

1 God-TOK

In search of Spiritual Knowledge

2 Introduction

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. (1 John 4:16b)

In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. (1 John 4:17)

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. (1 John 4:18a)

The one who fears is not made perfect in love. (1 John 4:18b)

3 Introduction

We love because he first loved us. (1 John 4:19a)

If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. (1 John 4:19b)

For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. (1 John 4:20)

And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother. (1 John 4:21 NIV)

4 Introduction

Everyone who believes that

Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and

everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. (1 John 5:1)

This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. (1 John 5:2)

5 Introduction

This is love for God: to obey his commands.

And his commands are not burdensome,

for everyone born of God overcomes the world. (1 John 5:3-4a)

This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. (1 John 5:4b)

Who is it that overcomes the world? (1 John 5:5a)

Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. (1 John 5:5b)

6 Introduction

TikTok is an insanely popular video-sharing social media app used to share or record 60 second clips of . . .

short music,

talent,

dance, and

comedy clips

You also might find curious clips of buildings falling, lions fighting, pranksters pranking, children crying, cars racing and more.

While they are short, they loop continuously and you can scroll for hours before you know it.

7 Introduction

The app is not without controversy.

President Donald Trump threatened to shut it down in the United States.

India at one time banned it completely, and Pakistan, Indonesia and other countries have done so as well.

Since the app is owned by the Chinese government, people didn't like the idea that their private information would be in the hands of the Chinese Communist Party.

8 Introduction

However, the content of tonight's sermon is not necessarily about TikTok.

Nor is it about "Tik"

But it is about "TOK."

TOK is an abbreviation familiar to many high school students both here and around the world.

It stands for the "Theory of Knowledge," known affectionately by students as "TOK."

9 Introduction

What happens in a TOK class connects well with our text from 1 John.

In fact, one of the principal themes in both the 1st letter of John and the Gospel of John is the vexing dilemma of how to "know" something.

Or in other words,

how can we be certain that we know what we know, or

how can we know what we don't know.

10 Introduction

This issue lurks in today's reading, and John even mentions it specifically:

"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we . . .

love God and

obey his commandments."

In 1 John, this theme is pervasive; in this short letter, the word "know" or "knowledge" appears 38 times.

11 Introduction

2:4 - Whoever says, "I have come to know him," but does not obey his commandments, is a liar.

3:14 - We know that we have passed from death to life because we love one another.

3:19 - And by this (showing generosity) we will know that we are from the truth.

3:24 - And by this (obeying God's command to believe His Son) we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

4:8 - Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.

4:13 - By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

— Introduction

And, as though to emphasize his point, John closes his letter by reviewing his theme and purpose:

"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life."

This verse recalls John's thesis in his gospel, explicitly identified in 20:30-31:

"Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.

But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing (trusting, following, and obeying) you may have life in his name."

12 Introduction

According to the Theory of Knowledge (TOK), finding knowledge is a four-fold endeavor and we must study and look at the following:

The Ways of Knowing.

The Areas of Knowing

The Factors of Knowing.

The Expression of Knowledge.

The last point is something students must accomplish through writing something known as the "Extended Essay."

13 Introduction

When you ask most people the question how we come to know something they will probably look at you kind of funny.

It is one of those questions that is so easy, it is hard.

Most people will answer that knowledge comes through our five senses.

However, according to TOK, we also come to know things through reason and we know things through our emotion and language.

New to TOK they have also added four additional ways of knowing: intuition, imagination, faith, and memory.

14 Bible Lesson

However, I'm going to go out on a limb tonight and declare to you another way of knowing that the world does not know about.

In fact, it is a way of knowing that many Christians don't know about because we are more inclined to accept its counterfeits.

What I'm talking about is not hard, but it gets at the heart of knowing God because it has to do with the essence of God's nature and what is most important to him.

What I'm talking about is the virtue of love.

15 Bible Lesson

I'm not talking about love as in feelings or affection.

I'm talking about the love that God has and the kind of love that sent Jesus to the cross, which is "selfless" love or as the Bible says "agape love."

In my opinion, agape love is best described as "parental love."

No wonder, God describes himself to us as a Father.

16 Bible Lesson

Good parents not only have feelings for their children, but will

Give sacrificially for their well-being.

They will make sure they are clothed, fed, and have a safe place to live.

They will frequently go out of their way for their kids even when it's inconvenient or even creates a hardship.

They will teach, correct, and even discipline their children because their goal is not to make them happy, but make them into responsible adults.

Good Christian parents will do not only all of the above but will also teach their children how to be responsible people of faith and productive members of the body of Christ—the church.

17 Bible Lesson

The Bible (1 Corinthians 13:4–7) says this about agape love.

Agape Love is patient, agape love is kind.

It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

Agape Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

18 Bible Lesson

The benefits of exercising, expressing, or fellowshiping, agape love are huge.

Especially in the area of gaining spiritual knowledge, understanding, and enlightenment to the deep things of God.

Not that we become a seer or a prophet that goes around giving people personal prophecies.

But we're someone who are mature in the faith and able to walk the straight and narrow—especially in a world that is

full of darkness,

half-truths, and

outright deception.

19 Bible Lesson

This is why Paul gave this advice to Philemon.

He said (Philemon 1:4–7 NIV),

I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your “agape” love for all the saints.

I pray that you may be active in sharing (koinonia) your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.

Your “agape” love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints.

20 Bible Lesson

According to the Greek Strong’s Dictionary, koinonia means

partnership, i.e. (literally) participation, or
(social) interaction and expression.

In other words, Paul is saying to Philemon,

keep up the good work of expressing your faith (agape love) because as you do,
you will grow in your understanding to who you are and what you have in Christ.

21 Bible Lesson

John says the same thing in his gospel.

Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. (John 14:21a NIV)

He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.” (John 14:21b NIV)

Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. (John 14:23 NIV)

So then, as you can see, loving God and knowing Him intimately is interconnected to obey Jesus' commands, which is to "agape" love one another.

22 Bible Lesson

Let us go back to 1 John where the Apostle John says,

No one has ever seen God; but if we "agape" love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. (1 John 4:12 NIV)

God is "agape" love. Whoever lives in "agape" love lives in God, and God in him. (1 John 4:16b)

In this way, "agape" love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. (1 John 4:17 NIV)

There is no fear in "agape" love. But perfect "agape" love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in "agape" love. (1 John 4:18 NIV)

23 Bible Lesson

There are many, who believe that intimacy with God is achieved through mysticism or through of some form of contemplation, meditation, and asceticism (i.e., fasting).

The reality is, it is by becoming imitators of God, as we put into practice the revelation we have in the Bible, we grow in our knowledge of God.

In other words, when we put into practice what Jesus teaches us, we will come to know God intimately, which will set us free from the power of sin and the fear of condemnation.

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. (1 John 1:7 NIV)

24 Bible Lesson

As Paul says to the Colossians (Colossians 3:12–14 NIV) who were combating hollow and deceptive teaching by ascetic mystics:

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.

Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

And over all these virtues put on "agape" love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

25 Bible Lesson

So then what happens when we put on virtue?

According to the Apostle Peter, we will not be ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:8 NIV)

And with that spiritual enlightenment, (2 Peter 1:10–11 NIV)

we can make our calling and election sure,

where we will never fall, and

will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

26 Bible Lesson

So then, what is the biblical TOK (Theory of Knowledge)?

It is as stated by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 5:1-2,

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and

live a life of "agape" love,

just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

AMEN!