

all we have to do to be born of God is to believe in Jesus. That's what he says, but is that what he means? What does he mean by believing in this passage?

John goes on: "And every one that loveth him that begat loveth him that is begotten of him" (1 Jn. 5:1b). Just when we decide that believing is enough, John says loving God is required. So now the believer who loves God and God's begotten, is born of God. Still no problem for most folks. We can see how believing in something brings about love. Yet, John keeps going. He continues: "by this we know that we love the children of God, when we keep his commandments" (1 Jn. 5:2,3a). Now the situation is truly complicated because the perceived opposite of faith, commandments, has entered into the mix. Commandments, spoken of in the same breath as love and faith? How can that be?

John's progression, bringing all these concepts together, is the same story as the entire Bible presents. God wants our faith to be toward Him. He promises that the just shall live by faith (Gal. 3:11). But is it faith alone with nothing else involved? Why, no! Love must be enjoined as well. We must love God, we must love God's Son, and we must love one another. How do we show our love? By keeping God's commandments! How could we possibly show love for God while we willfully disregard his commandments?

In the minds of some, having faith precludes the necessity of commandment keeping. But to John, the keeping of commandments, which are not griev-

ous (1 John 5:3b), proves our faith and proves our love, toward God and toward our fellow man. Without obedience, faith and love are empty words. Obedience understands true faith and love!

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2011?

2011

It's amazing how eventful this last year has been. Every time we turned around, it seems something huge was happening. Just take a look at some of the events in 2011:

- January 11: Massive flooding and mud-slides in Brazil (killing 903).
- February 11: Egypt's leader, Hosni Mubarak, is forced from power.
- March 11: A 9.1 magnitude earthquake and tsunami hits Japan (killing 15,840), and results in a nuclear crisis.
- April 29: An estimated 2 billion people watched the wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton.
- April-May: Huge tornadoes hit the southeast and Midwest.
- May 2: Osama Bin Laden is killed.
- July 21: NASA's space shuttle program is ended.
- July 31: Massive flooding in Thailand, affecting over 12 million

people and causing \$45 billion dollars in damage.

- August 27: Hurricane Irene hits the east coast.
- September 17: The "Occupy Wall Street" movement begins.
- October 20: Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi is killed.
- October 31: Global population reaches seven billion.
- December 15: End of the Iraq war.
- December 17: North Korea's leader, Kim Jong II, dies.

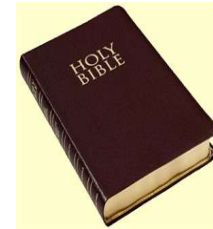
This list only scratches the surface of the events of 2011. This doesn't talk about people who died, our bad economy, record high unemployment numbers, or other events that impacted us last year. Our world is not the same as it was one year ago. Chances are, neither are you. This may have been a terrific year for you, or maybe it was one of the worst.

Only the Lord knows what will happen in 2012. He knows who will live and who will die. He knows what disasters will occur. He knows who will be President in 2012. He even knows what will happen in your life this year. God knows exactly what this year will be like. Which is all the more reason to put Him first.

There is no other way to ensure a great 2012 than serving the Lord. Joshua's words are just as true then as they are now, "If it is disagreeable in your sight

to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15). Chose to serve the Lord, it will be the greatest choice you make all year long.

- Brett Petrillo, Bear Valley Institute



Five Rules for Prosperous Bible Study

By Dave Hart

1. Study the Bible Prayerfully. Before a person ever open his Bible, he should fall down on his knees and ask for God's blessings. Paul reminds us of this principle as he prays for the Christians at Collosae. "For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Col. 1:9).

2. Study the Bible Carefully. One must never study the Bible with a flippant and irreverent view of God and His Word. Paul taught Timothy to, "Study to show yourself approved unto God a workman who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).

3. Study the Bible Practically. For the Word of God to do us any good in this life, we must apply its' teachings to our daily life. Paul reminded the Christians in Phillipi of this when he said, "The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do and the God of peace will be with you" (Phil 4:9).

4. Study the Bible Impartially. To study God's word correctly a person must put aside all prejudice, bias and preconceived notions of God and His Will. We must have the attitude of Samuel who said, "Speak Lord, for your servant hears" (1 Sam. 3:10). We must remember the words of the Proverbs writer; "There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof is the way of death (Prov. 16:25).

5. Study the Bible Expectantly. For a person to receive the full blessings of Bible study, he must study it expecting several things. For example, we should study the Bible expecting to understand it (Eph. 3:4). We should study the Bible expecting its principles to bless us as they are applied to our life (Ps. 1:1-3).

