

## 1 John 2:3-6 True believers keep God's Word

3rd message in the series after Christ, Sin, the 3rd test John gives the believers is the test of obedience. The first 2 were much about what you believe, how you see Christ and how you see sin. This one, the believing and talking is over, now it gets to real living.

Illustration of going out to get fruit from lemon and naartjie trees both bearing the right fruit with some that don't always look so awesome but generally they do what they are supposed to do.

### 1John 2:3-6

**3** We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. **4** Whoever says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. **5** But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: **6** Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.

### V.3 & 4 Obedience fits a believer

*3 We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. 4 Whoever says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person.*

3 ways to handle God's instructions:

1. Despise & reject them → Rom 1:32 → *Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.*
2. Perform them outwardly but dead inside → matt 23:1-3 → Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: **2** "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. **3** So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach.
3. Keep = guard and preserve them →
  - a. Psalm 119:11 → I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.
  - b. 20 → My soul is consumed with longing for your laws at all times.
  - c. 103 → How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

The test = is there a desire and living out of God's instructions in your life?

If the answer to that is Yes, you can have assurance that you truly know Him. More on this later...

**4** Whoever says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the

truth is not in that person.

Luke 6:43-49

*For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.*

*Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.*

In the same parallel story in Matthew 7:15-27 the conclusion from lip service without obedience is even stronger → v.21: *Not everyone who says to me 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.*

You might be wondering, do I always do God's will? Am I always obedient? What if I am not? Does that disqualify me?

Luckily not, from the previous message about sin we know that 1 John 1:9 says *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

However, those who consistently and intentionally continue to sin and choose against how God has instructed us to live, there is a clear sign that the fruit of that life is not that which belongs to a person born of God.

Practically, this doesn't speak about matters of interpretation like whether you sing with an organ or guitar, the exact timing and order of the last days or what exactly prophecy is...following the commands of God is about things that are clearly defined as wrong and right in scripture.

You can say you are a Christian but accept and allow homosexual relationships like e.g. many in the NG kerk leadership do and many other Christians do. According to what John writes, that is not possible and a clear warning sign as [scripture clearly defines homosexual relations as a sin.](#)

<https://kerkbode.christians.co.za/2019/10/06/ope-brief-aan-die-algemene-sinode-van-die-ng-kerk-oktober-2019/>

You can profess to be a believer but continue to engage in worshiping dead people like e.g. the ZCC church.

If you wilfully and knowingly continue in sin you don't pass this test. An example used often in the letter of John is that of hate towards fellow people. You can claim to be a christian but if your life doesn't demonstrate it you are what the bible describes as a liar and a man building his house on the sand that will not stand on the day of judgment.

A naartjie tree can't bring forth lemons. When I go out to fetch fruit, I shouldn't have to wonder if my naartjie tree will have naartjies or lemons.

When the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, returns he should see good fruit on the tree of your life. Otherwise he will reject you.

## **V.5 Obedience leads to fellowship and maturity**

*5 But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete (perfected) in them.*

To obey God's word, stimulates a growth process, a maturing in a believer where our love for Him reaches new depths and we grow in our relationship with Him and other believers.

1 John 1:7 → with each other → *but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another*

John 14:23 → with the Father → *Jesus replied: 'if anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.*

John 14:21 → with the Son → *Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.*

1 John 3:24 → with the Spirit → *Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit who he has given us.*

Through obedience, we grow in fellowship with those who love God and our love relationship with the triune God will strengthen. The stronger the choice of obedience for God, the stronger the fellowship and the more the maturing.

Love for God / Love of God → His love is perfect, He doesn't need our love. Our love towards him is cold and empty compared to the love he has shown us. For our benefit, not his. Our love for God strengthens and matures through our obedience and continuously choosing Him over other things.

There are 2 forms of obedience to highlight here. Following instructions in terms of what to do, and what not to do.

- Love, be kind, be generous, teach your children in the ways of the Lord, pray
- Don't be greedy, show partiality, be jealous etc

Overall, there are many things we should do and don't do as we develop a love to obey God's word. This brings me to the ultimate example we have in this regard.

## **V.6 Following the greatest example**

*6 Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.*

What does that mean?

Phil 2:5-8

*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:*

*Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross!*

John 6:38 → *For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.*

He is our example and our role model that we should follow. That and a desire to grow in relationship with Him is our biggest motivation

### **Summary**

1. Obedience to God's word is a key test for a believer to see whether he himself is in the faith and whether others are
2. Obedience to God's word stimulates spiritual maturity and fellowship
3. Obedience to God's word is to follow Christ

Does your life bear fruit in obedience to God's word?

If you say, I'm sure I truly am a believer because it's my desire to obey God but I don't always know what that practically means. Let me encourage you, 1 Cor 2:16 says we have the mind of Christ meaning we can know what God's will is. He has

given us his word to read and his spirit to understand so we can know what he instructs.

The more you spend time opening yourself to that and following it, the more you will grow in obedience and love for God.

If not, let me give you this one thing to start doing

Acts 17:30 → *he commands all people everywhere to repent*

1 John 3:23 → *and this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.*