



“Learning How to Love”
Wk. 3 Light & Love - 1 John 2:3-11
By Pastor Jody May

1 John 2:3-11 ESV

³And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. ⁴Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, ⁵but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: ⁶whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

The New Commandment

⁷Beloved, 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. ⁸At 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. ⁹Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. ¹⁰Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. ¹¹But 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.

REVIEW:

LIGHT & LOVE

1st – Light – Truth that stems from Christ and is sustained in Fellowship with each other.

2nd – Love - Treasuring God and how we value each other.

This is week three of Light and Love and here’s where we are at. John the older statesman of the Apostles, is addressing most believe the church at Ephesus. Ephesus is the trade/banking capital of Asia Minor, an area of the world that is entwined with every known religion and philosophy because it is home (New York) to multiple cultures and nations.

The church has grown and grown fast because of its’ stark contrast to the rest of society. We read last week in [Acts 19](#) that Paul had called people essentially to membership in the church by the confessing of their idolatry and a part of their repentance was the turning in and burning publically all the books of



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which craft and sorcery. These acts cause the financial collapse of the bank at the temple of Artemis, causing riots, leading to the expulsion of the Apostle Paul.

This made the church a big glaring spot in society that did not look like everyone else, it stood apart, it was holy, but now during the early 90s AD, about 35 years later, some of its' members were being drawn out of the light of the Truth of Jesus, by people who were claiming you don't have to behave differently to be saved. These people were teaching the call of Salvation has nothing to do with looking like the one that saved you.

INTRODUCTION:

Now that problem, **the problem of being called a disciple and not looking like the one you are following**, that's a big problem that has led the church to centuries of people doubting if they had been truly saved.

Martin Luther, the instrument of God for the beginning of the Reformation, why we are here, was **plagued by doubt himself**.¹ He was driven to discover God and question the Catholics' church stance on justification because he was plagued by doubt over his Salvation. It was not until he fully grasped the meaning behind:

Romans 1:17 ESV

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

When he grasped this, he was able to go on, and in **assurance of Salvation** he now did not care about being excommunicated by the Catholic church. He felt compelled to place his life solely on the authority of God's Word alone, to tell him what to do, to give him his **commands**. In this way he came to know God for himself, and he became obedient, and the church will never be the same because of him. It was our emancipation from Catholic indoctrination.

Today, it is my desire that we **all gain** in our lifetime, perhaps even today, the assurance of faith, that is **to know God**, so we too can live our lives **not**

¹ <https://www.ligonier.org/blog/fortress-truth-martin-luther/>



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worrying about our **Salvation** but living out of the power of it, enjoying it, believing it, and sharing it.

John is going to give us **three** things today that are to help you and me be **assured** about our **Salvation**. These three things are connected to the **theme of Love** and how he wants us to **learn to love** as God has loved. To love for John, is to **obey God’s commands** so his three lessons on how to love all have to do with adhering to God’s commands. Here is the sum of those three separate points:

To know God is to obey God; loving Him and loving others.

1. We **keep** God’s commands, when we **know** Him.

³And by this we know that we have come to **know him**, if we keep his commandments. ⁴Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, ⁵but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the **love of God is perfected**. By this we may know that we are in him: ⁶whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

A. Explanation:

This is a huge statement here in v. 3:

And by this we know that we have come to **know him**, if we keep his commandments.

The position of the two words “**know him**” in v. 3 means you and I should want this achievement. Knowing Him in what way though? That goes back to verse 2: “He is the **propitiation** for our sins” John means that for those people that **KEEP HIS COMMANDS** know Jesus as their redeemer, savior, and substitution, for their sinful lives.

Do you want to know if you are saved today? Do you keep the commands of God!?



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In John’s Day the argument by the Gnostics, is that being saved is something realized by yourself, because it comes from your personal knowledge of God which may be different than everyone else, so your Christian life should look different than everyone else’s, don’t worry about it! If you look more like the culture that’s fine because following God means you don’t have to change.

But the Bible teaches the exact opposite. In fact, the Bible all through the OT prophets talks about how no one knows God because no one looks like Him.

Hosea 4:1-2 ESV

Hear the word of the LORD, O children of Israel,

for the LORD has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land.

