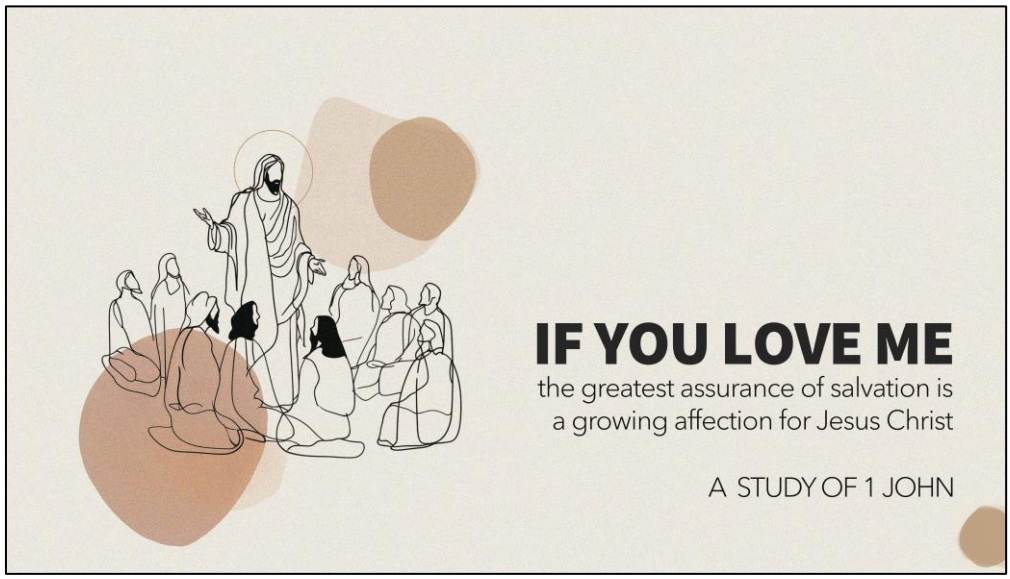


Obedience – Whatever He Asks

1 John 2:3-6

Lake Arrowhead Church, Waleska, Georgia

©Monty Watson – October 25, 2026

OBEDIENCE – WHATEVER HE ASKS
1 John 2:3-6

If you're a dog lover, you'll enjoy this story. Most dogs can be trained to sit, roll over, and fetch a ball. But dogs can be trained to do a lot more than that. Sheep dogs are trained to herd sheep. Service dogs are trained to help people with disabilities, like a blind person. Police dogs are trained for drug and bomb detection, to attack and apprehend criminals, and perform search and rescue. Dogs have even been trained to sniff out diseases – like cancer, malaria, and Parkinson's. But here's a video of one amazing dog. **[VIDEO[1]]**

When Kevin Weaver went into a diabetic seizure, his dog Belle had been trained to detect his low blood sugar and dial 9-1-1. Belle saved Kevin's life!

If dogs can be trained to do amazing things and consistently obey their master's voice, then surely, we can as well. This morning, we are going to talk about obedience, doing whatever Jesus asks, because we love Him so much.

The Apostle John knew Jesus up close and personal. He walked with Him. He heard every word and witnessed every miracle. In his own words, John said, "I've seen Him, I've heard Him, and even touched Him."

First John is a sequel to the Gospel of John. In this short letter, John explained the Gospel to a new generation. He also explained what Jesus meant when He said, "If you love Me …" John describes what a true Christian looks like. He describes what it looks like to truly believe and to truly love Jesus Christ. And that's why 1 John can be summed up in this sentence. ***The greatest assurance of salvation, the greatest proof of salvation, is a growing affection for Jesus Christ.***

Of course, Christianity is about the Gospel. But Christianity is more than theology. It's more than morality. It's relational. Christianity is about loving Jesus. That's why we are studying the New Testament letter of 1 John, to deepen our love for Jesus Christ.

Around the age of 90, and around the year of 90 AD, John wrote this to a new generation.

> "We know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says 'I know him' but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him – whoever says he abides in him (whoever claims to be a Christian) ought to walk in the same way in which he walked" (1 John 2:3-6, ESV).

If we truly believe and truly love Him, we will obey Him and do whatever He asks.[2]

"IF YOU LOVE ME"

In the upper room around the table of the last supper, Jesus talked about what was most important.[3] The cross was just hours away, and Jesus wanted those hours to count. It was a somber night, a tender night, because these were the last words He spoke to His disciples before He was crucified. Among many other things He said that night, Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15, NAS).[4]

Sixty years later, to a new generation, John repeated what he heard in the upper room that night. "We know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments" (1 John 2:3, ESV).[5] The point? Obedience proves that we truly believe and truly love Jesus. Yes, we obey Him out of duty. Yes, we obey Him in submission to His Lordship. But most of all, we obey Him because we love Him. Love and obedience are like two sides of the same coin. But love comes first. You don't obey your way to love. You love your way to obedience. Love comes first. That's why the greatest assurance and greatest proof of salvation is a growing affection for Jesus Christ.

