

Knowing God

How can we truly know God?

¿Cómo podemos conocer verdaderamente a Dios?

1. Let's obey His _____.

Obedezcamos sus _____.

1 John 2:3 (1 Juan 2:3)

Luke 6:46 (Lucas 6:46)

John 14:15 (Juan 14:15)

2. Let's be like _____.

Seamos como _____.

1 John 2:6 (1 Juan 2:6)

1 Peter 2:21 (1 Pedro 2:21)

1 John 3:2-3 (1 Juan 3:2-3)

3. Let's love all _____.

Amemos a todas las _____.

1 John 2:10 (1 Juan 2:10)

1 John 4:7-8 (1 Juan 4:7-8)

Matthew 5:43-45 (Mateo 5:43-45)

John 15:12-13 (Juan 15:12-13)



Life Group Discussion Questions

Week 3: February 22—March 1

Scripture: 1 John 2:3-11

When the Bible talks about knowing God, it is not talking about having mystical experiences or learning things about God that no one else knows. God is infinitely greater than our ability to comprehend Him. There will always be some things about God that are mysterious and beyond our understanding. Learning things about God is good and important. But when the Bible talks about knowing God, it is usually talking about having a good and growing relationship with God through Jesus Christ. In First John chapter 2, John tells us how we can truly know God in this way.

Read 1 John 2:3-11

1. According to verse 3, how do we know if we truly know God?

Gary Burge notes,

“We know that we have come to know him” disguises a perfect tense verb, which in Greek means not simply that knowledge is a one-time enlightenment, but rather a past experience with ongoing present consequences. Knowledge for John is experiential, not speculative and abstract. It reveals itself in present activity, namely, the continuing reflex to obey God. Therefore, people who make some claim that they know God must have evidence in their daily lives that they are conforming their decision-making to his will. (Burge, 97)

2. What did John say about the person who claims to know God but refuses to obey God? (2:4)

Much of what John wrote was to help Christians identify and avoid false teaching. The false ideas of Gnosticism developed near the end of the first century and they were creeping into some of the churches. The word “gnostic” means one who knows. The Gnostics claimed to know secrets about God that no one else knew. They claimed to really know God, but the way they lived indicated something else.

John Stott observes,

‘Here is the test by which we can make sure that we know him’ (2:3 NEB). The Gnostics in particular laid claim to the

knowledge of God. They had been enlightened with the true *gnōsis*. John does not deny the possibility of knowing God, since both the Old Testament and the Gospel promise it (Jer. 31:34; John 17:3). But he insists that no religious experience is valid if it does not have moral consequences (Titus 1:16). It is not the person who claims to be a Christian and to know God who is presumptuous, but the person whose claim is contradicted by his conduct. (Stott, 94)

3. How do we know if God's love is perfected or complete in us? (2:5)

4. How must we live if we claim to be in Christ? (2:6)

Morris Womack comments,

John sees our being "in him" and living "in him" as the same thing. So, if we live in him, we must walk as Jesus walked. Jesus left an example that we should walk "in his steps" (see 1 Pet 2:21). Again, John may be striking at the gnostic docetic philosophy (the notion that Jesus only seemed to be human) when he refers to walking "as Jesus walked." Walking as Jesus walked, however, does not refer to some ritualistic religion; it is more than simply living a "form of religion"; it means truly walking an unselfish, God-centered life in all we do. Jesus was not interested in mere ritual and form; he was interested in our lives being God-like in all we do. (Womack, 53)

5. How did John address his readers in verse 7?

6. What did John say about the command he was writing to them? (2:7)

7. In what sense is John's message both an old command and a new command? (2:7-8)

8. What do think John meant when he said, "the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining"?

Robert Yarbrough writes,

"Darkness in 1 John 2:8 is the moral and spiritual gloom that enshrouds current human existence. It is the realm of evil, deprived of God's presence and ruled by Satan. With the coming of Christ, this darkness, never sovereign in the world even in OT times, receives a decisive setback and weakening; John's Gospel

uses similar language in announcing the incarnation (John 1:5). Jesus promised his followers that they need not walk in darkness (John 8:12). He came “into the world as light, so that no one who believes in [him] should stay in darkness” (12:46 NIV). Now John testifies to a time in which the light Jesus promised is an increasing reality in the community he founded. (Yarbrough, 102)

9. What did John say about the person who claims to be in the light but hates his brother? (2:9)
10. What did John say about the person who loves his brother? (2:10)
11. How does hatred blind us and cause us to stumble? (2:9-11)
12. How does loving one another help us to live in the light? (2:9-11)
13. How can people get to know God better?
14. Why would someone claim that he or she knows God and while refusing to obey God?
15. When have you seen the love of God perfected or made complete in someone’s life? What did it look like?
16. What does it mean for Christians today to walk as Jesus walked? Think of an example from your own life.
17. When and how has a Bible command or principle taken on new meaning in your life?
18. What does the way in which we treat other believers reveal about us?
19. What specific commands in the Bible do you need to focus on this week?
20. How will you show love to someone you may be tempted to hate?

Sources cited:

Burge, Gary. *The Letters of John*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996.
Stott, John. *The Letters of John*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2009.
Womack, Morris. *1, 2, & 3 John*. Joplin, MO: College Press, 1998.
Yarbrough, Robert. *1-3 John*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008.