

STUDIES IN 1 JOHN

STUDY NUMBER THREE: Fellowship Is Nourished by Obedience

1 John 2:3-11

Key Verse 2:5: "But whoever is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God has been brought to maturity. In this we are knowing that we are in Him."

TEXT:

v. 3 And in this we are knowing that we know Him, if we are keeping His commandments.

v. 4 The one who is saying, "I have come to know Him," and is not keeping His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in this one.

v. 5 But whoever is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God has been brought to maturity. In this we are knowing that we are in Him.

v. 6 The one who is saying he is abiding in Him, he himself is morally obligated to be walking around just as that one also walked around.

v. 7 Beloved ones, I am not writing to you a new commandment, but an old commandment which you were having from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you heard.

v. 8 Again a new commandment I am writing to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the genuine light already is shining.

v. 9 The one who is saying that he is in the light and is hating his brother, he is in the darkness until now.

v.10 The one who is loving his brother is abiding in the light, and there is not a stumbling block in him.

v.11 But the one who is hating his brother is in the darkness and he is walking around in the darkness, and he does not know where he is going because the darkness blinded his eyes.

INTRODUCTION:

(Lewis & Me & Skipper Makes Three by Ludlow Porch)

We were going south on 1-95 and stopped at a place called Kitty's Kountry Kitchen. I learned at my mother's knee that you should never eat in a place where the owner spells "country" with a "k." Common sense will tell you that anybody who can't spell "country" sure as heck can't read a cookbook. We looked at the menu and noticed that the first item said simply, "Chicken." The waiter was an Oriental gentleman with a name tag that read, "Earl."

"How is the chicken prepared?" asked Skip.

"It is smothered, sir," replied Earl.

"I don't care how you killed it," Skip declared. "What I want to know is, do you have any fried chicken?"

"Fried chicken is not good for you," Earl answered. "Too much grease."

"Earl," said Skip with a frown, "are you here to wait on tables or practice medicine?"

A quick check of the menu showed that there was nothing mashed, fried, or starchy.

So we left unfed. We walked out into the parking lot, by this time starving to death.

Across the street from Kitty's Kountry Kitchen was an old clapboard store. The hand-lettered sign out front said, "Walt's Texaco/Grocery Store/Notary."

Skip lit up like a carnival midway. "Come on," he said. "We're going to have a real Southern meal."

We walked across the road. There were double screen doors that said, "Colonial Bread is Good Bread," in bright yellow and orange letters. There was a fist-sized ball of cotton fastened to the top of the screen. The inside of the store was dark even though the lights were on.

"Come in the house," said the old man behind the counter as we pulled open the screen door.

"How ya doin'?" we asked.

"Never been better and had less," he answered. "Can I hep ya?"

"We're going to have us a little dinner," Skip said.

"You pick it out, and I'll ring her up," said Walt.

Skip was absolutely beaming as we walked around the old store shopping. There was a bright red drink box against the wall. The yellow writing on it said, "Royal Crown Cola . . . Best by Taste Test." We pulled two six-and-a-half-ounce Cokes out of the freezing cold, murky water. We then bought a box of soda crackers and a loaf of white bread. We continued to wander around and found the sardines, two Moon Pies, a box of Fig Newtons, and some pork and beans. Skip hollered to Walt at the front of the store, "You got any baloney?"

"Was Eleanor Roosevelt ugly?" Walt hollered back. "You know I got baloney."

He escorted us back to the meat counter, where we ordered six slices of baloney. He cut them off with a knife.

"Speck you gonna need some cheese, ain't ya?" he asked.

"We need about a hunk or a hunk and a half of cheese," Skip answered.

We bought paper plates, plastic spoons, and a 49-cent can opener. While we were paying Walt, I noticed two signs on the wall behind the old brass cash register. One said, "Jesus loves you." The sign directly below it read, "Absolutely no credit."

Walt bade us farewell by saying, "Y'all hurry back."

We pulled the car under the shade of a giant live oak tree and spread our South Georgia luau on the hood of the car. I don't know if it was my hunger or my Southern roots, but it was probably one of my top two or three all-time memorable meals.

When we had finished our last Fig Newton, we sat down in the grass to finish our Coke and savor the moment.

"Do you know what would really make this meal complete?" Skip asked between lazy draws on his Marlboro.

"What?"

"If we went back to Kitty's Kountry Kitchen and whipped old Earl's ass with that smothered chicken."

There have been many changes in both our lives since that long-ago meal. Wives, jobs, and lifestyles have all changed. Our careers have consumed us so that we don't get to spend as much time together as we would like.

When we do get together, though, we often wind up talking about favorite times and favorite meals, and we never forget to mention the one catered by a gentleman named Walt.

Precious memories . . . how they linger.
pp. 148-51

Throughout the scriptures a very high premium is placed upon OBEDIENCE AS THE KEY TO BLESSING AND PROSPERITY.

Joshua 1:7, 8

Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this Book of the law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

1 Samuel 15:22

But Samuel replied:

"Does the Lord delight in burnt
offerings and sacrifices
as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord?
To obey is better than sacrifice,
and to heed is better than the fat of rams.

Leviticus 26:21

If you remain hostile toward me and refuse to listen to me, I will multiply your afflictions seven times over, as your sins deserve.

Joshua 22:5

But be very careful to keep the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you; to love the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to obey his commands, to hold fast to him and to serve him with all your heart and all your soul.

Deuteronomy 30:11, 14

Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach.

No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it.

Deuteronomy 30:16

For I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.

Ezra 7:10

For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the law of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.

Proverbs 3:5, 6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make your paths straight.

Isaiah 55:6-11

Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."

Jeremiah 6:16

This is what the Lord says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, 'We will not walk in it.'"

Ezekiel 33:30, 31

As for you, son of man, your countrymen are talking together about you by the walls and at the doors of the houses, saying to each other, 'Come and hear the message that has come from the Lord.' My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they express devotion, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain.

Daniel 9:10-14

... we have not obeyed the Lord our God or kept the laws he gave us through his servants the prophets. All Israel has transgressed your law and turned away, refusing to obey you.

