, a habitual continual way of life, a life in fellowship with God.

B. Vs 4, Verse four is a negative restatement of the previous verse.

1. Any person who claims to be saved, claims to know God, and does not live for the Lord is a liar. The importance of obedience is driven home.
2. “Keepeth not his commandments.” We could say: “His commandments is not keeping.”
  - a) What we have indicated here is a persistent failure to keep the commands of God. It indicates a person who’s life does not live up to his profession, a habitual life of disobedient actions.
  - b) Some folks do not want to do right. They rebel because they are unsaved.
3. “Is a liar.” For a person to say that they “know him” and live like the world makes them a liar.
4. “The truth is not in him.” The truth is not within because the Lord is not within. This person has not experienced the new birth (II Cor 5:17).

## II. VS 5, OBEDIENCE IN KEEPING HIS WORD

A. Keeping His Word is a broader stroke than keeping His commandments (vs 3).

1. “His Word” denotes all of the revealed will of God.
2. Keeping His Word is an act of obedience.
  - a) Obedience is the bench test of and following true conversion.
  - b) A child can tell his parents he loves them. He can profess it over and over, but his words are meaningless when that child goes on disobeying and commands of the parent.
  - c) “Keepeth” is in the present tense indicating continuous activity not just a single act.
  - d) Keeping His Word means day by day obedience in material as well as spiritual things. “Obedience not only when people are watching us, but when we are in secret” (Greene 57).

B. “In him verily is the love of God perfected...”

1. The man who keeps the Word of God. In this man is love fore God perfected. Man’s love for God is in view here.

2. The man who has the love of God in his heart does not desire to be carnal or worldly. He desires to please God whom he loves.
- C. "Hereby know we that we are in him."
  1. You can know that you are saved by discerning the desires of your heart. Do you desire God or sin?
  2. Love for God and obedience to his word are proof of true conversion.
- D. "In him"-- means that we are no longer alienated from God.
  1. The unregenerate has been born again and now enjoys fellowship with God.
  2. Eph 2:13.

### III. VS 6, OBEDIENCE AS WE WALK AS JESUS WALKED

- A. "Abideth" means ongoing fellowship with God as a result of knowing Christ personally.
- B. "Ought." Because of what Christ has done for us, we as a matter of debt, as a matter of responsibility, and as a matter of duty ought to walk as Christ.
- C. "Even as he walked." Hiebert says that this "calls for an imitation not merely in broad outline but a close duplication of the way 'he'... 'that one' walked" (84).
  1. We are to follow in His steps (I Pet 2:21).
    - a) The word "example" in I Peter 2:21 means "to write under, to trace the letters."
    - b) As a child traces letters on a page, so the Christian traces the path of Christ" (Kistemaker 109).
  2. "Follow" in I Peter 2:21 means "to take the same road." This is the idea of I John 2:6-- to take the road Christ did in His earthly ministry.
    - a) Some years ago as I was ironing a shirt, my daughter Sharon said: "I will learn to iron by watching you." Because she loves me, she wanted to be like me and do as I did.
    - b) We ought to want to be like Jesus and do as He did because we love Him.

CONCLUSION: Obedience is expressed in keeping God's commandments, in keeping His Word, and in walking as Jesus walked.