

— 1 John —  
Lesson #1 Introduction  
Teacher's Guide

Read through the book of 1 John two times before you begin answering the questions below.

Using only the text of 1 John, try to answer the following questions. Be sure to note the Scripture references to show where you found your answer from the Bible. *At this point in the lesson, you may not be able to answer every question using only your Bible.* You will have an opportunity at the end of this lesson to come back and complete your answers using other Bible study sources.

1. Who wrote the book?

Someone who knew Jesus personally and interacted with Him while He was on earth (1:1-3)

Someone fatherly, possibly someone old (2:1, 12-14, 18, 28)

Someone who loves the people he is writing to (2:7, 28; 3:2, 21; 4:1)

Other sources:

Style the same as the gospel of John, similar themes.

From John MacArthur Study Bible: "The epistle does not identify the author, but the strong, consistent and earliest testimony of the church ascribes it to John the disciple and apostle (cf. Luke 6:13, 14). This anonymity strongly affirms the early church's identification of the epistle with John the apostle, for only someone of John's well known and preeminent status as an apostle would be able to write with such unmistakable authority, expecting complete obedience from his readers, without clearly identifying himself (e.g., 4:6). He was well known to the readers so he didn't need to mention his name."<sup>1</sup>

2. To whom is it written?

Believers who know the truth and have received the promise of eternal life. He is writing to those who are "children of God" (1:3-4; 2:1, 21, 25; 3:1-2; 4:4).

From *Talk Thru the Bible*: "Apart from Revelation 1, the New Testament is silent about his later years, but early Christian tradition uniformly tells us that he left Jerusalem (probably not long before its destruction in a.d. 70) and that he ministered in and around Ephesus. The seven churches in the Roman province of Asia, mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3, were evidently a part of this ministry. Although there is no address in First John, it is likely that the apostle directed this epistle to the Asian churches that were within the realm of his oversight."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> MacArthur, John, Jr., ed. 1997. [The MacArthur Study Bible](#). Electronic ed. Nashville, TN: Word Pub.

<sup>2</sup> Wilkinson, Bruce, and Kenneth Boa. 1983. [Talk Thru the Bible](#). Nashville: T. Nelson.

3. When was the book written?

After Jesus' resurrection. Other than that, there isn't much internal evidence.

Other sources:

Most believe this book was written from Ephesus when John was an old man. Since no persecution is mentioned, it would put the date for the book between AD 81-96.

From the John MacArthur Study Bible: "In light of such factors, a reasonable date for 1 John is ca. a.d. 90-95."<sup>3</sup>

From *Talk Thru the Bible*: "First John was probably written in Ephesus after the Gospel of John, but the date cannot be fixed with certainty. No persecution is mentioned, suggesting a date prior to a.d. 95 when persecution broke out during the end of Domitian's reign (a.d. 81-96)."<sup>4</sup>

4. Where was it written?

No indication of place.

Other sources:

Most believe this book was written from Ephesus when John was an old man.

From the Bible Knowledge Commentary: "The letter contains no hint about the identity or location of the readers beyond the fact that they are Christians. Since early church tradition associates John with the Roman province of Asia (in western Turkey), it has often been thought that the readers lived there. This may well be true especially since this association is confirmed by Revelation 2 and 3."<sup>5</sup>

From the John MacArthur Study Bible: "It was likely written from Ephesus to the churches of Asia Minor over which John exercised apostolic leadership."<sup>6</sup>

From *Talk Thru the Bible*: "Apart from Revelation 1, the New Testament is silent about his later years, but early Christian tradition uniformly tells us that he left Jerusalem (probably not long before its destruction in a.d. 70) and that he ministered in and around Ephesus. The seven churches in the Roman province of Asia, mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3, were evidently a part of this ministry.

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<sup>3</sup> MacArthur, John, Jr., ed. 1997. [The MacArthur Study Bible](#). Electronic ed. Nashville, TN: Word Pub.

<sup>4</sup> Wilkinson, Bruce, and Kenneth Boa. 1983. [Talk Thru the Bible](#). Nashville: T. Nelson.

<sup>5</sup> Hodges, Zane C. 1985. "[1 John](#)." In *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, edited by J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, 2:880-81. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>6</sup> MacArthur, John, Jr., ed. 1997. [The MacArthur Study Bible](#). Electronic ed. Nashville, TN: Word Pub.

