How Do You KNOW that You KNOW HIM?

I John 2:3-11

10-7-2026

**** When you truly know Christ, your life will show it!***

2 marks of one who knows Christ
(Two subjective evidences of a saved man or woman)

I. ***If you truly know Him,***
YOU WILL <u>OBEY</u> <u>HIS WORD</u> (v.3-6)

II. ***If you are truly in the light,***
YOU WILL <u>LOVE</u> <u>YOUR BROTHER</u> (v.7-11)

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Introduction: The basic elements of God's Plan of Salvation

How does a sinner become saved?

In brief, the sinner undergoes:

1) Heart preparation:
   God's Spirit softens & opens his heart

2) Conviction:
   A deep sense of one's own sinfulness grips his heart

3) Enlightenment:
   Through hearing God's Gospel, faith is born in the heart
   (One's eyes are opened to the grace of God through Christ's substitutionary sacrifice)

4) Repentance & Belief:
   The sinner turns from his own self-effort, works, religion, goodness, and trusts the person and finished work of Jesus Christ for his/her eternal salvation and righteousness

When one truly trusts Christ and believes the Gospel, a new heart is implanted in the life of that newly-born son of God; a new nature is implanted into that person's life (this new nature is God's Holy Spirit); the individual becomes a new creation (II Cor. 5:17) who has a new faith, outlook, goals, desires, and orientation.

How does a person know he is saved?

Through two kinds of evidence:

1. Objective evidence
2. Subjective evidence

The OBJECTIVE evidence: I know I'm saved because of God's promises in His Word
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--I received Christ Jn. 1:12
--I believed on Him Jn. 3:16, 3:36, 5:24
--I came to Him Jn. 6:37
--I called upon His name Rom. 10:13

The SUBJECTIVE evidence: I know I'm saved because of God's new life He imparted into mine; He changed me.

--He transformed my character I Cor. 6:11
--I now produce a new fruit Rom. 6:17-18, 21-22
--I hear His voice (through His Word) and follow Him John 10:27

v. 3

"Hereby" - by this; let's find out what the "this" fers to that we might know that we know Him!

"Here we have the first of 25 occurrences of the verb "to know" (*ginosko)* in I John. It denotes a personal knowledge gained through observation, experience, and instruction" (Hiebert, p. 78-79).

"We do know (present tense) **that we know** (perfect tense) **Him" -** We know right now that we have come to know Him in the past.

This past coming to know Christ has continuing results; we both came to know Him and are still knowing Him, and the proof will now be given.

The pronoun "Him" refers specifically to God's Son - Jesus Christ.

Proof:

1. Jesus is the most immediate antecedent (2:2).

2. Jesus is the "he" who "walked" on this earth (v. 6)

**** When you truly know Christ, your life will show it!***

"…by their fruits ye shall know them." Matthew 7:20

2 marks of one who knows Christ
(Two subjective evidences of a saved man or woman)

I. ***If you truly know Him,***
YOU WILL OBEY HIS WORD (v.3-6)

v. 3

"If" - (third class condition) This is the condition upon which our objective assurance of salvation is based.

"Keep" - to keep in two senses:

1. To guard - the saint treasures God's Word in His heart (the devil does not steal the truth from his heart)

2. To obey - the saint submits his will to God's will and does what His master tells him to.

"Commandments" - a reference to God's "Word" (v. 5); God's requirements for obedience for the New Testament believer.

Note: The word is plural, indicating that there are more than one command we are responsible to obey.

*Commandment keeping does not save! It is an evidence that one is saved. He does not say, "We know Him if we keep His commands"; rather, "we know that we know Him . . . if."

What would God's commands include?

1. God's moral Law (contained in the 10 commandments; those repeated in the New Testament – not the Sabbath, which, according to Exodus 31:13-17 was to be exclusively observed by the nation of Israel).

2. To not be controlled by alcohol (Eph. 5:18)

3. To not commit fornication (I thes. 4:3ff)

4. To assemble with God's people (Heb. 10:24-25)

5. To witness to the lost (Mk. 16:15; Mt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8, etc.)

6. Husbands - to love your wives; Wives - to submit to your husbands; Children - to honor your parental authority.

v. 4

"He that saith" - this is a key phrase in this context (repeated in v. 6 & 9)

Many more people profess salvation that possess salvation.

It's not what you say tha proves you are a Christian, but rather what you do proves it!

