

First Epistle of John V

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As we started out and showed that the Epistles of 1st, 2nd & 3rd John are a study in *contrasts*—and what John is doing is contrasting God’s way *vs* the devil’s way. And he does this in simple and easy to understand language. What he’s doing is showing that of these two ways:

1. walking in the Light
2. walking in the darkness

—and that’s the whole theme of 1st, 2nd & 3rd John. So let me just review here. God’s way is Light and the *Spirit of Truth*—which means that He’s giving us the *true foundation* of Christianity through Jesus Christ and God the Father. Which then is based on:

- 1) light
- 2) truth
- 3) love
- 4) repentance
- 5) the Spirit of God
- 6) obedience and commandment-keeping
- 7) true knowledge
- 8) living and abiding in God’s way
- 9) Jesus spiritually dwelling in each Christian
- 10) eternal life

Now, Satan’s way is the *spirit of deception*, or the *spirit of error*—and we are to know both. Let’s go to 1-John 4:6—and this is the whole summary of everything in 1st, 2nd & 3rd. 1-John 4:6.: “We are of God... [and this is what we are to know:] ...the one who knows God listens to us; the one who is not of God does not listen to us. By this *means* we know the **Spirit of the Truth** and the **spirit of the deception** [or error].”

Now, I’m going to give a sermon on: *Could a Christian be Deceived?* Because we have heard in the past that it’s *impossible* to deceive Christians, or *true* Christians. But, let’s read that again. It does not say it is *impossible* to deceive them. Matthew 24:24: “For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and they shall present great signs and wonders, in order to deceive, *if possible*, even the elect.” But, we’ve never thought about what if those who have been called *elect* were to be deceived—or choose to be deceived. And how many Scriptures have we read over and over and over and over and over again. ‘Let no one deceive you by any means. Let no one beguile you.’

So Satan’s way is walking in darkness—the *spirit of deception*. So here are the main points of the *spirit of deception*. The children of the devil are walking in darkness:

- 1) darkness
- 2) deception and lies
- 3) hating the brethren and God—that is loving the world
- 4) the spirit of the devil—which he can influence and possess and be a counterfeit begettal
- 5) disobedience or commandment-breaking, lawlessness and transgression
- 6) false knowledge
- 7) living and abiding in the devil and deception
- 8) the devil’s spiritually motivating his children
- 9) eternal death

What John is doing here in the book of 1-John, especially, is clearly laying out how Christians, in time of confusion and deceit going around, can really get their bearings. Can stay true to God. Can understand the difference between Truth and error. So, I have a summary of living in the Light *vs* living in the darkness. I cross-reference some of the verses. And then we’re going to see, when we get to chapter two, how he builds upon that to show the concrete method that you really can actually know, and *know* that you know.

- 1) Practice the Truth is **walking in the Light**. And you’re constantly walking in the Light. And as we saw, **coming to the Light**.
- 2) Practicing sin is **walking in darkness**. And when people sin, this brings **spiritual blindness**.

Now, when people sin, *and* (as we will see) **repent**, then that clears everything up. God will cleanse us from that. But when people sin and are walking in darkness **and do not repent**, they become blind—**spiritually blind!** And they don’t know where they’re going.

- 3) The claim: You do not have sin means *denying the sinful nature of humans*. The Truth is not in you and hence you are practicing sin.
- 4) The claim: Have not sin and action and behavior makes God a liar. Now you think about that for a minute. About how profound that is if you make **God** a liar. It’s one thing to lie, it’s one thing to be a liar; but it’s another thing, by your action and your behavior and proclamations, **to make God a liar!**
- 5) Confess your sins—God cleanses us from every sin and unrighteousness.

Now let's look at the comparison of the Scriptures there in 1-John, and what I've done, I've taken the things which show *walking in sin* or *walking in the darkness* and *practicing sin*. So I've got 1-John 1 and then verses 6, 8 and 10. Then that is paralleled by 1-John verses 7, 9 and 1-John 2:1-2. Now let's just look at verses 6, 8 & 10 for a minute. Notice the 'if' clauses here—and we'll come back and review those in just a minute.

1-John 1:6: “**If** we are proclaiming that we have fellowship with Him... [that is, ‘we know God, we’re fellowshiping with God.’] ...and we are walking in the darkness, we are lying to ourselves, and we are **not practicing** the Truth.” And the Greek there means literally *practice the Truth*. Now, every time you come across the word *Truth* immediately certain Scriptures should come to your mind:

- God’s Word is Truth
- Your commandments are Truth
- Your laws are Truth
- All Your precepts are Truth

When we get into the second chapter we’re going to see about commandment-keeping and how so important that is. Now notice, all the way through we are looking at claims in the plural: *we*. So that could be either be the apostles or that could be the Christians as a group.

Verse 8: “If we say that we do not have sin... [that’s meaning that is you do not have a sinful nature. All people are good people and all people are righteous people and all good people everywhere will all get together and we will all build this wonderful New World Order. That’s what the whole *spirit of deception* is all about.] ... we are deceiving ourselves and the Truth is not in us.... [So you see, you have two things here: they are not practicing the Truth, and the Truth cannot be in them. Why? *Because we’re looking at the differences we just saw in 1-John 4:6—we are to know the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error.*] (Now v 10): ...If we say that we have not sinned, we are making Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.”

