

Small Group Guide

Based on 1 John 2:12-17

Overview

In this sermon, the pastor walked through 1 John 2:12-17, where John writes to the church with both encouragement and warning. John reminds believers of their firm foundation in Christ, cautions them against false teaching, and calls them to choose the will of God over the desires of the world. This guide is designed to help your group go deeper into those themes together.

Key Takeaways

- John writes to the church with tenderness and care, reminding every believer -- young and old in faith -- of who they already are in Christ.
- Our foundation is not what we know but who we know. Salvation and strength come from Christ alone, not from our own wisdom or effort.
- False teaching has always been a threat to the church. Knowing God's word is our best defense against deception.
- The world and its desires are temporary. Only those who do the will of God will live forever.
- We do not obey God to become his children. We obey God because we are his children.

Opening Question

Take a few minutes to get the conversation started before diving into the deeper questions.

- Think about a time when someone you trusted gave you advice that turned out to be wrong. How did you eventually figure out the truth? What helped you recognize it?

Discussion Questions

On Encouragement and Identity in Christ

1. In 1 John 2:12-14, John addresses children, fathers, and young men in the faith. Which of those categories do you most identify with right now in your spiritual journey, and why?
2. Lee made the statement: "We do not obey to become children of God. We obey God because we are children of God." How does that shift in thinking change the way you approach your relationship with God on a daily basis?

3. John repeats his words of encouragement twice in this passage. Why do you think repetition matters when it comes to reminding believers of who they are in Christ? Is there a truth about your identity in God that you personally need to hear more often?

On False Teaching and Discernment

4. Lee described how false teachers in John's day denied that Jesus was fully God and fully man, denied his resurrection, and denied his payment for our sins. Why are those specific truths so essential to the Christian faith? What falls apart if any one of them is removed?
5. Lee said that any teaching leading you away from Scripture should set off an alarm in your head. What habits or practices help you stay grounded in the truth of God's word? What habits make you more vulnerable to being misled?
6. John writes in a circular, repeating style to drive his points home. The pastor compared this to Joshua standing before Israel and calling them to choose who they would serve. What does it look like practically for your group to stand firm in the truth together?

On the World and Its Desires

7. Lee broke down worldly temptation into three categories from 1 John 2:16 -- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Which of those three do you find most difficult to navigate in your own life, and why?
8. Lee was clear that physical creation is not evil -- God made it good. The problem is when our attitude toward created things becomes one of worship, obsession, or disobedience to God. Where is the line between enjoying God's good gifts and crossing into idolatry? How do you personally evaluate that in your own life?
9. Lee referenced the Egyptian pharaohs who believed they could take their possessions with them into the afterlife. In what ways do people today -- including Christians -- live as though their earthly treasures will last forever? What would it look like to genuinely invest in treasures in heaven instead?

On Choosing the Will of God

10. First John 2:17 says the world and its desires will pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever. What does "doing the will of God" look like in your everyday, ordinary life -- not just in big decisions but in small ones?
11. Lee pointed out that John is writing this letter because he genuinely cares about the church. Who in your life has cared enough about your spiritual health to speak truth to you, even when it was hard to hear? How did that shape you?

Practical Applications

Choose one or more of the following to work on individually or as a group before you meet again.

Read 1 John in Full If you have not already done so, read the entire letter of 1 John in one sitting this week. Try a different translation than you normally use. Notice where John repeats himself and ask why he keeps coming back to those themes.

Examine Your Desires Take 15 minutes in a quiet place and honestly evaluate the three categories the pastor mentioned -- lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life. Write down one specific area in each category where you sense the world has more of your attention than God does. Bring that honestly before God in prayer.

Memorize a Key Verse Write 1 John 2:17 on a notecard and place it somewhere you will see it every day this week. Let it serve as a daily reminder of what lasts and what does not.

Evaluate What You Are Consuming Consider the podcasts, social media accounts, books, or teachings you regularly take in. Do they consistently point you toward Scripture and toward Christ? Are there any that raise concerns? Talk about this with a trusted fellow believer.

Practice the Disciplines The pastor encouraged journaling, reading Scripture in different versions, and using the church app devotional to go deeper. Commit to one new spiritual discipline this week and share your experience with your small group at the next meeting.

Closing Reflection

Before you close in prayer, take a moment for each person to answer this question:

- Based on what you heard in the sermon and discussed today, what is one specific thing you want to surrender to God this week?

Closing Prayer

Close your time together by praying as a group. You may use the following as a guide or pray in your own words.

Father, thank you for the truth of your word and for the care you have for your church. Help us to know you more deeply, not just to know about you. Remind us of who we are as your children, and give us the wisdom to recognize lies when they come. Teach us to hold loosely to the things of this world and to invest in what lasts forever. Work on our hearts from the inside out, and make us more like you. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

For Further Study

- Proverbs 9:8-10
- John 6:67-69
- 1 Corinthians 1:18-31
- 1 Timothy 6:17-19
- Daniel 2:44
- Psalm 104:14-15
- Ecclesiastes 3:12-13
- Joshua 24 (Israel's choice to serve the Lord)