Although there is no address in First John, it is likely that the apostle directed this epistle to the Asian churches that were within the realm of his oversight.”<sup>7</sup>

5. What is the general tone of the author in the book?  
Loving, encouraging, admonishing, but all so the believers would be built up in the faith. He reminds, reminds, and remind them of what he’s said before...all to give them assurance and to correct any wrong responses.
6. What is the author’s purpose in writing this book?  
John seeks to keep the believers walking in the truth. He wants them to live out their most genuine faith in the most God-honoring way, seeking to protect them from sin and being derailed by false teaching.

From the Bible Knowledge Commentary: “The First Epistle of John is an intensely practical letter addressed to Christian readers. It warns against the dangers of false teaching and exhorts believers to lives of obedience to God and love for their brothers and sisters. Its controlling theme is fellowship with God the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (1:3).”<sup>8</sup>

From *Insight for Living*: “As he did in his gospel, John stated with clarity the purpose of his first letter. He proclaimed the good news about Jesus to the recipients of this letter, saying “so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ” ([1 John 1:3](#)). Later, John added “so that you may not sin” (2:1) and “so that you may know that you have eternal life” (5:13). John wanted his readers to experience true fellowship with God and with God’s people. But he knew that would not happen until the Christians set aside their own selfish desires in favor of the pursuits God had for them. To help them attain that goal, John focused on three issues: the zeal of the believers, standing firm against false teachers, and reassuring the Christians that they have eternal life.”

7. What topics are included in this book?  
Right thinking about sin, walking in the light, and fellowship with other believers (chapter 1). The truth about continual practicing of sin and love for the brethren, doing God’s will compared with the waywardness of antichrists (chapter 2). God’s children practice righteousness and love one another (chapter 3). How to recognize false teachers and their teaching, and more about love for the brethren (chapter 4). How to identify children of God by their obedience, the testimony of truth about Jesus, and the confidence we have in prayer (chapter 5).

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<sup>7</sup> Wilkinson, Bruce, and Kenneth Boa. 1983. [Talk Thru the Bible](#). Nashville: T. Nelson.

<sup>8</sup> Hodges, Zane C. 1985. “[1 John](#).” In *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, edited by J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, 2:880–81. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

8. What are the key words of the book? Key words are words that are repeated or carry an important thought.  
Fellowship, joy, Father, Son, light, darkness, sin, righteousness, love, brother, truth/true, lie, practices, lawlessness, keeps, abides, antichrist, overcome, faith, testimony, eternal life.
9. What are the main themes of the book? A theme is the main idea, the overall message.  
Fellowship with God; fellowship with (love for) believers; walking in the light to show that we are children of God. John wanted his readers to have assurance of their salvation and how to live as God's children.

J. Vernon McGee said, "First John has been called the *sanctum sanctorum* of the New Testament. *It takes the child of God across the threshold into the fellowship of the Father's home. It is the family epistle.* Paul's epistles and all the other epistles are church epistles, but this is a family epistle and should be treated that way. The church is a body of believers in the position where we are blessed " . . . with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ" (Eph. 1:3, Translation mine). We are given that position when we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. *Believing on the Lord Jesus brings us into the family of God. In the family we have a relationship which can be broken but is restored when "we confess our sins." Then "he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9)."<sup>9</sup>

Cornerstone Bible Commentary: "Talk is cheap; reality must be tested by one's relationship with the members of the church community. John urged the believers to know the truth and to live in it."<sup>10</sup>

10. What attributes of God do you see in this book?  
Love and care for His children; provision (3:24; 4:10, 13); holiness (1:5); knowable (1:3); eternity (1:2); faithful (1:9); righteous (1:9; 3:9-10); truthful/true (1:10; 5:20); loving (2:5; 3:1; 4:7-8); comforting (3:21-22; 5:4); sovereign king to command (3:23); omniscient (3:20); protecting (5:18); answers prayer (5:14-15); powerful to answer all prayer (5:14-15).
11. What attributes of Christ do you find in this book?  
Sacrificial (1:7; 3:16); love; holiness (1:7); Son (1:3); righteous (2:1; 3:7); advocate (2:1); propitiator (2:2); the Christ/Messiah (2:22); knowable, near, accommodating (2:28); Returning (2:28; 3:2); pure (3:3); purposeful (3:8); Savior of the world (4:14); eternal (and able to impart eternal life) (5:13).
12. List any attributes of the Holy Spirit you find in this book.  
Covenant keeper/promise sealer (3:24); God's spirit (4:2); truth/true (4:6; 5:6); testifies, specifically testifies to the truth (5:6).