Now let’s look at the other side of that—of walking in the Light: 1-John 1:7: “However, if we walk in the Light... [now, how are we to be walking in the Light?] ...**as He is in the Light**, then we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His own Son is cleansing us from every sin.” So, as we saw in Eph. 5, that God is washing us, Christ is washing the Church with the *‘washing of the water of the Word’*—cleansing us from every sin.

Now notice v 9: “If we confess our own sins... [which then is repentance] ...He is faithful

and righteous that He may forgive us our sins, and that He may purify us from all unrighteousness.” So, that goes a little bit further. That goes to those things, which you might say are the sins which are ‘not unto death’—missing the mark—the sins which are sins of just originating from human error. But they are more like just indiscretions rather than gross sins. But ‘every unrighteousness.’

Now, 1-John 2:1: “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And *yet*, if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ *the Righteous*.... [So Christ is *advocating* for us, *interceding* for us, our High Priest at the right hand of God the Father. That allows us to come into the very presence of God the Father:

- through prayer
- through fellowship of God’s Holy Spirit
- through fellowship with Them
- through fellowship with each other

...And He is *the* propitiation for our sins... [which means a continual source of mercy and forgiveness] ...and not only for our sins, but also for *the sins* of the whole world” (vs 1-2). And so God’s plan is that He so loved the world that He’s going to bring salvation to all of those who believe in Jesus Christ.

Now, let’s look at a couple of these things in review again. 1-John 1:7: “However, **if we should be walking in the Light.**” What does it mean to be ‘walking in the Light’? To be

- ‘walking in the *Light*’ is *Truth*
- *by the Spirit of Truth*
- *one walks in the Truth*
- *lives in the Truth*
- *loves the Truth*

Now that’s what it means to be ‘walking in the Light’: *live in the Light, walk in the Light, love the Light*. In order to walk and live in the Light a Christian must renounce and confess sins and sinful nature. That is the whole key in importance to our relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Now, we’re also going to see that we have to *keep the commandments of God*—and that is the thing that begins to give us the understanding concerning the *spirit of deception* or error. The *spirit of deception* comes along and says: ‘this commandment is not so important’ or ‘that commandment is not so important’ or ‘if you’re sincere in your heart and you are meaning well, even though you’re living in sin, that’s okay.’ That’s the whole basis of the book *I’m Okay, You’re Okay*.

Let’s come here to 1-John 1:6: “If we are proclaiming that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness, we are lying to

ourselves, and we are not practicing the Truth... [v 8 says]: ...we are deceiving ourselves..." (vs 6, 8). Now the comment for that is the Greek is most emphatic—and this becomes so important for us to realize: **we can deceive ourselves!** And if we do deceive ourselves, if we are *the elect*, then that portion or that individual of *the elect* in general **can be deceived** because you deceive yourself. And that's the worst kind of deception. So, it does not say 'we are deceived.' Satan has the whole world in deception. We put ourselves in a different category when we come out of that deception and then go back into it, because we have to justify that deception to the being equivalent to Truth in our minds. So therefore, in doing so we are lying to ourselves. All of those then—self-deception—there's no room for Truth, and the *spirit of deception* will consume you. One cannot know and share the reality of God while 'walking in darkness' because you are not practicing the Truth. So they *live* in darkness and they *walk* in darkness and they *love* darkness and *hate the Light*.

Now v 10: "If we say that we have not sinned, we are making Him [God] a liar, and His Word is not in us." To make God a liar is blasphemy because God cannot lie. The sinner is the liar and Satan is the father of lies **and liars**.

Now let's notice the 'if' clauses that we find—and then we'll get right on in to 1-John 2:3. Here's the first clause:

- 1-John 1:6: "**If** we are proclaiming that we have fellowship with Him..."
- v 8: [transcriber's correction]: "**If** we say we do not have sin..."
- v 9: "**If** we are confessing our own sins..."
- v 10: "If we say that we have not sinned..."
- 1-John 2:1: "...**if** anyone does sin..."
- v 3: "...**if** we are keeping His commandments."

Now, what becomes so important is that when you have an '**if**' clause then we are to make a *determination* and we are to make a *judgment* and we are to come to *understanding* concerning that. And that's why when the Church reaches a certain point of maturity—that's what it is here with 1-John—then we have to go back to the very basics and we have to get a **clear and sharply defined understanding of the Truth** and how we are to live in it.

Just one last comment on *propitiation*: God, in the person of Jesus Christ the Righteous, is the sacrificial sin Offering, the Offerer, the Cleanser for the forgiveness of our sins. God the Father is the *receiver* and *forgiver* of our sins and Jesus Christ is

the *continual propitiation, the continual source of mercy and forgiveness for our sins*—and **it is all the operation of God**.

Now let's come to chapter two and let's begin in verse three. So the first part of 'walking in the Light' consists of:

- 1) living in the Light and practicing Truth
- 2) confessing and repenting of your sins

Now we come to the part that is so important: **keeping the commandments of God**. 1-John 2:3—and this is very *emphatic* and this very *specific* and this is very *profound*. "And by this *standard*... [as we went through and saw before: 'en toutou'] ...**we know**... [now we have to know. **There cannot be any doubt.**] ...that we know Him: **if we are keeping His commandments.**" And this is another one of those 'if' clauses, and it is present tense: *keeping on going*. You don't keep them for some of the time, part of the time, when it's convenient for you to do it; but you are keeping them *always, continuously, all the time*, because **that's what God requires**. That's how we know we are in Christ and God the Father—and we are to **know** it. Now also this is the kind of knowledge where it is experiential knowledge—by keeping His commandments and "walking in the Light" and by *practicing the Truth*, we **learn from experience** that and **we know!** And God wants us to know.

