

HOW CAN WE KNOW?

1 John 2:3-6

One of MY favorite stories:

(from Robert Mager)

Once upon a time in the land of Fuzz, King Aling called in his cousin Ding & commanded, "Go ye out into all of Fuzzland & find me the goodest of men, whom I shall reward for his goodness."

"But how will I know one when I see one?" asked the Fuzzy.

"Why," he will be *sincere*," scoffed the king, and whacked off a leg for his impertinence.

So, the Fuzzy limped out to find a good man.

But soon he returned, confused and empty-handed.

"But how will I know one when I see one?" he asked again.

"Why, he will be *dedicated*," grumbled the king, and whacked off another leg for his impertinence.

So the Fuzzy hobbled away again to look for the goodest of men.

But again he returned, confused and empty-handed.

"But how will I know one when I see one?" he pleaded.

"Why, he will have *internalized his growing awareness*," fumed the king, and whacked off another leg for his impertinence.

So the Fuzzy, now on his last leg, hopped out to continue his search.

In time, he returned with the wisest, most sincere and dedicated Fuzzy in all of Fuzzland, and stood him before the king.

"Why this man won't do at all," roared the king. "He is much too thin to suit me." Whereupon, he whacked off the last leg of the Fuzzy, who fell to the floor with a squishy thump.

The moral of this fable is that . . . if you can't tell one when you see one, you may wind up without a leg to stand on.

How do we "know one when we see him?"

What does a person who is in fellowship with God LOOK like?

Twice in this passage John tells us: "By this you will know"

Here's how you know a person in fellowship with God when you see one.

John has observed many professing believers who claim to know God but whose lives don't give evidence of what they profess.

He seems to believe most are truly saved but not enjoying fellowship.

He has written to such people in order that we might enjoy fellowship with God.

The letter describes how we can enjoy life more, as we fellowship with God and with one another.

TWO MAIN PURPOSES

1. That we might enjoy true fellowship 1:3
 —with other Christians
 —with God Himself

2. That we might have complete JOY 1:4

JOHN'S MESSAGE:

If two people want to go somewhere together we must be heading the same direction!

To have fellowship with one another, people must be going the same way!

To enjoy fellowship with God, we must be like Him!

1:5-7 God is *HOLY*

=> to enjoy fellowship with God, WE must be *HOLY*

God's Holiness 1:5-3:10**Description of God 1:5 "God is light" (Holy)****Implications for believers 1:6-3:10****We must walk in holiness 1:6-7**

[After initial summary, John turns the diamond to show us how our problem with sin affects that fellowship, and what God has done to resolve the problem.]

Provision for our restoration 1:8-2:2*ALL people sin*, even children of God (pres.) 1:8

God has provided means of restoration through Christ 1:9

All people have sinned 1:10

Purpose for us 2:1a

God's provision for our sin today—as His people 1b-2

[John turns diamond again...]

*How can we KNOW we're in fellowship with God?***Evidence of fellowship with Him 2:3-27**

4 evidences:

#1—People walking in the light obey God's commands 2:3-6**How do we *know* that we know Him? 3**Question deals with *knowing* Him.This is a *salvation* question.

How do we know we're saved?

The question isn't about how we *come to know* Him?It asks for evidence that we *have already* known Him.**When we're keeping His commands, we know!**

John's use of tenses is careful and deliberate.

Present tense with indicative mood (statement of fact),

–an ongoing, continuing process

Even more careful use is made of substantive pres. participle

–looks at **characteristic** of the person described.

- * 2:3 “we know that we have known Him... if (when) we are keeping [pres. cont.] His commands”
- * 2:4 “the person who characteristically goes around saying, ‘I have known Him’ and who is characterized by not keeping His commands is a liar, and the truth is not in Him.”
- * 2:5 “Whoever is keeping [pres. cont.] His Word, God’s love has been made complete in Him.”
- * 2:6 “The person who characteristically goes around saying he abides in Him, had better be sure he walks like He did.”

John argues consistently that:

People who are characterized by righteousness have been born of God.

People who are characterized by sinful deeds have *not* been born of God.

John states clearly that *ALL people sin*, even children of God 1:8

But while we’re sinning, we can’t enjoy fellowship with God 1:6

However, God has provided a means of restoration through Christ 1:9

It’s *impossible* to continue to practice sin, & to continue in fellowship with God at the same time. 2:3-6, 9, 15

When we’re keeping His commands, we know that we have known him

All of us have had times in our life when we've wondered whether we were really saved.

When did you experience those doubts?

We never doubt our salvation when we're walking in the light –when we know our life is pleasing God!

The doubts always come when we know we're NOT obeying His commands.

Then Satan loves to club us!

When we're keeping His commands, we *know* that we know Him!

Lifestyle characteristics which indicate that we don't know Him 4

(Contradictory lifestyle characteristics)

2:4 *"The person who characteristically goes around saying, 'I have known Him' & who is characterized by not keeping His commands is a liar, & the truth is not in Him."*

Saying we know Him + Not keeping His commands
=> Liar

People who are always claiming to know Christ, but who don't obey His Word, are lying.

God's love *has been* perfected in people who keep His commands. 5

2:5 *"Whoever is keeping [pres. cont.] His Word, God's love has been made complete in Him."*

We keep His commands *because* His love has been perfected in us.

Obedience doesn't produce God's love.

God's love produces obedience!

Loving Him is the motivator of obedience

How do we know that we are *abiding* in Him (= fellowship)? 6

2:6 "*The person who characteristically goes around saying he abides in Him, had better be sure he walks like He did.*"

Lifestyle characteristics which demonstrate that we abide in Him:

(Consistent lifestyle characteristics: (5b))

If we say we abide in Him, we ought to walk as HE walked!

Unless we are walking as He walked, we have no basis to claim we are abiding in Him!

People who claim to abide in Christ, ought to live as Jesus did!

The key phrase is "abide in Him."

**When we abide in Him (as a branch abides in a vine-
-Jn 15), we draw from Him what we need to sustain our life.**

When we're drawing our sustenance from Him, we will produce His fruit!

If we're not exhibiting Christlike character, we're not abiding in Him!

HOW SHOULD AWARENESS OF THIS CONCEPT AFFECT OUR LIVES?

2 COMMON MISTAKES

Mistake #1 Don't confuse the gospel by trying to add works to become saved.

We don't obey Christ's commands in order to earn our salvation
Mistake #2 Don't confuse the fruit of fellowship with its cause.

We don't obey Christ's commands in order to obtain fellowship with God.

ESSENCE OF GODLY LIVING

Abiding in Christ produces godly living.

Abiding in Him produces obedience.

His love perfected in us motivates us to live by His Word.

Abiding in Him causes us to walk as He walked.

If we try to live a godly life in our own strength—by our efforts—we ALWAYS come up short!

Godly living is the result of ABIDING IN CHRIST.

We draw from Him what sustains our life.

He produces godliness in us.

Trying to “do it ourselves” *always* leads to guilt and frustration.

If we want to *enjoy* fellowship with God, it always begins with abiding in Him.