

Head & Heart

by Gary Henry

“He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him” (1 John 2:4-5).

In seeking God how should “reason” and “emotion” be related? What does knowledge have to do with love, and what do both knowledge and love have to do with obedience?

Since God is the ultimate perfection of love, our understanding of love should come from Him. We must allow God’s **character** to show us what love **is** and His **conduct** to show us what love **does**. Cut off from the knowledge of God, the thing that we call “love” soon becomes weak and misguided. If what we know of God is not accurate, we’ll not be able to put real love into practice. Our attempts to show love will do more harm than good.

But also, it is the knowledge of God that causes us to **want** to love. He is not only the **what** of love, He is also the **why**. The knowledge of God is our most powerful motivation to love, and no one can really say that he knows God if he has not been moved to greater love. The apostle John said it very simply: *“He who does not love does not know God, for God is love” (1 John 4:8).*

This helps us to see how obedience is connected to knowledge and to love. To know God is to love Him, and to love Him is to want to **show** that love. Worldly knowledge and love may be lethargic, but the knowledge and love of God are *active*. And not only *active*, they are willing to be governed by God’s rule. Knowledge and love are, in a word, **OBEDIENT**. And again, John said it simply: *“This is the love of God, that we **keep** His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3).*

In practice, of course, all of this requires a serious study of the Scriptures. Our **obedience** to God must be grounded in our **love** for Him. Our love must be determined by our **knowledge** of God. And our knowledge of God must come from His own self-revelation in the **Scriptures**. Each of these reinforces the other, resulting in spiritual growth. The more we know of God, the more we’ll love Him. And the more we love Him, the more we’ll want to know of Him. When all is said and done, that is why we want to go to heaven.

Editor’s Note: Gary Henry is a gospel preacher and has a web page (www.wordpoints.com) containing daily devotionals, family Bible studies, blogs, etc. I have had the privilege of working with Gary in past Gospel Meetings and encourage you to check out his web page. He approaches things with more of a philosophical approach and is an encourager.

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