Satan's going to come around and say, 'How do you know?' And if you are not keeping the commandments, and if you don't know the difference, or if you're discounting the commandments of God then there's an entrance through the *spirit of deception* and an entrance for the light of Satan—**which is darkness**. So we are to know. Most emphatic, most specific—now here's another aspect of it: commandment-keeping and obedience is a condition of true Christianity. You cannot be a Christian and not keep His commandments.

Now let's see how He expounds this even further: Notice what happens in v 4. All the way down through v 3 we have: 'if we.' Now he changes:

- v 4: "Anyone who says..."
- v 6: "Anyone..."
- vs 9, 10, 11, and 5: all of them have "anyone."

So this becomes very important for us to understand what he's saying. Let's go back to v 4: "Anyone who says, 'I know Him,' and is not keeping His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him." Now, there's an awful lot in here for us.

Let's go to the Gospel of John 17:1. We are to **know** Christ. We are to **know** the Father. And that

very knowledge is based upon the fact that we are keeping His commandments. “Jesus spoke these words, and lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, ‘Father, the hour has come; glorify Your own Son, so that Your Son may also glorify You; since You have given Him authority over all flesh... [Now, let’s understand that. That *with all flesh* means **there is no salvation through anyone other than Jesus Christ. None other! There cannot be!** There is not any other salvation!] ...in order that He may give eternal life to all whom You have given Him” (vs 1-2).

So, this goes right back to one of the very basic premises of our calling. ‘No one can come to Me except the Father, who sent Me, *draw* him.’ And ‘no one can come to the Father except through Me.’ Now v 3: “‘For this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom You did send.’” So we are *to know*, and we are **to know** that *we know*. Because when the *spirit of deception* comes, and when the *spirit of deceit* is pushing upon us, **we’ve got to know!** And that’s exactly what’s happening to the Church of God today. These books of the letters of John or the Epistles of John are so important for today, because they are fundamental and they just are so weighty—and yet, when you read them they are **so simple!** And they are easy to understand. There is no mystery here at all.

Let’s go back to 1-John 2:4: “Anyone who says, ‘I know Him,’ and is not keeping His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him.” And there’s one thing Israel always did; Israel always made God to serve with their sins and their lies. Now we can’t do this under the New Testament.

Let’s just cover just a little bit here: “I have known Him”—because of John writing this, we could be dealing with a couple of other possibilities.

1. That there were people who were still alive who had actually seen Jesus in the flesh.
2. That we know Him because of the Spirit which is dwelling in us.

Now, if you have the Spirit of God dwelling in you, what is the Spirit of God going to do for you? The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ. It is the Holy Spirit. Plus, what does the Holy Spirit do for us? What is the one main purpose concerning the laws and commandments of God that the Holy Spirit is going to do for us? And remember, the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Truth. Let’s go to the book Hebrews for just a minute. If we have Christ in us, and if we have the Holy Spirit in us, it is going to **lead us to keep the commandments of God IF we follow the lead of the Spirit.**

Here is what God wants to do: Hebrews 10:15: “And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us... [and this is exactly what we’re talking about here—Christ in you:

- the Spirit of Truth
- the Spirit of knowledge
- the Spirit of love
- walking in the Light
- walking in the Truth
- loving the Truth.

...for after He had previously said, ‘This is the covenant... [Now, we’re all under the New Covenant, and this is what John is writing about, the New Covenant.] ...covenant that I will establish with them after those days,’ says *the Lord*: ‘I will give My laws into their hearts, and I will inscribe them in their minds’” (vs 15-16).

It actually means in the Greek *to inscribe* or *to etch*. And that’s actually what happens when knowledge comes into your mind. Your brain cells actually are modified to store that information or it is *etched*—it becomes a part of your very being. So that’s why commandment-keeping becomes very important. Not only to discern who a true Christian is, but also for true Christians to gauge the level of their activity in relationship to the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Truth, walking in the Light, having the laws of God in our hearts and in our minds, and written there—**inscribed there!**

Now let’s go to Jeremiah the seventeenth chapter—because here’s what happens if you walk in the darkness. And here is what happens when you continue living in sin—in a powerful, and in a continuous and determined effort. Jeremiah 17:1: “The sin of Judah *is* written with a pen of iron... [pretty profound, pretty tough words] ...*and* with the point of a diamond: *it is* graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars...” Now, that shows what happens when people just dedicatedly give themselves over to sin. And they give up keeping the commandments of God. So therefore, the keeping of the commandments of God become most profound. And we’re going to zero in on some of those commandments in just a little bit here.

Let’s come back to 1-John 2:4: “Anyone who says, ‘I know Him,’ and is not keeping His commandments [remember?] is a liar...”—not God. He is a liar. Question: In order to keep Sunday, do they have to lie about the Sabbath? **Yes!** Is Sunday—the doctrine of Sunday—a lie? **Yes!** God did not *suggest*—and you know the Ten Commandments are *not* God’s suggestions. They are the **commandments!** And what John is writing is most emphatic. He did not say, ‘Since I’ve made man and I know you’re physical and I know that you need

rest, I'm hereby suggesting that you rest one day in seven.' That is the *spirit of deception*. Jehovah Witnesses come along and say, "Well, every day is Holy." *No it's not!* God didn't say they were. God did not make them Holy. So every time you have to get around one of the laws of God, one of the commandments of God—which is Truth—you become a liar.

