

“How do we know that we know?”

1 John 2:3-6

INTRO:

Several years ago, my wife introduced me to a children’s book entitled the Velveteen Rabbit. The book is about a stuffed rabbit who becomes real. The Apostle John is writing his little epistle to talk to us about the importance of being a real authentic Christian. If we are going to be real we must first know that we know Him. How can be sure that we really know the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord in our lives? One way we can know that we know Him is the subject of John’s paragraph in **2:3-6**.

There is one major point that John wants us to understand. Our assurance of our salvation is bound up in our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ’s commands. *(1 John 2:3)*

“Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.”

Our meditation will have two parts.

I. We Can Know Because (v.3-5)

II. The Summary (v.6)

I. We Can Know Because (v.3-5)

A. John has just told us that his purpose in telling us about how easily we who belong to God can have practical cleansing from sin was not to encourage us to sin, but to keep us from sin itself.

He does not mince words. He underlines that sin is a very serious business. The reason that the Father can and does forgive our sin is because Jesus Himself is our advocate and He is also the one who satisfied God’s righteous wrath against sin and paid the debt that our sin incurred. ***“The wages of sin is death. . .” Romans 6:23***. The Lord Jesus died in our place for our sin.

B. This truth should change our attitude toward the things that the Lord Jesus Christ commanded us. We should want to keep His commands. Indeed, John records for us in his Gospel a statement that Jesus made in the upper room while alone with His disciples. He said, ***“If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15)***.

1. A part of our loving our Lord is loving what He loves, He loves to always obey the Father. Therefore, we should desire to love obeying the Father and Him also.

2. The visible evidence of our love is that we want to obey the Lord Jesus Christ. This does not mean that we will always succeed in obeying Him. John made this clear in putting this truth on the doorstep of his discussion of forgiveness of our sins. But we

should desire to obey Him more and more the longer we walk with Him and the more that we grow in Him.

C. John, as is often his custom, negates the opposite possibility in **vs. 4**.

“He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”

This is a categorical statement. John really leaves us no wiggle room. If we say that we know the Lord Jesus and have no concern about obeying Him, we are liars. We are either hypocrites or we are severely self-deceived.

To John, knowing God is not just intellectual or theoretical, it is real and practical. Most of all, knowing Christ effects how we live. Our lives are a continual walk with the One who loved us and died to save us. Anything less is either falsehood or our settling for mediocrity in our spiritual lives.

D. In **vs. 5**, the Apostle John turns the coin over and shows us both the perfect example and why those who know Him and obey Him have assurance.

“But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.”

This person keeps the words of our Lord because the love of God is completed in him or her.

1. John draws a contrast with the bad example the first guy in **vs. 4** is a liar. In **vs. 5**, the person truly has a relationship and fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The crucial point is that in this person the love of God is completed. This phrase appears again and again in **1 John** and we must understand it. Remember God’s love when He saves us is one-sided. Remember **1 John 4:10**?

“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

The arrow showing love is from God to us, not from us to God. However, when we grow up into Him we find another arrow has been added in our experience. We love God (an arrow from us to God) and thus the circle is completed. God’s love poured out on us is returned to Him. The evidence of that working of God in our heart is our increasing desire to obey and serve Him.

E. So, we keep His commandments because we believe in Him and He has changed us from not caring about what He wanted or said, to wanting more than anything else to please Him because we love Him. This is a process, but we need to see progress as we grow in Him.

II. The Summary (v.6)

A. John concludes by giving us a picture of how this should look in our lives. (**1 John 2:5b-6**)

“By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.”

B. John’s point in presenting this digital photo of someone who is genuine in his profession and faith is to show us that if we know Christ as Savior it must make a difference in our lives. There is an often overlooked verse in Hebrews that sums this truth up well.

Hebrews 12:14 *“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.”*

The writer of Hebrews point is quite clear. We cannot get to heaven by simply knowing truth. We have to have the Lord Jesus as an important part of our lives and that will change how we live.

There’s a song we used to sing as teens that says:

***In the stars His handiwork I see
On the wind He speaks with majesty
Tho' He ruleth over land and sea
What is that to me
I will celebrate nativity
For it has a place in history
Sure He came to set His people free
What is that to me***

Chorus

***'Til by faith I met Him face to face
And I felt the wonder of His grace
Then I knew that He was more
Than just a God who didn't care
That lived away out there
And now He walks beside me day by day
Ever watching o'er me lest I stray
Helping me to find that narrow way
He's ev'rything to me***