

## The Test of Knowing God: Obedience

Tests are part of life. We take tests in school or to get a driver's license. We take tests to see if we have Covid or if we have vision or hearing issues, just to name a few. Tests reveal things. In 1 John, John gives us some spiritual tests to reveal where we are at with God. In our passage today, John explains the test of obedience. Anyone can make the claim to know God, but do they pass the test? Do they obey God. The core truth that John wants us to understand is that a lifestyle of obedience is evidence that one truly knows God.

### Read 1 John 2:3-6

1. What is the main point of this passage? How would you summarize the meaning in your own words?
2. Is John saying that unless we obey perfectly, we can't really claim to know God? Why or why not?
3. What does John mean when he says that those who keep his word, in them the love of God is perfected (v. 5)? How is our love for God connect to our obedience?
4. What does it mean to be "in Him" (v. 5) or to abide in Him (v. 6)?
5. In verse 6, John says that if we claim to abide in Christ, we ought to walk as he walked. What does this mean to walk as He walked?

6. Suppose you have a friend who is a new Christian. How would you help them understand what this passage means for them?

Brian said:

**The source of obedience is found in our connection to Jesus.** John gets at this when he talks about being “in him” in verse 5 and abiding in Jesus in verse 6. Scripture teaches that when one becomes a believer in Jesus that we are spiritually united with him. God comes to live within us in the presence of His Spirit. And because of this, our lives cannot help but be changed. Now, let me be clear. We are not passive in this. We do need to apply ourselves to obeying. Paul talks in Colossians (see 3:5-14) and elsewhere about how we are to put off the old and put on the new. That is talking about effort when it comes to spiritual growth. But we need to remember that it is effort energized by the life of God within us. The source of our obedience is our connection to Jesus.

7. What do you think Brian meant when he said that our effort in spiritual growth is “effort energized by the life of God within us”? How does spiritual growth actually happen? What is God’s part? What’s ours?

Brian said:

Fourth, **the focus of obedience is Jesus not a list of rules.** When John says that we ought to walk in the same way that Jesus walked, he is saying that Jesus is the model. The Christian life isn’t about a list of do’s and don’ts. It is about following a person. It’s about following Jesus. It is about being disciples of Jesus learning how to live like him.

8. Do you tend to think of obedience more in terms of following the rules or of following Jesus? Explain.