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<sup>9</sup> McGee, J. Vernon. 1997. [\*Thru the Bible Commentary\*](#). Electronic ed. Vol. 5. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>10</sup> Osborne, Grant, Philip W. Comfort. 2007. [\*Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Vol 13: John and 1, 2, and 3 John\*](#). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.



Now you can go back and add to your answers above using your study Bible, a Bible dictionary or Bible commentary.

13. What insights have you gained thus far in your study of 1 John?  
This is actually an encouraging book! John wants us to understand God better and understand how we can know him better. God wants us to know how we can give Him glory with our lives! The message is so simple really. There are no secrets. And it is all undergirded by His deep love for us—He is our Father, and we are His children.
14. Did you discover a verse or two in the book that caught your attention? How did it encourage or convict you, or make you want to study and think about it more?
- Jesus' purpose and its life changing implications for my life: **1 John 3:5** You know that *He appeared in order to take away sins*; and in Him there is no sin. **1 John 3:8** the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. *The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.*
  - The assurance about answered prayer is staggering! **1 John 3:21-22** Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. **1 John 5:13-15** These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.
  - The simple power and truth of 1 John 1:9 and that Jesus is our Advocate. How comforting! **1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **1 John 2:1** My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;

— 1 John —  
Lesson #2 Chapter 1 Overview  
Teacher's Guide

The goal of this lesson is to teach you how to look at and begin to study a text of Scripture. Observation is a necessary part of Bible study, yet all too often it can be overlooked or rushed through. Simply put, observation is the practice of noticing what God has placed in His Word. *At this stage* in our Bible study, I only want you to notice and then record what you observe in the chapter. You're not making any interpretations about what the Scriptures mean or how they apply to your life—that will come later, I promise.

Don't rush through this lesson. Set aside time this week to peer into the living and abiding Word of God. Rich treasures are waiting for you!

I've included Chapter 1 (NASB) at the end of this lesson so you can print it out and mark it up if you'd like. I find it helps me see items more easily if I'm marking and noting things as I go.

1. SUMMARIZE. To begin, read through Chapter 1. Now, summarize the contents of Chapter 1. This is not the time to be super detailed; instead, think of trying to tell a 4th grader the contents of the chapter.<sup>1</sup>
  - a. Summarize paragraph 1 (verses 1-4).  
John begins by talking about the Word of Life. John says the Word of Life was from the beginning, but that he and others (he uses *we*) had heard, seen, looked at and touched the Life. John explains that the things he's explaining about the Life are to help them fellowship with the Father and His Son, Jesus, so their joy would be complete.
  - b. Summarize paragraph 2 (verses 5-10).  
John explains the message he has for them. He wants them to know God is light and there is no darkness in Him. When we walk in the light, we have fellowship with God and with other believers.

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<sup>1</sup>The method and process of observation in Bible study does God honor, as we stop, observe, and consider each and every one of His recorded Words, in their context. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the debt I owe to the Precept Inductive Bible Studies observation method, which I have adapted in my studies. As far as I know, the method is the brainchild of Kay Arthur, though I've encountered a number of others who have also come up with similar ways for observing the text. The point of observation is to slow down and really look at what God has preserved for us in His Word. What I've created here is simply another variation to help us peer more closely at the Scriptures—for our good and His glory.

## Scripture Paths Bible Studies

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But if we say we never sin, we are liars. Yet when we do sin and confess it to the Lord, He forgives us and cleanses us from all unrighteousness.

2. SUMMARIZE. After reviewing the chapter and what you wrote for your summaries, ask yourself: *What is the main point of this chapter?* How do all these details and events reveal the main idea of the chapter? Record your answer below.

The main idea of this chapter is to help us know how to have fellowship with God, with His Son, and with one another.