Therefore the curses and sworn judgments written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against you. You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and against our rulers by bringing upon us great disaster. Under the whole heaven nothing has ever been done like what has been done to Jerusalem. Just as it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us, yet we have not sought the favor of the Lord our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth. The Lord did not hesitate to bring the disaster upon us, for the Lord our God is righteous in everything he does; yet we have not obeyed him.

Zephaniah 2:3

Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land,
you who do what he commands.
Seek righteousness, seek humility;
perhaps you will be sheltered
on the day of the Lord's anger.

Zephaniah 3:2

She obeys no one,
she accepts no correction.
She does not trust in the Lord,
she does not draw near to her God.

Matthew 7:24-27

Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall.

John 14:21

He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him.

John 15:10, 14

If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.

You are My friends, if you do what I command you.

John 7:17

If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself.

James 1:22-25

But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does.

Lady Henry Somerset was passing through a season of spiritual uncertainty and doubt, and one day on the grounds of Eastnor Castle she heard a mystic voice speaking to her, "Act as though I were and you shall know that I am." Obedience is the organ of spiritual knowledge.

Guy King points out:

We Evangelicals have placed such emphasis upon the duty and efficacy of Trust--and we cannot stress this too much--that we have sometimes appeared to underline too little the paramount importance of Obedience. Yet, James, and Paul, and John, and even the Master Himself, all, in various ways, combine to teach us that the two go together--the two legs on which we progress heavenwards, the two hands in which we receive Divine blessing, the two knees on which we practice effectual prayer, the two eyes with which we discern the unclouded vision of spiritual truth, the two ears which enable us clearly to hear the voice of God in His word, the two lips with which we may more effectively declare the Gospel of His grace. Think those similes out and see how truly they do indicate the dual office performed for us by Trust and Obedience in all spiritual experience and advance. The old chorus was exactly right which said, "Trust and obey, for there's no other way, To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey." . . . --the Test of our Knowledge, the measure of our Love, the token of our Loyalty to [Jesus Christ are all reflected in the one essential quality of obedience.]
pp. 34-35

Too often in our lives we are more interested in arranging COMPROMISES than we are in obeying COMMANDS.

The resistance to the divine plan and purpose is often revealed in a stubborn heart resisting what God is trying to do.

This was certainly true of JACOB as he wrestled all night with the angel in Genesis 32.

(The Gospel According to Bubba by Chuck Meyer)

"Nope. Just like J.R., he divides his flocks and herds and folks into two groups so even if he loses one he's still got the other. Next he sends a Lexus, a Rolex, and 401 tickets to the Super Bowl on ahead to his brother to try to buy him off. Then, just like they used to freeze-frame J.R. sittin' back in his leather chair with that smirk on his face, Jacob sits back on his blanket, alone in the camp, and waits.
p. 106

Matthew 23:37, 38

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!

Whereas in our previous study we're looking at the NEGATIVE ASPECT OF FELLOWSHIP in that it is broken by sin,

we now come in this particular study to the POSITIVE ASPECT:
"FELLOWSHIP IS NOURISHED BY OBEDIENCE."

v. 3 And in this we are knowing that we know Him, if we are keeping His commandments.

One of the ways that we are able to tell whether or not "WE KNOW HIM" is by our obedience to His commands.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The 2 occurrences of the word "KNOW" in this verse are the 1st of 23 times John used this word in his epistle. He also uses the word oida, which is translated "knowing intuitively," 6 times.

We could really translate this 1st verse more accurately by saying:

"And in this we are knowing that we have come to know Him."

The evidence of having "come to know Him" is that:

"WE ARE KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENTS."

The battle has been fought,
the surrender documents have been signed,
and now there is reconciliation and peace.

Jesus Christ rules and reigns supreme and now our greatest desire is to bring Him pleasure by:

"KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENTS."

The word translated as "KEEPING" here in verse 3 is also translated in the words:

"to keep,"

"to observe,"

"to fulfill,"

"to pay attention to."

Revelation 1:3

Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

One of the translations renders the word "HEEDS," which is the same word that is used here in this passage by John, in this way:

"IT IS HE WHO IS TAKING MY DEEDS TO HEART."

What does John mean by the term, "COMMANDMENTS"? He does not make reference here to the Ten Commandments or the Old Testament law. It was the function of the law to bring us to Christ, and yet, there are commands made by Jesus Christ in His life here upon earth that reflect the Mosaic law. It is our responsibility as Christians to be obedient to those things which are a reflection of His will.

Romans 3:19, 20

Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God; because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

Actually the summary of His commandments in the New Testament are seen in this epistle:

chapter 3:23

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

Psalms 19:7-14

The law of the Lord is perfect,
reviving the soul,
The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.
The precepts of the Lord are right,
giving joy to the heart.
The commands of the Lord are radiant,
giving light to the eyes.
The fear of the Lord is pure,
enduring forever.
The ordinances of the Lord are sure
and altogether righteous.
They are more precious than gold,
than much pure gold;
they are sweeter than honey,
than honey from the comb.
By them is your servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.
Who can discern his errors?
Forgive my hidden faults.
Keep your servant also from willful sins;
may they not rule over me.
Then will I be blameless,
innocent of great transgression.
May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be pleasing in your sight,
O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.

What John is saying here is, one of the ways we can come to a real assurance in our hearts that we belong to Jesus Christ is that we have a great desire to express our love for the Lord with an obedient heart.

1 Kings 3:9

So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?

What SOLOMON is praying for here is:

he might be able to hear the Lord speak,
to be able to discern what is right and wrong,
and then that he might not only hear it but be obedient.

John 10:27

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;

Isaiah 30:21

Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."

Hebrews 5:11-14

Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

(The Existence and Attributes of God by Stephen Charnock)

We think him injurious to our liberty when by his precept he thwarts our pleasure; we wish it of another frame, more mild, more suitable to our minds. It is the same as if we should openly blame God for consulting with his own righteousness, and not with our humours, before he settled his law; that he should not have drawn it from the depths of his righteous nature, but squared it to accommodate our corruption.

