

We Know by This That He Remains In Us—1st John 3:23-24

23 This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.

When we obey the Holy Spirit's urging and Jesus' command to love one another by fellowship with each other and meeting each other's needs, then the practical effect is that it is proof to us that we are saved. We have convincing evidence of a life spent in service to other believers as we are brought into the presence of our Creator at death. Our love for Jesus; our faithfulness in obedience to Him as our bridegroom, affects our relationship with Him. John 14:23-24 **23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will follow My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our dwelling with him. 24 The one who does not love Me does not follow My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.** And as we have allowed His love to pour through us, as a clean vessel, pouring His true love to those around us, we will be in utter delight and joy when we meet Jesus.

It's the living out of the word in our lives that causes us to see whether we've actually incorporated these truths that we've learned into our character and manner of living. James 1:22-25 says **22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not just hearers who deceive themselves.**

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Commanded to believe

There are two important commandments in this first. The first is the essential gospel message of belief in Christ. John 3:16 **16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life."** Romans 10:9-10 **9 If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.** In John 6:47 **Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. Or John 6:29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent"**. In fact, John gives us the reason for writing his gospel in John 20:31 saying **but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.** We are to believe in His name and have life eternal. "Believe in the name" means to believe in the person, Jesus, and His authority as God the Son to save you—a right legally purchased by Him when He died on the cross for your sins. We must believe in Jesus, in His Name, in His Work of salvation, to be saved, and keep on believing on the basis of Who Jesus is, as He is revealed to us more and more by the Holy Spirit.

Second, John emphasizes that as believers we are "to love one another, Just as Jesus commanded us."

We read this command in John 13:34 **34 I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are My disciples: if you have love for one another."** Jesus' commandment to love other believers is a commandment to follow Him serving our brothers and sisters in Christ. The command to love one another is so important, that Jesus repeats it twice more in John 15:12, and John 15:17!

Sometimes it's difficult to show love in the families that we were originally born into, and likewise sometimes it's going to be tough sometimes to demonstrate Christ's love to our Brothers and Sisters in Christ. We all have our flaws and faults, and that makes us difficult to love sometimes. And others do too, and that makes it more difficult to love them. **Eph 4:2 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.** Just like our own original birth families, our church family is a mixed bag of people with different backgrounds, experiences, hurts, habits, and hangups, but also talents, abilities, giftings and abilities. John is encouraging himself, the other Christians that he's talking to and US to "to keep loving. We need to ACT on Jesus' command to love each other, and to humbly receive love from other

Christians. **As Col 3:12-14 reminds us 12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and [!]patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so must you do also. 14 In addition to all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.** All the people sitting around you on a Sunday morning are your spiritual close relatives—brothers and sisters in Christ. And loving them is one of the reasons that we’ve been left on earth for. We’re here to care for each other, and meet each other’s needs. And, as we cooperate with the Holy Spirit’s urging in this, we’ll find that we get closer to God, and our relationship with Him becomes richer and deeper. You cannot believe without loving nor love without believing.

24 The one who keeps His commandments remains in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He remains in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

John is stating another principle that governs the believer’s relationship with God and connects the Spirit’s indwelling with our mutual abiding relationship with God. In this verse he describes the mutual indwelling relationship between the obedient believer and Jesus. This is reminiscent of Jesus’ words in the Upper Room in John 15:4–7. **4 Remain in Me, and I in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself but must remain in the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in Me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches; the one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not remain in Me, he is thrown away like a branch and dries up; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If you remain in Me, and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so [g]prove to be My disciples** The believer “abides” through obedience and Christ “abides” in the obedient believer in the person of the Holy Spirit. This use of “abide” is not related to the question of whether one is a believer or not, but whether Jesus is influencing our lives as believers or not.

“And he who keeps his commandments abides in Him and He in him.

Abiding in the love of Christ involves habitual obedience to God and His commandments. It is a life lived like Christ lived. Though habitual obedience is not automatic in the life of the believer, we have an obligation through what Christ has done for us to make it more automatic through habitual imitation of Christ. **Ephesians 5:1-2 says 5 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.** The one who says that he abides in Him, to have a relationship with God should imitate the character and the lifestyle of Jesus, who always and only did the Will of the Father, continually serving God and meeting the needs of others. Realizing what Jesus has done for us, we have a moral obligation that drives us to live our life as Jesus did, because we realize more and more the Goodness and Righteousness and Love of the God we serve, and love Him for what He has already done for us, demonstrated most clearly at the cross. Knowing God creates this inner desire on our part to serve God, just as He did. Our walk is in obedience to God, obeying His commands, and it results in the best life we could live. We see this again in Deuteronomy 10:12 **12 “And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep the Lord’s commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?**

Abiding results in Joy

John 15:10-11¹⁰ If you keep My commandments, you will remain in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and remain in His love. ¹¹These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full.

So, we see that obedience to God, and abiding in His love is the other means by which we receive the Joy of the Lord. We can only abide, remain, and have fellowship with Jesus if we walk in the Light, just

as He is in the Light. We remain and dwell in the Father's love through obedience to Him in our daily lives.

To Abide is to Love our Brothers and Sisters

John consistently refutes the claim to be able abide in Christ, while living in disobedience in verses like 1 John 2:4 **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;** Those who refuse to love their brothers and sisters in Christ, he similarly calls false-brethren, in verses like 1 John 2:9 **9 The one who says that he is in the Light and yet hates his brother or sister is in the darkness until now. and expressing hatred toward brothers** and in 1 John 4:20 **20 If someone says, "I love God," and yet he hates his brother or sister, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother and sister whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.** In other words, our love for God will be revealed in our love for our brothers and sisters in Christ, since we can easily express that love that God has for them through caring and loving them ourselves. He's saying that it's easy to claim to love God, but if we really do, then it's going to show by our willingness to care for and help our Brothers and Sisters in Christ. So, those characterized by obedience experience a mutual abiding relationship with God.

"and by this we know that he abides in us."

Since the Holy Spirit accomplishes this work in us of loving our brothers and sisters and encouraging us to obey and abide in Christ, then this also proves to us by this evidence that we are His! We know that He abides in us by the proof of the influence that He has in our lives. We can know we are experiencing Christ's presence within us precisely BECAUSE of the obedience and love. We have this assurance by the evidence of our actions inspired by the Holy Spirit. It is knowledge gained by experience, not just knowledge gained by instruction. This is something we experience, not just believe to be true because we were taught it, which is much more valuable in the day of adversity!