

Module 4: 1 John 2:3-6

- 1) Read 1 John 2:3-17 for context.
 - a) What words do you see repeated often in this section?
 - b) What titles do you suggest for the paragraphs starting in verses 3, 7, 12, and 15?

- 2) Today's focus is verses 3-6.
 - a) "And" at the beginning of verse 3.
 - i) This is in the Greek, but not in the NASB (in some editions), NIV, or Message. It is in the NASB (in other editions), KJV, NKJV (Now), ESV, and ASV.
 - ii) There is a connection with the previous thoughts: 1) God is light; 2) three erroneous ideas about sin; 3) the incompatibility of fellowship with God when there is sin.
 - iii) In contrast to these false claims, we can positively know that we have fellowship with God by the following verses which give us signs (or tests) of true fellowship with God.
 - b) "By this we know that . . ." (NASB) v. 3 and 5.
 - i) Do these refer to one set of tests or two different tests? (This is an interpretation question.)
 - ii) We will study these verses more in depth and then return to this question.
 - c) "We know that we have come to know him" v. 3
 - i) *Ginosko* – personal knowledge gained through observation, experience, and instruction.
 - ii) We know (present tense)
 - iii) We have come to know (perfect tense)
 - iv) The double use of the verb means we have assured knowledge!
 - v) We know, on-going, that we have entered into an abiding knowledge of Him, which lasts and lasts. In other words, we can have assurance of our salvation!
 - d) How can we know we are saved, that is, have a relationship with God?
 - i) We obey His commandments (v. 3b)
 - ii) "The verb [keep] denotes a watchful and sympathetic concern to obey that which has been commanded." This person "finds within himself a growing love for and desire to obey His commands." "Such a keeping of God's command is not legalism but a voluntary internalization of His commands as a pattern for practical conduct." (Hiebert)
 - iii) "There is only one way of proving to ourselves that we know God, and that is by loving obedience to His will." (Plummer)
 - iv) This is contrary to the teaching of the Gnostics, who separated knowledge of God from righteous living.
 - e) The characteristic of one who does not walk the talk (v. 4)
 - i) He says the right thing, but he does not consistently do the right thing.
 - ii) "saying" and "keeping" – both present tense participles. Consistently saying and consistently not keeping is the characteristic of this person.
 - iii) This person is a "liar"

- iv) The “truth” is not in this person. The “truth” is larger than the set of His “commandments”. By consistently not keeping His commandments, this person shows that the larger body of God’s truth has not gained a hold inside him.
- f) The contrasting characteristic of one who walks in obedience (v. 5a)
 - i) He “keeps His word”.
 - ii) “In him the love of God has truly been perfected”
 - (1) The “love of God”
 - (a) Is this love “for” God? (Plummer, Stott)
 - (b) Is this love “from” God? (Hiebert)
 - (c) Is this love “like” God’s love, that is, with a divine quality?
 - (d) This is another interpretation decision.
 - (e) I take it to be love “from” God.
 - (2) “has truly been perfected”
 - (a) If love “for” God, then “perfected” may mean loyal love that shows itself in obedience.
 - (b) If love “from” God, then “perfected” may mean that God’s love has attained its intended purpose of fellowship in the believer’s life that is characterized by vitality.
- g) “By this we know that we are in Him” (v 5b)
 - i) What is “this” to which verse 5b refers? Is it before or after this phrase?
 - (1) KJV – before
 - (2) Message, NKJV – not indicated textually, since it is shown as a separate sentence.
 - (3) NIV, NASB, ESV, ASV – after
 - (4) The “this” is referring to verse 6.
 - ii) “in Him” – we can know that we have an intimate union with Him.
 - iii) Compare and contrast v. 3 and 5b.
 - (1) V. 3, we have come to know Him – enter into relationship
 - (2) V. 5b, we are in Him – ongoing relationship
- h) How can we know we are in Him?
 - i) We talk of “abiding” (dwelling, being) in Him
 - ii) We behave as Jesus behaved
- i) Are there one or two tests John gives the professing Christian? (Revisiting this interpretation question first posed above)
 - i) If one test,
 - (1) Is walking as Christ walked a “specific example” of keeping God’s commandments?
 - (2) Is walking as Christ walked a “summary” of keeping God’s commandments?
 - ii) If two tests, is the first the “test of obedience” and the second the “test of imitation”?
 - iii) I believe verses 5b-6 describe a second test.
- j) Review verses 3-6. What is your summary interpretation?
- k) What are some applications of these verses?
 - i) We can have assurance of our justification (entering into salvation).

- ii) We can have assurance of our sanctification (continual fellowship with God and appropriation of His forgiveness and cleansing as God's light reveals more sinful areas for us to forsake).
- 3) Handout for next week
- a) Reread verses 3-17 for context.
 - b) Thank God for what you learned from verses 3-6.
 - c) Focus on verses 7-11.
 - d) What do you think are the old and new commandments?
 - e) Find examples of love and hate in the Bible.
 - f) What do you think is the one main point of these verses? Make sure to base this interpretation on what you observe in the text. Remember, observation, then interpretation, then application.