Affection is a deep, intimate love for our Savior. And the greater our appreciation for Him, for what He did for us on the cross, the greater our affection for Him. The more we return to the cross, and consider how much He loved us, the more we will love Him.

What does it mean to love Him?

- To love Jesus is to respect Him and revere Him.
- To love Jesus is to be humbled and grateful for what He did on the cross for us.
- To love Jesus is to be drawn to Him, to be attracted to Him.
- To love Jesus is to cherish Him, to value Him, to honor Him, and to count Him dear and precious.
- To love Jesus is to long to sit with Him and be with Him, to with Him and walk with Him.
- To love Jesus is to be in relationship that goes both ways. Mutual affection, mutual love. It's loving Him and being loved by Him.
- To love Jesus is to proudly say, "He is *my* Savior and He is *my* Lord."

Paraphrasing John from the opening of his letter, he said, *"The Creator of the universe has appeared. I've seen Him, I've heard Him, and even touched Him. I'm an eyewitness and I proclaim to you that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. In a human body, He died on a cross for our sins. But then, miraculously, He came back to life. And through Him, we can have eternal life."*

John was saying, "I love Jesus because of how much He loved me, and I would do anything He asked!"

"YOU WILL KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS"

"If you love Me," Jesus said, "you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15, NAS). And sixty years later, John repeated it to a new generation. "We know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments" (1 John 2:3, ESV).[6]

Obedience is a constant theme throughout the Bible.[7]

When Joshua became the leader of the Hebrews, the Lord told him to "meditate on (the word) day and night" and "be careful to do everything that is written in it" (Joshua 1:8, NIV).

When the prophet Samuel knew something was missing in the heart of God's people he confronted them. "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" (1 Samuel 15:22, NIV). God is much more pleased when we obey Him than when we go through the motions of religious routine.

At the end of his life, King Solomon came to a great conclusion. "After all I have experienced, after all I have observed in life, after all the wealth and wisdom I have acquired … the conclusion is this – fear God and keep His commandments" (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

Time and again in Israel's history, the Lord promised to bless them if they obeyed Him. Yet the Lord said, "When I brought your forefathers out of Egypt and spoke to them, I did not just give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices, but I gave them this command – Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in all the ways I command you, that it may go well with you. But they did not listen or pay attention; instead, they followed the stubborn inclinations of their evil hearts. They went backward and not forward" (Jeremiah 7:22-24, NIV). Every painful turn in Israel's history was due to their disobedience.

I love the heart of the person who wrote Psalm 119. I love his desire to obey God. "I will thank you by living as I should! … I have devoted myself to your commandments … I will spend my life obeying your commandments … I will hurry, without delay, to obey your commands" (Psalm 119:7, 45, 56, 60, NLT). I want a heart like that, don't you?

The proof that we truly believe and truly love Jesus is how quickly and cheerfully and fully we obey.

And if we love Him, we will not dread His commands. That's what John was talking about when he said, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3, ESV).[8] If you look at His commandments as a burden, then you don't really understand His love for you, and you're not filled with love for Him. God's commands are not a burden to be dreaded, but a delight to be obeyed.[9] David said, "I delight to do your will, O my God" (Psalm 40:8, ESV). We take delight in obeying God because we trust Him and because we believe His way is the best way.

Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15, NAS). And John repeated it. "We know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments" (1 John 2:3, ESV).

"DOERS OF THE WORD"

We hate to admit it, but it's true. There's a gap. There's a gap between what we know and how we live. We can read the Bible every day and still have an unhealthy marriage, unhealthy relationships, have hidden addiction or hidden sin, lack kindness and humility, and lack brokenness for lost people. Knowledge does not guarantee spiritual maturity.

James confronted that gap when he said, "***Be doers of the word***, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. A hearer of the word and not a doer is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror, and walks away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the one who looks intently into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not being a hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in what he does" (James 1:22-25).

Jesus described many in His day as "hypocrites … people honor me with their lips, but whose hearts are far from me" (Mark 7:6, NLT). Paul said the same thing, "(Many) claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him" (Titus 1:16, NIV). That's why we must wrestle with the question, ***Does the life I live reflect the faith I profess?***

When James said, "Be doers of the word," he was echoing what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount. "A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit … Just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions. Not everyone who calls out to me, 'Lord! Lord!' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. On judgment day many will say to me, 'Lord! Lord!' … But I will reply, 'I never knew you'" (Matthew 7:17-18, 20-23, NLT). And then Jesus said this, "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46, NAS).

