

Test of Knowing Him

1 John 2:1-11

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7/19/2026

**BIG BEND
BIBLE
FELLOWSHIP**

1 John 1:5-11 Summary: Describes the importance of the shed blood of Christ in the forgiveness of sins along with the role of confessing sins in maintaining our fellowship with God.

Lessons learned from this passage...

- It is Christ's shed blood alone that enables our sins to be forgiven.
- Mortal Christians must recognize our sin nature keeps us from fellowship with God.
- God wants us to confess our sin so that it does not become a hinderance to our relationship with Him.

1 Jn 2:1a – Purpose of Letter: *that you may not sin*

My little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin.

How should the Christian deal with their sin nature?

While Christians still have a sin nature, 1 John 1:9 makes it clear that there is always forgiveness for confessed sin.

- Yet, Christians should still be concerned about sin.
- One reason for this letter was *that you may not sin*.
- While we cannot be sinlessly perfect (1 John 1:8), we do not *have* to sin.

What is God's desire for His children?

That you may not sin: If sin is inevitable for us, it is not because God has decreed that we *must* sin.

- All the resources for spiritual victory are ours in Jesus Christ and that resource is never withdrawn.

Why is dealing with sin essential for Christians?

It is critical in order to grow in our *relationship* with God (1 John 1:3).

- God doesn't want us to break fellowship with Him.
- The weakness comes in our flesh, which is not consistently willing to rely on Jesus for victory over sin.
- God promises that one day the flesh will be perfected through resurrection.

1 John 2:1b-2 – Help for the sinner

And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the

propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

What does it mean that Jesus is our Advocate?

God's provision for us to deal with sin is that Jesus Christ is our *Advocate*, a defense lawyer on our side.

- The ancient word translated *Advocate* designates the friends of the accused who voluntarily step in personally urging the judge to decide in his favor.

What is the imagery of Jesus as our Advocate?

It is as if we stand as the accused by Satan in the heavenly court, before our righteous Judge, God the Father.

Revelation 12:10 – *the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.*

Our Advocate stands up to answer the charges: "He is completely guilty your honor. In fact, he has even done worse than what he is accused of, and now makes full and complete confession before You."

- The gavel slams, and the Judge asks, "What should his sentence be?"
- Our Advocate answers, "His sentence shall be death; he deserves the full wrath of this righteous court."

All along, our accuser Satan, is having great fun at all this. They are guilty! They admit their guilt! They see their punishment! But then, our Advocate asks to approach the bench...

- As he draws close to the Judge, he simply says: "Dad, this one belongs to Me. I paid his price. I took the wrath and punishment from this court that he deserves."

The gavel sounds again, and the Judge cries out, "Guilty as charged! Penalty satisfied!"

- Our accuser starts going crazy. "Aren't you even going to put him on probation?"
- "No!" the Judge shouts. "The penalty has been completely paid by My Son. There is nothing to put him on probation for."
- Then the Judge turns to our Advocate, and says, "Son, you said this one belongs to You. I release him into Your care. Case closed!"

How is Jesus as our Advocate different from a human defense lawyer?

A human defense lawyer argues for the innocence of his client. But our **Advocate**, Jesus Christ, admits our guilt — and then enters His plea on our behalf, as the one who has made an atoning sacrifice for our sin.

Why is Jesus Christ described as *the righteous*?

This means that Jesus is fully qualified to serve as our Advocate, because He Himself is sinlessly perfect.

- He has passed heaven's bar exam, and is qualified to represent clients in heaven's court of law.

How is Jesus Christ *the propitiation for our sins*?

This means that Jesus is the one who atones for and takes away our sins, and not only our sins, but also the sins of *the whole world*.

- *Propitiation* has the idea of presenting a gift to the gods, so as to turn away their displeasure.
- The Greeks thought of this in the sense of people bribing the gods into doing favors for them.

But in the Christian idea of propitiation, God *Himself* presents *Himself* (in Jesus Christ) as that which will turn away His righteous wrath against our sin.

- Christ Himself was our sin-offering, reconciled God and us by His voluntary death as a sacrifice thus averting God's wrath from us.

For whom did Jesus make propitiation for sins?

The whole world: While Jesus made His propitiation for *the whole world*, the whole world is not saved and in fellowship with God.

- This is because *atonement* does not equal *forgiveness*. The Old Testament Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:34) demonstrates this, when the sin of all Israel was atoned for every year, yet not all of Israel was saved.

Why isn't everyone saved if Jesus made provision for everyone's sins to be forgiven?

Because of our free will.

Matthew 7:13 – *Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.*

Trusting in Jesus' provision for forgiveness of sins is the only way of salvation. People are free to choose other ways but they all lead to destruction.

