

Small Group Guide: Obedience That Proves It

The Real Thing: Week 2

1 John 2:3-17

Opening Prayer

Begin by asking God to open hearts and minds to His truth, and to help group members honestly examine their walk with Christ.

Ice Breaker

Share a time when you discovered something you thought was genuine turned out to be fake or counterfeit. How did that make you feel?

Sermon Overview

This sermon explores four marks of genuine faith from 1 John 2:3-17:

1. Genuine believers obey Jesus
 2. Genuine believers love God's people
 3. Genuine believers remember who they are
 4. Genuine believers reject the world's values
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Key Takeaways

- **Obedience reveals relationship:** Our obedience doesn't save us, but it does reveal whether we truly know Christ.
 - **Love is evidence:** Genuine love for other believers is one of the clearest marks that God's grace is at work in our lives.
 - **Identity before instruction:** Remembering who we are in Christ empowers us to live as we should.
 - **Eternal perspective matters:** The world offers temporary satisfaction; Christ offers eternal fulfillment.
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Discussion Questions

Part 1: Genuine Believers Obey Jesus

Read 1 John 2:3-6

1. What's the difference between knowing *about* Jesus and truly *knowing* Jesus? How would you describe your relationship with Christ?
2. The pastor said, "Obedience is not the root of salvation; it is the fruit of salvation." What does this mean? Why is this distinction important?
3. John says the person who claims to know Jesus but doesn't keep His commandments is a liar (v. 4). How does this challenge modern ideas about faith that separate belief from behavior?
4. How does verse 6 challenge us? What does it mean practically to "walk as Jesus walked" in your daily life?

Part 2: Genuine Believers Love God's People

Read 1 John 2:7-11

5. Why do you think John calls the command to love both "old" and "new"? How did Jesus redefine what love looks like?
6. The sermon asks: "Do I genuinely love God's people? Not just attending church with them, not tolerating them or putting up with them, but do I really love them?" How would you honestly answer this question?
7. John describes a progression in verse 11: in darkness → walks in darkness → doesn't know where he's going → blinded by darkness. What does this progression teach us about the danger of harboring bitterness or hatred?
8. Is there someone you're struggling to love or forgive right now? (You don't have to name them.) What steps can you take this week to move toward love and forgiveness?

Part 3: Genuine Believers Remember Who They Are

Read 1 John 2:12-14

9. John reminds believers of three truths:
 - Your sins are forgiven
 - You know the Father
 - You have overcome the evil one

Which of these truths do you most need to remember right now? Why?

10. The pastor said, "Identity fuels obedience." How does remembering who you are in Christ change the way you approach Christian living?
11. What does it mean that we fight "from victory" rather than "for victory"? How should this truth affect our daily spiritual battles?

Part 4: Genuine Believers Reject the World's Values

Read 1 John 2:15-17

12. John identifies three ways the world appeals to us:

- The lust of the flesh (sinful desires)
- The lust of the eyes (craving for more)
- The pride of life (finding significance in accomplishments)

Which of these three do you find most challenging in your life right now?

13. The pastor asked: "What captures your heart? What drives your desires? What shapes your priorities? What is it that you treasure most?" How would you answer these questions honestly?

14. Verse 17 reminds us that "the world is passing away." What are you investing in that will last forever versus what will fade away?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose one of the following to focus on this week:

- **Option 1 - Obedience Audit** Identify one area where you know God is calling you to obey but you've been resisting. Take one concrete step toward obedience this week.
- **Option 2 - Love in Action** Think of someone in the church who is difficult for you to love. Pray for them daily this week and do one practical act of kindness for them.
- **Option 3 - Identity Reminder** Write out the three truths from verses 12-14 on a card:
 - My sins are forgiven
 - I know the Father
 - I have overcome the evil one

Read these aloud each morning and thank God for these realities.

- **Option 4 - World vs. Kingdom Investment** Make a list of where you spend your time, money, and energy. Honestly evaluate: Am I investing more in what's temporary or what's eternal? Make one change this week to shift toward eternal investments.

Reflection Questions for Personal Quiet Time

1. If I'm honest with myself, is my faith characterized more by profession or possession?
 2. In what areas of my life does my obedience to Christ need to grow?
 3. Are there any relationships where I'm harboring bitterness, resentment, or hostility?
 4. What "worldly" thing has been competing for my heart's affection lately?
 5. Am I living like someone whose sins are forgiven and who has victory in Christ?
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Prayer Prompts

- **Confession:** Ask God to reveal areas of disobedience or lack of love in your life.
- **Thanksgiving:** Thank God for forgiveness, for knowing Him personally, and for victory in Christ.
- **Petition:** Ask God to help you love His people genuinely and to give you strength to resist the world's values.
- **Intercession:** Pray for others in your group who are struggling with specific challenges shared during discussion.

Closing Prayer

Father, help us not just to hear Your Word but to live it out. Give us hearts that truly obey You, genuinely love Your people, remember who we are in Christ, and reject the values of a world that is passing away. May our lives prove that our faith is real. In Jesus' name, Amen.

For Next Week

Read 1 John 2:18-29 in preparation for the next study.