To say we believe in Jesus, to sing songs about Jesus, to be proud of being students of the word, and not obey Him … is absurd!

James illustrated that absurdity, when he said, "A hearer of the word and not a doer is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror, and walks away and immediately forgets what he looks like" (James 1:23-24). One commentator said, "James is not describing a man with a poor memory, but rather a man with poor priorities."[10] James is saying that it is unthinkable for a person to read the word of God and walk away unmoved and unchanged.

James moved from the negative to the positive, when he said, "But the one who looks intently into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not being a hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be ***blessed in what he does***" (James 1:25). The phrase "looks intently" means to stoop down to inspect. That's the difference between "hearers" and "doers." Those who obey God's word not only hear it, they linger over it, they absorb it, it becomes a part of who they are, it changes them, and it results in obedience.

CONCLUSION

Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15, NAS). And John repeated it. "We know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments" (1 John 2:3, ESV).

If we truly believe and truly love Him, we will obey Him and do whatever He asks.

Obey what? Everything! Everything in His word and anything He asks!

- Obey what? Jesus explained what following Him looked like in the Sermon on the Mount, when He said, "If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn the other cheek" (Matthew 5:39, ESV). When Jesus said, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44, NAS). When Jesus said, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven … For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-21, ESV). Obey what? When Jesus said, "Do not be anxious about your life," and instead, "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:25, 6:33, ESV). Obey what? When Jesus said in the Golden Rule, "Treat people the same way you want them to treat you" (Matthew 7:12, NAS).

- Obey what? When Romans says, "Detest what is evil, and cling to what is good" (Romans 12:9, NAS). When Romans says, "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love" (Romans 12:10, NAS).

- Obey what? When the Galatians says, "Walk by the Spirit" and "be filled with the Spirit" (Galatians 5:16, 18, NAS).

- Obey what? When Ephesians says, "Walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love" (Ephesians 4:1-2, NAS). And when Ephesians says, "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ has forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:32, NAS).

- Obey what? When Philippians says, "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves, do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others" (Philippians 2:3-4, NAS).

- Obey what? When Colossians says, "Put aside anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech … and do not lie to one another" (Colossians 3:8-9, NAS). When Colossians says, "Set your minds on things above, and not on earthly things" (Colossians 3:2, NIV). And when Colossians says, "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you" (Colossians 3:16, NAS).

- Obey what? When James says, "Be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger" (James 1:19, NAS). When Peter says, "The one who called you is holy, so you be holy in all your conduct" (1 Peter 1:15-16, ESV). When Paul says,

"Pray without ceasing" and "in everything give thanks" (1 Thessalonians 5:17, 18, NAS).

- Obey what? What the book of Hebrews says. "Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near" (Hebrews 10:24-25, NAS).
- Obey what? As John said, "Whoever says he abides in him" – whoever claims to be a Christian – "ought to walk in the same way in which he walked" (1 John 2:6, ESV).

Obey what? Everything in His word and anything He asks. Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15, NAS). And John repeated it. "We know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments" (1 John 2:3, ESV). ***If we truly believe and truly love Him, we will obey Him and do whatever He asks***.

NOTES

[1] YouTube link – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SwTBzn65Jhw.
[2] David Jackman writes, "For truly to know God is to love him. And truly to love him is to obey him" (page 49). [David Jackman, *The Message of John's Letters*, The Bible Speaks Today, (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1989), page 49].
[3] Recorded in John 13-16.
[4] See also John 14:21, 14:23, 15:10.
[5] One point John made was that obedience is proof of our salvation. Some 25 times John used the word "know," to refer to assurance and certainty of one's salvation.
[6] With John, the word "keep" is synonymous with "obey."
[7] The theme of love and obedience is repeated throughout the book of Deuteronomy.
[8] The Greek word for "burdensome" is βαρεῖαι (*bapeiai*), and means troublesome, difficult, dreaded, heavy, oppressive, demanding. John was echoing Matthew 11:30, when Jesus said, "My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:30, NAS). Jesus was contrasting His commands to heavy burdens of Jewish tradition.
[9] See Psalm 40:8. The ESV reads, "I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart" (Psalm 40:8, ESV). The NLT reads, "I take joy in doing your will, my God, for your instructions are written on my heart" (Psalm 40:8, NLT).
[10] Steven Cole, "Doers of the Word, James 1:22-27," Bible.org.