This being the language of such complaints, is a reproving God because he would not be unholy, that we might be unrighteous with impunity. Had the divine law been suited to our corrupt state, God must have been unholy to have complied with his rebellious creature. To charge the law with rigidity, either in language or practice, is the highest contempt of God's holiness; for it is an implicit wish that God were as defiled, polluted, disorderly, as our corrupted selves.

p. 507

Obedience naturally results from this doctrine. As his justice requires fear, his goodness thankfulness, his faithfulness trust, his truth belief, so his sovereignty, in the nature of it, demands obedience. As it is most fit he should rule in regard of his excellency, so it is most fit we should obey him in regard of his authority. He is our Lord, and we his subjects; he is our Master, and we his servants; it is righteous we should observe him, and conform to his will. He is everything that speaks an authority to command us, and that can challenge an humility in us to obey.

p. 750

v. 4 The one who is saying, "I have come to know Him," and is not keeping His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in this one.

Here we have someone who is making a confession with the LIPS but it is not being revealed in the LIFE.

It is an expression of faith without obedience.

It is faith without works.

Just like we had the little word "IF" 5 times, revealing the response to the light in our previous study,

so we have the little phrase "THE ONE WHO" recurring 5 TIMES in this particular study, revealing to us the possible positions for a Christian to be in with regard to one's relationship to obedience:

We have the little phrase "THE ONE WHO IS SAYING" occurring in:

1. verse 4,
2. verse 6,
3. and again in verse 9.

We then have in verse 10 the words:

4. "The one who is loving,"

and in verse 11:

5. "the one who is hating."

This particular verse sounds a lot like:

chapter 1:6

If we say that we are having fellowship with Him and we are walking around in the darkness, we are lying and not doing the truth.

When you say that you have come to know Jesus Christ and entered into a relationship to Him, you also must say that you are recognizing Him as Lord and you are committed to obedience.

Romans 12:1, 2

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

When we say that we have come to know Him and we have disobedience in our lives, fellowship is broken--as we learned in the previous study--and we are walking around in the darkness, not in the light.

"THE ONE WHO IS SAYING, 'I HAVE COME TO KNOW HIM.'"

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

As often in Johannine usage the Him might refer either to God or to Christ. For John, Jesus is so closely linked with the Father that a precise distinction between the persons of the Godhead sometimes seems irrelevant. Fellowship is with both the Father and the Son (1:3), and to know one of them intimately is to know the other.

But obedience is the condition for such knowledge.

John 14:21-23

He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him." Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him.

Stott points out:

The positive principle of the previous verse is illustrated by a negative example. A man's words must be tested by his works. If he disobeys God's commandments, his claim to have come to know God is a lie (cf. i. 6). His conduct contradicts his profession and proves it to be false.

p. 90

Van Gorder points out:

Much is said today about each having his own "lifestyle." A Christian has but one lifestyle: obedience to God's Word. Any profession of faith that fails to be corroborated by a Christlike walk immediately marks that one as living a lie.
p. 60

"THE ONE WHO IS SAYING, 'I HAVE COME TO KNOW HIM,' AND IS NOT KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENTS, IS A LIAR, AND THE TRUTH IS NOT IN THIS ONE."

There are 2 THINGS that are said about this individual:

1. HE "IS A LIAR,"
2. "THE TRUTH IS NOT IN THIS ONE."

This is a person who is giving testimony with his lips, but not with his life. He is not doing the word.

The proof of the reality of our Christian experience is not our talk but our walk. It is what we do, not what we say, that is going to make an impact.

Titus 1:16

They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Someone may profess a fellowship with God which his life shows he does not possess. John was not afraid to call this kind of claim what it really is--a lie. In such a person, the truth is not a dynamic controlling influence. He is seriously out of touch with spiritual reality.

(The Existence and Attributes of God by Stephen Charnock)

Is it not a more becoming thing to be ruled by the will of our sovereign, than by that of our lusts? to observe a wise and gracious authority, than to set up inordinate appetites in the room of his law? Would not all men account it a disorder to be abominated, to see a slave or vassal control the just orders of his lord, and endeavour to subject his master's will to his own? Much more to expect God should serve our humour, rather than we be regulated by his will. It is more orderly that subjects should obey their governors, than governors their subjects; that passion should obey reason, than reason obey passion. When good governors are to conform to subjects, and reason veil to passion, it is monstrous; the one disturbs the order of a community, and the other defaceth the beauty of the soul. Is it a comely thing for God to stoop to our meanness, or for us to stoop to his greatness?

p. 750

(The Heart of Godly Leadership by Hudson T. Armerding)

What is important in the matter of delegation is a periodic review--accountability. Even the best of us needs this. A friend of mine says that most people do not do what they are expected to do; they do what they are inspected to do. Like any generalization, this one has its notable exceptions. But it is interesting how easily most of us slacken off when nobody is noticing and how quickly we recover when we know someone is going to review our work. Certain exceptional people work well independently without being reviewed, but many people make an extra effort when they know somebody is coming by to see them.

p. 120

"Oh, for the wisdom of Solomon!" one often hears. At times the complexities and perplexities of Christian work cause the leader to wish for the intellectual advantages Solomon enjoyed. But a consideration of Solomon's life makes plain that one needs more than wisdom if his performance is to please God. Because of his failure to recognize the principle of accountability, Solomon stands as one of the most tragic figures in Biblical history.

p. 165

(Looking Back, Moving On: Applying Biblical Principles of Freedom to Your Life by Boyd Luter)

Where there is no accountability, there probably will not be much recovery. Without clear boundaries and limits, it is altogether too easy to wander out of bounds into a self-indulgent or self-destructive lifestyle.

The book of Judges offers Samson as a classic example of the effects of a lack of accountability, resulting in both self-indulgence and self-destruction. He did not learn until it was too late. What a pity that a life full of such God-given ability would end up in such an embarrassing shambles because no one had the care and courage that added up to speaking the truth in love!
p. 87

v. 5 But whoever is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God has been brought to maturity. In this we are knowing that we are in Him.