- The test is in believing God and accepting His way.

Why is it important to know that Jesus made provision for the whole world?

So that it should not be possible to be deceived into thinking that the Lord died for Peter and Paul, but not for me.

1 John 2:3-6 – The fruit of fellowship.

Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. 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.

How do we know that we have fellowship with God?

The evidence of someone knowing God, and has fellowship with Him is that he keeps *His commandments*.

- A simple, loving obedience is a natural result of fellowship with God.

What does it say about a Christian who do not keep God's commandments?

They are *a liar, and the truth is not in him*. This is so certain that if one does not live a life marked by obedience, his claim to fellowship with God can be fairly challenged.

What is the distinction between knowing Christ and knowing about Him?

Knowing Him implies having a relationship with Him.

- Knowing about someone requires no relationship.

How is the *love of God* perfected in us?

When we are obedient to Him, this reveals our love for Him. The idea of being perfected reflects the idea of being mature.

- The presence of obedience and love gives us assurance that we are in Jesus (*by this we know we are in Him*).

When someone becomes a Christian, what is the change in their relationship with sin?

Sin is not eliminated in believers until they come to glory, but their relationship to sin is changed...

a Christian no longer:

- loves sin as he once did.
- brags about his sin as he once did.
- plans to sin as he once did.
- fondly remembers his sin as he once did.
- is comfortable in habitual sin as he once was.

What does it mean to abide in Christ?

It means to *walk just as He walked*. When we are abiding in Jesus, we will live lives of obedience and love.

- We aren't called to imitate the way Jesus walked on water, but His every-day walk with God the Father.
- The spiritual power evident in the life of Jesus flowed from a faithful, regular, disciplined life of fellowship and obedience.

1 John 2:7-11 – The absolute imperative of love.

Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining. He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

Is John introducing any new concepts here?

No... *I write no new commandment to you...* The commandment John wrote of was at the same time both **old** (in the sense that it was preached to the brethren their whole Christian lives) and **new** (in the sense that it was called the *new commandment* by Jesus in John 13:34).

How was the Lord's commandment to love new?

John 13:34 – *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.*

Jesus *displayed* a kind of love never seen before, a love we were to imitate...

- *Wide* enough to include every human being.
- *Long* enough to last through all eternity.
- *Deep* enough to reach the most guilty sinner.
- *High* enough to take us to heaven.

This is a new love, a love the world had never really seen before the work of Jesus on the cross.

Why was this new love of Jesus necessary?

Because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining: The new commandment of love is necessary because of the darkness that marked humanity.

- This was before the **true light** illuminated the finished work of Jesus.

What does hating fellow Christians reveal?

That they are still *in darkness*. Previously in this chapter, John examined us according to the moral measure of our walk with God.

- Later he will examine us according to doctrine as a measure of our walk with God.
- Here he examines us *according to our love for other Christians* as a measure of our walk with God.

Why is loving God's people important?

Just as our relationship to sin and our obedience is a measure of our fellowship with God, so also is our love for God's people.

- If we say that we are *in the light* yet hate our brother, then our claim to fellowship with the God who is light is hollow (1 John 1:5).
- But the one who *does* love his brother shows that he *abides in the light* and is not stumbling.

What excuses to Christians have for breaking fellowship?

- Thinking: "Following Jesus would be easy if it weren't for all the Christians."
 - Many Christians live as the walking wounded, crippled by the scars other Christians have inflicted on them.
- However, if we can't love each other, then we have no way to claim a real love for God. Our relationship with God can be measured by our love for other Christians.

What is the mercy in God measuring us by our fellowship with other Christians?

God is merciful in requiring this because we are measured by how we love other Christians, not those who are not Christians.

What is the challenge in God measuring us by our fellowship with other Christians?

God gives us a particularly difficult measure, because we often — perhaps rightly — expect much more from our Christian friends and associates than unbelievers.

What characterizes Christians who break fellowship with other believers?

But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness: If we lose love then we lose everything. You can do all the right things, believe all the right truths, but if you do not love other Christians, then all is lost.

- The three tests — moral, doctrinal, and love — all stand together, like the legs on a three-legged stool.
- It is all too easy for people to place "ministry" or "being right" above love in the body of Christ. We *must* do ministry, and we *must* be right, but we *must* do it all in love.

What are those doing who hate fellow Christians?

They are walking in darkness, blinded, unable to see.

- hatred can also be expressed by indifference
- true love will demonstrate itself.

What applications do we see from this discussion?

- Jesus is our Advocate with the Father
- Loving the brethren is essential