

Theme: Authentic love is rooted in the character of God, displayed in the life and death of Christ, described in God's Law, and is an essential trait of the obedient Christian life.

## I. Intro - The Cry for 'Authenticity'

- A. A key idea today - everything must be 'authentic'
- B. This is especially true when it comes to 'love'
- C. The problem is our understanding of 'authentic' and 'love' are both unauthentic!
- D. What is authentic love?

## II. John - The Apostle of Love

- A. Love is a key theme in this short letter

The elder, To the chosen lady and her children, whom I **love** in the truth...<sup>3</sup> Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and **love**...<sup>5</sup> And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we **love** one another.<sup>6</sup> And this is **love**: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in [**love**]. 2 John 1:1, 3, 5-6

  - 1. Love - 4 times in 6 verses!
  - 2. NIV has a 5th time - implied in the Greek
  - 3. Love is one of the major concerns of this letter
- B. John is the Apostle of love
  - 1. John uses some form of love 112 out of 320 in NT
  - 2. The two highest totals in the NT are John, 1 John

- 3. The highest concentration (use per number of words in the book) are 3 John, 1 John, 2 John
- 4. The highest concentration in the whole NT is not 1 Corinthians 13, but 1 John 4!
- 5. From John we learn that love is central to the Christian Gospel and the Christian life.

- C. There is no way to understand God, the life and work of Christ, the Gospel, or the Christian life apart from authentic love.

## III. Authentic Love

- A. Authentic love is rooted in and defined by the character of God

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and **love**. 2 John 1:3

  - 1. Everything in this verse is from God and Christ
  - 2. This shows God is the source of authentic love
  - 3. Authentic love is not defined by human emotion but the nature, character, and actions of God.

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.<sup>11</sup> Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 1 John 4:10-11

    - a. Authentic love is not our love for God or one another, but God's love for us.
    - b. Authentic love is God's very character and is most clearly displayed in the sacrificial death of Christ for our sins.
  - 4. Authentic love is not opposed to the holiness of God but always works so that the holiness is maintained.

B. Authentic love is displayed in the life and death of Christ

And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. 2 John 1:5

1. The command to love one another is in OT

Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but **love your neighbor as yourself**. I am the Lord. Leviticus 19:18

2. Jesus made this a “new command” by basing love on His actions toward us

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. John 13:34

- a. The command to love one another was very old
- b. What was “new” was the model and the measure - the way Jesus loved us

3. Authentic love is displayed in the life of Christ, which is the model for believers

But if anyone obeys his word, **God’s love** is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: <sup>6</sup> **Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did**. 1 John 2:5–6

- a. God’s love at work in the life of believers
- b. Believers must walk (another key word in 2 John) as Jesus did.
- c. Jesus is the model of authentic love in action.

4. Authentic love is displayed in the death of Christ

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 1 John 4:10

- a. Authentic love prompted Jesus to sacrifice Himself to pay for our sins.
- b. Authentic love is not merely an emotion but is seen in concrete actions of sacrifice for the good of others.

C. Authentic love is described in God’s Law

And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love. 2 John 1:6

1. Authentic love is obeying the commands of God.
2. God’s Law, which is summarized as loving God and loving others, describes and defines authentic love
3. Note that the word ‘command’ appears 4 times in vv4-6!
4. Any idea of love that embraces desires or actions contrary to God’s revealed Law and will is actually inauthentic love!
5. Because God IS love, authentic love will ALWAYS reflect the character of God, which is described in God’s Law and displayed in the words and actions of Jesus Christ!

D. Authentic love is an essential trait of the obedient Christian life

It has given me great joy to find some of your children **walking** in the truth, just as the Father **commanded** us. <sup>5</sup>And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new **command** but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. <sup>6</sup> And this is love: that we **walk in obedience** to his **commands**. As you have heard from the beginning, his **command** is that you **walk** in love. 2 John 1:4–6

1. Walking (3x), commands (4x) - key idea!
2. Because authentic love is a summary of God's Law and description of the words and actions of Jesus, it is an essential trait of the obedient Christian life!
3. It is impossible to be obedient to God's Law while having a life defined by attitudes, words, and actions of anger, bitterness, and judgmentalism rather than love
4. It is impossible to be obedient to God's Law while having a life defined by actions that embrace what God has declared to be sinful.
5. The obedient Christian life will be a display of authentic love as defined in God's Word.

E. Theme: Authentic love is rooted in the character of God, displayed in the life and death of Christ, described in God's Law, and is an essential trait of the obedient Christian life.

#### IV. Applying the Authentic Word

A. Do I understand authentic love?

1. Our culture thinks 'authentic' means being true to what I think and desire
2. Actually 'authentic' is that which is real, which is in accord with reality as God made it.
3. We think "love is love" an 'authentic love' is whatever we really want or feel
4. Authentic love vs unauthentic love

Authentic love is rooted in the character of God, displayed in the life and death of Christ, described in God's Law, and is an essential trait of the obedient Christian life.

- a. We think love is 'authentic' if it expresses our shifting emotions and desires, but authentic love is always a reflection of God's unchanging character.
- b. We think love is 'authentic' if it follows our current personal and cultural behavior patterns, but authentic love is thinking, speaking, and acting like Jesus rather than our own desires.
- c. We think love is 'authentic' if it conforms to our current wants and desires, but authentic love is CHOOSING to conform our lives to God's Law.
- d. We think it is inauthentic to do what is right even if we do not feel like it (fake it till you make it), but God says this is authentic love!
- e. We think love is 'authentic' if it expresses what we feel, but authentic love is always choosing to act in line with the truth of the way God has actually created and ordered the world.

5. Is my thinking regarding love actually authentic or unauthentic?

6. Let God's Word shape your view of love - not movies, music, novels, mass media, etc.!

B. Am I walking in authentic love?

**Authentic love** is rooted in the character of God, displayed in the life and death of Christ, described in God's Law, and **is an essential trait of the obedient Christian life.**

1. Authentic love is not an option for believers!

2. Am I growing in words and actions that express love towards others?

a. Can authentic love be heard in my words?

1. Our culture is spewing words of hatred and it is tempting to join in, but authentic love does not do so!
2. Do my words express God's love to others?

b. Can authentic love be seen in my actions?

1. In many ways, love is a verb! It is seen in action!
2. Do my actions display God's love - especially to those less fortunate, the suffering, the marginalized?

c. Do I have and express authentic love for all others?

1. Other believers who are different than me in their cultural, social, or political beliefs and actions?
2. Unbelievers? (Remember love is defined by Christ sacrificing Himself for us while we were unbelieving, God-hating, rebellious sinners!)
3. It is easy to express 'love' for those like me - that is not authentic love, it is just liking myself in others!

3. Cry out for the Spirit to grown authentic love in us!

C. The Table of authentic love

1. This Table is a display of authentic love
2. Come and experience the authentic love of God - and then spread it to others!

## Authentic Love

2 John 1-6  
January 24, 2021  
Communion  
2 John 3

Teaching keywords: Love; Christian life; God's Law; obedience

May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else. <sup>13</sup> May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones. <sup>1</sup> Thessalonians 3:12-13

The elder, To the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in the truth — and not I only, but also all who know the truth — <sup>2</sup> because of the truth, which lives in us and will be with us forever: <sup>3</sup> Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and love.

<sup>4</sup> It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us. <sup>5</sup> And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. <sup>6</sup> And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love. <sup>2</sup> John 1-6