Now v 5: "On the other hand, *if anyone* keeps His Word... [Now we go from more than just commandments, we go to God's Word, which includes all of it. And how much does Sunday-keeping, professing Christianity throw away of God's Word? Now, we'll talk about that in just a little bit.] ...On the other hand, *if anyone* keeps His Word... [So, it's not just commandments, not just laws, His Word includes faith and hope and love and endurance and understanding.] ...truly [in truth] in this one the love of God has been perfected.... [is reaching its fulfillment] ...By this *means* we know that we are in Him." Now what he's really saying here: 'If you really want to know that you are continually in Christ and God the Father, you have to be keeping His Word.'

Now let's go to John 14 because this ties right in there exactly with it. Then we're going to see that the requirement even gets stronger. We go from commandments to His Word, and then this is *perfecting* love in you. And by this means we *are knowing* that we are in Him. We've gone to these verses quite a bit, but let's come back to them because these are profound and are:

- the very *basic substance* of Christian living,
- the very *basic substance* of how you can avoid the spirit of deception,
- the very *basic substance* on how you know you are in Christ.

The whole key to Christian commandment-keeping. The Jews or Judaism look to the mechanics of the law, so therefore, if it's not specifically defined in a finite law written down in some book, they can't understand it. Christ has it the other way around. John 14:15: "If you love Me... [The book of 1-John has awful lot to do with love and we'll cover that when we get there.] ...keep the commandments... [And the Greek there is]: ...—namely, My commandments." The exact same word for 'commandments' is in 1-John, the second chapter, as we're reading.

Now if we know—which we do—that Christ was the God of the Old Testament—which He was—then any commandments that He gave, which apply in the New Covenant as well as the Old Covenant, are those commandments which we are to

keep. And I've seen it time and again, when it comes to the least of the commandments that's what people want to *first* give up. And then that spirit of deception begins to creep in. But if you love and keep His commandments then you'll receive the Spirit of Truth (v 17 paraphrased) and then we come down here to v 20: "In that day, you shall know that I am in My Father, and you *are* in Me, and I am in you."

Now notice again, 'know'—you are *to know*. True Christianity

- is very *dogmatic*
- is very *punctilious*
- is very *knowledgeable*

Christ doesn't want us to be without knowledge. Christ doesn't want us to be in doubt. So when you get a whole Church of God that is run on fear and run on doubt and keep people on edge all the time—so then human manipulation and control can take over—Christ does not want that. He wants you *to know* that you're in the Father, and that He's in the Father; that you are in Him and that He is in you.

Verse 21: "The one who has My commandments... [again, in the present tense] ...and is keeping them, that is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him.... [v 23]: ...Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me...'" There again, the '*if*' clause—**IF!** And how many people say, 'I love the Lord'? And how many people preach the *spirit of deception* in the name of love?

There's something very interesting happened yesterday. And I heard it on the news. Now we have said for years that God has been against all those preachers who take all kinds of money and misuse it. Well, Jim Baker was originally sentenced to forty years in prison. He got his sentence reduced and he's getting out now in eight years. It doesn't seem like it was eight years ago. Now whether this is sincere or not, I don't know. But I have never heard it from any minister in the Church of God who has also squandered millions of dollars. He said, 'I ask forgiveness to everyone that I have taken money from and then have lived an arrogant and abusive lifestyle.' And he says, 'I know that I offended God and the name of our Lord Jesus Christ for what I did.' Now I don't know how sincere that is, but at least it came out of his mouth! And I heard it on the radio. I have never, never heard that from others who stole millions more. So, I have to say, we'll just wait and see.

Now, v 23 transcriber's correction: "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word... [Notice, you will *keep* the words of

God—that is the whole foundation of the spiritual knowledge and understanding of true Christianity. ***Are you keeping and living by and walking in the Words of Christ?*** And Jesus said, “The words which I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life”—and those are the true words of God—correct? So, if you are walking in the Light, you are *practicing* the Truth and you are doing just what Jesus said here.] ...and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.” So that’s why, in 1-John, the first chapter it says, “And truly our fellowship is with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ—**both!** And **they are living in us.**”

Verse 24: “The one who does not love Me does not keep My words... [So we come down to the very sayings of God. How important are the words and commands of God? *If God utters it, it is Truth.* If God puts it into the form of law, **it is Truth and binding**—and the ‘wages of sin is death.’—is that not correct? *Yes, it is!* So that’s what John is showing here. This is very profound.] ...The one who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s, Who sent Me” (v 24).

1-John 2:5: “On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God has been perfected.” Now, ‘being perfected’ means a *constant state of being perfected.*

Hold your place here and let’s see how then, with love *is the foundation*, with love *is the motivation*—then you’re going to want to be keeping the commandments of God, the words of God, the sayings of God. And when I mention that, think about the message from the angel Gabriel to Zachariah the father of John the Baptist. And what happened to him because he didn’t *believe*. So that’s why belief becomes very profound.

