

Deep Practice Discipleship Guide

1 John 2:15–17 — *Ordered Love: Loving God First*

1. Reflect on Last Week's Practice

Before beginning today's discussion, invite the group to share briefly:

- How did you do with last week's deep practice?
- What helped you live it out?
- What challenges or distractions did you notice?
- What did you learn about yourself or about God through the practice?

Encourage each person to share honestly, focusing on growth, not perfection.

2. Sermon Summary: Ordered Love

1 John 2:12–17 — “Spiritual Maturity: Ordered Love”

HEAD — “The Algorithm of Your Heart” (1–2 minutes)

- Ever notice how online algorithms show you more of what you click on?
- One click → more of the same content... shaping what you see next.
- **The same is true of the soul:**

What you give attention to shapes what you desire.

What you desire begins to shape who you become.

This passage is about **what is shaping your heart.**

HEAD — What We Must Remember (Identity First)

John starts with *who we already are* in Christ — before he warns us about disordered love.

Children (v.12) — *Your sins are forgiven.*

- You don't start from shame. You start from grace.

Fathers/Mothers (v.13a) — *You know God and belong to Him.*

- Deep, anchored relationship.

Young Men/Women (v.13b–14b) — *You are strong in the Lord; the Word lives in you; you have overcome the evil one.*

- You are not powerless—God has given you strength for this battle.

Identity before command. Grace before challenge.

We stand on who we are, not on what we achieve.

HEAD — Ordered vs. Disordered Love (Core Teaching)

Introduce Augustine:

- **St. Augustine** helps us name what John is addressing:
Ordered Love – loving things in the right order.
Disordered Love – loving the right things in the wrong order.

The problem is not that we love—it's **that we love out of order.**

Examples:

- Baking a cake but adding eggs after it's cooked → ruined.
- Building a roof before building walls → collapse.
- **Order matters.** In baking, building... and **in the heart.**

Real-life examples of disordered love:

- Loving **grades more than integrity** → cheating.
- Loving **being liked more than truth** → lying or image-managing.
- Loving **alcohol more than family** → addiction destroys relationships.

These are **not wrong loves**—but **wrongly ordered loves.**

Augustine Quote:

“Living a just and holy life requires one to... love things in the right order; so that you do not love what is not to be loved, or fail to love what is to be loved... or love that more which is to be loved less.”

— *On Christian Doctrine* 1.27–28

TEXT — 1 John 2:15–17 Teachings

v.15–16 — Love the Father more than the world

- The Father **does not take second place.**

- You can't love God *and* let the world set the order of your heart.

Reference Deuteronomy:

- God has always called for **first love and exclusive devotion**.
 - Deut. 5:1–11
 - Deut. 6:4–5 — *LOVE the Lord your God with all...*
 - Deut. 10:12–13

God has always been clear: **He is first**.

v.17a — Disordered love leads to destruction (passing away)

Illustration: Hydrogen + Oxygen

- Hydrogen = explosive. Oxygen = fuels fire.
- Combined wrong → explosion.
- Combined in the right order → **water**—life-giving.

Disordered love **blows up** our priorities, families, identity, and soul.

v.17b — Ordered love leads to life

- “The one who does the will of God abides forever.”
- Loving God first leads to **full, abundant, lasting life**.
- God's commands are **not restrictions**—they **reorder our loves for our good**.

Examples of ordered love God teaches:

- Integrity before achievement
- Truth before popularity
- Family and faithfulness before escapism

HEART — Personal Reflection (slow down, pastoral)

This passage isn't just asking, “**Do you love God?**”

It's asking, “**What do you love most?**”

Ask reflective questions slowly:

- What sits at the **center** of your heart?
- What gets your **first affection, energy, attention, desire?**

- Where do you feel your loves **competing**?
- Has a **good thing** slid into first place?

Grace invitation:

God is not asking for perfection—He is inviting you into freedom.

He is not shaming you—He is calling you back to **first love**.

Let Him **reorder** your heart.

(If Communion follows, this is an ideal bridge.)

HANDS — Practice for the Week: “First Love at First Light”

This week, practice giving God **first love at first light**.

Before phone, news, email, or social media:

3 minutes each morning:

1. **Acknowledge God’s presence.**
2. **Thank Him** for forgiveness and grace.
3. **Offer Him** your affection and your day.

Prayer to use each morning:

“Lord, You loved me first. Help me love You first today.”

3. Discussion Questions (Bloom’s Taxonomy Framework)

Remember & Understand

1. What does John mean by “the world” in verses 15–16?
2. How do the Deuteronomy passages help us understand what it means to love God first?

Apply

3. What are some ways “the world” tries to reorder our loves or priorities today?
4. Which of those pressures do you personally feel most?

Analyze

5. Think about the illustration of hydrogen and oxygen. What happens when “good things” in your life are in the wrong order?
6. Can you identify a time when disordered love led to stress, regret, or harm? What did you learn from that experience?

Evaluate

7. How can you discern when your loves are disordered? What warning signs do you see in yourself?
8. What would an “ordered love” look like in your daily habits, relationships, or ambitions?

Create

9. Write a simple statement or phrase that describes what it looks like for you to “love God first.”
10. If you were to teach this passage to a friend or child, how would you illustrate “ordered love”?

4. Storytelling Exercise: (Mark 10:17–22)

Read the Story

Invite one person to read Mark 10:17–22 aloud slowly and clearly.

Encourage the group to listen for the emotions, actions, and turning points in the story.

“As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, ‘Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ ...”

(Read through verse 22.)

Retell the Story

After the reading, close Bibles and ask:

- “Who can retell the story in their own words?”
Allow several people to fill in details until the story feels complete.
Encourage them to focus on *what happened* and *how people responded*.

Then ask:

- “What do you notice or feel as you tell it?”
- “Which part stood out to you the most?”

- Why do you think Jesus asked him to give up his possessions before following Him?
 - How does this story reveal the danger of *disordered love* — loving something good (wealth, success, security) more than God?
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5. Deep Practice Commitment

Close your group by inviting everyone to record and share their personal **Deep Practice Commitment** for the coming week.

This week's suggested practice:

“First Love at First Light.”

Before phone, news, or social media, take three minutes each morning to give God first love.

Encourage group members to write a brief reflection in their journals or phones:

- “This week, I will show love for God first by...”
 - “A specific situation or habit where I will reorder my love is...”
 - “A prayer I’ll use to start my day is...”
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Leader Closing Thought

“Loving God first doesn’t make life smaller; it makes everything else fall into its right place.”