
Inductive Bible Study of 1 John 2:3-14

John now answers an important question: How can we know that we truly know God? He does not point to a label or a claim by itself. A growing pattern of obedience, walking as Jesus walked, and loving other believers gives visible evidence that His truth is at work in us. John then reminds believers of what is already true because of Jesus.

Step 1 – Observation: *What does the passage say?*

Read 1 John 2:3-14 slowly at least three times, using more than one translation if possible. On the first reading, follow John's flow of thought. On the second, mark repeated words and contrasts. On the third, notice the claims John examines and the assurances he gives.

Observation Prompts

- What words or phrases are repeated?
- What claims begin with “whoever says”?
- What contrasts do you notice?
- What does John connect with knowing God?
- What does John say about love and hatred?
- Who is John speaking to in verses 12–14?

Read the Passage and Record What You See

1. According to verses 3-5, what gives us confidence that we know God?

2. List the three statements that begin with ‘whoever says’ in verses 4, 6, and 9. What follows each claim?

3. What words and ideas repeat in verses 3-6? What progression do you notice?

4. How does John describe the commandment in verses 7-8? List everything he says about it.

5. How does John describe the person who loves a brother or sister and the person who hates one?

6. Which three groups does John address in verses 12-14? Record every reason he gives for writing to each group.

7. What words, phrases, or truths repeat in verses 12-14? What differences do you notice?

8. Which word, phrase, or sentence is surprising or difficult to understand?

Step 2 – Interpretation: *What does the passage mean?*

John is describing evidence of knowing God, not a way of earning salvation. He has just said that believers still sin, confess their sin, and depend on Jesus as their Advocate. Here he focuses on the direction of a life that is being shaped by Christ.

Obedience and love do not make us God's children. They show that His truth and love are at work in us. John tests spiritual claims by asking whether a person's walk agrees with the words that person speaks.

Questions to Explore

1. What does John mean by knowing God? How is knowing God different from only knowing facts about Him?

2. Read 1:8-2:2 again. Does keeping God's commandments mean sinless perfection? How does the context shape your answer?

3. How are keeping God's word and God's love being perfected in us connected in verse 5?

4. What does it mean to abide in Jesus and to walk in the same way He walked?

5. How can the command to love be both old and new? Compare verses 7-8 with John 13:34-35.

6. Why does hatred belong to darkness? How can hatred blind a person or cause someone to stumble?

7. Why might John address children, fathers, and young men separately? What assurance does he give to each group?

8. How are being strong, having God's Word abide in us, and overcoming the evil one connected?

Word Study Suggestions

- **Know:** Greek ginosko - to know personally, recognize, or understand through relationship and experience.
- **Keep:** Greek tereo - to guard, observe, hold firmly, or pay careful attention to.
- **Abide:** Greek meno - to remain, continue, stay, or dwell.
- **Walk:** Greek peripateo - to walk or conduct one's life; an ongoing way of living.
- **Commandment:** Greek entole - an authoritative command, order, or instruction.
- **Love:** Greek agapao - to love, value, and seek another person's good.

Step 3 – Application: *How should I respond?*

John calls us to look beyond the label Christian and examine the direction of our lives. Knowing Jesus should increasingly shape the way we obey, walk, and treat other believers.

This kind of examination is not meant to leave us fearful or condemned. John reminds us that our sins are forgiven, we know the Father, God's Word abides in us, and through Christ we have overcome the evil one.

Personal Reflection

1. Is there any area where you are relying on the label Christian while resisting something Jesus has told you to do?

2. What command of Jesus do you already understand but need to obey more faithfully?

3. What would walking as Jesus walked look like in one situation you are facing right now?

4. Is there a believer toward whom you are holding bitterness, hatred, or unforgiveness? What step of love should you take?

5. Which truth in verses 12-14 do you most need to remember this week? How can you let God's Word abide more deeply in you?

Summary Truths

- Knowing God becomes visible through a growing pattern of obedience and love.
- Our obedience does not earn salvation; it gives evidence that God's truth is at work in us.
- A claim to abide in Jesus should be matched by a life that is learning to walk as He walked.
- The command to love is old because believers have heard it from the beginning and new because it is true in Jesus and His people as the true light shines.
- Love belongs to the light, while hatred blinds us and keeps us in darkness.
- Believers can live from assurance: we are forgiven, we know God, His Word abides in us, and we have overcome the evil one through Christ.

Optional Memory Verse

"Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked." **1 John 2:6**
ESV

Prayer Prompt

"Father, thank You that through Jesus my sins are forgiven and I can truly know You. Help my life to agree with what I say I believe. Teach me to obey Your Word, remain close to Jesus, and walk as He walked. Bring any bitterness or hatred into the light, and help me love others as Jesus has loved me. Let Your Word abide in me and make me strong as I follow You. Amen."

For Further Study

- **John 13:34-35**
 - How does Jesus describe the new commandment, and what does love reveal to others?
- **John 14:15-24**
 - Trace the connection between loving Jesus, obeying His commands, and His presence with us.
- **John 15:1-12**
 - Mark every use of abide and notice what abiding produces in a believer's life.
- **James 1:22-25 and Ephesians 5:1-2**
 - Compare hearing and doing the Word with walking in love as Christ loved us.

Homework for next week

Read 1 John again - Circle every use of know/known, and note what John says believers can know.

Prepare for the next lesson - Read 1 John 2:15-27 and mark world, love, desires, last hour, antichrist, anointing, truth, lie, and abide.