1-John 5:2: “By this *standard*... [‘en toutoo’—*in this way*] ...we know that we love the children of God... [Again, notice the things we are to know. Go back and study that. And when you do that, you go through and ask yourself, give yourself this test: Do I know this? Do I know everyone of these things we are to know?] ...By this standard we know that we love the children of God: when we love God and are keeping His commandments.”

All the way through 1st, 2nd & 3rd John you have love, you have Truth, you have Light, you have commandment-keeping—and it becomes very specific and very profound and very pointed. John is making it in such a way there is no ‘wobble room.’ You’re either on one side of the fence—which is God’s way, walking in the Light. Or you’re on the other side of the fence, walking in the darkness—and the only problem is, too many people are climbing the wall....

(go to the next track)

Now today, because the *spirit of deception* is coming on the whole world, there are a lot of ‘twilight zone’ Christians. And isn’t there a series called *Twilight Zone* on television? And isn’t that dealing with—what?—witchcraft and demonism and oddball stuff? I’ve only seen the title, but I’ve never watched it—is that true? (comments from audience) Another way of expressing the ‘twilight zone’ Christians are the Laodiceans. That they’re neither hot nor cold, but they are lukewarm and are running around naked—and nakedness reveals that they are not keeping the commandments of God.

So back here, 1-John 5:2: “By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God when we love God and are keeping His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we should keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome” (vs 2-3).

Let’s come back to 1-John, the second chapter, again. I tell you this whole first two chapters are so loaded, but yet, when you just sit down and read it, when you just say, ‘Okay, I’m going to read it through’; it’s pretty simple reading. And we fail to understand how profound and how deep this really is. So this means that the love of God is being perfected or fulfilled in us on an ongoing basis.

1. keeping the commandments
2. keeping His Word

Now, let’s take the next step. Notice 1-John 2:6: “Anyone who claims to [abide] dwell in Him... [that is Christ—and ‘Him’ there can also include God the Father. ‘Anyone’—this is a test, this is a condition, this is observable:] ...**is obligating himself**... [and that’s what it means. So, if someone wants to get picky about the commandments, notice this obligation:] ...also **to walk even as He Himself walked.**”

- And, didn’t Christ walk in the Light?
- *Yes He did!*
- Are we to not walk in the Light?
- *Yes, we are!*
- That’s quite an obligation—isn’t it?
- *That is a whole perfecting goal!*

So, what he’s stating here is: That this is the whole goal, the whole purpose of loving God; the whole purpose of keeping His commandments; the whole purpose of being in Him. This is it! ***‘To walk as He Himself also walked.’*** Now we know He did not do any sin. So that’s quite an obligation.

Now, let’s go to Luke 17. Let’s understand something very important here. Now, I know some of these are a little bit repetitious, but I also know

that it is so important for us. The only way we're going to grow in understanding in depth of knowledge and understand the deep things of God, is to really understand the foundation of love and the Spirit of God and walking in the Light and walking in the Truth.

Luke 17:5: "Then the apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.'.... [So, what He is doing is saying, 'I can't increase your faith. You can increase *your* faith by *trusting God*, by *loving God*.] ...But the Lord said, 'If you had faith as a *tiny* mustard seed, you might say to this sycamine tree, 'Be rooted up, and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. But which of you having a servant plowing or shepherding will immediately say *to him when* he comes in from the field, "Come and sit down *and eat*"? Rather, will he not say to him, "Prepare what I may eat, and gird yourself, *and* serve me while I eat and drink; and afterwards you may eat and drink"? Is he thankful to that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. Likewise you also, when you have done all *the* things that are commanded you, say, "We are unprofitable servants, because we have done that which we were obligated to do"" (vs 5-10).

Now, let's understand something very clearly: ***God gave His commandments and they are required to be kept by all mankind.*** That's how God is going to judge the world. How can God judge them of sin, if it were not a requirement for *all* human beings to keep the commandments of God? So this shows that unless we love God in faith and hope and trust—that's why He's saying here, this fits right in with 1-John 5:6: that we are 'obligating ourselves to walk even as He walked.' In other words, to grow beyond the basic commandment-keeping, because ***we are to do it because we love God.*** We are to do it because we won't to live by every Word of God.

Now let's go back to Matthew five and let's look at a verse that we've covered again in the past—because the *spirit of deception* will come along and say: 'That's not so important. This is not so important. The other thing is not so important.' Or as one man who is a high minister in the Church of God, when he was found sitting in the Sizzler eating shrimp by church members—they asked him, 'Well, what are you eating shrimp for?' *I'm a Gentile.* It is the least commandment that people want to do away with. Now the commandment for the Sabbath is not one of the least, it's one of the most important.

One of the very basic things, this is one of the very first things that you heard and that you understood when God was calling you—correct?

Yes! But this is one of the most profound things that we need to understand in a continual, ongoing basis for our relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ and walking in the Light and walking in the Truth and practicing the Truth.

Matthew 5:17: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law **until everything has been fulfilled...** [or 'until all are fulfilling it.'] ...Therefore, whoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever shall practice and teach *them...* [The Greek is 'poieo' meaning *to practice*. That ties right in exactly with 1-John 1, that we are to be ***practicing*** the Truth. Not acknowledge that the Truth is truth, but to ***acknowledge it and to practice it.***] ...this one shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (vs 17-19).

Now, think of the Ten Commandments. I'm sure you should have those memorized. Which of those would you consider is the 'least'? Let's go another step further: Which commandment would you think is the least commandment to you? and you then have justified not keeping that commandment—which are parts of the words of God—and so therefore you are becoming a 'twilight' Christian.

