



Obedience

John 15:9-17; 1 John 2:3-6

Bearing Fruit

- ❑ Jesus says, “If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit” (*John 15:5*). He also says, “Remain in my love” which is connected to obeying his commands (*15:9-11*).

Obedience & Love

- ❑ Read John 15:9-11. As Jesus has obeyed his Father’s commands and remains in his love, we are to obey Jesus’ commands and remain in Jesus’ love.¹ Obedience and love go together.

📖 *Jesus says, “... I love the Father and do exactly what my Father has commanded me” (John 14:31b).*

📖 *Jesus says, “If you love me, you will keep my commands” and “Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me.” (John 14:15, 21)*



Obedience & Knowing God

- ❑ To “know God” is to be in a personal relationship with him through faith in Jesus (*John 1:12; 1 John 1:3*). To know God is to be “in Jesus” (*1 John 5:20*). Read 1 John 2:3-6.

1. Based on 1 John 2:3-6, how do we know that we “know God” and are “in Jesus?”

- ❑ Obedience and “remaining in him” go together. Obedience and knowing God go together.

📖 “This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live (remain) in him² must live as Jesus did” (*1 John 2:5b-6, NIV*).³

📖 “We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands.” (*1 John 2:3, NIV*)

📖 “The one who keeps God’s commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.” (*1 John 3:24, NIV*)⁴

2. Which of the following four statements is most consistent with the Bible’s teaching?

(a) A person gains a relationship with God by obeying his word (the Bible).⁵

(b) A person gains a relationship with God through *spiritual* knowledge. Thus the actions of the physical body are not necessarily important to knowing God.

¹ We are ‘in Jesus’ because of the gracious love of God the Father and God the Son (Jesus Christ). However, ‘remaining in Jesus’ also involves our response to God’s love.

² The word translated ‘live’ (*menō*) is the same word translated ‘remain’ in John 15. ‘in him’ may mean ‘in God the Father.’ However, to be ‘in the Father’ we must be ‘in the Son’ (1 John 5:20) so the difference is not important.

³ To ‘live (literally ‘walk’) as Jesus did’ is to follow his example of obedience and love (John 15:10). Of course, Jesus’ is without sin, and we are not! (Hebrews 4:15; 1 John 1:8). Thus, in this world we will fall short of Jesus’ perfection. But being a Christian is about being changed and made new (2 Corinthians 5:17). This is something God does. So it is not just our efforts to follow Jesus’ example, but God’s transforming power to make us like Jesus. We may not be perfect in our love and obedience, but if we are truly ‘in him,’ God’s work will be evident in our lives.

⁴ ‘Keeping God’s commands’ certainly means more than obeying a list of rules! It involves a relationship of love, realized and empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Though our obedience is imperfect, the ‘Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children’ (Romans 8:16, NIV).

⁵ Knowing God is connected with ‘obeying the gospel of our Lord Jesus’ (2 Thessalonians 1:8), which is included in the Bible. However, this refers to responding to the gospel by believing and receiving Jesus as Lord and Savior.

- (c) A person enters into a relationship with God by His grace. Since this is entirely God's work, the person's obedience is not necessarily a characteristic of truly knowing God.
- (d) A person enters into a relationship with God by His grace, through faith, not by his/her own efforts. However, the person's obedience *is* a characteristic of truly knowing God.⁶

3. In general, why is obedience to God important in the Christian life?⁷

Jesus' Command

4. Read John 15:12-17. What does Jesus command?⁸



📖 “And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.” (2 John 1:6, NIV)

❑ Love and obedience go together.

5. How can we grow in our obedience to God?

Growing in Obedience

- ❑ Reflect on God's gracious love for us. (*John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:9-11*)
- ❑ Reflect on Jesus' example of love and obedience, and follow it. (*John 6:38; Luke 22:42*)
- ❑ Develop a heart for God (*Matthew 22:37-39; Romans 12:1-2; Colossians 1:9-12*)
- ❑ Seek to know God's will, and commit to do it. (*2 Timothy 3:16-17; James 1:22-25*)
- ❑ Realize that we (as believers) have been set free from the controlling power of sin, and enabled to live a new life of love and obedience. (*Romans 6:1-23; Colossians 3:1-17*)
- ❑ Realize that the transforming power to love and obey comes from God. (*1 John 4:7; Philippians 2:12-13; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 3:16-21*)
- ❑ Realize that we need the encouragement of Christian fellowship. (*Hebrews 10:24-25*)

Reflection/Application

- Do you “know God?” If not, do you *want* to know God? To know God, you need to “obey the gospel” – which means believing and receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
- As a believer, are you obeying God's commands? Do you love others as Jesus has loved you? In what areas do you struggle with obedience? Do you need to confess a sin to God? (See 1 John 1:9.) Review this lesson, and make a specific commitment to grow in obedience.

⁶ Calling (c) ‘false’ may be controversial to some. Definition of terms and concepts is essential to sound evaluation (e.g. definition of ‘relationship,’ and consideration of levels of obedience and knowledge). In any case, (d) is more consistent with the teaching of 1 John in the context of the entire Scriptures (also see James 2:14-26).

⁷ Disobedience dishonors and offends our heavenly Father. It harms others and harms ourselves. It misrepresents the gospel. Obedience honors our Father (Matthew 5:16; 1 Peter 2:12) and strengthens our relationship with him (James 4:7-8). Obedience brings blessing (Luke 11:28). Obedience is the only proper response to God's gracious love and Christ's sacrificial death and provision of salvation (Philippians 1:27; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20). We were saved to be obedient (Ephesians 2:10). Obedience is the expected ‘fruit’ of our union with Christ (Matthew 7:15-27).

⁸ Jesus commands many things, but all of his commands fall under the central command to love. First of all, we are to love God with all our being (Luke 10:27a). Also, we are to love others (10:27b), especially ‘one another’ (that is, our brothers and sisters in Christ). We are to love others as Christ loved us (John 13:34; Ephesians 5:2).