

You Say You Know God: 1 John 2:1-11 Explained

Scriptures for Today

1 John 2:1-11

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. 3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. 6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. 7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. 8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. 9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. 10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. 11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

God's Standard and Reality

1 John 2:1

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

God sets the standard first by saying do not sin, which means holiness is expected. God doesn't want you to sin. And we will preach against sin here at this church. Even though I am a sinner, I will preach against sin.

God CLEARLY says to sin not. Then in the same sentence He says "if any man sin," showing that believers still fail. Believers continue to sin because we are in this flesh. We do not always walk in the Spirit though we are commanded to sin not and to walk in the Spirit.

This destroys the false teaching of sinless perfection while still holding the line on holiness. Religious people go to far in both directions. Some say they don't sin. Some say it's okay to sin. Both are wrong. God expects you to live right, but He has already provided an advocate when you do not.

When you sin, you are not standing alone before God. Jesus Christ stands as your advocate, meaning He represents you and speaks on your behalf. Your standing is based on His righteousness, not your performance in this life. Your performance includes sin every day.

But thank the Lord Jesus Christ that He is our advocate or someone who speaks for us, represents us, and defends us. Jesus stands in our place.

This verse completely destroys the idea that you maintain salvation by your works. And there are many other Scriptures that destroy the maintaining of salvation through your own works. If Christ is your advocate, your position is secure even when your walk is not what it SHOULD be.

The Payment Was for the Whole World

1 John 2:2

And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Propitiation means the full payment that satisfies God's wrath. Jesus ALONE is the full payment for our sins that satisfies the wrath of God. Jesus Christ did not make a partial payment but a complete one. He fully paid off our debt.

The second half of the verse destroys the false doctrine of Calvinism or reformed theology. Jesus is the full payment for our sins, and not for ours only, BUT for the sins of the WHOLE WORLD. Jesus Christ paid for all sins.

This directly refutes limited atonement. The payment was made for the entire world, which means anyone can be saved through believing on the Lord Jesus Christ ALONE.

So, how do Calvinists slither out of this verse? They say that "whole world" doesn't mean every person. They will say it means that there are people from every nation. They will say Jesus is sufficient to pay for everyone but He only paid for the elect. They will say world in other verses means doesn't always mean every person.

But this verse is structured SPECIFICALLY to expand the scope. "Not for ours only." Not just for one group. "But also for the sins of the WHOLE WORLD." Whole means whole. Whole means the entire world. So, the payment by Jesus Christ was made for all but it is only received by those who believe on Jesus Christ.

John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the WORLD." 1 Timothy 2:6 says, "Who gave Himself a ransom FOR ALL." Hebrews 2:9 says, "that he by the grace of God should taste death for EVERY MAN." For anyone out there who wants the truth: reject Calvinism, reject reformed theology, reject TULIP, reject the false doctrine of Limited Atonement. It's absolute foolishness.

Knowing God vs Saying You Know God

1 John 2:3-4

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

This is often twisted into a test of salvation, but it is about your walk in this life. You can be saved and still walk in disobedience, because salvation is based on Christ, not the way you live. But your life will show whether you are actually walking with God or just claiming to know Him.

For example, you can't say that you are walking with Jesus Christ as you smoke marijuana every day. You can't say that you are walking with Christ as you destroy the temple of the Holy Ghost.

There is a difference between knowing God positionally in salvation and knowing Him in your daily life. You can belong to Him and still ignore what He says. When someone claims to know God but consistently rejects His commandments, they are not losing salvation, but they are lying about their fellowship with God. They are not walking with Him.

"The truth is not in him" means truth is not controlling how they live. They may know it, but it is not active in their life. So this passage is not asking if you are saved, it is exposing whether your life lines up with the truth you claim to believe.

We can't see faith so we might question if a person truly believes based on the life they live. We might say, "Well I hope he was saved. He never showed faith in anything he did."

A saved person has the truth, has the ability to obey, has the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, can walk in the Spirit, and will most likely obey at times. An unsaved person does not have the truth in them, does not truly follow God, and may outwardly do good things but not from the right relationship with God. Believers can walk with Christ. Unbelievers cannot walk with Christ.

The Love of God Perfected

1 John 2:5

But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

Perfected means matured, not sinless. It is not talking about reaching a state where you never fail, but about God's love reaching its intended result in your life. Obedience is what allows that love to actually function and show itself in how you live.

When you keep God's Word, you are not earning anything. You are allowing what God has already placed in you to grow and operate the way it should. His love is no longer just something you know about, but something that is active and visible in your life.

