

Love God: obedience

discussion guide

based on **1 John 2.28 – 3.10** (Linked to sermon from 4/3/18)
which can be accessed at www.stjamesbythepark.org/current-sermon-series

This was part of our 'Love is an action' series, unpacking what it means for us to 'Love God, Love each other, Reach the world'.

Intro: What is your first thought when someone mentions 'obedience'? Why do you think that is?

One of the recurring themes of John's first letter is that one of the marks of Christian assurance is a desire to be obedient to God.

Read 1 John 2:28-3:10

John is careful to root our obedience in God's love for us in this passage (eg 3:1). Why do you think that he does this?

How can this change the way we view obedience?

How does your view of God colour your feelings about obedience? Do you see Him as a loving Father who wants the best for you or as a strict disciplinarian?

In 1 John 5:2-3, John ties our obedience to our love for God. How is love inter-related with obedience, do you think?

It also says that God's commands are not burdensome. Is that true in your experience? Why / why not?

3:2 talks about the now and the not yet. How does this relate to our topic, do you think? What do you think John meant by this verse?

1 John 3:6 and 9 seem to imply that Christians will sin no more. Yet 1 John 1:8 says that none of us are yet perfect. This apparent tension can be explained by realising that 3:9 refers to continual sin rather than "one-off" incidents of sin. What is the difference? Can you think of how this is relevant to you?

Which areas of life are you struggling to be obedient to God in at the moment?

Can you give an example of a time when you've chosen to be obedient (maybe at some cost), but have seen the blessings that come with obedience?

Up (love God) – spend some time praising God that Jesus lived a perfect life, came to take away our sin (v5) and destroy the devil's work (v8b). He is also the one who speaks to the Father in our defence when we do sin (2:1), the atoning sacrifice for our sins (2:2). Spend some time in confession, claiming the promise of 1:9.

In (love each other) – How can we support one another as we strive to be obedient to God? Do we give one another permission to encourage and challenge us in our walk with God?

Out (reach the world) – A friend says "The problem with Christians is that they're a bunch of hypocrites: they say one thing and do another." How would you respond?