

# THE AUTHENTIC LIFE

STAND OUT. BE FAITHFUL.



**Date:** 09/21/2025

**Text:** 1 John 2:7 – 2:17 NLT

**Sermon:** Living in the Light

## 1 John 2:7–11 NLT

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. 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. If anyone claims, “I am living in the light,” but hates a fellow believer, that person is still living in darkness. Anyone who loves a fellow believer is living in the light and does not cause others to stumble. 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.

Deuteronomy 6:5 NLT

And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength.

Leviticus 19:18 NLT

“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against a fellow Israelite, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.

Matthew 22:36–40 NLT

“Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?” Jesus replied, “ ‘You must love the Lord your God with all

your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."

Notes:

**Walk in \_\_\_\_\_, Walk in \_\_\_\_\_**

**1 John 2:12–14 NLT**

I am writing to you who are God's children because your sins have been forgiven through Jesus. I am writing to you who are mature in the faith because you know Christ, who existed from the beginning. I am writing to you who are young in the faith because you have won your battle with the evil one. I have written to you who are God's children because you know the Father. I have written to you who are mature in the faith because you know Christ, who existed from the beginning. I have written to you who are young in the faith because you are strong. God's word lives in your hearts, and you have won your battle with the evil one.

An affirmation that those who remained faithful have a genuine relationship with God.

Notes:

## **Three distinct categories of discipleship**

Children of God

Fathers / Mature in the faith

Young Men / Growing Christians

## **Grow \_\_\_\_\_ Through the Word**

1 John 2:15–17 NLT

Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.

Notes:

## **John's description of the world**

The World & Satan

The world and God

The world and Christians

**Choose \_\_\_\_\_ Over \_\_\_\_\_**

## **Conclusion**

1. Walk in \_\_\_\_\_, Walk in \_\_\_\_\_

2. Grow \_\_\_\_\_ Through the Word

3. Choose \_\_\_\_\_ Over \_\_\_\_\_

### **Next Steps**

1. Abide in God's Word
2. Live Out God's Word
3. Depend on God through Prayer

## **Life Group Questions:**

### **Get to Know You**

**Question:** What's one moment in life that either made you feel like you had finally "grown up" when you were younger (maybe getting your driver's license, staying up late, buying something on your own, etc.) Or share a moment when the weight and responsibility of adulthood hit you?

### **Digging Deeper in the Bible**

Read 1 John 2-7:17 and write down any questions, observations or things that stood out to you.

**Question:** John says that loving one another is both an "old" and a "new" commandment (1 John 2:7–8). How is love both ancient (rooted in the Law of Moses) and new (made deeper and broader in Jesus)? In what ways does this connect to how we understand sanctification and assurance of salvation?

**Question:** If walking in the light means abiding in God's Word, loving others, and resisting the pull of the world, which of those three areas do you feel God is prompting you to strengthen this week? What's one small, specific action step you can take?

## **SANCTIFY, SANCTIFICATION**

The act of making something or someone clean or holy. In Christian theology, sanctification is usually understood as an act or process subsequent to salvation which renders the believer holy in fact (as opposed to justification, which is a legal declaration of innocence).

In the OT, especially in the prophets, sanctification was understood as the whole process by which God is cleansing our world and its people. His ultimate goal is that everything—animate and inanimate—be cleansed from any taint of sin or uncleanness (Ezek. 36:25–29; 37:21–23). Heb. *qdš* occurs as a verb, “to be set apart, consecrated,” and an adjective (“sacred, holy” [thing, place, person, etc.]), whether that quality was applied to God, or places, things, persons, or times sanctified by (or to) God. The people were to be a “holy nation” (Exod. 19:6). In order to facilitate their sanctification, God established a holy priesthood (Exod. 29:1; 1 Sam. 7:1).

A less frequent term, Heb. *ṭhr* (“to be clean, pure”), describes cleansing in a physical, ceremonial, and moral sense. There are “clean” animals (Gen. 7:2, 8; 8:20) and “pure” metals (Exod. 25:11–39), “clean” people and things (Num. 18–19). The Lord’s words are “pure” (Ps. 12:6 [MT 7]), his eyes “too pure to look on evil” (Hab. 1:13).

Something may be separated from God by sin and uncleanness. One can obtain forgiveness from sin by offering the appropriate sacrifice for sin; cleansing from uncleanness requires the appropriate purification ritual. Such rituals can be divided into water rituals, for people and things that can be cleaned, and fire rituals (usually destructive), for severely contaminated things, especially those which cannot be cleansed.

A person who has contracted uncleanness must bathe, wash his clothes, and wait until evening (Lev. 11:38; 15:1–32; Num. 19:11–13). Greater amounts of uncleanness required more complicated ceremonies and additional ingredients (Lev. 14:1–9; Num. 19:1–22). Under the right conditions, even water could be made unclean (Lev. 11:33–35). However, water from a spring (“living water”) or underground cistern was always considered clean. This is why “living water” became so important (Lev. 14:5, 6, 50–52; 14:52; 15:2, 13; cf. John 4:10, 11; 7:38).

Ultimately, the NT teaches that the sanctification of the world takes place at a personal and individual level. Those who choose to be sanctified by the Spirit must cooperate in the process (1 John 3:3; Rev. 22:11)—just as in the water purification rites of the OT. This process removes the sin but “saves” the individual. The Spirit’s role in sanctification begins before conversion with conviction (John 16:8–11), includes cleansing the believer at conversion (1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:1–2), continually washing him or her from

sin after conversion (John 4:10–14; 7:38–39; cf. 1 John 1:7–9), through guiding him or her in righteous living (John 14:26; Rom. 8:5–13; 1 Cor. 2:9–16).

