

## Series DM Session 8 110124 Experience of Faith 2 Hor

### 1 John The relationship of 'Faith' to John's use of "knowing'.

In 1 John, the word "know" (Greek: *ginōskō*) is a key term that emphasizes the certainty of a believer's relationship with God and understanding of truth. John uses this term frequently to affirm various experiences of spiritual assurance and the indwelling presence of God through Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Some of these experiences include:

1. **Obedience as a Sign of Knowing God:** John asserts that keeping God's commandments is evidence of truly knowing Him (1 John 2:3-5) (First John Chapters 1 –...).
2. **The Indwelling Spirit:** The Holy Spirit's presence affirms that believers are in fellowship with God (1 John 3:24; 4:13)(First John Chapters 1 –...).
3. **Recognizing Truth:** John reassures his readers that they know the truth and can discern between the spirit of truth and deception (1 John 2:20-21; 4:6)(First John Chapters 1 –...).
4. **Love as Evidence:** Genuine love for others is described as a sign of knowing God because "God is love" (1 John 4:7-8)(First John Chapters 1 –...).
5. **Assurance of Eternal Life:** John writes so that believers may know they have eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ (1 John 5:13)(First John Chapters 1 –...).

Throughout the letter, John emphasizes that knowledge of God is not merely intellectual but is deeply experiential and transformative, manifesting in a life characterized by love, obedience, and spiritual discernment.

## How does John ground the experiences and the personal knowledge in his foundation of actual faith

John grounds personal knowledge and experiences of God in the foundation of actual faith by emphasizing faith's tangible, evidential nature and its basis in the historical and physical reality of Jesus Christ. Here's how John connects experiences of God with faith's firm foundation:

1. **The Witness of Christ's Incarnation:** John begins his epistle by establishing that the apostles' experiences with Jesus were real, physical encounters—"what we have heard, seen with our eyes, looked upon, and touched with our hands" (1 John 1:1). This firsthand witness provides a foundation for faith that is rooted in historical reality, not just abstract beliefs (First John Chapters 1 –...).
2. **Obedience as Evidence of Faith:** John states that genuine faith in God is demonstrated by obedience to His commandments (1 John 2:3-5). Keeping God's commandments is an outward sign of an inward reality—showing that faith isn't just an idea but an active commitment to live according to God's will (First John Chapters 1 –...).
3. **Indwelling of the Holy Spirit:** The presence of the Holy Spirit in believers serves as both an assurance of their relationship with God and as proof of faith's effectiveness. John teaches that God's Spirit, given to those who believe in Christ, enables them to discern truth and abide in God (1 John 3:24; 4:13). This Spirit not only confirms their faith but transforms their lives (First John Chapters 1 –...).
4. **Love as an Indicator of Genuine Faith:** John continually stresses that genuine love for others is evidence of knowing God. "Whoever loves is born of God and knows God" (1 John 4:7). This love, grounded in faith, isn't just an emotional experience but a reflection of God's nature within believers, giving them assurance of their relationship with Him (First John Chapters 1 –...).
5. **Certainty of Eternal Life:** John writes so that believers can know they have eternal life through faith in Jesus (1 John 5:13). This assurance is grounded in their belief in Jesus as the Son of God and is confirmed by their ongoing relationship with Him. Faith in Christ thus becomes the basis for the confidence that eternal life is theirs (First John Chapters 1 –...).

In these ways, John builds a foundation where personal knowledge of God is not just mystical or subjective but is verified by the historical reality of Jesus, the active work of the Holy Spirit, and the transformative evidence of love and obedience in a believer's life. This grounding in actual faith means that spiritual experiences are rooted in the truth of who Jesus is and what He has accomplished.

## Is this Faith a personal revelation or an intellectual belief or doctrine?

In 1 John, faith is portrayed primarily as a personal, experiential relationship rather than merely an intellectual belief or doctrine. John's approach emphasizes a deeply relational and transformative faith that goes beyond head knowledge and connects believers with God through lived experience and the indwelling Spirit. Here's how John differentiates faith from a mere intellectual doctrine and instead presents it as a personal revelation and relationship:

1. **Faith as Relational Knowledge:** John's language emphasizes a knowing (*ginōskō*) that is personal and relational rather than strictly intellectual. For instance, knowing God is intertwined with experiencing His love and following His commandments (1 John 2:3-5). This knowledge is active and evidenced in a life transformed by a relationship with God rather than by an abstract understanding (First John Chapters 1 –...).
2. **The Indwelling Spirit as a Personal Witness:** John highlights the Holy Spirit's role in the life of believers as the ultimate assurance of their faith. This is a deeply personal aspect of faith, described as the Spirit of God abiding within believers, providing them with guidance, insight, and a connection to truth (1 John 4:13). This experience goes beyond doctrine, giving believers an intimate awareness of God's presence in their lives (First John Chapters 1 –...).
3. **Transformative Love as Evidence of True Faith:** In 1 John, love is a defining mark of authentic faith. John states that "God is love," and thus, anyone who truly knows God will exhibit love (1 John 4:7-8). This love is an outpouring of God's presence in a believer's life rather than just an ethical teaching or moral duty. It is the natural expression of a faith grounded in the personal revelation of God's love (First John Chapters 1 –...).
4. **Faith Grounded in the Reality of Jesus Christ:** John affirms that faith is based on the real, historical person of Jesus—one whom John and the apostles "have seen with [their] eyes and touched with [their] hands" (1 John 1:1). This grounding in the Incarnation underscores that faith is more than doctrinal assent; it's faith in a living, relational Savior (First John Chapters 1 –...).
5. **Certainty and Assurance through Faith:** John writes so that believers "may know that [they] have eternal life" (1 John 5:13). This assurance comes not from intellectual conviction alone but from the lived experience of a relationship with God through Christ and the Spirit. It is a personal revelation that brings confidence in one's standing with God and the hope of eternal life (First John Chapters 1 –...).