3. TITLE. Now you're ready to title your chapter. Your 3-5 word title should reflect the contents of the chapter. Remember, a title's purpose is to help you remember what is in each chapter.

Learning to Fellowship with God

4. MARK and LIST. On the *1 John Bible Text* handout mark any key words you see in the chapter. *God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit* are always key words. It's easiest to start with these "God" words first. Next mark words or phrases that are repeated at least 3 times. Mark any other words that seem important to the chapter or are strongly emphasized.

You can mark words or phrases by creating a symbol or using a certain colored pencil every time it appears. This will enable you to see at a glance how often a word is used in the chapter or note a progression of thought.

- a. Next, *list the phrase containing the key words* on a separate sheet of paper. This step will allow you to pull together the information you noted from marking the key words. Be sure to cite the verse references when you list your key word information.

For example, with *God* as your key word you would begin to make a list of the information you discovered every time God is mentioned in 1 John Chapter 1. Your Chapter 1 list about *God* should begin by looking something like the one below.

Verse 2—proclaim the eternal life, which was with the *Father*

Verse 3—our fellowship is with the *Father*

Verse 5—*God* is light

Verse 5—in *Him* there is no darkness at all

Fun study tip to try: Mark any key/repeated words that you notice appear all the way through the book, even if their use in individual chapters may not fit the "3 times or more" rule. This will allow you to trace major themes and an author's thoughts throughout the book.

# Scripture Paths Bible Studies

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## God

Verse 2 eternal life was with the Father

Verse 3 our fellowship is with the Father

Verse 3 our fellowship is with His (the Father's) Son

Verse 5 God is Light

Verse 5 in Him (God) there is no darkness

Verse 6 if we say we have fellowship with Him (God) yet walk in darkness...

Verse 7 if we walk in the Light as He Himself (God) is in the Light, we have fellowship

Verse 7 the blood of Jesus His (God's) Son cleanses us from all sin

Verse 9 if we confess our sins, He (God) is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins...

Verse 10 say not sinned, we make Him (God) a liar

Verse 10 say not sinned, His (God's) Word is not in us

## Jesus

Verse 3 our fellowship is with the Father, and with His (God's) Son Jesus Christ

Verse 5 message we heard from Him (Jesus) and announce to you

Verse 7 the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin

*Bob Utley in his commentary writes, "From Him" is the only PRONOUN in the entire section of 1:5-2:2 which refers to Jesus. Jesus came to reveal the Father (cf. John 1:18). Theologically speaking, Jesus came for three purposes: (1) to reveal the Father (cf. 1:5); (2) to give believers an example to follow (cf. 1:7); and (3) to die on sinful mankind's behalf (cf. 1:7; 2:2)<sup>2</sup>*

## Holy Spirit

No references

## Life

Verse 1 ...the things we have heard, see, looked at, and touched, concerning the Word of Life

Verse 2 and the Life was manifested...

Verse 2 and we testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father

## Fellowship

Verse 3 we proclaim what we have seen and heard, so you may have fellowship with us

Verse 3 and our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus

Verse 6 if we say we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in darkness, we lie

Verse 7 if we walk in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus cleanses us

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<sup>2</sup> Utley, Robert James. 1999. [\*The Beloved Disciple's Memoirs and Letters: The Gospel of John, I, II, and III John\*](#). Vol. Volume 4. Study Guide Commentary Series. Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International.

# Scripture Paths Bible Studies

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## Darkness

Verse 5 in Him there is no darkness at all

Verse 6 if we say we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie

## Light

Verse 5 God is Light

Verse 7 if we walk in the Light

Verse 7 as He Himself is in the Light

## Sin

Verse 7 the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin

Verse 8 if we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves

Verse 9 if we confess our sins

Verse 9 He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins

Verse 10 if we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar

## Walk

Verse 6 if we say we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness

Verse 7 if we walk in the light as He is in the light

## See/saw

Verse 1 what we have seen with our eyes

Verse 1 what we have looked at

Verse 2 we have seen and testify

Verse 3 what we have seen we proclaim

## Hear/heard

Verse 1 what we have heard

Verse 3 what we have heard we proclaim to you

## Speak/say [lie]

Verse 2 we testify and proclaim to you the eternal life

Verse 3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also

Verse 5 message we have heard from Him and announce to you

Verse 6 if we say we have fellowship with Him,

[Verse 6 yet walk in darkness, we lie]

Verse 8 if we say we have no sin

Verse 9 if we confess our sins

Verse 10 if we say we have not sinned

# Scripture Paths Bible Studies

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## Touch

Verse 1 what we have touched with our hands concerning the Word of Life

5. MARK and LIST. Mark any *commands* that are listed in the chapter. Look for things the author is telling his readers to do or be. Now, list them on your separate sheet of paper in the same way you did for the key words.