The word "BUT" forms the contrast to the previous.

"BUT WHOEVER IS KEEPING HIS WORD."

This is the 3RD TIME in the 3 verses that we have had the word "KEEPING" occur. It was:

1. "KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENTS" - verse 3
2. "KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENT" - verse 4
3. "KEEPING HIS WORD" - verse 5

This word means:

"to observe,"

"to fulfill,"

or "to pay attention to."

Van Gorder says:

The practical obedience of a genuine believer is contrasted with the statement of the man who claims to know Christ, yet "keepeth not His commandments . . ." (1 John 2:4). To claim the knowledge of God yet disobey Him is an unresolvable contradiction. The evidence and the assurance that one knows God is simple obedience to His Word.

p. 60

Mitchell says:

If obedience to the Word of God is not the desire of your heart, then, my friend, I would like to ask you a question. Have you really accepted Christ as your personal Saviour? Have you come into right relationship with Him?

Obedience to His Word is the measure of our love for Christ and is also the evidence of our fellowship and union with Him.

p. 55

I have chosen this particular verse to be the KEY VERSE for Study #3:

"FELLOWSHIP IS NOURISHED BY OBEDIENCE."

It is here in verse 5 that we have the key to continued fellowship. It is by "KEEPING HIS WORD."

It is not by a lot of talk that fellowship is maintained, nor by loose living, it comes by "KEEPING HIS WORD."

HOW TO BE FREE

The greatly loved Bible teacher Henrietta Mears knew the secret of true freedom, and she wanted her students to know it too. With young people in mind, she said, "A bird is free in the air. Place a bird in the water and he has lost his liberty. A fish is free in the water, but leave him on the sand and he perishes. He is out of his realm. So, young people, the Christian is free when he does the will of God and is obedient to God's command. This is as natural a realm for God's child as the water is for the fish, or the air for the bird."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

Psalms 1:1, 2

Blessed is the man
 who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked
 or stand in the way of sinners
 or sit in the seat of mockers.
 But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
 and on his law he meditates day and night.

VERSES 'R' US

Memorization of Scripture is one of the most critical elements of spiritual living.

If a person memorized only two verses of Scripture a week, at the end of a year he would know over a hundred. Doing that for ten years would result in knowing more than a thousand verses by heart. How many people who have been Christians for ten years know that many verses?

Memorizing God's word is critical to our spiritual growth, but the excuses for not doing it are myriad: "I don't have enough time," "I'm not smart enough," "I used to but don't feel I need to anymore." Sometimes Christians memorize Scripture for the wrong reasons, such as to get an award, to please someone (pastor, family member, a person they admire) who said they should, or to be able to win arguments.

Why should we memorize God's Word? The Bible itself makes it clear that we need to have God's Word in our hearts; in fact, God specifically commands that we do it. So we should memorize out of simple obedience. By obeying we make it possible to have freedom, victory, and the fruit of the Spirit. This obedience is not out of a sense of duty or fear of punishment but because our God is good, wise, and loving.

The benefits of memorizing God's Word are many. (1) It makes it possible for you to meditate on Scripture wherever you are. (2) Letting God's Word "dwell in you richly" is the key to "walking in the Spirit." (3) Through your memorizing of Scripture the Spirit can lead you, teach you, and remind you of the truth in every situation, applying the Word to particular problems you face. (4) It enables you to know and understand God intimately. The Scriptures are His very thoughts. (5) It allows you to comprehend how the various parts of the Bible fit together in perfect unity. (6) The more you memorize the greater mental capacity God will give you--for learning His Word and other things as well.

"You don't have to be a genius. But it does take discipline. You just have to decide that you'll do it."

"Verses 'R' us: Reasons why Scripture memory isn't just for kids" by Mark Littleton. Discipleship Journal, Mar/Apr 1991 [#62]. Pages 48-51.

"BUT WHOEVER IS KEEPING HIS WORD, TRULY IN THIS ONE THE LOVE OF GOD HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO MATURITY."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

This kind of obedience results in a rich and full experience of God's love.

John 14:21-23

He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him." Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says further in this passage:

An obedient disciple is promised a special experience of the love of the Father and the Son. Since a Christian is already the object of God's saving love, this additional experiential realization of the divine affection may be properly said to make God's love complete in him.

1 John 4:12, 17

No one has beheld God at any time; if we are loving one another, God is abiding in us, and His love has been brought to its fulness in us.

In this the love has been brought to completion which is in us, that as a result we are having boldness in the day of judgment; because just as that one is, so we ourselves are in this world.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

That is to say, an obedient believer has a deep full-orbed acquaintance with God's love. Since God is love (4:16), to know God intimately is to know His love intimately.

What John is saying is that we reflect our love for Jesus Christ by our obedience to His word. If we really love God, we are going to do what He says.

Jesus certainly manifested this obedient spirit to the Father:

John 4:34

Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work.

John 8:29

And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.

John 14:31

but that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go from here.

Luke 22:42

saying, "Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done."

"BUT WHOEVER IS KEEPING HIS WORD, TRULY IN THIS ONE THE LOVE OF GOD HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO MATURITY."

It is a state of things by which one is above reproach.

"IN THIS WE ARE KNOWING THAT WE ARE IN HIM."

The consequence of disobedience is seen in the disciplinary action taken by the Father against us as His children:

Hebrews 12:5-8

and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him; For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives." It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

From this particular passage we learn that the Lord is desirous of a submissive spirit and an obedient heart on our part in our relationship with Him. He has ways to accomplish those objectives in our lives, though sometimes it comes through the unpleasant experiences of suffering.

THE LITTER CAMPAIGN in the state of Texas has the slogan:

"Don't Mess with Texas."

We could well say the same thing here:

"Don't Mess with God" when it comes to the matter of disobedience.

Hebrews 5:8

Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

How is it that we can know that love has been brought to maturity in us? It will reveal itself in the 6 S's:

- 1.LOVE IS SUBMISSIVE,
- 2.LOVE IS SELFLESS,
- 3.LOVE IS SENSITIVE,
- 4.LOVE IS SHARING,
- 5.LOVE IS SACRIFICIAL,
- 6.LOVE IS SERVING.

