

Knowing God: 1 John 2

1-2 "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world."

- Let the world abandon you. Let a close friend disappear during a time of need, but not Jesus. You've got an advocate. You know what this is? Advocate - **one who appears in another's behalf, mediator, intercessor, helper**. Can I put it another way? He's got your back. Ever had a sibling approach your parents on your behalf when you messed up? Not to make excuses, but to plead for understanding and patience?
- He's not a cliquish God. Leave it to humans to behave in such a way. Leave it to us to play favorites. Leave it to us to show biased behavior. We tend to only bless those who are deserving, but not Jesus. Jesus blessed the whole world with His death. Ever have a sibling take the fall for you? He took on the wrath of God (so, yes - our brother did step in at one point to appease the wrath of the Father).
- John wanted believers to be confident in their relationship with God.

3-6 "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. 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."

- "I know Tom Hanks." Did you know that? Do you believe it? That statement comes with some responsibility. What if I made such a claim, though I'd never met him? What if I said, "Tom Hanks is my father?" How much more responsibility does that come with? What kind of expectation would there be? I should know a lot about him. I lived with him. Stayed where he stayed. I learned from him. I think like him. I act like him, right? I love him and he loves me. He trained me from my youth. He disciplined me. You should expect all of that if I were to claim such a relationship.
- How much more when we claim to have a relationship with God? What about calling Him our Father? In this passage we have so many powerful terms: Know, love, abides and walk. This passage teaches that if you don't obey God, you cannot say you know him, love Him, abide in Him or walk like Him.
 - **Know** is used 37 times in the ESV. I believe it carries the idea of fellowship - just using a different term. (*It may have been deliberate seeing as how others claimed superior knowledge during those times*).
 - **Love** is used 45 times. It would be wise to let God's word define love.
 - **Abide** is used 22 times. Abide - **remain, stay**. This means to stay in a relationship with Christ. Stay in the word. To keep grounded in the message and live the message.

- **Walk** is used 5 times in 1 John and found in 2 & 3 John as well. **Practice** is used 8 times and synonymous in use.
- You'll know I love God when I keep His commandments.
 - You can do the right thing and still not have love ([Revelation 2:2-4](#)), but you certainly cannot say you love God when you ignore His commandments. We need to have this love, not only towards God, but each other.

7-8 Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.

- Jesus called it new in [John 13:33-35](#) when He said, "*Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.' A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*"
- Selfishness should be replaced by a love for others in our lives. The light of God should be shining through us in how we treat one another.

9-11 Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

- John will write about love for God and brethren throughout this letter (especially in chapters 3-4). Consider John, an older man. Most of His friends and other apostles have passed away. He's dealing with false teaching (we'll see it in a bit), but he's also dealing with a struggle he's seen for many years within the Christian community: loving each other.
- Those who claim to love God will love His people. It should stand out.
- I hope you have high expectations from Christians. You should want to be around a people who walk like Jesus. You should be around people of light. You should be a person of light. And what does that look like? When you picture Jesus - how is He with others? He's bold, but gentle. He doesn't go along with the norm, but challenges the hypocritical and lukewarm. He's deep in prayer. Deep in God's word. He'd give you the time of day. He'd give you the shirt off His back. I mean, He gave you His life. He's someone you'd want to be around. You're graced by His presence when He enters your home, etc. Brethren, it's who we want to see in ourselves. We're trying to follow Jesus. Did we forget what that? We're trying to walk like Jesus. Know the Father how Jesus knew the Father. Love others how Jesus loved. We are Christians. Christ followers. And when you're pro-Christ, you're pro-brethren. This can make or break a believers experience in a local body by the way.
- Sometimes I fear we've tried to explain away this lack of character we've seen in the body. We explain away cold attitudes, distant relationships, and rude behavior by focusing on God's desire for obedience. But doesn't love teach us not to behave in such a way? That's

not the Jesus I can read about. He was obedient and full of grace and truth. He wasn't doing the right things with the wrong attitude. Try and get away with that in your marriage. That's a cold marriage. Are you close to brethren? Are they important? Are we worthy of each other's time? Are we like Jesus?

12-14 I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake. I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, children, because you know the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

- Some hold "children" & "little children" to represent young converts. Young men represent those who have some time under their belts as Christians, and then fathers as the most mature in Christ. Others believe "children" & "little children" refer to all Christians, and then two classes: the young men and fathers. It is true that John uses Jesus vocabulary "little children" or "children" in John and this letter (1 John 2:1, 18, 28; 3:1, 2, 7, 10, 18; 4:4; 5:2, 21) to refer to all Christians. I wouldn't lose sleep over this.
- John has made a bold statement, but he doesn't want to discourage the brethren. This portion seems to be a short poem. It's encouraging and reassures everyone of their relationship with the Lord. They know the Lord and God's word abides in them.

15-17 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life - is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

- So, we have to check our hearts. You can either be into God and He into you, or you can be into the world, but understand this: those who are into the world will pass away like the world.
- Those who love the Father will remain forever. I see what the Lord gives to me, but what about the world? Only a fool loves the world. We like to talk about financial planning - you may want to do some spiritual planning as well. One's more predictable and lasts much longer.

18-27 Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also. Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. And

this is the promise that he made to us - eternal life. I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you.

- It's always good to let the letter explain itself. Be careful to not get ahead of yourself. Search the text first and not a commentary. Search the full text before you get lost in some theory. For example: 1 John 1:4; 5:13 tell us why he wrote the letter. This passage tells us about false teachers. Some were denying that Jesus was the Christ. 1 John 4:3 - denying that He came in the flesh. They were trying to deceive the brethren (2:26). They were Christians who had fallen away - probably teachers (2:19).
- Did you notice how it's antichrists (plural)? The text tells you who an antichrist was - the one who denies Jesus is the Christ. One who denies the Father and the Son.
 - So, this idea of an antichrist coming - some spiritual evil one, etc, - is not supported by scripture.
- Some believe that the anointing is a miraculous ability given by the Holy Spirit at that time. Please take note that the Holy Spirit is not mentioned and John tells them to "let what you heard from the beginning abide in you." It was knowledge. They had learned the truth - been anointed with it - and were encouraged not to let go of what they already knew.
- "The word anointing (*chrisma*) is very likely a deliberate pun on the word "antichrist" (*antichristos*), for both words are connected with the name 'Christ' (*Christos*). These are all derived from the Greek verb *chrio*, 'to anoint.'" "Some Gnostics held that a spiritual seed was implanted in man, as the germ of his higher development into the future life," Interesting that 1 John 3:9 teaches that God seed abides in those born of him. Peter also spoke of this - he called the seed the word of God. Jesus would also use the seed to represent God's word in His teaching.
- "Some had received an anointing (*chrisma*) from the anointed (perhaps a play on words: 'anointed,' 'Christ,' and 'anti-christ'). In contrast to the anti-christs, they had the anointment and could thus know the Truth."
- I can say this - even if it was a miraculous gift, it would no longer be needed today. We have the mind of Christ, the Holy One, delivered once and for all.
- John is addressing a fundamental teaching of Christianity. Jesus Christ was the Son of God come in the flesh. He is the eternal God. Anyone who denies this truth does not have fellowship with God. What about you?