No Commands

6. MARK and LIST. Mark words or phrases that are being *compared or contrasted*. Words like *as, likewise, in the same manner, or like* will help you find words or phrases being compared. Contrasting words like “light/dark” or “love/hate” and the word “but” will help you find words or phrases that are being contrasted. Now list what you discovered about comparisons and contrasts on the extra paper you’ve been using.

See chapter observation sheet

7. MARK. Mark transition terms: *therefore, wherefore, finally*. Sometimes an author has his own kind of transition term that lets you know he is making a switch to a new topic, so be sure to look for those kinds of terms. (Generally, these are at the beginning of a paragraph.)

See chapter observation sheet

8. MARK and LIST. Mark any time *so that* is used. In putting together your list, look for what comes before the “so that” which will bring about or produce some kind of result. For example, in Philippians 1:10 “so that” appears, but in order to understand its significance you need to also look at verse 9. Your entry for Philippians 1:9-10 might say something like, “Paul prays that the Philippians’ love would abound in real knowledge and all discernment *so that* they would be able to approve the things that are excellent and live sincerely and blamelessly until the day of Christ.” I think you will be so blessed by this part of your observation time!

Verse 3 we proclaim these things to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us

Verse 4 these things we write, so that our joy may be made complete

9. MARK. Mark expressions of time—words like *shortly, quickly, soon, for a little while*.

Verses 1 and 2

10. MARK. Mark words that are synonyms of each other. For example: *Paul and Timothy are bond-servants* from 1:1.

See chapter observation sheet

11. LIST. List any *attributes* of God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit that you notice in this chapter. You’ll start this list by going back up to your listed “God” words that you marked earlier in #4 and #5. An attribute is a characteristic or quality used to describe an object or person.

# Scripture Paths Bible Studies

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For example, you might read John 3:16, “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*” From this verse we see that God is *loving* [because He loved the world]; He is *giving* [because He gave His Son]; He is *eternal* [because only the eternal can offer eternal life].

## Attributes of God

Verse 2 God is Father

Verse 2 He is eternal (He is the holder, initiator of eternal life because it comes from Him)

Verse 3, 6 He is knowable (fellowship with Him)

Verse 5, 7 God is Light/holy/righteous/good/just. There is no darkness in Him

Verse 9 He is faithful

Verse 9 he is righteous

Verse 9 He is powerful, sovereign, gracious, omniscient to forgive us our sins

Verse 10 He is true, faithful, trustworthy, holy.

Verse 10 He gives/impart to us His Word and makes His will known

## Attributes of Christ

Verse 3 He is God’s Son

Verse 3 He is knowable (we have fellowship with Him)

Verse 5 He imparts His message; He is teacher

Verse 7 He is holy, righteous, sacrificial

12. LIST. Look for lists of words, phrases, or related thoughts. Number the lists within the Bible text, then record your list out to the side in the margin or on a separate sheet of paper. This will help you see the thought progression of the author or the results of some action.

For example, in 1 John 1:1 we find a list about the *Word of Life*. We discover 1) the Word of Life was from the beginning; 2) John heard the Word of Life; 3) John saw the Word of Life with his own eyes; 4) John looked at the Word of Life; 5) John touched the Word of life with his hands.

See chapter observation sheet

13. NOTE. Be sure to mark or write down any “nuggets” you observed which you thought were interesting, spurred on some thought, or made you want to study further. I love how John wants us to things! *These things we write! This is the message!* He explains things by contrasts...*if we say, yet walk, then...*



# Scripture Paths Bible Studies

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*Remember*, the purpose of this lesson is to observe and take note of what is in the chapter. You are not making any interpretations or applications to your life right now. Your task at this time is to simply look for the treasures that God has put in each chapter.