We should study the Bible expecting to learn how to be set free from sin (John 8:32). We should study the Bible expecting to learn how to be saved (Acts 2:38). May God bless each one of us as we apply His will to our lives!



Kristen Morris

01/03

Scott Barnes 1/08

Billy Biter 1/10

Prayer List: **Cancer:** Kenneth Dunn; Rhonda Bogus; Rick Campbell; Debbie Boggs; Lowell Crumfield; Barbara Hill; Tammy Hodges; Barbara Francis; Jeff Wiley. **Health problems:** Virgil Steele; Donald Rife; Eugene Holdren; Steve and Pam Poorman's-daughter; Glenna Dempsey; Marlin Harles; Hazel Farr & JR

Rex "Jimmy" Backus; Dosie Branscome & Katie Hensley. Arnold Dempsey; Ken McWilliams; Gene Booth; Wanda Rowe; Diane Haleston; Billy Myers; Zack Holland; **Strokes:** Richard Clement; Amanda Lance. **Other:** Shelby Lindsey-fibromyalgia; Kyle Hockenberry-recovering from military injuries; Betty Bailey-not eating; Brooke Family, Ken McWilliams friend Wolf - eye problems; David Carrico-Leukemia; Lura Durham-dizziness & had to have a pacemaker; Sean Smither-bad car accident; Robin Hodges; Betty Scott- tests; Hazel Anderson-fluid around her heart; Debra Lagos-issue with her pregnancy; Justin Begil's nephew Payton -meningitis; Whitney Lockman-health problems; Edna Roberts-tumor on thyroid; Kimberly Redden -Spots on lungs; Christine Asbury-home recovering from back surgery; David Allen-surgery on his neck; Travis Durham-back problem; Ethan Oliver-Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia. Kim Lively-spots on liver; Debbie Jones accident; Gary Durham; Ken McWilliams-eye and health problems; Johnny Blankenship-health problems; Scott Boyd III- surgery on tumor; Bridget Harrisburg-health problems; Linda Harris-health/job problems; Mildred Lilly-cancer & needs liver transplant; Cody Sells-health problems; Don Dillon's wife-has cancer; His grandchild is a 6 year old having problems with his mind; David Blankenship-heart attack; Albert Mahon-cancer; Jean Myers-breathing problem-her surgery was postponed so they can do a stress and lung test; Hunter Miller- ear infection and a virus along with the pneumonia; Dominick Collins-recovering from surgery; Konner Lively-MRI on a mass in his chest; Rose Reece friend Patricia Rotenberry has cancer. Caleb Hill and Brooke Hill; Ed Thomas-blockage in his heart; Ruby Biter. **Alzheimer's:** Zella England; Mary Lou Thomas, & Leo Hamby. **Nursing home:** Peggy Barie is in the Loving Hands Adult Care; Ethel Pitzer- Country View Assisted Living; **Military:** Zachary McConnell.

Mailing Address:
211 Church Street
Rich Creek, VA 24147
wwjd@exhorter.com

Preacher:
Roger Hazelwood:
Cell: 304-324-7799
rlh90@comcast.net

Services:
Sunday:
Bible Study: 9:30 AM
Worship: 10:30 AM
Evening: 5:PM
Wednesday: 6:PM

Serving Communion:
Don Davis
Darrell Fletcher
Johnny Pitzer

Attendance:
January 1, 2012
A.M. Worship -
P.M. Worship -
January 4, 2012
Wednesday:

Contribution: \$ 329.00

TV Programs on Sunday
In Search of the Lord's
Way 7:30 am
INSP Channel

The Gospel of Christ
10:am CW Channel
www.wvacofc.com

Free Private Home :
Bible Studies & Lessons!
Video Lessons & Tracts!
www.exhorter.com



Church of Christ



Exhorter January 8, 2012



BELIEVING, LOVING, AND OBEYING By Dennis Curd

The apostle John was a master of connecting thoughts that sometimes don't seem to be connected. He is often portrayed as the apostle of love, and he is well characterized by that. Yet, he spoke as forcefully toward the condemnation of sinners as any inspired writer. How could such sternness be overshadowed, in the minds of many, by his words of love? Can it be that John was speaking deceitfully or in a confusing manner? Or could it be another problem?

People are bad about seeing only what they want to see. We tend to ignore, or at least diminish, any perceived negative in anything we do. Thus, when people read John's words of love they forget about the matters opposite to it. Take for instance these words of John: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 Jn. 5:1a). To end John's thought at that point could teach the idea of "faith only", that is,