

Loving God in obedience (1 John 2:3-5; 5:3)

Picture a man with his arm around one girl telling his wife how much he loves her and she is the only one for him. Would you believe him? Would anyone? No, because his actions don't match his words. During this session we will talk about our actions matching our words. Can we say we love someone when our actions show us to be unfaithful to that person? Likewise, we can't say that we love God but not obey him.



I. What is the greatest commandment?

Matthew 22:35-40 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"

- "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment."
- "And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Compare the greatest commandment to the "**liars**" of 1 John:

- 1 John 2:4-6. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, **is a liar**, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.
- 1 John 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, **he is a liar**; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

In 1 John 3:23, we find His commandment defined as "And this is His commandment that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment."

So if we say we love God but don't keep his commandments, we are like the man above who is looking back telling his spouse, "I love you! You're the only one for me!" while he has his arms around another woman, walking away. Keep our question in mind; do my actions (obedience) equal my words ("I know Him" or "I love God")?

In 1 John 2:5-6, we are made a promise that if we will obey "we are in Him" (i.e. saved). "But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked."

This has been true since the beginning of time. God told His people, "I will be your God, if you will be my people" (Lev. 26:12). Then there were the great blessings and the sobering curses in Deut. 28 and Lev. 26.

List a couple of examples where Israel through their mouth may have said they loved God, yet their actions showed they did not?

(1 Sam. 12:14, cp. 13:11, 15:22, 1 Kings 2:3, cp. 11:38, 1 Kings 3:2-3, 1 Kings 13:21)

Now think to yourself of a few examples where your actions (obedience) didn't match your words of "I love God," and set your mind to correct these disconnects.

II. Now picture a parent telling child not to touch the hot stove, not to put his finger in an electrical plug or not to jump off a high piece of furniture. What is the child's first response? Is it not, "why"? The first few times the parent offers an explanation, but before long the parent simply responds, "Because I SAID SO!"

When we are given a command, even as a kid there are a few things that we want:

- First: we want the command to make sense to us.
- Second: we want the command to align with what we want to do.
- Have you ever been told to clean your room?
 - How did you respond? "Yes, ma'am" and happily go do it, or was it one of the reactions above?

The story of Abraham and Isaac shows us the perfect example of one who followed the command and obeyed when the command would not have met either of the tests above. How could God's command to offer Isaac make sense to Abraham? There is no way he could have wanted to kill his only son. However, Abraham and Isaac simply obeyed the command, putting their faith in God. (Genesis 22, Hebrews 11)

III. As we get older, these two basic desires grow, and we add peer pressure.

So now we have:

- It starts, "Does this make sense to me?" and it grows into arrogance. We make ourselves the standard. We hear a command at work, school or from our local elders and reason that doesn't make sense to me; therefore, it must be wrong.
- Does this command match my desires (do I want to do it)? (2 Cor. 10:5)
- Can I do this and still fit in with those around me (peer pressure)? Even as adults in the workforce there is a real fear of being ridiculed for being different?

III. Obedience is not burdensome, and it is not too difficult. You can do it as the cloud of witnesses before you have (Heb 12:1). You should take great comfort in the fact you can do this, and you are a part of something very special.

1 John 5:2-3. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. **And His commandments are not burdensome.**

Matthew 11:29-30 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.**

Just because we can keep His commandments and just because they are not too difficult for us to follow, this doesn't mean it isn't hard sometimes. Let's think about the following verses.

1 John 2:15-17. Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

- Sin is referred to as “desires of the flesh” and “lust of the flesh.” Sin gives earthly pleasure.
- Satan uses everyone he can find around you at school, work and social activities to draw you into sin.
- Sadly, I can point to cases where Satan has used family members or even church members to draw people into sin.
 - Satan uses arguments, attitudes, etc. to get you to think and act emotionally rather than soberly.

So let's spend the rest of our time thinking on those situations where people's actions (obedience) don't match their words (I'm a Christian, I know God, I love God, etc.).

- Can someone “love God” while showing disrespect to their mother, father, husband, wife, brethren or friend? (1 John 4:20)
- Can someone “love God” while disrespecting government officials, parents, elders, teachers or others of authority?
- Can someone “love God” while drinking a beer (socially or to get drunk)?
- Can someone “love God” while cursing or using euphemisms?
- Can someone “love God” while making fun of a classmate?
- Can someone “love God” while having a sexual relationship before or outside of marriage?
- Can someone “love God” while browsing, posting and liking unprofitable things on the web, MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc...?