

1 John 2:3-11 | Sunday November 23, 2025

John has been describing how to have fellowship with a God who is light and in Him is no darkness at all. To be able to have fellowship with this God we must walk openly before Him in His light. Meaning His word will come into our lives and point out the areas of darkness that exists and we have to be willing to acknowledge (confess) the sin that He points out. We all sin and will fail at this but the great news is that we have an advocate with God the Father, Jesus Christ. Jesus enables us to live in this light and is our advocate because He is the propitiation, the perfect payment that appeased God's wrath. God's willingness to forgive is not based on us, or how deserving we are but is based on the shed blood of Jesus. **Through Jesus' payment God is still just as He forgives us.**

Micah 7:18-19 ESV

(18) **Who is a God like you**, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of His inheritance? He does not retain His anger forever, **because He delights in steadfast love.**

(19) He will **again** have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities underfoot. **You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.**

We truly have a God to be thankful for and to worship. He is not **hesitant** to forgive or **bothered** by our constant need for Him. He **delights, takes pleasure** in showing us steadfast love. He will again and again show compassion to us. As John shares this amazing truth of how willing God is to continually cleanse us, He is quick to warn against sinning. John is sharing the truth of confession so that believers would not sin. He desires for us to be able to experience fellowship with God. **We cannot walk in the darkness and have fellowship with the light.** As John continues he then describes the outcome of walking in fellowship with the God of light, that we would know Him and be obedient to Him.

1 John 2:1-11 ESV

(1) My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

(2) He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

(3) And by this **we know that we have come to know Him**, if we keep His commandments.

(4) Whoever says "I know Him" but does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him,

(5) but whoever keeps His word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in Him:

(6) whoever says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked.

(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.

(9) Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness.

(10) Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling.

(11) But 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.

This passage is difficult and not true to life if we do not understand what John is discussing. John is not describing how to be saved or knowing Jesus for salvation. He is describing what it looks like for a believer to know Jesus, meaning to be in fellowship with Him. **Knowing Jesus in this way is one of Paul's greatest desires.**

Philippians 3:8-11 ESV

(8) Indeed, I count everything as loss because of **the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.** For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ (9) and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—

(10) **that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection,** and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death,

(11) that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Paul as a believer is pursuing knowing Jesus more. He is willing to trade everything else, and count it all as waste in order to have a personal, real knowledge of Jesus. He is not desperately trying to earn salvation. He is in a love relationship and wants to know more of who Jesus is and what He is like. We understand that there are degrees of knowing someone. When someone's actions surprise us we might say **"I thought I knew you but I didn't."** Meaning we thought we had an understanding of that person but in the end their action is showing we really did not know them well. Paul wants to know Jesus and not be shocked by what Jesus values, or does. This is the same kind of knowing that John is talking about. **John is giving the answer of how do we know when we actually know Jesus in this way.**

1 John 2:3 ESV

(3) And by this we know that we have come to know Him, **if we keep His commandments.**

John is not describing a believers **eternal security** or how we know we are saved. That is based on Jesus being the propitiation for our sins. Here he is describing **assurance**. How do we know practically in our life that we know Jesus? If we keep His commandments. **Fellowship leads to a knowledge of Jesus which is shown through keeping His word.** We can make all sorts of claims of knowing God and having fellowship with Him but our actions will expose if these are true or not. Faithfully walking with God in keeping His commandments shows we know Him. Walking in darkness, or sin shows we do not.

Titus 1:16 ESV

(16) **They profess to know God, but they deny Him by their works.** They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.

Our lives expose if we really know Him. The same is true of any relationship. The gifts we chose to give someone, where we take them to spend time, what we talk to them about all expose how well we know that person. It shows how attentive we have been to them.

1 John 2:3-4 ESV

(3) And by this we know that we have come to know Him, **if we keep His commandments.**

(4) Whoever says “I know Him” but **does not keep His commandments** is a liar, and the truth is not in him,

The word keep means **to guard, or keep watch over, to pay attention to.** John is not demanding perfection, He just explained to us how to confess our sins when we fail. **Keeping God’s commandments means we have an attentiveness to and a desire to live for Him.** It is having a concern for what God says and wanting our lives to reflect that. When God calls something sin do we care? When God instructs us in how to live do we aim to follow that? It is impossible to know Jesus intimately, personally and ignore His commandments. If you try to claim fellowship without keeping His commandments you are a liar and God’s truth is not in you. His word reveals His commandments and His desire for our lives. This is why it is so important we know His word. We need to let God define what is good and in the light. In a few verses John will single out one specific commandment that we need to reflect. Keeping God’s word is to bring assurance. **Our desire for Him and His truth is meant to help us “know that we have come to know Him.”** At times this is hard for us to see when we are so imperfect at following Him.

Romans 7:15-25 NAS95

(15) **For what I am doing, I do not understand;** for I am not practicing what I would like to do, **but I am doing the very thing I hate.**

(16) But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good.