(Rediscovering Holiness by J. I. Packer)

These discussions of discipline confront us with the truth that the call of God to develop fellowship with him, in face of pressures and restraints imposed on us by our condition, our company, and our circumstances, along with our weaknesses and blind spots and the multitude of traps set for us by the devil, make imperative a planned, orderly, thoughtful approach to the business of daily living. Only then can we ever ensure that there is room in our lives for all the things we ought to be doing. Only then shall we ever learn to think ahead, and prepare ourselves for what may come, and work out before God what our reactions to this and that should be.

The Christians who realize that it is Christ-like wisdom to think ahead in this way are few and far between, but it is so all the same. Experience confirms that those who have already adjusted their minds to the fact that troubles may come, are able to keep their footing and handle their feelings better when troubles do come. As the children of this world, fired by personal ambition, set themselves career goals and then work very hard to achieve them, so God's children, fired by the greatness of divine love, should have before their minds the goal of discipline in daily living, and work equally hard, planning, praying, and trying things out, to make it a reality. The alternative is to live like a pilot flying blind--always being taken by surprise and tyrannized by the immediate, the urgent, and the unexpected--experiencing life as a succession of emergencies that one is never ready to meet.

p. 115

(Living by the Book by Howard G. Hendricks
& William D. Hendricks)

Does this seem too rigid, too confining? If so, may I suggest that you might be settling for a decaffeinated form of Christianity--one that promises not to keep you awake at night. You see, God gives us His Word not to make us comfortable but to conform us to the character of Christ. And that goes way beyond pious feelings and good intentions. It penetrates to the level of our schedules and checkbooks, and friendships and jobs and families. If our faith makes no practical difference there, then what difference does it make?

pp. 326-27

(The Existence and Attributes of God by Stephen Charnock)

It is more fit God should have the same promptness from his subjects. We are to obey his orders, though our purblind understandings may not apprehend the reason of every one of them. It is without dispute that he is sovereign, and therefore it is without dispute that we are bound to obey him, without controlling his conduct. A master will not bear it from his slave, why should God from his creature?

p. 754

He melts us down as gold, to fit us for the receiving a new impression, to mortify the affections of the flesh, and clothe us with the graces of his Spirit. The due sense of this would make us to submit to his stroke, and to wait upon him for a good issue of his dealings.

p. 521

If he built the world principally for anything, it was for the communication of his goodness, and display of his holiness. He formed the rational creature to manifest his holiness in that law whereby he was to be governed. Then deprive not God of the design of his own glory.

p. 522

Guy King says:

Do you know that vivid poem of Charles Wesley's, on "Wrestling Jacob", with its concluding stanzas--

"Contented now upon my thigh
I halt, till life's short journey end;
All helplessness, all weakness I,
On Thee alone for strength depend,
Nor have I power, from Thee, to move;
Thy nature, and Thy name is Love.

"Lame as I am, I take the prey,
Hell, earth, and sin with ease o'ercome;
I leap for joy, pursue my way,
And as a bounding hart fly home,
Thro' all eternity to prove
Thy nature, and Thy name is Love."

p. 39

The response of our Heavenly Father to the obedience of His Son is:

"This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

THE SECRET OF ABIDING PEACE

Like Enoch, whose greatness was quiet and unpretentious, we can live and act so that we may walk with God. This is greatness of character. "To walk with God means to live in God's presence and in conscious communion with him, to live in the real and constant companionship of God." The results of walking with God are great joy, a sense of security, peace, spiritual enlightenment, purity of heart and life, a beautiful character, usefulness and God's eternal companionship. To walk with God: 1) trust the sacrifice of Christ, 2) obey God, 3) think about his presence. Study the Bible, pray, give thanks, and worship.

"The secret of abiding peace" by R. A. Torrey. Decision, Nov 1989. Pages 25-26.

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

I am reminded of the great old hymn:

"Have Thine Own Way, Lord"

Have Thine own way, Lord!
 Have Thine own way!
 Thou art the Potter,
 I am the clay.
 Mould me and make me
 After Thy will,
 While I am waiting,
 Yielded and still.

Have Thine own way, Lord!
 Have Thine own way!
 Search me and try me,
 Master, today!
 Whiter than snow, Lord,
 Wash me just now,
 As in Thy presence
 Humbly I bow.

Have Thine own way, Lord!
 Have Thine own way!
 Wounded and weary,
 Help me, I pray!
 Power all power
 Surely is Thine!
 Touch me and heal me,
 Saviour divine!

Have Thine own way, Lord!
 Have Thine own way!
 Hold o'er my being
 Absolute sway!
 Fill with Thy Spirit
 Till all shall see
 Christ only, always,
 Living in me!

(The New Church Hymnal, 1976, Lexicon Music, Inc., #186)

v. 6 The one who is saying he is abiding in Him, he himself is morally obligated to be walking around just as that one also walked around.

Back in verse 4 we had the 1st phrase:

"The one who is saying, 'I have come to know Him,'"

and now we have the 2nd phrase here in verse 6:

"THE ONE WHO IS SAYING HE IS ABIDING IN HIM."

John 14:10

Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.

John 15:1-8

I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

John is speaking of discipleship here and not of salvation.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Our relationship with the Lord can be ruptured with the resultant loss of fellowship and fruitfulness. Thus here in 1 John the proof that a person is enjoying this kind of experience is to be found in a life modeled after that of Jesus in obedience to His word.

2 Corinthians 3:18

But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

The obedient heart is reflected in a likeness to the one obeyed. To walk as He walked is an outward sign of an obedient heart in fellowship with the Father.

John Calvin said:

A likeness in life and deeds will prove that we abide in Christ.

God the Father has all of the resources to transform our characters and to change our lives, even as He did the twelve that He chose to be with Him; but the only way this can be done is for us to be abiding in Him. That involves obedience on our part. It is only then that His life will begin to be reflected in ours.