Thus, while John does not dismiss the importance of truth and sound teaching, his epistle emphasizes that faith is ultimately a personal, Spirit-led relationship with God. It's a revelation of God's love that transforms believers from within, evidenced by their love, obedience, and assurance.

## Is the origin of this faith from God to the believer or just derived from the exercise of the mind of man.

In 1 John, the origin of genuine faith is presented as coming directly from God rather than being derived from human reasoning or intellectual effort alone. John emphasizes that faith is a divine gift—a revelation initiated and sustained by God—manifested in the believer through God's own actions and presence. Here are the key ways John underscores the divine origin of faith:

1. **Faith Initiated by God's Revelation in Christ:** John points to the Incarnation of Jesus as the starting point of faith: "That which was from the beginning...we have heard...we have looked upon" (1 John 1:1-2). John's opening verses show that faith originates in God's choice to reveal Himself to humanity through Jesus, allowing believers to know Him personally. Faith, therefore, begins with God's self-disclosure rather than human discovery(First John Chapters 1 –...).
2. **The Work of the Holy Spirit in Believers:** John emphasizes that the Spirit's presence in believers is a testimony from God, confirming their faith and enabling them to know and abide in Him (1 John 4:13). This indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a divine act that assures believers of their relationship with God and strengthens their faith beyond intellectual conviction(First John Chapters 1 –...).
3. **The Gift of Love from God as Faith's Foundation:** John's assertion that "We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19) indicates that the capacity for love—and by extension, faith—is not self-generated but flows from God's initial love for humanity. God's love enables believers to respond in faith, making love and faith possible through His initiative(First John Chapters 1 –...).
4. **Belief in Jesus as the Christ Enabled by God's Testimony:** John writes that the belief in Jesus as the Son of God is rooted in God's own testimony about His Son (1 John 5:9-10). This testimony, which resides in those who believe, indicates that true faith is not merely intellectual but is received as a divine revelation through God's declaration of who Jesus is(First John Chapters 1 –...).
5. **Eternal Life as a Gift Through Faith in Jesus:** John states that eternal life is a gift from God to those who believe in His Son (1 John 5:11-12). This life and faith are given by God, not achieved by human effort, showing that faith is a response to God's generous act rather than a product of human reasoning(First John Chapters 1 –...).

In summary, John presents faith as divinely initiated and sustained—a response to God's revelation, love, and Spirit, rather than a product of human intellect. This foundation means that true faith, according to John, is a relational gift from God, rooted in His actions and presence in the believer's life.

## Is this concept of knowing John uses built upon the primary experience of this God-given revelatory experience?

Yes, the concept of "knowing" that John uses is indeed built upon the foundational experience of God's revelation. John's use of "know" (Greek: *ginōskō*) in 1 John consistently refers to a personal, experiential knowledge that is rooted in a divine, God-initiated encounter rather than mere intellectual understanding. This knowledge is a deep, relational awareness that comes from the believer's response to God's revelatory actions. Here's how John grounds this knowledge in divine revelation:

1. **Knowing God Through Christ's Incarnation:** John begins by affirming that the apostles' knowledge of God is based on their experience with Jesus, whom they "have heard...seen with [their] eyes...looked upon and touched" (1 John 1:1). This first-hand experience of Jesus, God's ultimate revelation, is the foundation of knowing God. John presents this knowledge as not merely theoretical but rooted in a lived encounter with the incarnate Word of Life (First John Chapters 1 –...).
2. **The Holy Spirit as the Source of Knowledge:** John emphasizes that knowing God is made possible through the Holy Spirit's indwelling. The Spirit enables believers to abide in God and know His truth (1 John 3:24; 4:13). This knowledge comes as a direct result of God's revelation through His Spirit, who provides believers with insight, guidance, and assurance of their relationship with God (First John Chapters 1 –...).
3. **Knowledge of Truth Through God's Testimony:** John states that the believer's confidence in knowing God rests on God's own testimony about His Son. "The Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is the truth" (1 John 5:6), grounding believers' knowledge of God in God's self-revelation rather than human reasoning. This understanding of truth and God's identity comes directly from the testimony He has given, affirming that knowledge of God is rooted in His disclosure, not human deduction (First John Chapters 1 –...).
4. **Love as an Experiential Knowledge of God:** John's assertion that "God is love" (1 John 4:8) and that those who know God will also love others ties knowledge to the experience of God's nature. Knowing God is revealed as a transformative experience of His love that manifests in believers' lives. This experiential knowledge goes beyond theoretical belief, as it reflects God's revelation of His love within believers, transforming them to love as He does (First John Chapters 1 –...).
5. **Assurance of Eternal Life Through Divine Knowledge:** Finally, John assures believers that they "may know that [they] have eternal life" through their faith in Jesus (1 John 5:13). This certainty is rooted in God's promise and revelation, enabling believers to have a personal and assured knowledge of their eternal standing with Him (First John Chapters 1 –...).

Thus, John's concept of "knowing" God is deeply relational and experiential, built upon a foundation of divine revelation and the believer's encounter with God's love, Spirit, and truth. This knowing is far more than intellectual belief; it is a dynamic, personal awareness of God fostered through His self-revelation.