

# Week 3

## Obedience

### Day 1

**1 John 2:7-11:** *7 Dear friends, I am not writing a new commandment for you; rather it is an old one you have had from the very beginning. This old commandment—to love one another—is the same message you heard before. 8 Yet it is also new. Jesus lived the truth of this commandment, and you also are living it. For the darkness is disappearing, and the true light is already shining. 9 If anyone claims, “I am living in the light,” but hates a fellow believer, that person is still living in darkness. 10 Anyone who loves a fellow believer is living in the light and does not cause others to stumble. 11 But anyone who hates a fellow believer is still living and walking in darkness. Such a person does not know the way to go, having been blinded by the darkness.*

The old adage “actions speak louder than words” comes into play here. It is very easy to talk the talk; it is much harder to walk the walk. The command to love one another can be traced back all the way to the Ten Commandments. What John and Jesus before him says about loving one another is not a new or foreign concept; it’s one that has been spoken since the wilderness sojourn fifteen hundred years previous. Humans have a tendency to have poor short-term memories and need to be reminded constantly of the things of God.

What does it mean though to love one another? On the surface it looks like looking out for those who we care about, attending to their needs and being in community with them. Jesus takes it further though. It’s really easy to love someone you get along with; it is very difficult to love someone you disagree



with or don't like. Gary Burge says of the kind of love Jesus and John speak of that, "love becomes a genuine value only when it is tested, when we must reach beyond ourselves and love someone we do not wish to love." By today's cultural beliefs, this kind of love is looked at as hypocritical. What would it look like to set aside differences and find unity in Christ?

Who can you love today who may not see eye-to-eye with you?

## Day 2

***John 15:9-14:** 9 "I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. 10 When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. 11 I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! 12 This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. 13 There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command.*

What are your motives for love? Is it personal gain? To express or receive an emotional feeling? Or is it a genuine response in gratitude for the other person? When we obey God, it should be out of love for all that he has done for us. Obeying God to try and get something from Him is counterintuitive. You are in essence using God for your own ends. Think of a time when someone used you for their own gains. It probably was not a very good feeling, was it? That's how God feels when we use Him for our own personal ends. He is the one who has given us life and provides the air we breathe. He didn't have to create us; he chose to. There is a big difference between the two. We experience the genuine love of God when we are obedient to his commands and furthermore, we are filled with an eternal joy.

What is your source of joy?



## Day 3

**Romans 13:11-14:** **11** *This is all the more urgent, for you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.* **12** *The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living.* **13** *Because we belong to the day, we must live decent lives for all to see. Don't participate in the darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity and immoral living, or in quarreling and jealousy.* **14** *Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.*

Think of a time when something was really urgent. Maybe it was a deadline on a work project or you were running late to your kids soccer game. Maybe you or someone you know was in a bad accident and needed urgent care. Whatever the case may be, a sense of urgency creates a heightened awareness to the task at hand. Do we carry the same urgency to tell people about Jesus as the other urgent things in our lives? What makes something urgent is twofold. First, it's important to us in some way. If you don't get this work project done on time, you'll lose the client, get a bad review, maybe a pay cut, etc. The level of urgency is proportionate to the importance of the situation. Second, whatever is urgent in the moment stays rooted in your mind. You are constantly reminded of the importance of what is at stake. You run through different scenarios of the possible outcomes. Will my kid hate me if I miss the beginning of their game? Will they think I'm a bad parent? Will the other parents think I'm a bad parent? How can we keep the mission of Jesus urgent in our minds?

What reminders can you put into place to ensure Jesus is at the forefront?



## Day 4

*Ephesians 5:1-9: 1 Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. 2 Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God. 3 Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people. 4 Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God. 5 You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. 6 Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey him. 7 Don't participate in the things these people do. 8 For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! 9 For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true.*

Growing up, who were your heroes? Was it someone in your family? An athlete or movie star? A musician? What was it about those people that made them your hero? Did you try to imitate them? When I was a kid, I wanted to be like my father who was a fireman. I had the fireman gear, had a bunch of matchbox fire trucks that I would arrange on the floor as different fire stations and they had to respond to pretend emergencies. I even got to go to work with my dad a lot and ride on the fire trucks. I imitated my dad because I wanted to be like him. In this passage, Paul urges us to imitate Christ in all we do. He modeled perfectly the life that we are each to lead. He spent a lot of time in prayer and scripture. He was busy, but never in a hurry. He took time to be alone with his Father and he had compassion on everyone.

What's one thing you can do today to imitate Christ in your life?



## Day 5

**John 14:15-17, 23-24: 15** *“If you love me, obey my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. 17 He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you... 23 Jesus replied, “All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them. 24 Anyone who doesn’t love me will not obey me. And remember, my words are not my own. What I am telling you is from the Father who sent me.*

Recognition is born from familiarity. How do you recognize people? The world does not recognize the things of God because they are not familiar with God. How do you become familiar with someone? You spend time with them, learning their interests, finding out their story and just being in their presence. It’s the same way with God. When you take time to be with him and learn from him through Scripture, prayer and by being obedient, you start to recognize how he works in your life and you begin to recognize his voice. It might not always be audible, but that subtle nudge in your spirit is the Lord leading and guiding you. And the more time you spend with him, the more you recognize him.

What is something you can do consistently to become familiar with God. No one fully arrives here; we’re constantly growing in Christ until we reach heaven.

