



Made For More Community
Oct 7: I Will Obey

Series Summary: One word defines the message of 1, 2, & 3 John: Love. Specifically, God's sacrificial and perfect agape Love. This love is so perfect and so powerful, it does not lead us the way it finds us. It transforms us. It marks us. In this small group series, we will see how God's agape love for his people transforms us and every part of our lives.

Big Idea: Because of God's agape love for us, we should be ready to obey His Word as a response to the grace He has shown to us.

Schedule:

- Live teaching
- Small group

VIDEO TEACHING

Series Lead in: One word defines the message of 1, 2, & 3 John: Love. Specifically, God's sacrificial and perfect agape Love. This love is so perfect and so powerful, it does not lead us the way it finds us. It transforms us. It marks us. In this small group series, we will see how God's agape love for his people transforms us and every part of our lives.

Last week: We talked about God's agape love for us.

Tonight: we should have a response to His love—obedience. So many people say that they want to grow and mature in their faith, but don't realize that obeying God's Word is the best way of doing so.

Transition - This is not simply my answer and my opinion! Take a look at this compilation in John's writings regarding maturation and obedience...

1 John 2:3-6 We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands.
4 Whoever says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. **5** But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: **6** Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.

1 John 3:22-24 and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. **23** And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. **24** The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

1 John 5:2-3 This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. **3** In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome,

Transition - When people see these passages, they get so much wrong about obedience because they misunderstand God's agape Love. Obedience is not to earn God's love, but rather a response to it.

OBEDIENCE IS A RESPONSE

Obedience is a response to God's love

1 John 4:9-10 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. **10** This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Jesus was sent into the world so that whoever believed in Him would not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16-18). Did the world love Jesus? No. In fact, the world hated Jesus (John 15:23). The world loved darkness instead (John 3:19-20).

Transition - This means that God's love was first. That is why John said...

1 John 4:19 We love because he first loved us

Our love is always a response to God's love. Our obedience is how we show our love for God. But understand that God already loves you, now, Today! Your obedience is a response to God's perfect love.

Transition - But it is easy for us to say that we know that, but our actions will always show how fully we understand God's agape love.

1 John 3:1 See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

Father-like love: God the Father has lavished his love on us. So much so that we are called Children of God. Therefore, God loves us as he does his children.

Disobedience does not forfeit God's love. This was the mistake of the prodigal son.

Obedience does not purchase more of God's love. This was the mistake of the prideful older son.

We have a tendency to drift towards one of these two extremes. There is truth in neither.

1 John 3:2-3 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. **3** All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

Our obedience is an imperfect reflection of Christ's perfect obedience. Jesus is perfectly pure. In him there is no sin (1 Pet 2:22). Jesus is pure by his very nature. We, even as believers in Jesus Christ, must do the work of purifying ourselves (Eph 4:22-24).

Imitation is the ultimate form of flattery. If I am imitating an obedient Savior, I will seek out obedience.

Let's be honest: There's going to be moments when we fail. Moments when we fall short. Moments where we disobey. What happens then?

HOPE WHEN OBEDIENCE FALLS SHORT

Transition - Look at a different passage that Paul writes, and look at his response

Romans 7:21-25 So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law; 23 but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? 25 Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Paul voices his frustrations with wanting to do good, but still dealing with sin and disobedience. But notice how his frustration doesn't turn to shame...his frustration turns back to the gospel.

- When we sin, and we will sin, we can trust that he is faithful and will forgive us of our sins and continue to do a powerful purifying work in us.

Transition to small group: As we head to groups, we're going to unpack more about us showing our love to Jesus by obeying him with our lives. If we desire to grow in Godliness then what does that call for us to do?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Leader Note: The progression of discussion tonight is to help students see first where spiritual maturity comes from (obedience). Then we shift into obeying for the right reasons, and traps to look out for when it comes to our obedience. In short, we need to obey for the right reasons, and if we don't then we can see detrimental habits occur.

1. What is a sign that someone is a mature believer in Jesus Christ?

Note: Feel free to take time to delve out plenty of answers

Some Potential Answers

- Maturity is not measured in knowledge alone, although knowledge is necessary.
- Maturity is not measured in simply sounding spiritual. Even if Truth is behind their words, it can be cheap and a poor reflection of reality.
- Maturity is measured by obedience as a response to God's commands.

2. Have you ever found yourself trying to earn God's approval through your obedience? What did that look like?

**3. Obedience is a response to God's love, not a way to receive God's love.
Why is it easy to think that our obedience is us earning God's love?**

Leader Note: A great quote to help put this in perspective: "Christianity is a religion of grace, not fairness. If it was a religion of fairness, then Heaven would be empty, and Hell would be packed to the brim."

- Fairness would mean that no one is allowed to enter Heaven, even if we tried to earn God's love.
- Obedience is a response to God's grace which covers everyone who has believed in Jesus. We obey because we are grateful for God's grace that we don't deserve, but He willingly shows it to us anyways.

READ 1 JOHN 5:1-5 TOGETHER AS A GROUP

1 John 5:1-5 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. **2** This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. **3** In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, **4** for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. **5** Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

- 4. (Lead-in)** Vs 1: Many throughout church history have misunderstood John's teaching in this chapter to teach that salvation is somehow earned, preceded, or validated by obedience to God. In verse one, John clarifies that salvation comes from believing in Christ.

Why is it so important that we get this fundamental doctrinal truth right?

Leader Note: Answers might lead into the premise of the next question, which is okay. One of the greatest issues that we run into is the concept of becoming legalistic in our way of thinking. ("I'm a better Christian than they are"..."Why aren't they on my level of faith"..."They must not really love God").

5. How does trying to earn God's love lead us down a path of legalism and perfectionism? What are the traps of these ways of thinking?

Leader Note:

- **Legalism:** Christianity becomes about favoritism and comparison. We think that God might love me more or less compared to how I live out my faith compared to someone else. We can harden our hearts by thinking I'm a more superior Christian compared to another. We will also develop this wrong

image of God altogether where we will think He's an unfair judge and loves some people more than others.

- **Perfectionism:** We feel like we have to be perfect or else God will throw us away. FYI, God knows we will never be perfect. This way of thinking will constantly make us run away in shame, and hide from His grace. We will also constantly live in unrest. Imagine the panic of someone laying on their death bed wondering if they did enough good things in their life...only to remember all the bad things they did also. Praise God for His grace where we can live in peace because Jesus's blood covers my sin!

6. Vs 2: How does legalism and perfectionism prevent us from genuinely loving God and loving others?

Wrap-up: Have you been living with a wrong idea of obedience and what it brings? Have you been trying to follow God's words with the wrong intentions? If you desire to be more like Jesus then what commands in scripture do you need to start obeying?