



1 John

An Exegetical Series

**1 John 2:1-11: Sin, Forgiveness, and
Christian Authenticity**



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**1 John 2:3-6: God's Love and Christian
Authenticity**

Last Week Summary

1 John 2:1-2

- ▶ The sufficiency of God's grace through Christ is more than we could ever hope for—it is an everlasting, eternal hope by which Jesus advocates for all believers in the world in the same way: Through his atonement and intercessory ministry as the Righteous One, who's righteousness is mine through the confession of sin whereby I am cleansed and made a child of God!
- ▶ Have confidence, even when you sin, because all bases are covered with a unfading, eternal love in Christ!

Fellowship With God as the Goal

John's Message Ultimately Points to Fellowship with God

- ▶ Remember, all aspects of what the Apostles brings before the reader is meant to push us toward joyful fellowship with the God who *is* and *was*
- ▶ Up to this point, the Apostle is concerned with knowing God through his self-revelation in Christ who shows us God and shows us who we are without God (light & darkness)
- ▶ Now, John will press this same point further through knowing God evidenced by obedience

Psalm 119:1-8

1 John 2:3-6 Through the Eyes of the Psalmist

“How happy are those whose way is blameless, who walk according to the Lord’s instruction! Happy are those who keep his decrees and seek him with all their heart. They do nothing wrong; they walk in his ways. You have commanded that your precepts be diligently kept. If only my ways were committed to keeping your statutes! Then I would not be ashamed when I think about all your commands. I will praise you with an upright heart when I learn your righteous judgments. I will keep your statutes; never abandon me.”

1 John 2:3-6

Knowing & Obedience As a Test of Authenticity

- ▶ “Knowing God” means...
 - You are in covenant with God by responding to the truth of Christ by profession of faith and have received the forgiveness of sin whereby Christ becomes your advocate, righteousness, and atonement
- ▶ Likewise...*not* knowing God means
 - None of the above!

The Command of God

Knowing & Obedience As a Test of Authenticity (1 John 2:3-4)

- ▶ Knowing God = Covenantally knowing God
- ▶ Keeping His Word = Obedience to God's commands, truth & Word
 - These are three distinct things which are not necessarily interchangeable but closely related!
 - As people who claim to “know” God, we cannot pick and choose what commands, truths, or parts of the “Word” to follow — we are called to obey them all — not doing so make us a liar, devoid of truth in us!

The Theme of Love

Love as God Loves (1 John 2:5-6)

- ▶ Knowing God and Keeping His Word has a goal:
 - Transformation which **culminates in love (John 15:13)**
 - Perfected (v 5) = Reached its fulfillment!
 - That is, God's perfect love must be lived out in the life of the believer! The goal of God's love for believers reaches its fulfillment through the way believers treat other people (**John 13:33-35**)
 - In context, Greek philosophy is nothing like this!

Socrates: Know Yourself

Socrates Famously said:

- ▶ “The unexamined life is not worth living...”
 - Socrates believed people often do wrong because they do not truly know what is good. Therefore, through questioning, self-examination, and reflection, a person could move toward wisdom and virtue.
 - The goal is *knowledge of oneself* which would result *virtuous living*.

Problem: How can sinful people accurately examine themselves if they are already deceived about themselves?

Plato: Know Ultimate Reality

For Plato...

- ▶ The visible world was not the highest reality.
 - In the famous *Allegory of the Cave*, people are chained facing shadows on a wall. Philosophy frees a person from illusion and enables him to behold ultimate reality—the Forms, especially the Form of the Good.
 - The goal is knowledge of *ultimate truth*. The result is *liberation from ignorance*.

Problem: Even if one sees "the good," what gives him the power to live according to it?

Aristotle: Know Causes

For Aristotle, knowledge begins with the senses.

- ▶ We observe the world, investigate causes, and understand how things function. Through reason and habituated virtue, a person develops wisdom and achieves *eudaimonia*—human flourishing, often translated as "the good life."
- ▶ The goal is knowledge of reality through observation and reason. The result is human flourishing.

Problem: Can human reason, damaged by sin, ultimately arrive at God on its own?

The Common Greek Theme

Though they differ, all three share a common assumption:
Knowledge leads to right living.

- ◆ Socrates → Knowledge of Self → Virtue
- ◆ Plato → Knowledge of Ultimate Reality → Freedom
- ◆ Aristotle → Causes and Nature → Flourishing

The movement is always:

Knowledge → Virtue → Human Fulfillment

God's Self-Revelation as True Knowledge

1 John 2:3 and 1 John 1:1-4

Notice what John does not say:

- ◆ We know God because we have examined ourselves.
- ◆ We know God because we have contemplated ultimate reality.
- ◆ We know God because we have understood causation.

God's Self-Revelation as True Knowledge

- ▶ God has revealed himself through His Word and through His Son (1 John 1:1-4; John 1:1)
- ▶ Knowledge is personal, relational, and able to provide fellowship between the knower (us) and the thing being known (God) with the ability of fellowshiping with him!
- ▶ The goal of the knowledge is not merely virtue, human flourishing, or a vague “ultimate reality” but love from a transformation which God initiated through His Son, Jesus Christ

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The Theme of Love

“Remaining” in God Related to God’s Love (1 John 2:5-6)

- ▶ To remain is one of John’s favorite verbs
 - This concept goes back to John 15 (Vine/Branches)
 - Remaining in God implies two important dimensions:
 - ◆ Continued belief in the teaching of Christ
 - ◆ Continued action of reorienting one’s life according to the teaching of Christ given through the Apostles (1 John 1:1-4)
 - ◆ The supreme referent is in the action of love (v. 7-11)

The Theme of Love

“Remaining” in God Related to God’s Love (1 John 2:5-6)

- ▶ It also implies that the person who “remains” lives as Jesus lived or loved as Jesus loved
 - What does it mean to live as Jesus lived, ultimately?
 - Obedience to the Father (Luke 22:42)
 - Broadly, it means looking to the example of Jesus, as Jesus truly was and how the divine authors presented him (1 John 1:1-4) for in that, we can see how Jesus loved, cared, obeyed, grew, and so on!

Application Questions

- ◆ Do you know God?
- ◆ Do you desire to know God?
- ◆ Do you see God's love affecting your life through how you love others?
- ◆ Do you continue to believe in Jesus by trusting His Word, obeying His Word, and following His commands?

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