This is about growth, not salvation. Keeping His Word matures you, it does not save you. Salvation places you in Christ, but obedience is what causes your life to reflect that reality in a real and practical way.

So this verse is not asking if you are saved. It is showing whether God's work is being carried out in your life. When His Word is kept, His love is not just present, it is being completed in how you live.

Walk Like Christ Walked

1 John 2:6

He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

If you claim to abide in Christ, your life should reflect Him. This is not perfection, but it is direction and pattern. If you're doing wrong, you shouldn't say I am walking with Christ.

For example, there's all these unsaved religious "Christians" out there who tell me that it's not just believing that saves but you must follow Christ to be saved. They condemn themselves because they aren't following Christ. They call Him a liar but claim to follow Him. You shouldn't be claiming to follow Jesus while you call John 3:16 a lie.

This verse destroys casual Christianity that claims to walk with Christ without any change in life. If nothing changes, something is wrong in your walk. Now, we aren't talking about salvation. We're talking about your walk with Christ. Walk with Him. Don't claim to do that and stay the same. There must be changes.

Old Commandment — Not New

1 John 2:7

Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

John is not introducing something new. This truth has been there from the beginning, and they had already heard it. He is not trying to impress them with new ideas, but to bring them back to what was already established.

This shows the consistency of God's Word. God does not change His standards, and truth does not evolve over time. What was true at the beginning is still true now, and it will still be true later.

The problem is not that people lack truth. The problem is that people move away from it. They hear it, they know it, but they stop continuing in it, and that is when error begins to take over.

This also exposes a major issue today. People are always looking for something new, something deeper, something no one else has seen before. But real spiritual growth does not come from chasing new ideas, it comes from staying grounded in what God has already said. His words don't become out of date. They are everlasting. We don't need anything new.

So John is not giving them new revelation. He is calling them back to the original truth they received. The issue is not discovery, it is consistency, because most people fail not by rejecting truth outright, but by slowly drifting away from it. People drift away. Don't drift away.

New Commandment — Fully Revealed

1 John 2:8

Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

It is called “new” not because the commandment itself never existed, but because it is now seen in a new way. The same command—especially love and obedience—was already given from the beginning. But now it has been fully revealed and demonstrated in Jesus Christ.

Before Christ, people had the command. After Christ, they have the perfect example of it lived out. They do not just hear what love is, they see it clearly in Him.

That is why it says “which thing is true in him and in you.” It was perfectly true in Christ, and now it is becoming true in believers as they walk in the light. The command is no longer just instruction, it is something being actively lived out.

“Because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth” explains it. The light has come in a fuller way through Jesus Christ. Truth is clearer now, more visible, more understood.

So it is “new” because: 1) It is fully revealed in Christ. 2) It is clearly seen, not just heard. 3) It is now being lived out in believers.

Light vs Darkness

1 John 2:9-11

He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. 10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. 11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

This is where everything becomes visible. That's what LIGHT does. You can claim to be in the light, but hatred exposes the truth of you not being in the light. What you say does not determine where you are walking. Words are easy to speak. What you do reveals where you are walking. Loving thy brother means following God's commandments.

You can say, "I love my brother" all you want but what you do actually proves that. Verse 10 shows the opposite clearly. When someone truly loves their brother, they are walking in the light, and their life becomes stable. “There is none occasion of stumbling” means they are not constantly tripping spiritually, because they are walking in clarity, not in confusion of darkness.

Verse 11 goes deeper into the danger of walking in darkness. Hatred does not just mean you are in darkness, it means you are walking in it and being controlled by it. You lose direction, you

lose understanding, and you do not even realize how far off you are because that darkness blinds you.

This passage holds two truths together. Salvation is secure because of Jesus Christ. Salvation isn't secured or kept by you and the way you walk throughout life. At the same time, your walk determines whether you are living in light or darkness right now.

The difference is not what you say. The difference is how you live.

Practical Applications

1. Do not pretend you are walking right when you are not. Be honest.
2. When you sin, go to your advocate. Do not try to fix it yourself.
3. Stop limiting who Jesus died for. The payment was for everyone.
4. Love people genuinely. Hatred puts you in darkness.

Conclusion

You can say you know God. You can claim truth. You can talk about the light. But if your life does not match it, you are not walking in the light of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ paid for all sin and stands as your advocate. Now the question is simple. Are you walking in the light, or are you just saying you are?

Let's pray.