As you do this lesson, take time to worship and thank the Lord that He has preserved His Word for you to study. Admire and marvel at what He placed in this chapter for you to notice. There really isn't any other time in our studies where we simply look at, think on, and study God's Word for itself, so have fun with this lesson! And may the Lord be blessed by your labors!

# Scripture Paths Bible Studies

## Scripture Paths Bible Studies

### The Word of Life

#### 1 John Chapter 1

1 What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of

1. The Word of Life
2. We heard
3. We saw with our eyes
4. We looked at
5. We touched

2 and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us—

3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus

Christ.

#### Purpose Statement

4 These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;

7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

Life  
Life is manifested  
and all in it that  
life

life  
we  
testify  
and  
proclaim  
vs  
walking  
in vs 6-7

△ god  
+ Jesus  
v Spirit  
life  
fellowship  
darkness  
light

contrast  
comparison  
not in us  
Sin  
walk  
righteous/unrighteous  
see  
hear  
speak/say  
touch

So that  
The things we heard  
vs 1-3  
vs 4-5  
vs 6-7  
vs 8-10

Speakers  
vs 2  
vs 3  
vs 4  
vs 5  
vs 6  
vs 7  
vs 8  
vs 9  
vs 10

— 1 John —  
Lesson #3 Chapter 1:1-4  
Teacher's Guide

Before you begin this lesson, prepare your heart by going to the Lord for help in understanding His Word and wisdom in applying it. May you be blessed as you dig into this passage!

1. As you get started, list what you know about the author of this epistle. See how much you can come up with just off the top of your head.

John the apostle whom Jesus loved. He outlived the other apostles. Was formerly nicknamed a "son of thunder" by Jesus. Wrote the gospel of John and the letters of 1, 2, 3 John and Revelation. By the time he writes this letter, he's quite old—or he feels that old. He was formerly a fisherman, but now devotes his time to the building up of the saints.

2. Now let's piece together a portrait from the Scriptures of the writer of this epistle. See Mark 3:16-17; Acts 8:14-15; Galatians 2:9; Revelation 1:9. What do you learn about him?

**Mark 3:16-17 – 16** And He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom He gave the name Peter), **17** and James, the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James (to them He gave the name Boanerges, which means, "Sons of Thunder");

**Acts 8:14-15 – 14** Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, **15** who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

**Galatians 2:9 – 9** and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

**Revelation 1:9 – 9** I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

3. How does the author often describe himself? See John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20. How does that description give insight into what the author considers to be most valuable in life?

**John 13:23 – 23** There was reclining on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.

**John 19:26 – 26** When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!"

**John 20:2 – 2** So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."

**John 21:7 – 7** Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord." So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put his outer garment on (for he was stripped for work), and threw himself into the sea.

**John 21:20 – 20** Peter, turning around, *saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them*; the one who also had leaned back on His bosom at the supper and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?"

The sheer repetition of that description, and without naming himself, reveals the value that he places on being loved by the Lord Jesus. If he were introducing himself to someone for the first time, this is how he would introduce himself. "*Hi, I'm the disciple Jesus loved.*" The marvel and wonder of it seems to have forever changed how he viewed himself. That Jesus loved *him* became his identity.

Oh, how we should be that changed for if we know the Lord Jesus as Savior, then those words apply to us as well. They seem to have been a heart meditation and wondrous truth for him.

4. What things do you learn about the *Word of Life* from verse 1?

**1 John 1:1 – 1** What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life–

The Word of Life was from the beginning. We heard about the Word of Life. We have seen the Word of Life with our eyes. We have looked at and touched the Word of Life with our hands.

That makes me envious in the best of ways! Oh, to have seen Jesus, to have touched Him! I so look forward to the day when I will see Him face to face.

5. Let's take a moment to look at the list given in verse 1 about the Word of Life. First, John says the Word of Life was from the beginning. What does John want us to understand about the *Word of Life* from that opening description? See John 1:1-2; 8:58; 1 John 2:13-14; Micah 5:2.

**John 1:1-2 – 1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and *the Word was God*. **2** He was in the beginning with God.