We are abiding in Christ when we are doing 3 THINGS:

- 1.WE ARE DRAWING UPON ALL THAT HE IS,
- 2.WE ARE DEPENDING UPON ALL THAT HE CAN DO,
- 3.WE ARE DEVELOPING INTO HIS LIKENESS.

The term "ABIDE" refers to an action whereby we draw life from that in which we abide like the vine in the branches. The branch draws life-giving sap from the vine, or the root, with the ultimate objective of producing fruit--so it is as we abide in Christ, the life-giving Source. Our lives begin to take on the character of Jesus Christ, and the only way that we can abide in Christ is to be submissive and obedient to His will.

John personally could never get over the changes that were taking place in his life.

Westcott says:

The sign of union. The sign of union with God is found in the imitation of Christ. As the sign of knowledge is to be seen in the keeping of the divine commandments in their unity (v. 3) and in the keeping of the divine word in its unity (v. 5), so the sign of fellowship is to be seen in the copying the divine life.
p. 50

(The Existence and Attributes of God by Stephen Charnock)

It is this only wherein he commands our imitation of him. We are not commanded to be mighty and wise, as God is mighty and wise, but 'be holy as I am holy.' The declarations of his power are to enforce our subjection, those of his wisdom to encourage our direction by him; but this only to attract our imitation.
p. 526

v. 7 Beloved ones, I am not writing to you a new commandment, but an old commandment which you were having from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you heard.

Verses 3-6 have introduced the issue of obedience and now the apostle John speaks further of these matters.

He calls them "BELOVED ONES" which is a very affectionate concern.

It also occurs in:

3:2, 21;

4:1, 7, 11.

Leviticus 19:18

Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.

What John is now saying here in this passage is that our obedience to his word will reflect itself in love.

The obedient heart will be manifested in 3 WAYS:

THE OBEDIENT HEART IS REVEALED BY:

1. THE KEEPING OF HIS COMMANDMENTS

2. BY WALKING AS CHRIST WALKED, OR REFLECTING THE IMAGE OF JESUS CHRIST WHICH RESULTS FROM ABIDING IN HIM

3. BY LOVING THE BRETHREN

We can say it is:

BY THE WORD,

BY OUR WALK,

and BY OUR LOVE.

Westcott says:

The declaration of the test of knowledge of God and fellowship with God, which St John has given in vv. 3-6, leads to a view of the practical fulfillment of the test indicated already in v. 6. The Life of Christ, a Life of complete love, of complete self-sacrifice, is the type of the Christian's life; and the significance of Christ's Life in this aspect is gathered up in the one commandment of love, which expresses what is meant by 'keeping His commandments' (v. 3) and 'walking even as He walked' (v. 6). This commandment is first set forth in its twofold character as old and yet new (vv. 7, 8); and then traced out in its issues (vv. 9-11).

p. 51

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

This is not a new obligation. "Beloved ones, I am not writing to you a new commandment, but an old commandment which you were having from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard." And you could add again, "from the beginning."

(Rediscovering Holiness by J. I. Packer)

Outwardly, holiness is obedience; inwardly, holiness is love in action. The love for God that prompts the obedience that expressed love for fellow human beings is holiness' true heart and heartbeat: heart in the sense of essence and core and fount, and heartbeat in the sense of energy-center and driving force. As it is God's love that makes the world go round (yes, it is!), so it is love for God that makes the holy person tick, and care, and serve. Gospel-taught, God-wrought, grace-given love is what holiness in the final analysis is all about.

p. 178

v. 8 Again a new commandment I am writing to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the genuine light already is shining.

John 13:34, 35

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Yet, Jesus has called that commandment new, and John pointed out that it had not lost its freshness. It is really a new command and its truth is seen in Him and in you.

This love is first seen in Him and then in us as well.

John 15:13

Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

Dr. Mitchell says:

When we walk in fellowship with God, there will be in us, that same submission to the will of our Father. Again I ask, how can we know the will of our Father, how can we be obedient to His Word, unless we stay in the Word of God? How can we know the purpose of God for our lives unless we live in the Word of God where it is revealed to us?

We do not know the will of God by some experience. We find the will of God, we find the purpose of God for our life, we find the desire of God for us, in the Word of God. We must go to the Word of God! The more we read it, the more we hide the Word in our minds and in our hearts, the greater will be our desire to be obedient to His Word and to be submissive to His will. When this is true, He will have more delight in us, and we will have more fulness of joy in Him.

p. 58

It is new in the sense that Christ has raised it to new standards. It now reaches to the sinner and the Gentile, there are none outside the reach of His love. It is new in the sense that it is a love which is in spite of, not a love because of. It is new in the sense that it is a love not affected by the character of the one loved.

Rule Howe, in his book Herein is Love, however, has pointed out:

Our day seems to be one in which people are more conscious of their need to be loved than of their need to love, with a result that everyone is running around looking for love. Though we do not find love by looking for it, we find it by giving it. The Christian fellowship is the fellowship of men and women who accept dying as a part of living and who are not surprised by the presence in human relations of selfishness, betrayals, misrepresentations, hostility, and all other violations of the ideal. When we meet these things, we should not run away or pretend that such conditions do not exist. Instead, we should face these hostile and negative human responses with courage, because we are participating in the life of our Lord. We may move through these experiences knowing that nothing can really separate us from the love of God, which seeks to make itself known in and through our relations with one another. We may trust that if we accept the pain that we have in our relations with one another and are obedient to the Spirit of the love that seeks to reunite man with man, we may emerge on the farther side of the painful experience with relationships that are richer, deeper, and stronger than they were before.

"AGAIN A NEW COMMANDMENT I AM WRITING TO YOU, WHICH IS TRUE IN HIM AND IN YOU."

John goes on to say in verse 8:

"BECAUSE THE DARKNESS IS PASSING AWAY, AND THE GENUINE LIGHT ALREADY IS SHINING."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

"The darkness is passing away" refers to Christ's incarnation which brought a light into the world which can never be extinguished.

We will see in 1 John 2:17 that darkness is the hatred of the present world.

In contrast, light equals the Incarnation and revelation of divine love.