There is no faithfulness or steadfast love,
and **no knowledge of God** in the land;

² there is swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery;
they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.

To know God in a relationship means He has changed your **ethical behavior**. If there has been no visible change in one’s demeanor, **then one does not know God**.

B. Illustration:

When a young person goes into the military there’s about to be a whole lot of change happening in that person’s life.

First change is that your clothing, what you wear will look like everyone on the inside of the platoon but it will look starkly different than what everyone wears in the real world. Even your haircut will be similar. Then for 10 weeks you will eat together, train together, sleep together, sweat together, and suffer together so that at the end you all will look like a unified unit.

That all happens because you listened to those in charge over you, **you changed by their commands**. They told you when to eat, when to sleep, how to do a job, when to stop complaining, and they told you when you were done. None of that came from you deciding what to do for military training that was a plan to make you a soldier like everyone else.



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But you may be thinking to yourself, Jody Christianity is not the military God is love, that means He lets me call the shots or at least He lets me have some input? Listen again to what John’s commentary was on their behavior:

⁴Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, ⁵but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. – Keeping His Word is how you work out loving like God.

C. Argumentation:

People lie to themselves and others when they do not follow God’s Word. We also find this other promise which is necessary for the rest of our verses today in v.5 that whoever keeps God’s Word, listens to His commands, the Love of **God is perfected**, that is, it is learned...

Jesus loved the Father, but it did not mean He did not grow even more in perfection by loving His Father stronger over the years. By His obedience to the Father, He grew in His perfection ([Heb. 5:9](#)). Let me just show you one place by which we too can learn how to grow in perfection of this love by obeying God’s commands.

John 10:18 ESV

¹⁸No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

The word for **charge** is the same word used for **command (έντολή (entolē))**. Jesus received a command that He must preserve His life so that it may be given for His sheep.

Jesus is told what to do for an undeserving people.

Jesus is charged with the responsibility to save God’s sheep.

Jesus is called upon and directed to die by the hands of traitors.

Jesus “walked” in obedience by adhering to the **“commands”** and John says in v. 6 we, *“ought to walk in the same way in which He walked”*.

That means we are to understand our lives are under the commands of God not to choose whether we want them or not but to obey explicitly; without delay,



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without change, and without question. The intent of the verses in 1 John now, in light of what Jesus has already done goes like this:

We are commanded to live for an all deserving Lord!

We are commanded with the responsibility to call the already saved sheep!

We are commanded and directed to live under the yoke of the most faithful savior!

While we are called to be like Him our lives are easy in comparison. Because **Jesus endured the commands of God for sinners, we get to endure the commands of a perfected Jesus because we love Him!** And in return the love of God, loving like God is perfected, the proof is in the obedience.

To know God is to obey God – ok we got that first part down of our main point, now let’s keep figuring out what this obedience looks like.

2. We Review God’s commands, to love others.

⁷ 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. ⁸ 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.

Let’s not get confused here by that term old commandment. Some people think automatically that is a reference to the OT. Their (Ephesians) beginnings as the church of Ephesus only happened a few decades earlier, he’s talking about what they learned of first importance when they left all the occult practices behind.

John is saying remember in the beginning the Gospel that you were founded on. We didn’t give you a long list of rules to follow, the Mosaic Law, as you have also been assaulted by. There was a simple command, as a member of God’s new people, do you remember it?

John 13:34-35 ESV

³⁴ 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. ³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”



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To know God, to be **assured** of one’s **Salvation** is by being **obedient** to the **calling of loving others in the church.** This is our Basic training, this is what starts getting us all to look alike, it’s what gets us trusting each other, it’s what makes us want to be around each other, when we practice the command of loving others over ourselves.

A. Illustration:

If there is one thing, I can say I know about everyone in this world, is that it does not matter how old, bad, or independent you are **everyone in this world wants to be loved but everyone stinks at doing it.**

I thought I was a good husband when Heather and I were first married. We didn’t argue, I praised her cooking, we went on dates, I let her get a dog, life was grand UNTIL one day God’s command began to become manifested in my life.