"I know Him" - I have come to know Him; (akin to "I have been saved")

"Keepeth not his commandments" - Certainly cannot be teaching sinless perfection or impeccable 100% perfect obedience (none of us [in this life] will obey perfectly).

Obedience is not the perfection of our life, but it certainly is the direction of our life.

The words clearly indicate "his persistent failure to keep God's commands. The two present-tense participles under one article (ho legon. . . me teron) mark the sharp contradiction between his profession and his daily life; his invalidates his claim" (Hiebert, p. 80).

How can you profess to know Him when there is prolonged, unconfessed, unforsaken sin in your life (that you know about and yet do nothing about).

--No remorse; no guilt
--No seeking forgiveness
--no seeking restoration

"A liar" - (to speak falsehood with an intention of deceiving) you are deceiving yourself; you are deceiving others (those you profess faith to).

"The truth is not in him" - what is the truth?

1. Jesus Christ (truth incarnate; the embodiment of truth - Jn. 14:6)

2. Christ's words (truth is inscripturated; God's written word)

3. Christ's gospel (the body of truth essential for salvation; God's salvation message)

v. 5

"the love of God" - God's love for the sinner; when you truly believe the gospel, you will understand the love of God for you. Those who know God's love for them will love Him in return (I Jn. 4:19) and love for God will always result in obedience to God.

"Perfected" - brought to completion; to finally and fully experience God's love

"Hereby know we" - Knowing God's love and by this being motivated to obey Him provides the basis upon which we know that we know Him.

"In Him" - i.e. in relationship with Him; all of humanity is either "in Him" or "out of Him" (only two classes of people – cp. I Jn. 5:110.

v. 6

"Abideth in Him" - to remain in close fellowship with Christ.

The word "Abideth" marks a transition from salvation (v. 5) to sanctification (v. 6). From a once and for all relationship (v. 5) to ongoing fellowship (v. 6).

"He walked" of obedience to the will of the Father when on earth; we should likewise follow in His steps!

How can one be close to Christ and not live like Christ? It is impossible for such an inconsistency to exist.

II. *If you are truly in the light,* YOU WILL LOVE YOUR BROTHER (v.7-11)

v. 7

"Brethren" - beloved (NASV) one who is specially loved by God ought to be able to love others.

The command to **"love"** (loving God - Deut. 6:5; and loving others - Lev. 19:18) is not a new command.

(It was known for a millennium and a half - since the Law of Moses was given. And it had been reiterated by Jesus in the Gospels - Jn. 13:35, 15:12).

v. 8

The command to love is not new in its proclamation, but is new in its power. We have an ability to love because of the fullness of the light of the New Testament gospel. The ability or power to love is found only "in Him"; it is only truly realized "in Him."

This command is not chronologically new, but is "qualitatively new as experienced in Christ." (Hiebert, p. 86).

John states it is a new reality to you (**"in you"**) because now **"in Him"** you are able to fulfill it!

The old command to love gave us an "ought"; the new command to love spells for us the word "can".

When there is light there is love!

Christ's light must glow before Christ's love can flow" (VS)

You can't love biblically until you have entered his light.

v. 9

Another way to describe a believer is that he is one who has entered the light (you are either "in darkness" or "in light"; there are no grays; no in-between).

v. 10

"Loveth" - present (continual) tense.

Love continues as you continually remain in the light.

If you abide in the light (via a continual reading of God's Word and close intimacy with Christ), you will continue to love others.

"None occasion of stumbling" - You don't trip, stumble, and fall when you can clearly see where you are going.

If you find yourself tripping into sin, it is because you are not abiding in the light.

v. 11

To hate is <u>not</u> merely an attitude of <u>animosity</u> toward someone; it is an action of <u>neglect</u> toward that person (I Jn. 4:17-18).

Love for God and for others is the single most obvious evidence of one who has been born of God.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if you have love one for another."

To harbor bitterness, resentment, unforgiveness and animosity toward a child of God should cause such a one to question his relationship with God.

Conclusion:

Obedience and "love" are a recurring theme in this small epistle. These two virtues are repeated by John because they are the two key elements by which we can know that we have been born again.

Cp. Righteousness - 2:29, 3:8-9
Love - 3:14-15, 4:7

What is the difference between objective evidence and subjective evidence?

The basic difference is **whether the evidence can be independently observed or measured** versus **whether it comes from someone's personal experience or judgment**.

Objective evidence

Objective evidence is evidence that can be observed, measured, or verified independently of a person's feelings or opinions.