We can also say that darkness represents the Satanic,
and light represents Christ's kingdom.

Colossians 2:15

When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

Psalms 119:130

The unfolding of your words gives light;
it gives understanding to the simple.

Proverbs 4:18

The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn,
shining ever brighter till the full light of day.

v. 9 The one who is saying that he is in the light and is hating his brother, he is in the darkness until now.

This is the 3RD TIME in the passage we have had the words,

"THE ONE WHO IS SAYING":

1. We saw it back in verse 4:

"The one who is saying, 'I have come to know Him,' and is not keeping His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in this one,"

2. in verse 6:

"The one who is saying he is abiding in Him, he himself is morally obligated to be walking around just as that one also walked around,"

3. and now here in verse 9:

"THE ONE WHO IS SAYING THAT HE IS IN THE LIGHT AND IS HATING HIS BROTHER, HE IS IN THE DARKNESS UNTIL NOW."

Isaiah 5:20, 21

Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

This is a warning for Christians. The reference is to "his brother," and hatred or love will plainly show.

We have already talked about the subject of SPIRITUAL DANGER in:

chapter 1:8 - "If we say that we are not having sin, we are leading ourselves astray, and the truth is not in us."

verse 10 - "If we say that we have not sinned, we are making Him a liar, and His Word is not in us."

"THE ONE WHO IS SAYING THAT HE IS IN THE LIGHT AND IS HATING HIS BROTHER, HE IS IN THE DARKNESS UNTIL NOW."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

"Darkness" here indicates that he has much to learn about God and cannot legitimately claim an intimate knowledge of Christ. If he really knew Christ as he ought, he would love his brother.

Here we have the 3RD RESPONSE to "keeping His commandments" in the little phrase:

"THE ONE WHO IS SAYING."

This also is a false response. It is a person who is saying that he is in the light and he is hating his brother. The verdict from John here is:

"HE IS IN THE DARKNESS UNTIL NOW."

This sounds a lot like chapter 1:6:

"If we say that we are having fellowship with Him and we are walking around in the darkness, we are lying and not doing the truth."

LOVE and LIGHT go together,

and HATE and DARKNESS go together.

In regard to our brother in the body of Christ, it is either a case of love or hate. There is no halfway stage. There is no such thing as neutrality in personal relationships. INDIFFERENCE IS IMPOSSIBLE.

You will notice that as far as John is concerned there is no twilight in the spiritual world. A man is either walking in the light of love or in the darkness of hatred. We are either living in the flesh or in the spirit.

When it comes to our relationship with brothers in the family, we can treat them in 1 OF 5 WAYS:

1. NEGLIGIBLE--A man can be so self-centered that no one matters except himself.
2. CONTEMPT--He is a fool in comparison to my intellectual attainments.
3. A NUISANCE--in the sense that he's underprivileged.
4. AN ENEMY--This comes when we treat others as competitors to our cause, and competition becomes a principle of life.
5. A BROTHER--In love his needs are our needs. His interests are ours. To serve him is why we are here.

v.10 The one who is loving his brother is abiding in the light, and there is not a stumbling block in him.

Once again we have the word "ABIDING" occurring.

It was "ABIDING IN HIM" back in verse 6,

and it is "ABIDING IN THE LIGHT" here in verse 10.

Blaiklock observes:

The hater, the loveless, is necessarily outside God's plan, and fair game for the Evil One.
p. 37

This is the 4TH RESPONSE, and it is the honest approach again. Here we have a member of the body of Christ loving his brother with God's kind of love.

There are 2 THINGS that result from this:

1. HE "IS ABIDING IN THE LIGHT,"
2. "THERE IS NOT A STUMBLING BLOCK IN HIM."

Since he is "ABIDING IN THE LIGHT," he has spiritual discernment. He understands the will of God for his life.

Psalm 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light for my path.

"THERE IS NOT A STUMBLING BLOCK IN HIM."

He is not causing others to fall because of a lack of love in his life.

The word "STUMBLING BLOCK" here can be translated:

"trap,"

"temptation,"

"that which gives offense,"

"disapproval,"

or "stain."

In him there is no stain or fault.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Hatred is a kind of an internal stumbling block which can lead to disastrous spiritual falls, but the calamities to which hatred leads are avoided by one who loves his brother.

(The Heart of Godly Leadership by Hudson T. Armerding)

Apparently for some, God's love is really His indulgence or permissiveness and finds its unique expression in His forgiveness, with other aspects of His character (such as holiness or justice) not being taken seriously. From this perspective it would appear that love means letting me alone to do what I want and then comforting me if I get into difficulty. While it is true that God comforts and forgives, His love is to be understood in light of His character as revealed in the Bible.

p. 66

v.11 But the one who is hating his brother is in the darkness and he is walking around in the darkness, and he does not know where he is going because the darkness blinded his eyes.

This is the 5TH RESPONSE and it is a wrong one again. His life is being conducted in the sphere of darkness. He has no guidance or direction because:

"THE DARKNESS HAS BLINDED HIS EYES."

We are told that some species of fish in the great depths of the ocean have no eyes because they are living in perpetual darkness.

2 Corinthians 4:4

in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

There are 3 RESULTS here of being out of fellowship with the Lord and reflecting it in the hatred of our brother:

1. We are in the darkness. We are out of fellowship as we noted back in chapter 1,
2. We are continuing to conduct our activities in the darkness. We are living in the flesh.
3. We do not know where we are going because our eyes have been blinded by continuing to walk in the darkness.

Matthew 15:14

Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

A Christian who harbors hatred for a fellow Christian has lost all real sense of direction. Like a man wandering aimlessly in the dark, he faces potentially grave dangers.

This takes us back to verse 9:

"The one who is saying that he is in the light and is hating his brother, he is in the darkness until now."

