**Experiential Exercise**

**1 John 2:3-11**

*But those who obey God’s word truly show how completely they love him* (1 John 2:5).

When a person becomes a Christian, there is a change in their relationship with sin. Sin is not eliminated in the believer until he comes to glory, but their relationship to sin is changed when they truly become a Christian.

- A Christian no longer loves sin as he once did.

- A Christian no longer brags about their sin as he once did.

- A Christian no longer plans to sin as he once did.

- A Christian no longer fondly remembers his sin as he once did.

- A Christian never fully enjoys his sin as he once did.

- A Christian no longer is comfortable in habitual sin as he once was. (Guzik)

When a person becomes a Christian and there is an authentic experience of God’s love, there is also a resulting desire to please Him. Jesus confirmed this process in the Gospel of John. “If anyone loves me, he will keep my commandments” (John 14:23). As we experience more and more of God’s love for us, the more we’ll want to obey Him – the more we’ll want to keep His commandments.

**Teachers, give these instructions:**

Let’s reflect on some of the aspects of God’s Word that we have obeyed. This is not an exercise in patting ourselves on the back for how well we have lived. This is an experience of celebrating the opportunities we have to love or please the Lord. ***We are going to do 1 John 2:5. We are going to celebrate some of the ways we’ve shown our complete love for the Lord as we’ve obeyed His Word.***

It’s also important to note that our God does not keep score. His love for us is not conditional. There’s nothing we can do to earn his love and there’s nothing we can do to lose his love. His love for us is permanent. Because we have received His never-ending, unconditional, everlasting love, we now have the privilege to love him back. One of the ways we can love Him is by obeying His Word.

Furthermore, Philippians 2:13 says, “For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.” He is at work, giving us the desire and power to please him. He is the source of our desire and power, we just get to celebrate the ways we can love him back!

Listen to some of the ways we can please or love the Lord. Which ones have been true for you?

* Have you demonstrated faith in God and counted on Him to come through? Then you’ve lived out or obeyed Hebrews 11:6. “And it is impossible to please God without faith… He rewards those who sincerely seek him.” Your faith brought pleasure to the heart of God.
* Have you demonstrated an attitude of humility, giving an account of yourself to God? You’ve obeyed Romans 14:18. Your life of peace and desire to live a life of goodness pleases the Lord. “For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. If you serve Christ with this attitude, you will please God…”
* 1 Timothy 2:1-4 says, “I urge you to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them… This is good and pleases God our Savior.” Have you prayed for another person, interceded on their behalf and given thanks for them? You’ve brought pleasure to God. Your prayers for other people have been a demonstration of love for Him.
* 1 Timothy 5:4 reminds us that it pleases the Lord to care for widows. Have you cared for an aging parent or helped an elderly person whose family lives out of state? You have obeyed God’s word and brought joy to the heart of the Father.
* Hebrews 13:16 tells us that doing good and sharing with those in need, is a sacrifice that pleases God. Have you served a meal to the homeless community? Donated to people in need? Have you volunteered, helped out or given time or resources to those less fortunate? You have pleased the Lord by obeying His Word.
* 1 Peter 2:19 says that we please God when we endure harsh or unjust treatment. Have you been ridiculed or unjustly treated because of your faith? Imagine how your patient endurance was one way that you loved the Lord!

Teachers: Share your own responses to the following prompts before you ask class members to share in circles or at their tables. Your vulnerability sets the tone and the mood for the room. Share with appropriate vulnerability and model the length of response you would like for others to emulate.

Now, complete the sentences below:

*I never really thought about it in this way or today was a great reminder but/and I feel \_\_\_\_\_\_ when I imagine that God feels loved when I obey His Word.*

*I’m celebrating that I get the chance every day to love the Lord by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I plan to do more of it \_\_\_\_\_\_\_(state the when?).*