

## 1 John 2:1-14

### *Knowing God*

#### Learning Objective

- Knowing God leads us to follow His commands in the context of community.

#### Questions for Discussion

**Pray for your time together as a group.**

#### Read Out Loud: 1 John 2 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup> My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. <sup>2</sup> He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

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

<sup>7</sup> Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. <sup>8</sup> Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.

<sup>9</sup> Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness. <sup>10</sup> Anyone who loves their brother and sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble. <sup>11</sup> But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them.

<sup>12</sup> I am writing to you, dear children,  
because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.

<sup>13</sup> I am writing to you, fathers,  
because you know him who is from the beginning.

I am writing to you, young men,  
because you have overcome the evil one.

<sup>14</sup> I write to you, dear children,  
because you know the Father.

I write to you, fathers,  
because you know him who is from the beginning.

I write to you, young men,  
because you are strong,  
and the word of God lives in you,  
and you have overcome the evil one.

? Verse 1 says that Jesus is our advocate. How does Jesus advocate for us?

*Possible Answers: Jesus is an advocate for us in His death. Jesus had no sin and took on God's judgment in our place. He steps in for us so that we can have salvation.*

? What does it mean to "know God"? (See vv. 3-6)

*Possible Answers: Knowing God like a best friend vs. knowing of a celebrity or acquaintance. To be in a real relationship with Him, obedient, communicating with Him, His love and truth present in us, etc. The more we know God the easier it is to live out His commands and be obedient.*

? How does knowing God allow us to better keep His commands?

*Possible Answers: Knowing God is a completely life-transforming relationship, not just something we say or do. We no longer do things to become "right" with Him; we do things because we get to please Him with our lives, our living sacrifice.*

? How do Jesus' life, death, and resurrection give new life to the commands from the Old Testament?

*Possible Answers: After Christ's death our obedience to God is not the determining factor for our salvation. Instead, as we grow in our relationship with God, our behavior will hopefully reflect Him better as a fruit of that relationship. The law no longer condemns us; instead, we can approach it in freedom, knowing that our salvation through Christ is secure.*

#### Commands

In vv.7-8 John is talking about both an old and new command. He is referencing Leviticus 19:18, "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord." and Matthew 22:37-40, "<sup>37</sup> Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."<sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment.<sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'<sup>40</sup> All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

? What does this passage say about the importance of community in our ability to follow God's commands?

*Leaders' Note: You may wish to reference the previous study on 1 John 1 about community and confession. You could alternatively phrase this question as well: Why is it easier to fall into sin when you do not live in Christian community?*

*Possible Answers: You will be stumbling around in the darkness alone without love for one another. It is easier to live habitual sin if you are not in a community. Community requires love, not just people you know or acquaintances.*

? Compare and contrast your experiences in Christian community and non-Christian community—especially when it comes to trying to follow God's commands.

*Possible Answers: Answers will vary. Be prepared to give an example from your own life for your group.*

**?** John sets up two categories for Christian community, love or hate, with no middle ground. What does it mean to love your brothers and sisters versus hating your brothers and sisters? Why do you think there is no gray area within Christian community?

*Possible Answers: "Brothers and sisters" references Christian community specifically. There are lots of people you don't love but also don't hate. Jealousy, factions, exclusion are hate. Grieving and celebrating with one another, extending grace, and encouraging one another toward God are love.*

**?** In vv. 12-14 John addresses people with various levels of spiritual maturity. How do these encouragements and affirmations help us understand what people of different levels of spiritual maturity can offer to a community?

*Possible Answers:*

1. *Dear Children- (newer Christians or all Christians)- reminding them that their sins were forgiven and they know the Father.*
2. *Young Men- (metaphorically, this is when people hit their "prime" and have peak strength, but could be younger Christians)- overcame Satan, strong, word of God lives in them*
3. *Fathers- (long-time Christians)- reminding them that they've known Christ*

### **For Discussion and Accountability**

**?** This passage discusses two ways to evaluate if we really know God: by obeying His commands (vs. 3) and by loving others (vs. 10). How are you doing in each of these areas?

**?** What is one way we can hold you accountable (by either obeying his commands or loving others) this next week?