1Peter 3:7 ESV

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way

What God made painfully aware to me was that while I was working hard at making myself believe I was a good husband the truth was I was not focusing on the things that Heather needed. She needed a spiritual leader who studied her, looked at what she was afraid of, looked how the curse from Genesis 3 specifically affected her, and then made plans on how I can help her move with me in this life trying to love God and others.

I had to stop and study how my wife needed me but the only way I could do that was to **first obey the command of my God**, because that meant I was going to have to choose to fight sometimes with her, to let her be mad at me, to say sorry first in our disagreements, and be ok when she cries because **Jesus is more concerned about her soul so I better be as well!** **This is how Jesus loved me first!**

B. Application:

You want a practical place to start in obeying God, **to practice loving others**, husbands do yourself a favor, pay attention to your first church, study your wife, and discover what she needs, work towards that goal, and then maybe she



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will start respecting you like you desire. Let me also say it will be hard because what she needs most is your leadership lovingly challenging her, reading the Bible with her, praying with her, confessing to her, and modeling to her what it looks like to submit to God for you. Then you may see what Peter calls a beautiful woman and that is a wife that submits to her husband in [1 Peter 2:5](#).

Families working through the commands of God is how we wrestle with the assurance of our Salvation, if you hear nothing else today, I am going to challenge you with this. Leave here today dedicated to loving others and stop worrying so much about whether you are saved, but live by faith and live the command out to love others. **(Personal illustration)**

John 14:21 ESV

²¹Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.” Manifest – you will know Him!

To know God is to obey God; loving Him and loving others.

3. We Practice God’s commands, to remain in the light.

⁹Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. ¹⁰Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. ¹¹But 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.

A. Explanation:

v.9 says if I hate my brother, I am still in darkness. Don’t be fooled by the use of the word hate here. In the NT hate means to love less, not to kill. When we take our definition of hate and put that in there we are like, no problem with that! But what this means is if I love my brother less than another brother or even less than myself then I am in darkness.



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BUT loving my brother, - **fighting with myself** to make sure I don't treat him differently, confessing when I don't like a person, struggling with not being mean to a person, when I am doing that, I am in the light!

B. Application:

I think this is so hard for many of us because we think of loving someone in terms of how we like to be shown love. The word for love here is *ἀγαπάω* (*agapaō*), the Godly type of love that is **unconditional**. What that means is are you willing to say the hard things and do the hard things. That also means that you don't have to say yes to their every desire, that's the world's definition. Sometimes to love people you have got to be the person that says no and not do what they want. Godly unconditional love says goodbye in relationships sometimes so that people will learn what they are missing.

Family, the assurance of our Salvation is shown by adhering to the command love others as we have first been loved.

CONCLUSION:

To know God is to obey God; loving Him and loving others.

RESPONSE:

Do you know God this morning, are you living with the assuredness of your Salvation? Perhaps today there is a command you are wrestling with, something you have been telling God no, there is a person you need to reach out to and say sorry, there is spouse you need to confess to, you make excuses for not giving to the church, you have made it a habit not to meet in person with other believers, whatever that is as we said last week confess those things and know His forgiveness.

I think we all need to be reminded from John this morning what is the most imperative and simplest way we can practice our Salvation and that is in loving those in this church. Make up your mind today how you will love people in this room better. Will you take the responsibility to get to know them more? Will you make space to serve in the fall? Will you commit to discipling someone in



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here and not wait to be asked? How about committing to praying for one another? Whatever that is let us commit to loving each other better in here today.

Finally, let me invite those in here that are walking in darkness to the light of Jesus. Maybe you have never expressed your need for Him publically, then today I am going to challenge you to share with us in one of two ways either on your connection card or in person to either Bill or I and let us know that you have been in darkness. You are ready to follow the Lord, you are ready to turn your back on this world, you are ready to take on His ways, that will preserve you. Don't leave here without that next step please don't do that.

Today let's pray and ask God to help us learn this simple truth from His Word this morning:

To know God is to obey God; loving Him and loving others.

Prayer

Communion

Benediction

Go in the name of the Father, that has given us the command to listen to His Son for He has the words of life.

Go in the name of the Son, that has commanded us to keep His commandments if we love Him.

Go in the name and power of the HS, that enables us to keep His commands and propels us to live them out to witness to this world.