

Know that We Know

The word “know” appears 32 times in 1 John (NKJV). Brock Hartwigsen observed in 1 John “that man can know 23 different things” (19). He enumerated:

We can know Jesus (2:3; 5:20). We can know that we know Jesus (2:3). We can know we are in Jesus (2:5; 5:20). We can know it is the last times (2:18). We can know all things (2:20). We can know the truth (2:21). We can know that Jesus is righteous (2:29). We can know that everyone that does righteousness is born of God (2:29). We can know the when Jesus appears we shall be like him (3:2). We can know that Jesus was manifested to take away sins (3:5). We can know that we have passed from death unto life (3:14). We can know that no murderer has eternal life (3:15). We can know that we are of the truth (3:19). We can know that God dwells in us (3:24; 4:13). We can know who has the Spirit of God (4:2). We can know God (4:6). We can know that we dwell in God (4:13). We can know when we love the children of God (5:2). We can know that we have eternal life (5:13). We can know that God hears us (5:15). We can know that God will answer our prayers (5:15). We can know that we are of God (5:19). We can know that Jesus has come (5:20).

Two different Greek words are translated as “know” in 1 John—*ginosko* and *oida*. “The differences between *ginosko* and *oida* demand consideration: *ginosko* frequently suggests inception or progress in ‘knowledge,’ while *oida* suggests fullness of ‘knowledge’...” (*Vine’s*). Instead of being a blind leap of faith as ignorantly lunging into unknown darkness, the child of God can know that he knows his Savior—Jesus Christ. “Now by this we **know** [*ginosko*] that we **know** [*ginosko*] Him, if we keep His commandments” (1 John 2:3 NKJV). However, Jesus is only one’s Savior if he obeys Him (Hebrews 5:9). “In the NT *ginosko* frequently indicates a relation between the person ‘knowing’ and the object known” (*Vine’s*). Hence, Christians know that they know the Savior—Jesus Christ—through their sustained relationship with Him (1 John 1:7), which equates to ongoing obedience to the words of our Lord (John 8:31; 15:10).

Consequently, then, a faithful child of God can know that he is saved from his sins and that eternal life awaits him, as long as he continues to heed the words of Jesus Christ. “These things I have written to you who **believe** in the name of the Son of God, that **you may know** [*oida*] **that you have eternal life**, and that you may continue to **believe** in the name of the Son of God” (1 John 5:13). That is, the faithful child of God can have ‘full knowledge’ that his sins are forgiven and that eternal life awaits him. Eternal life is as certain as one’s ongoing belief and obedience. Eternal life remains conditional upon continued obedience, but nevertheless, eternal life remains certain, but conditionally.

Note: Proper belief, believing or faith are equivalent to obeying or obedience. For instance, when Moses disobeyed God, striking the rock when he was told to speak to the rock, God charged him with disbelief (Numbers 20:12). Therefore, to “believe” and to “continue to believe” in 1 John 5:13 involves obedience. Remember, Jesus is “the author of salvation to all who obey him” (Hebrews 5:9).

The denominational doctrine of the “Perseverance of the Saints” or “once saved always saved” is false. That a person cannot know that he is saved and that eternal life awaits him is equally false and ought not to be embraced by any child of God. To say or to think “I hope I’m saved” or something comparable either impeaches God and discredits the Word of God, or it indicts anyone who says or thinks such a thing as being guilty yet of sins. As long as our sins have been forgiven (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38) and are being forgiven (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:7, 9), we have boldness, through Jesus Christ, by which we can approach Almighty God in His throne room (Hebrews 10:19).

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