

Christ our model

Prepare *Have you got any difficult decisions to make? Bring them to the Lord.*

Read 1 John 2:3–17

Explore Jesus declared that the greatest commandment of the Law is, ‘Love the Lord your God...’ The second greatest, he said, is, ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’ (see Matthew 22:34–40). With this ‘old command’ – this essential teaching – in mind, and Jesus’ life and ministry as a model, we are called to follow in Christ’s footsteps (v 6). But how do we do this? Asking ‘What would Jesus do?’ might be a good starting point when struggling with an ethical dilemma, but we can’t always answer this with certainty. Perhaps we should ask ourselves two questions instead: ‘Would this action demonstrate wholehearted love for God?’ (vs 3–5) and ‘Would this action demonstrate love for my fellow human beings?’ (v 9). If the answer to both questions is yes, we can move forward confidently, unhindered (v 10). John doesn’t want his ‘dear children’ to doubt their salvation (vs 12–14). He reassures them that they know God, that in Christ they’re victorious over sin and evil, and that the word of God lives in them. They are living out their eternal life as part of God’s family and in obedience to him.

However, there are those who claim special knowledge of God but whose first priority is not to love and serve God and others, but to indulge their sinful nature and selfish ambition at any cost. John describes them as ‘loving the world’ (see vs 15,16). Their lifestyle leaves no room for the sacrificial, self-giving love of the Father and so robs them of eternal life (v 17).

Respond *Reread verses 12–14. Which of these assurances do you most need to hear?*

The Bible in a Year: Genesis 41,42; Matthew 15