(17) So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but **sin which dwells in me.**

(18) For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; **for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.**

(19) **For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.**

(20) But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

(21) I find then the principle **that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.**

(22) For **I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,**

(23) but I see a different law in the members of my body, **waging war** against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

(24) **Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?**

(25) **Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!** So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

I am so encouraged that Romans 7 was written by Paul who knew Jesus and made it His desire to know Him more. Paul is describing the ongoing battle within a believer between the sin nature and the new life in Christ. Paul had the desire to do what was right, and He delights in the law of God and yet he doesn’t understand His own actions. He keeps doing the very thing he hates, and the evil that he does not want is what He keeps walking in. He knows that as long as He is in a physical body with a sin nature this will be his struggle and ours. **What Paul describes here, is keeping God’s commandments.** This is a person who has an attentiveness and a desire to honor

God. They know all the ways they fail and keep wanting to walk fresh with Him. There is a personality type that feels defeated by this ongoing battle with sin. They are very attentive to God's word yet they struggle with the fact that they are in this battle. They can start to wonder if something is wrong with them or their salvation. **John is trying to encourage all of us, that keeping God's commandments, having a desire and attentiveness to His word shows we know Him.**

1 John 2:5-6 ESV

(5) but whoever **keeps His word**, in him truly **the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in Him:**

(6) whoever says he abides in Him **ought to walk in the same way in which He walked.**

When we follow rules, we can be so prone to get right up to the line without crossing it. When we walk in an abiding relationship with Jesus we want to please Him. **It is the difference between the heart attitude of having to do something and getting to do something.** Just as Jesus sought to please the Father (John 8:29), we show we are abiding by wanting to please God. When we are attentive to God's word, His love is perfected in us. In the Greek this can mean **both "God's love for us" or "our love for God" is perfected**, brought to completion. In reality it means both. The more we see God's love for us the more we will grow in our love for Him.

John 14:15; 21 ESV

(15) **"If you love Me**, you will keep My commandments.

(21) **Whoever 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."**

When we have a disobedience problem as believers we have a love problem. As we keep His word, we grow in our love for Him and in experiencing His love for us.

Jesus is promising to manifest, or make open and reveal Himself more fully to the one who keeps His commandments. This is why walking in an ongoing relationship with Jesus is so important for a believer. **Hopefully, we know Jesus and love Him more today than 5 years ago**, than from the day we were saved. Our love for Him and His love for us is supposed to be brought to completion, meaning we are to grow into it. During this whole discussion of keeping God's commandments John has had an underlying commandment on his heart.

1 John 2:7-8 ESV

(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.**

In some ways the commandment on John's heart is not new, his audience had heard it before. In other ways it is new because Jesus took this commandment and elevated it to its highest degree.

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.**”

The new commandment Jesus gave was to love each other. He was the perfect example of self-sacrificial love. He desired for His followers to be defined by His love. **How was someone to know that you are following after and want to be like Jesus, if you have His love for them.**

John wants to remind us that **the darkness is in process of passing away.** The light of God’s truth is already shining out. **Love belongs to the light.** If we are not careful we can forget that the darkness of the present age is not permanent. Jesus warns believers during the tribulation of what could happen to their love as sin increases around them and it serves as a warning to us.

Matthew 24:12 NAS95

(12) "Because lawlessness is increased, **most people's love will grow cold.**

The more sin and lawlessness we see the less loving we will be tempted to become.

1 John 2:9-11 ESV

(9) Whoever says **he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness.**

(10) Whoever loves **his brother abides in the light,** and in him there is no cause for stumbling.

(11) But 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.**

John is addressing believers and the very fact **that he refers to their brother emphasizes that he is talking about relationships within the body of Christ.** When a believer hates their brother in Christ they are revealing that they are walking in darkness. They are so blind they don’t know where they are going. Too many think this verse means that hatred is not possible for a believer. This teaching leads to many doubts, and creates a bunch of liars. In our sin nature we can hate others, and it destroys our fellowship with God.

1 Corinthians 3:1-3 ESV

(1) But I, brothers, **could not address you as spiritual people,** but as people of the flesh, **as infants** in Christ.

(2) I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready,

(3) for you are still of the flesh. For **while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way?**

The Corinthian believers were behaving as mere humans. They were walking in the flesh. Instead of love covering a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8) they were devouring each other with jealousy and strife. **A believer who is not loving is spiritually immature.** Hatred is a trap that drags us into sin, and causes so much pain. **When we learn how to love, “there is no cause for stumbling” meaning we will not be snared in a trap.** We are to be defined by our Godly love for others. A love that Jesus showed and reveals in His Word. I desire to be a believer that is not blind, but one who walks in the light and I pray this body would desire the same.

2 Peter 1:5-10 ESV

(5) For this very reason, **make every effort to supplement your faith** with virtue, and virtue with knowledge,

(6) and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness,

(7) and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection **with love.**

(8) For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, **they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

(9) For whoever lacks these qualities is **so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.**

(10) Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, **for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.**