Stott says:

Hatred distorts our perspective. We do not first misjudge people and then hate them as a result; our view of them is already jaundiced by our hatred. It is love which sees straight, thinks clearly and makes us balanced in our outlook, judgments and conduct.
p. 95

Blaiklock says:

So with the mind, the heart, the spirit of man. Never love, and the capacity to love is lost. Worse than the loss of sight or flight is the loss of the ability to see spiritually. To lose the light in that sense is to lose the vision of God, and no deeper or more tragic disaster can befall the soul of man. How solemn and awful is the warning. When we allow hate to creep in, we drink deep of the poison, a poison which blinds and kills.
p. 37

2 John 5, 6

And now I ask you, lady, not as writing to you a new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it.

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: One of the assurances of salvation is our obedience to His word.

LESSON #2: A person who is saying he has come to know Him and is not obedient is a liar and the truth is not in him.

LESSON #3: The love of God is brought to maturity in the obedient heart.

LESSON #4: To be abiding in Christ is to have an inward, enduring personal communion with Him.

LESSON #5: If we say we are abiding in Him, we are morally obligated to be walking like Him.

LESSON #6: The primary expression of the obedient heart is a love for one another.

LESSON #7: This love is seen first in him and then in us as a fruit of the Spirit.

LESSON #8: You cannot be hating your brother and walking in the light at the same time.

LESSON #9: The 2 results of loving our brother are:

1. abiding in the light,
2. and there is no stumbling block in us.

LESSON #10: There is no guidance or direction while we are walking in darkness.

We have been considering together the subject:

"FELLOWSHIP IS NOURISHED BY OBEDIENCE."

Our obedience to the known will of God is reflected in:

KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENTS,

WALKING AS JESUS CHRIST WALKED,

and LOVING THE BRETHREN.

How many times have you parents shared with your child that your one supreme desire would be to bless them, but you are unable to do so because of their rebellious heart which is manifesting itself in a continual disobedience.

Oh, how great it would be if we could see that the Lord waits to bless us in abundant fashion with fresh manifestations of Himself, if He could but find in us an obedient heart.

Isaiah 1:2-6

Hear, O heavens! Listen, O earth! For the Lord has spoken: "I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner's manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand." Ah, sinful nation, a people loaded with guilt, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the Lord; they have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on him. Why should you be beaten anymore? Why do you persist in rebellion? Your whole head is injured, your whole heart afflicted. From the sole of your foot to the top of your head there is no soundness--only wounds and welts and open sores, not cleansed or bandaged or soothed with oil.

Acts 26:13, 14

at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around me and those who were journeying with me. And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

(Men Who Win: Pursuing the Ultimate Prize
by Steven J. Lawson)

Maybe you are wondering if our personal sins will be revealed in that day. If that were the case, I would be in major-league trouble. Don't worry. As Christ sorts through our good and bad deeds, He will not manifest any of our sin. Why? Because Jesus already dealt with our sin two thousand years ago on the cross and it will never come up again. Never.

Think of it this way. When I was in high school, I played quarterback for a team that ran the triple-option offense. After the season, my football coach was asked to speak at the annual NCAA Coach's Convention on how to effectively run the triple option.

To best communicate, our coach spliced together a highlight film of our best option plays. You should have seen this film! In all humility . . . we looked awesome. It showed none of our bad plays, only our good plays. Any team could look great with only their good plays shown. The fact is, we looked better than we really were.

But over the years, something tragic occurred. Our highlight film has been lost! Gone! All our good plays are lost forever. (Now we are only legends in our own minds.)

I have all of our game films. Guess what it is like now to watch those reels? Horrible. All my fumbles, incompletions, and misdirections--every one of those clunkers--are permanently recorded. They still haunt me. All of my touchdowns, big plays, and completions are gone. (All right, so it was a short highlight film.)

Why couldn't it have been just the opposite? All of my bad plays gone, the game film erased, and only my good plays remaining? At the judgment seat of Christ, it will be exactly that way. All of our sinful deeds will be erased from God's film. Only the good will remain. God has been recording on heavenly film, if you will, our entire life. All our works, our thoughts, our attitudes--He has it all on tape. When we stand at the judgment seat of Christ, our life will be replayed and reviewed by Christ. But fortunately, God has edited out our bad plays and has spliced together only the good ones. What a highlight film that will be!

In that day, I will give an account of myself to Christ as a servant to his master. He will determine how faithful I have been with what He has entrusted to me. Have I invested it in His kingdom?

Men, this day of accountability is coming. How we live life today counts forever. It does matter how we run life's race. He will be there at the finish line. So, we must run faithfully today if we are to be rewarded in that Final Day.

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What would we think of a young lady engaged to a young man whose conceit and self-will prevented her from the consummation of her own joy by her unwillingness to give up her own name, her own rights, and possessions, her will in submission to his will, to refuse to love, to honor, and to obey. In this position she must continue to live on her own resources, she certainly cannot claim his. Until her love reaches a point of surrender, she must remain unsatisfied.

What a graphic picture of our relationship to the Lord.
How deep-seated is our distrust. How hesitant we are to
be submissive and obedient to His will. All He has waits
to become ours when we come to the point that we can say,
"I do."

It was J. Hudson Taylor who said:

The real secret of an unsatisfied life lies too often in an unsundered will.

Perhaps you are hearing:

the words that MARY heard from MARTHA:

"The Master is here and is calling for you."

or perhaps the word of the Lord Himself to ADAM:

"Adam, where are you?"

Be quick to respond with an obedient heart.

STUDY #3 - 1 John 2:3-11

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: One of the assurances of salvation is our obedience to His word.

LESSON #2: A person who is saying he has come to know Him and is not obedient is a liar and the truth is not in him.

LESSON #3: The love of God is brought to maturity in the obedient heart.

LESSON #4: To be abiding in Christ is to have an inward, enduring personal communion with Him.

LESSON #5: If we say we are abiding in Him, we are morally obligated to be walking like Him.

LESSON #6: The primary expression of the obedient heart is a love for one another.

LESSON #7: This love is seen first in him and then in us as a fruit of the Spirit.

LESSON #8: You cannot be hating your brother and walking in the light at the same time.

LESSON #9: The 2 results of loving our brother are:

1. abiding in the light,
2. and there is no stumbling block in us.

LESSON #10: There is no guidance or direction while we are walking in darkness.