Purification by fire included a variety of materials: clothing or leather with any kind of destructive mildew (Lev. 13:47–59) or a house from which mildew could not be cleansed (Lev. 14:33ff.; cf. Sodom and Gomorrah, Gen. 19:24; cf. Luke 17:29–30; and idolatrous Jerusalem, Jer. 4:4).

People who refuse to cooperate with the Spirit's work of sanctification are punished with fire. God will use this method to "cleanse" the earth of the presence of sinful people (Isa. 66:24; cf. Matt. 25:30, 41, 46; Rev. 20:11–21:1; cf. 2 Pet. 3:10–13).<sup>1</sup>

## ASSURANCE

Assurance of \*salvation can be defined as someone's personal conviction that they have been eternally saved by God's \*grace in Christ. Historically, such assurance has been a particular issue for Protestant and evangelical Christians. Other traditions have tended to view claims to absolute certainty of salvation as presumption: it is at the final judgment when the verdict will be given. Until then we wait, hope, and seek to live faithfully. But this has not satisfied \*Protestants, who have grappled with two linked questions regarding assurance. First, can someone really be sure, in this life, that they are saved and that this salvation cannot be lost? Secondly, if such security is possible (or indeed normative for a Christian believer), then how is this assurance to be known?

These questions came to the fore at the time of the European Reformation. The Magisterial Reformers (see \*Reformation theology) reacted against the doctrine of \*penance and the close linkage of assurance with ecclesial authority as taught by the medieval Roman Catholic Church. Against this, Martin \*Luther stated: 'I have been baptized and I have the Word, and so I have no doubt about my salvation as long as I cling to the Word' (*Works*, vol. 54, p. 57), and John \*Calvin asserted that assurance and 'security' were to be found by looking to Christ and especially his cross (*Institutes*, 2.16.6, 2.16.19). Assurance of salvation was possible, indeed it

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<sup>1</sup> Timothy P. Jenney, "[Sanctify, Sanctification](#)," in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1165–1166.



was part of normal Christian experience. The guarantees of such assurance were found in the \*atonement and the gracious promises of God to his people, appropriated by \*faith.

Later \*Reformed theologians, for example many sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English \*Puritans, continued to focus on the objective work of Christ as grounds for assurance, but also stressed a need for believers to reflect on their own growth in practical holiness. The doctrine of 'temporary faith', developed by William \*Perkins, was important here. A profession of faith might be made by someone who was not, in fact, truly regenerate. The sign that a 'professor' had really exercised saving faith was significant progress in holy living. Without such progress any assurance a 'believer' possessed would likely be proved false. In practice this led to significant doubts concerning assurance and a stress on rigorous 'self-examination'. Those who had professed faith were to search their experience for signs that they were truly part of the elect. In this tradition assurance was often achieved only after a long struggle and was, according to the Puritan Thomas Brooks, 'a pearl that most want, (but) a crown that few wear' (*Heaven on Earth*, p. 15).

In eighteenth-century evangelicalism there was a shift of emphasis again. According to David Bebbington, evangelicals such as Jonathan \*Edwards believed that assurance was 'normally given at \*conversion' and was 'the result of simple acceptance' of God's gift of salvation (*Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, pp. 42–50). Assurance was of the essence of faith and normative for believers, although it was still expected that there would be significant changes in the way Christians lived subsequent to conversion. Nevertheless, this more confident view of assurance could have a significant impact on the life of a believer. The Baptist theologian Andrew \*Fuller had been reared in a religious atmosphere dominated by High Calvinists who practised a heightened form of self-examination with a strong tendency towards introspective soul-searching and doubt. Fuller's conversion, in the years following 1780, to a more evangelical, moderate Calvinism led him away from the despondency which had characterized his earlier spiritual life towards what, by his own testimony, was a deeper joy and trust in God.

John \*Wesley certainly believed that assurance was of the essence of faith, stressing a 'felt' assurance, the classic description of which was Wesley's own account of his conversion and his heart being 'strangely warmed'. Wesleyan Methodists differed from Calvinistic evangelicals, however, in believing salvation could still be lost. A Christian could 'fall away' by rejecting Christ or failing to live as a believer. Thus Wesley refused to affirm the Calvinistic teaching regarding 'the final perseverance of the saints'.

But Reformed evangelicals who were committed to final \*perseverance have also spoken of a 'felt' assurance in terms reminiscent of Wesley. Sometimes this has been described as a 'baptism' or 'filling' of the Spirit subsequent to conversion. One of the sermons printed in Martyn \*Lloyd-Jones's *Joy Unspeakable: The Baptism of the Holy Spirit* is entitled 'Blessed Assurance' (Eastbourne, new edn, 1995, pp. 33–48). However, it has been conceived, assurance has always been an important feature of evangelical spirituality.

Significant work has been done on the doctrine of assurance by twentieth-century theologians such as \*Berkouwer, \*Barth and \*Moltmann, as questions of eternal security have continued to exercise the minds of Protestant thinkers. The fundamental point at issue is whether assurance is a confidence in Christ alone or the result of an additional work of the Spirit or a period of self-reflection. Barth speaks of the vain search for a 'guarantee of the guarantee' (CD 1/1, p. 465). But others have sought to insist that all true, regenerate believers will show some signs of growth in holiness, and that some evidence of the work of the Spirit is an important part of a biblical doctrine of assurance. What is certain is that the way questions of assurance are answered has deep implications for the way the Christian life is conceived and lived.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> P. J. Morden, "[Assurance](#)," in *New Dictionary of Theology: Historical and Systematic*, ed. Martin Davie et al. (London; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press; InterVarsity Press, 2016), 72–73.