Examples:

- A photograph showing an event
- A laboratory blood-test result
- A thermometer reading 102°F
- A video recording
- A document with a verifiable date
- Physical evidence, such as a broken window
- Measurements taken with a measuring instrument

Key idea: Someone else can examine the evidence and potentially reach the same conclusion.

Subjective evidence

Subjective evidence is based on a person's personal experience, perception, feelings, or interpretation.

Examples:

- "I felt a sharp pain in my leg."
- "I believe I saw someone standing outside."
- "That movie was frightening."
- "The food tasted too salty."
- A witness saying, "I heard a loud crash."

Key idea: The evidence depends on the individual's experience or perception and may not be independently verifiable.

Simple comparison

Objective	Subjective
Measurable	Personally experienced
Independently verifiable	Depends on someone's perception
Can usually be tested	May be difficult to test
Example: X-ray shows a fracture	Example: "My leg hurts"
Example: temperature is 102°F	Example: "I feel feverish"

One important point: **subjective evidence isn't necessarily false or worthless.** A person's testimony or personal experience can be genuine and important; it simply has a different level and type of verification than objective evidence.

For example, if someone says **"I have a headache,"** the headache itself is a subjective experience. A doctor's examination, blood pressure measurement, or brain scan may provide **objective evidence** that helps investigate its cause.

When is comes to a Christian person's assurance of salvation what would be objective evidence vs subjective evidence?

When discussing a Christian's **assurance of salvation**, the distinction is especially useful because the Bible gives both **objective grounds for assurance** and **subjective evidence within the believer's experience**.

Objective evidence for assurance

Objective evidence is based on **what God has done and what God has promised**, rather than how strongly a person feels.

For example:

- **Christ's finished work** — Jesus died for sins and was raised from the dead. (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)
- **God's promise of salvation** — "Whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)
- **Christ's promise to receive believers** — "the one who comes to me I will never cast out." (John 6:37)
- **God's promise of eternal life** — "God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." (1 John 5:11)
- **The believer's faith in Christ** — Salvation rests upon trusting Christ, not upon achieving a certain level of religious performance. (Ephesians 2:8–9)
- **God's work of keeping the believer** — Jesus said of His sheep, "no one will snatch them out of my hand." (John 10:28)
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In other words:

Objective assurance asks, "What has God said and what has Christ accomplished?"

Those things don't change from day to day based upon how a Christian feels.

Subjective evidence for assurance

Subjective evidence concerns **what is happening inside the believer's life and experience**.

The New Testament gives several examples:

- **A desire to obey Christ** — "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." (John 14:15)
- **Love for other Christians** — "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brothers." (1 John 3:14)
- **Hatred of sin and repentance** — A genuine Christian doesn't become sinless, but there is a changed attitude toward sin.
- **Love for God**
- **A desire for God's Word**
- **The witness of the Holy Spirit** — "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." (Romans 8:16)
- **Spiritual fruit** — love, joy, peace, patience, etc. (Galatians 5:22–23)
- **Perseverance in faith**

So:

Subjective assurance asks, "What evidence do I see in myself that is consistent with being a genuine believer?"

The important distinction

I would put it this way:

Objective evidence is the foundation of assurance. Subjective evidence is confirmation.

For example, suppose a Christian has a terrible day, falls into sin, feels distant from God, and begins wondering, *"Am I really saved?"*

Their **subjective experience** may be saying:

"I don't feel saved."

But the **objective evidence** says:

"Christ died for sinners. I have trusted Him. God promises eternal life to those who believe in His Son."

Their feelings don't overturn God's promise.

At the same time, Scripture doesn't tell Christians to completely ignore subjective evidence. **1 John was written specifically so believers could examine their lives and have assurance**:

"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life." — 1 John 5:13

John then gives characteristics such as love for fellow believers, obedience, belief in Christ, and perseverance as evidence of genuine faith.

A useful way to think about it

Objective:

"Am I trusting in Christ and His promise?"

Subjective:

"Does my life provide evidence that this faith is genuine?"

The danger is making the **subjective evidence the basis of salvation**. For example:

"I'm saved because I feel close to God."

Feelings can change.

Or:

"I'm saved because I don't sin very much."

That can lead either to pride or despair.

The stronger foundation is:

"My assurance ultimately rests upon Christ, His finished work, and God's promise. The changes I see in my life provide supporting evidence that my faith is genuine."

That distinction becomes particularly important when examining passages such as **Matthew 7:21–23, 2 Corinthians 13:5, and 1 John**, because those passages call for self-examination without making our fluctuating feelings the foundation of salvation.