



February 19/20, 2011

1 John 3 - 5

"Love and Truth" Part 2

Pastor Gary Hamrick

In the first study in this three-part series, we learned about the first two of four false claims. In this teaching Pastor Gary's message deals with the last two false claims: that we can know God without obeying him and we can know God without loving others.

False Claim #3 - We Can Know God Without Obeying Him

1. Knowing God, loving God and obeying God go together, however, there is a real disconnect in some people's minds when it comes to their relationship with God and obedience to his Word.
2. When we consider our relationship with our supervisor or the company/organization we work for, we realize that every relationship has rules.
3. God says, "To love me is to obey me and to obey me is to love me."
4. [John 14:15](#) - *"If you love me, keep my commands."*
5. [John 14:21](#) - *"Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me..."*
6. [John 14:23a](#) - *"Jesus replied, 'Anyone who loves me, will obey my teaching.'"*
7. [John 15:10](#) - *"If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love."*

8. We're tempted to think that this Christian "thing" is all about obey, obey, obey and commands, commands, commands, which causes us believe that the Christian life is burdensome!
9. **1 John 5:3-4a** - *"In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith."*
10. When you're in love with the Lord, you want to obey him, and his commands are not burdensome.
11. Christians must resist the temptation to believe they can delete certain commands that they don't agree with and adhere to others they do agree with.
12. The worst thing a Christian can do is to be selective about following God's Word.
13. There is more grace for those who are ignorant about God's Word than those who know the truth and choose to disobey.
14. To obey God's Word means that you accept his truth for your life no matter how difficult, inconvenient, or unreasonable it may seem.
15. To obey God's Word means you believe God always knows best and that he always has our best in mind.
16. **Jeremiah 7:23** - *"Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in all the ways I command you, that it may go well with you."*
17. The truth claim is found in **1 John 2:5a** - *"But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them."*

False Claim #4 - We Can Know God Without Loving Others

18. **1 John 4:19-21** - *"We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister."*

19. **1 John 3:11-15** - *“For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother’s were righteous. Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.”*
20. It’s important to notice that it’s a *“command,”* which means it may not always come naturally for us to love other people.
21. The reason it’s a command rather than a choice is because there’ll be times when people will offend you, betray you, lie to you, gossip about you, ignore you, try to manipulate you, reject you, and the list goes on and on.
22. John is basically restating what he heard from Jesus at the Last Supper when he writes in **John 13:34**: *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”*
23. It’s a command and it’s new, because **Leviticus 19:18** says, *“... love your neighbor as yourself.”*
24. The highest form of love that man could understand was self-love, but Jesus calls this kind of love a *“new command,”* because he says we’re to love other people as he has loved us!
25. We’re supposed to love others, because the Lord first loved us and gave us the capacity to love others.
- 1 John 4:7-8** - *“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.”*
 - 1 John 4:11** - *“Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”*
 - 1 John 4:19** - *“We love because he first loved us.”*
26. How are we commanded to love others?
- Sacrificially - **1 John 3:16** - *“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.”*
 - Materially - **1 John 3:17** - *“If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?”*

- i. **James 2:15-16** - *“Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, ‘Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?”*
- c. Verbally - **1 John 3:18a** - *“Dear children, let us not love with words or speech...”* (Emphasis added)
 - i. The instruction for us is *“love with words,”* because words matter.
- d. Practically - **1 John 3:18b** - *“Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions...”* (Emphasis added)
 - i. We’re to love with actions, because *“love is a verb.”*
- e. Spiritually - **1 John 3:18c** - *“Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.”* (Emphasis added)
 - i. There are times when we need to speak the truth in love (tell the hard truth regardless of how uncomfortable it may be) and leave the person’s reaction and response to the Lord.

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read **1 John 2:3-6; 5:3-4a and 4:19-21** to provide an overview for this study.
3. Allow the people in your group to share some of their experiences regarding employer/employee relationships.
 - a. If someone in your group is in management, allow them to talk about how difficult it is to have a good relationship with an employee when they have a lack of concern about doing their job in a timely manner, etc.
 - b. Spend time talking about situations where people have made choices that cause problems at their workplace.
4. Discuss Ted Koppel’s well known quote from a 1987 Duke University commencement address.

“We have actually convinced ourselves that slogans will save us. Shoot up if you must; but use a clean needle. Enjoy sex whenever and with whomever you wish, but wear a condom. No! The answer is no. Not because it isn’t cool or smart or because you might end up in jail or in an aids ward, but no because it’s wrong, because we have spent 5,000 years as a race of rational human beings, trying to drag ourselves out of the primeval slime by searching for truth and moral absolutes. In its purest form, truth is not a polite tap on the shoulder. It is a howling reproach. What Moses brought down from Mount Sinai were not the

Ten Suggestions.”¹

5. It's obvious that vows are critical to a marriage relationship.
 - a. What kind of marriage would you have if one spouse decided to abide by the “rules” only on Wednesdays and Sundays?
NOTE: Leaders – Be sensitive to the people in your group who have experienced the tragedy of divorce. You may want to bypass this discussion.
6. Read and discuss [John 14:15, 21, 23](#) and [1 John 5:3-4a](#).
 - a. How would you rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the best) regarding obedience to God's Word?
7. Discuss Pastor Gary's statement: The worst thing a Christian can do is to be selective about following God's Word.
 - a. Spend time talking about times when you made the choice to pick and choose concerning the Scriptures.
 - b. Was it the case that the obeying God's Word would have been too unreasonable, difficult or inconvenient?
 - c. Why didn't you come to the conclusion that God always knows what's best and the only choice would have been to follow the Lord?
8. Read and discuss [1 John 4:19-21](#).
9. Read and discuss the five ways we're commanded to love others. (See #23 above)
 - a. How often and how much do you go out of the way to love your brother or sister in the Lord?
 - b. Do you find that it's true that you love only when it's convenient?
 - c. How have you made a conscious decision to love others regardless of whether or not it's convenient?
 - d. Are you selective in your love for others and you only love when others are your “cup of tea”?
 - e. Allow time for people to share examples of ways they've been a blessing to others in each of the five ways we're commanded to love others: sacrificially, materially, verbally, practically and spiritually.
10. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: recognize that obedience to the Word of God is an important part of keeping a right relationship with the Lord; know that the Lord's commands are not burdensome and that they can follow the Word of the Lord out of love for the Lord rather than obligation; (pray the Scripture by having someone ready to

¹ ABC Nightline Moderator, Ted Koppel, at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, giving the 1987 commencement address. <http://message.snopes.com/showthread.php?t=24712>

read [John 13:35](#) - *"By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

Note: Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV).