

1 John 2:3-4 3 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

3 By this we know

A healthy relationship with God depends on obedience to His commands and imitation of Christ. We’re going to see that one of the greatest proofs that we have of our relationship with God is that we have a desire, and ability to keep His Word in obedience. Now that we are not under the law, but under grace, so we can look at those commandments and laws and realize that we want to please God. We want to know Him out of love, out of gratitude for what He has done for us. Seeking after God and wanting to know Him more means that we want to obey so that nothing comes between us and our closer relationship with Him. We seek after eternal life with Him and in Him.

So John describes a test by which we can be assured of fellowship with God, described here as “knowing” Him. Anyone can say that they know God, but how do we know for sure? This is a practical test of our profession of faith in God, a proof to ourselves that we are saved. We can be sure! It’s a claim on salvation, a claim on God, our Heavenly Father through Jesus’ work on the cross validated by the fruit of good works.

that we have come to know Him

What about this kind of knowing God produces obedience? Knowing facts about Jesus is not enough. Just hanging around the right people, or going to church isn’t enough. This difference is highlighted in John 14:9, responding to Philip’s request to be shown the Father, Jesus says, **“Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip?”** Jesus was marveling at Philip’s the lack of understanding. Since He and Philip had been in relationship as Master and Disciple, Jesus expected Philip to have greater insight. One of Jesus’ missions was to show who God is through His life—Jesus had come to explain the Father. In John 1:18 **18 No one has seen God at any time; God the only Son, who is in the arms of the Father, He has explained Him.** Jesus had “manifested” Him to His disciples. Jesus said in John 12:45 **45 And the one who sees Me sees Him who sent Me.** In John 17:6 **6 “I have revealed Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have followed Your word.”** And so, Jesus expected that Philip would understand that he had no need to see some great revelation of the Father in might and power and glory, since he had enjoyed the experience of knowing God in the flesh personally, by experience. Jesus was encouraging Philip to live in deeper relationship with God through Him.

In His High priestly Prayer for the Apostles and for the Church, Jesus professes the completion of His mission of allowing them to know God saying in John 17:6-7 **6 “I have revealed Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have followed Your word. 7 Now they have come to know that everything which You have given Me is from You;** Jesus prays for them on the basis of their relationship with Him, and their relationship with God! He doesn’t pray that God will clean up their lives, or get rid of their sin, He prays that they will Know God!

This word for “knowing” God *egnōkamen* implies a knowledge gained through experience in the past that had better well be influencing the present! This is what Jesus had accused Philip of lacking at that time. Knowing Jesus will necessarily result in a relationship with God. We have come to know God through relationship with Him, and this experience with God can’t help but change our lives for the better.

if we keep His commandments.

And so John is letting us know that we can’t know God and keep sinning. (see also Jer 9:6; Hosea 4:1–2) The disobedient person does not know God. He may know about God, but the true experience of a relationship with God has not sunken in. See also 1st John 3:9 **9 No one who has been born of God**

practices sin, because His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin continually, because he has been born of God.

John includes himself in the group that must evaluate whether it is in fellowship with God, whether its “knowledge” of God is personal and experiential, or only imagined. Our relationship with God is affected by obedience to Him.

Obedience out of Love for God and Trust in Him

So how does this knowledge guarantee obedience? 1 John 4:16 says, **"So we know and believe the love God has for us. God is love."** Notice how he puts the two words together: We know and trust the love of God. To know the love God has for you is to trust in God Himself. So when God commands you to do something and you ignore it or go against it, John can only conclude one thing: You don't believe that God is love. And therefore you don't know Him. Because if you believed that God is love, then you would believe that all His commandments and instructions were the very best possible thing for you, and you would follow them closely. As 1 John 5:3 says, **"This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments and his commandments are not burdensome."** If we know and believe the love that God has for us, his commandments will not be burdensome. If you turn away from the commandments of God because you think you will find more happiness in disobedience, then you do not believe that God is love, and you don't really know Him.

Parable of the Ten Minas in Luke 19:11-27 **13 And he called ten of his own slaves and gave them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business with this money until I come back.'** **14 But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.'** Notice that these are His citizens, people who claim to know Him that are saying this. These are the people that He has trusted to do the business of the Kingdom while He is away. But most of them, in their hearts, don't want Him as Lord of their lives. We read **20 And then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I kept tucked away in a handkerchief;** Now, the first thing that we need to know about verse 20 is that when it says “and then another came”, it uses the word heteros, which means “another of a different kind” than the first two servants. What caused this? We read in verse 21: **21 for I was afraid of you, because you are a demanding man; you take up what you did not lay down, and reap what you did not sow.'** This man did not operate out of the true knowledge of God! His relationship with Jesus is based on fear. How can He really know a God of love, and yet have His relationship with Him be based primarily on fear? This man disobeyed the direct commandment of God to, as Matthew 5:16 says **Your light must shine before people in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.** Instead he hid his supposed light, so that not even he realized that something was wrong with his relationship with God, and then, it was only in the judgement that he understood that he didn't have a real relationship with God.

4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

And the other side of the coin is that We come to know Him more and more by keeping His Commandments. We know God through His Word. A wise person has said of the Bible that The Word will keep you from sin, and sin will keep you from The Word. Disobedience to God habitually, produces liars who are so deceived that they don't even realize that they have no true relationship with God! A dangerous place to be!