- Could it be not keeping the Sabbath?
- Could it be taking God's name in vain?
- Could it be lusting and coveting?
- Could it be clean and unclean meats?

Now we have a Mexican restaurant that we like—and we found out that they switched their, their refried beans and put lard in them. So we asked them, do they have beans without lard—and yes, they have beans without lard. But I told Delores, I said, 'I'm not going to go back there.' So she found out that they will give us beans without any lard in them—fine!

- So if it's unclean foods, is that the least that you think it is?
- What about tithes and offerings?

There are a lot of people who think that is the least, and the truth of the matter is, is the covetousness of their own—which is not theirs, because that which belongs to God belongs to God. That which belongs to Caesar—he even takes it before you get it now—that belongs to Caesar. So, which is the least of the commandments? *You think about it!*

- How about the Holy Days?
- And is that not *a lie* to justify not keeping the Holy Days because you think those are the *least* of the commandments?

But what does God always do with the least? What does God always do with the least? *That becomes the most profound!* And that's why the Holy Days are so profound. Contain the whole meaning, contain the whole plan of God and God has buried it in a section of the Bible which people consider the least—the book of Leviticus.

So that is something, when you really begin to analyze this. Now let's come back to 1-John 2:6: "Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked." So that's more than just strict, letter of the law, commandment-keeping and all of that sort of thing. It is very profound. What did Jesus do? What did Jesus say that He always did?

Let's go to John 8. Let's see some things, which are also tying right in with this. And before I get done with this whole study, I'm also going to do some parallels between the Gospel of John and the Epistles of John—and I think we're going to find that that's going to be most revealing. Absolutely the most revealing!

Let's notice again how John makes this clear-cut. All the way through the Gospel of John and the Epistles of John he makes it absolutely clear-cut! Let's pick it up here in John 8:23: "And He said to them, 'You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am **not of this world**.... [Now, you tie that in with John 17:11-18—*we are not of this world.*] ...That is why I said to you that you shall die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I AM, you shall die in your sins'" (vs 23-24).

What is one of the *least* doctrines that people today are overthrowing. Now remember, He says, 'Keep My words, keep My sayings.' This is part of the sayings of Christ. Many of them are saying that Jesus was not the Lord God of the Old Testament. And yet, He says right here: 'If you do not believe that **I AM**—which is a name of God in the Old Testament—and that he is saying, 'I AM' that He is the Messiah of God. And in saying that, 'I AM' which refers to 'I am *the Way* and *The life* and *the Truth*'—he says, 'You shall die in your sins.'

"Then they said to Him, 'Who are You?' And Jesus said to them, 'The one that I said to you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge concerning you; but He Who sent Me is true, and what I have heard from Him, these things I speak to the world.' But they did not know that He was speaking to them of the Father. Then Jesus said to them, 'When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you yourselves shall know that I AM, and *that* I do nothing of Myself. But as the Father taught Me, these things I speak'" (vs 25-28).

And all the way here through John 8, He's saying, 'I AM.' He told them after saying that 'you are of your father, the devil.' And He says, 'Before Abraham was, I AM.' And they said, 'How could this man see Abraham, He's not even 50 years old.' But they understood the 'I AM.' Now notice: "...then you yourselves shall know that I AM, and *that* I do nothing of Myself..." (v 28). So, if you are 'obligating to walk as Jesus walked' then we're to do nothing from ourselves. In other words, with Christ in us, with God the Father in us, we're to do what the Father wants us to do.

"...But as the Father taught Me, these things I speak. And He Who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone because I always do the things that please Him" (v 28-29). Now, that's the whole summation of what it means to be 'walking as He is walking.' To do the things that *please* God. Now, if you want a real goal and a real incentive. If you want a charter to give you a change of behavior, to give you a change of attitude, then take this: examine in your life and ask the question:

- Which is the least of the commandments to me?
- Which commandment am I habitually putting in a very low category so therefore I justify it in my mind to not do it?

And then you're getting to the truth of the matter!

So let's continue on in John 8: "As He spoke these things, many believed in Him. [If] Therefore... [There's another Bible study for you. If you want a good Bible study, go through and study all the 'if' clauses in the New Testament, because those are conditional—and IF you are not doing the 'if' clauses you can be deceived—right? *Sure!*] ...Therefore, Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in Him, '**If** you continue in My word, you are truly My disciples. And you shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall set you free.' They answered Him, 'We are Abraham's seed...'" (vs 30-33). And Christ made it clear: it doesn't matter who you are now, *it matters what you are, not who.*

Let's go back to 1-John 2:6: "...is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself [also] walked. Brethren, I am not writing a new commandment to you but an old commandment..." (vs 6-7). Now, that's interesting— isn't it?

Now, Leviticus 19 gives quite a bit of New Testament teaching; let's notice how He ends each one of these commandments—Leviticus 19:1: "And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying, 'Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, you shall be Holy: for I the LORD your God *am* Holy.... [New Testament doctrine—1 Peter 1-2—right?] ... You shall fear every man his mother,

and his father, and keep My Sabbaths... [now notice how He ends every one of these]: ...**I am the LORD your God**.... [*Specific, dogmatic and emphatic!*] ...Turn you not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods: **I am the LORD your God**” (vs 1-4). And then He talks about offering the peace offerings, how they are to eat it, when it should be done.

