

Deep Practice Discipleship Guide

Living the Truth

1 John 3:19–24

Core Theme

God is greater than our hearts.

Truth is not determined by feelings alone, but revealed through a life of abiding faith, love, and obedience.

1. Opening: Reflection on Last Week's Deep Practice (10–15 minutes)

Leader Prompt

Before we move into tonight's Scripture, let's begin by reflecting on last week's deep practice.

These are not performance questions.

They are **awareness questions**.

Group Questions

Invite brief sharing (not everyone must answer every question):

- What deep practice did you commit to last week?
- What went well?
- What felt difficult or resistant?
- What did you notice about yourself—your thoughts, emotions, or habits?
- Where did you sense growth, even if it felt small?

Leader reminder:

Faithfulness matters more than success. We are learning, not proving.

2. Scripture Focus & Sermon Summary (10 minutes)

Primary Text

1 John 3:19–24 (NRSV)

Sermon Big Idea

The heart is real—but not reliable.

We belong to the truth not because of how we feel, but because we remain in Christ—trusting Him, loving others, and living from the relationship God has already given.

Key Movements from the Sermon

1. The Heart Is a Witness, Not a Judge

- The heart can accuse or falsely reassure
- God is greater than our hearts and knows the truth

2. Truth Is Known Through Lived Relationship

- Obedience is not earning; it is alignment
- God's command is relational, not legalistic

3. The Commandment Defined

- Believe in the name of Jesus Christ
- Love one another

4. Abiding Is the Center

- To abide is to remain where God already dwells
- Abiding is an objective reality, not a subjective feeling

5. The Spirit Confirms What Is Being Lived

- The Spirit bears witness to abiding
- This witness is often clearer over time than in emotion

3. Discussion Questions (Bloom's Taxonomy Progression)

Level 1: Remembering & Understanding

(What does the text say?)

1. According to this passage, what causes the heart to condemn us?
2. What does John say reassures the heart?
3. How does John define God's commandment in verse 23?

Level 2: Interpreting & Clarifying

(What does it mean?)

4. Why do you think John says “God is greater than our hearts” instead of telling believers to trust their hearts more?
5. What is the difference between obedience as performance and obedience as relationship?
6. How does John’s understanding of “abiding” challenge how we often think about faith?

Level 3: Applying & Discerning

(How does this shape our lives?)

7. Where do you most often rely on feelings to determine how you think God sees you?
8. What practices or habits help you “remain where the light already is”?
9. How might trusting feelings alone distort your understanding of truth or assurance?

Level 4: Evaluating & Integrating

(What is God inviting you into?)

10. How does this passage help distinguish the witness of the Spirit from the feelings of the heart?
11. In what ways might abiding lead to greater confidence before God—not arrogance, but peace?
12. What would change if you trusted God’s presence more than your inner accusations?

4. Storying Exercise (20 minutes)

Scripture for Storying

Luke 10:38–42 — Mary and Martha

Why This Passage

This story highlights the tension between:

- Activity vs. abiding
- Anxiety vs. presence
- Performance vs. relationship

It beautifully parallels **1 John 3** without repeating the same text.

Step 1: Tell the Story (Leader or Volunteer)

Tell the story **from memory**, slowly and simply.

No commentary. No interpretation.

Step 2: Group Retelling

Invite the group to retell the story together, each person adding a detail they remember.

Step 3: Story Questions

- What emotions do you notice in Martha? In Mary?
- What does Jesus affirm—and what does He gently correct?
- Where do you see “abiding” in this story?
- How does this story help clarify the difference between faithfulness and anxiety-driven obedience?

Key Insight:

Mary is not praised for feeling something special—but for remaining present with Jesus.

5. Deep Practice Commitment for the Coming Week (10 minutes)

Framing the Practice

This week’s deep practice is not about doing more.

It is about **remaining**.

Deep Practice Theme

Remaining Where the Light Is

Practice Options (Choose One)

If members don't have an area of discipleship they are working on, invite them to choose **one of the following**, write it down, and be specific.

Option 1: Noticing the Accusing Heart

- When your heart accuses you this week, pause
- Silently remind yourself:
"God is greater than my heart."
- Do not argue with the feeling—**remain** instead of retreating

Option 2: Daily Abiding Moment

- Choose one consistent moment each day (morning, lunch, or evening)
- Sit quietly for 3–5 minutes
- No agenda, no fixing
- Simply remain present with God

Option 3: Love in Action

- Intentionally practice love toward one person this week
- Let the action be quiet, intentional, and self-giving
- Notice how love reinforces assurance

Commitment Question (Write Down)

"This week, how will I practice remaining where God has already made His presence known?"