Verse 9: “And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, neither shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest.... [You’re to leave that for the poor.] ...And you shall not glean your vineyard, neither shall you gather *every* grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and stranger: **I am the LORD your God**” (vs 9-10). Emphasizes every one of them. In other words, he’s saying: *‘I’m saying to you in the name of God. These are binding commandments for you.’*

And I see none here that should not be observed today—do you? There are people who think that one of the least commandments is, ‘Well, it’s all right if you wear a cross, or a Star of David.’ But when you really understand what those really are you wouldn’t want to wear them. And after all, if you wear it, you’re telling God, ‘I think that is the least of Your commandments, because I am embolden to wear an idol.’

Verse 11: “You shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another.... [And you can put right in there Eph. 4: ‘lie not one to another’; and Col. 3] ...And you shall not swear by My name falsely... [and Jesus said, ‘Now, it’s even more binding. You’re not going to swear by My name or by the city, but let your ‘yes’ be *yes* and your ‘no’ be *no*.’ He says:] ...neither shall you profane the name of your God: **I am the LORD**. You shall not defraud your neighbor, neither rob *him*: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with you all night until the morning. You shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumblingblock before the blind, but shall fear your God: **I am the LORD**” (vs 11–14). This is all part of the old commandment, brethren, but it is *new* because now it is spiritually binding. It is *new* because now we are obligated to walk as Jesus walked.

Verse 15: “You shall do no unrighteousness in judgment... [Oh would to God that that would be true today. I am sick of seeing O.J. Simpson’s face on television—sick to death! Why not show the bodies of the slain? They aren’t going to get one bit of righteous judgment. I will be surprised if they get any righteous judgment out of that. ‘But shall fear the Lord your God, I am the Lord.’” (v 14).] ...You shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: You shall not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty... [Oh, ho, ho—is that

applicable today? *Yes!*] ...*but* in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. You shall not go up and down *as* a talebearer among your people: neither shalt you stand against the blood of your neighbor: **I am the LORD**.... [This is pretty profound New Testament doctrine—*isn’t it?*] ...You shall not hate your brother in your heart: you shall in any wise rebuke your neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him. You shall not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: **I am the LORD**” (vs 15-18).

Back to 1-John 2:7: “Brethren, I am not writing a new commandment to you but an old commandment, which you had from *the* beginning: the old commandment is the message that you have heard from *the* beginning.” And this could be applied in many different ways. This could be applied in the way that Jesus began preaching—which then is the message, which then you go Matt. 5, 6 & 7. That’s all part of the *new* commandment—*isn’t it?* Which is an *old* commandment. Jesus said, ‘You’ve heard of it said of old time, you shall not commit adultery, but I say unto you, you’ve heard it said of old time, but I say unto you...’” Same thing. *Exactly the same thing!*

Verse 8: “On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you...” Now, a lot of people look at this and say, ‘This is double-talk and gobblygook and He doesn’t know what on earth he’s saying. Old commandment/new commandment—it’s not old, it’s not new, but it is new.’ What is the new commandment? John 13:34: “You shall love each other as I have loved you.”

Let’s go to John 15, and we will see that it is not only that *new* commandment of loving each other, but it is the new dimension of all the commandments of God. So again, I ask: Which commandment do you think is the *least* commandment? And the way you know that it is the *least* commandment is: if you’re breaking it, and justifying yourself from the fact that it’s okay to break this one because it is one of the *least*.

Let’s just stop by John 13:34, so we can be sure and get the *new* commandment where Jesus said very clearly: “A new commandment I give unto you.” And that’s what He’s referring to here. And this new commandment then is new because now it is the Spirit of God in you. Now it’s based on the Spirit of love, the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Light, the Spirit of willingness, the Spirit of love. “A new commandment I give to you: that you love one another in the same way that I have loved you, that *is how* you are to love one another.”

Now, that’s pretty profound—*isn’t it?* And that’s how we need to do. And why is the Church of God all scattered abroad today in many different

groups? They're going to stay there until they learn this. They're going to stay there in their little groups because God is going to impress upon their minds, in smaller groups you can't hide. In smaller groups you can't fade into the background. You are either there or you're not there. And that's why God wants it because He wants us to grow in the grace, and grow in the knowledge, and grow in the understanding that comes from God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Now, let's go to John 15:9. Again, here is the overall complete goal that we are, are aiming at. Here is the fullness of the stature of the measure of Jesus Christ. "As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love.... [How do we do that? *For this is the love of God that we keep His commandments and His commandments are not burdensome. If you love Me, keep My commandments.* All based upon God's love and Spirit.] ...**If** you keep My commandments..." (vs 9-10). There again is this '*if*' clause. This week I'm going to study the 'if' clauses, and I'm going to ask the question: Are you an 'if' Christian? Or are you an 'in fact' Christian? And if you are 'in fact' a Christian, you will fulfill all of these 'if' clauses:

- Verse 6: "**If** anyone does not dwell in Me..."—there it is, an *if* clause.
- Verse 7: "**If** you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you..."
- Verse 10: "**If** you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and live in His love."

Why? Because Jesus said, 'I always do those things which please Him.' Do we need to make ourselves a little plaque for that? Put it on top of our heads to look at it all the time. In our foreheads? *Yes!* Am I doing the things that please God? Boy, I tell you, based upon that we have to repent many times a day—don't we? *Yes, we do!* Because this old human nature doesn't want to do anything that pleases God—does it? *No, as we found out last week.*

Verse 11: "These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and *that* your joy may be full. This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends. **You are My friends, if you do whatever I command you**" (vs 11-14).

Now let's go back to 1-John, the second chapter. He is showing, very clearly, that commandment-keeping is

the *measure*
the *standard*
the *outward manifestation*

of what's inside, and then you go beyond that to

- keeping His commandments
- **keeping** His Word
- **obligating** yourself *to walk as He walked.*

So there is no gobbly-gook between *old* commandment and *new* commandment, but it is the Word of God, which is always *new* even though it is *old*.

So he says 1-John 2:8: "On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him... [which we just read] ...and in you, because the darkness is passing away... [that is, *in* you and *for* you and *to* you] ...and the true Light is already shining." Now here's another gauge of it. "**Anyone**... [I circled all the 'anyones' and it's really quite a, quite a few there.] ...**Anyone**... [and this is a claim] ...**Anyone** who claims *that* he is in the Light, but hates his brother, is, *in reality*, in the darkness until now" (v 9). That's another reason why the Church of God is so separated and scattered so that we're going to learn this. Because too much of this was done within a large organization and hidden within the institution and covered up with the hierarchy and these things are still burning in the hearts of some men and hating their brother. But they're in darkness, so they may be 'twilight' Christians. Let's hope and pray they overcome it.

Now we are to hate the evil. We are to hate the sin. But we're not to hate the brethren. Verse 10: "Anyone who loves his brother is dwelling in the Light, and there is no cause of offense in him." Now, that's a pretty tough one—isn't it? If people are offended at the Word of God—then that's too bad—they're offended at Christ. But we're not to be deliberately making our self an offense to other people.

Now let's pick it up here in Matthew 18:6: "But whoever shall cause one of these little ones who believe in Me... [Now, how profound does God look at 'offending'? *Very profound.*] ...to offend, it would be better for him that a millstone be hung around his neck and he be sunk in the depths of the sea... [Now, those are parts of the Words of Christ—aren't they?] ...**Woe** unto the world because of offences! For it is necessary... [it's bound to happen] ... that offenses come, yet **woe to that man** by whom the offense comes!" (vs 6-7). So part of our Christian living is to learn how to have the kind of love, the kind of commandment-keeping and the walking in Christ that we don't offend each other.

"And if your hand or your foot causes you to offend, cut it off... [that's how important it is to get rid of offense—right? *Yes!*] ...and cast *it* from you; for it is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed than to have two hands or two feet *and* be

cast into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to offend, pluck it out and throw *it* away; for it is better for you to enter into life one-eyed than to have two eyes *and* be cast into the fire of Gehenna. Take heed *that* you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that their angels in heaven continually look upon the face of My Father, Who is in heaven. For the Son of man has come to save those who are lost” (vs 8-11). And then He goes on with a parable about the one sheep that is lost.

So one of the things we’re trying to do, brethren, is help people of God to be healed from their offenses. And every one of us are going to make offenses in our life. When we do we need to repent of it. We need to change of it. We need to grow out of it.

Let’s come back to 1-John 2:10: “Anyone who loves his brother is dwelling in the Light, and there is no cause of offense in him. But anyone who hates his brother is in the darkness, and is walking in the darkness, and does not understand where he is going because **the darkness has blinded his eyes**” (vs 10-11).

Now there are a lot of people today who say that they see, but are ‘twilight’ Christians and are becoming *dull* of seeing, *dull* of hearing, *dull* of commandment-keeping, *dull* in everything they do. They’re just kind of washed-out Christians. And what they need to do is get their lives back in order. How? Just exactly as John is saying here. That’s why it’s so important. Commandment-keeping! **You must be obedient!** And this obedience **must be based on love**, because that’s how it’s perfected. And it’s more than just commandments. **It’s His Word and it is His Truth.** And then we’re **obligating ourselves to walk even as He has walked.** And I know that verses nine through eleven, for many people—for us, for me, for you—to really fulfill in a right and proper way is quite a challenge for us—*isn’t it? Yes, it is!*

- 1-John Scriptures from *The Seven General Epistles* translation by Fred R. Coulter—except where noted
- All other Scriptures from: *The New Testament in Its Original Order—A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter—except where noted
- Old Testament Scriptures from the *King James Version*

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- 1) 1-John 4:6
- 2) Matthew 24:24
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- 6) 1-John 2:1, 3-4, 6, 9-11, 5
- 7) John 17:1-3
- 8) 1-John 2:4
- 9) Hebrews 10:15-16
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- 12) John 14:15, 17, 20-21, 23-24
- 13) 1-John 5:2-3
- 14) 1-John 2:6
- 15) Luke 17:5-10
- 16) Matthew 5:17-19
- 17) 1-John 2:6
- 18) John 8:23-33
- 19) 1-John 2:6-7
- 20) Leviticus 19:1-4, 9-18
- 21) John 2:7-8
- 22) John 13:34
- 23) John 15: 9-10; 6-7, 10-14
- 24) 1-John 2:8-10
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- Ephesians 5
- 1-John 5:6
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Also referenced:

Book: *I’m Ok, You’re Ok—by Thomas Harris*
 Sermon: *Could a Christian Be Deceived?*

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