**John 8:58 – 58** Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, *before Abraham was born, I am.*"

**1 John 2:13-14 – 13** I am writing to you, fathers, *because you know Him who has been from the beginning*. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father. **14** I have written to you, fathers, *because you know Him who has been from the beginning*. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

**Micah 5:2 – 2** "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. *His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.*"

The Word of Life is eternal and God Himself. When Jesus said *I am* He is referring to His eternality, that He has always existed, that He is God.

6. Why would it be important that John's readers understand the Word of Life was from the beginning? See also Isaiah 43:10; Colossians 1:17; Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 1:1; 1 John 5:20.

**Isaiah 43:10 – 10** "You are My witnesses," declares the LORD, "And My servant whom I have chosen, *So that you may know and believe Me And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, And there will be none after Me.*

**Colossians 1:17 – 17** *He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.*

**Titus 2:13 – 13** looking for *the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory* of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,

**2 Peter 1:1 – 1** Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of *our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:*

**1 John 5:20 – 20** And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding *so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.*

John was affirming to his readers that Jesus truly is God Himself, in spite of what the false teachers were spouting. In nearly every word and phrase of this letter, John testifies to Jesus deity and humanity—that Jesus is fully God and fully man.

7. ~~Next, John reveals four more things about the Word of Life in verse 1. What do you learn about the Word of Life from those four qualities listed in verse 1?~~ We've just looked spent some time learning about the Word of Life who was from the beginning. Next, let's look at 4 more things about the Word of Life. What do you learn about the Word of Life from those four qualities listed in verse 1?

We have heard the Word of Life.

We have seen the Word of Life with our eyes.

We have looked at the Word of Life.

We have touched the Word of Life.

The Word of Life was accessible, lived among them, was knowable, physical, in a body.

8. John wanted to strengthen and encourage the believers so they would enjoy fellowship with God to the fullest. He also wrote to refute false teaching that was infiltrating the church and undermining the believer's faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Gnostic heresy taught that "matter is inherently evil, and a divine being therefore could not take on human flesh."<sup>1</sup>

Because the false teachers taught that matter (anything created, anything of the flesh) was evil, they sought to diminish Jesus by claiming He could not have been fully God and fully man. This pernicious heresy goes straight to the heart of the gospel and seeks to unravel the redeeming work of Christ, who became a man, lived a perfect life, and died to

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa, [Talk Thru the Bible](#) (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1983), 485.



make propitiation for sin (Philippians 2:7-8; Hebrews 2:11, 14-15, 17-18; 10:4, 10, 19-22).

**\*\*\*[Philippians 2:7-8 – 7** but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. **8** Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

**Hebrews 2:11 – 11** For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,

**Hebrews 2:14-15 – 14** Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, **15** and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

**Hebrews 2:17-18 – 17** Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. **18** For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

**Hebrews 10:4 – 4** For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

**Hebrews 10:10 – 10** By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

**Hebrews 10:19-22 – 19** Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, **20** by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, **21** and since we have a great priest over the house of God, **22** let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.]

What elements do you see in verses 1-3 that show how John was seeking to “prove” that Jesus was fully man?

John refers to seeing, hearing, and touching Jesus to show Jesus lived upon the earth in a human body. John testifies to this reality (verse 2) and says he proclaims to them what he has seen and heard. He tries to be as concrete as possible to show Jesus' deity and humanity. Verse 1 is masterful in encapsulating both realities.

“Such heretical views destroy not only the true humanity of Jesus, but also the atonement, for Jesus must not only have been truly God, but also the truly human (and physically real) man who actually suffered and died upon the cross in order to be the acceptable substitutionary sacrifice for sin (cf. Heb. 2:14–17). The biblical view of Jesus affirms His complete humanity as well as His full deity.” ~John MacArthur<sup>2</sup>

“At the time John was writing, a false sect had arisen which became known as Gnosticism (Gk. *gnōsis* = knowledge). These Gnostics professed to be Christians but claimed to have *additional knowledge*, superior to what the apostles taught. They claimed that a person could not be completely fulfilled until he had been initiated into their deeper “truths.” Some taught that matter was evil, and that therefore the Man Jesus could not be God.

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<sup>2</sup> John MacArthur Jr., ed., [The MacArthur Study Bible](#), electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1962.

They made a distinction between Jesus and the Christ. "The Christ" was a divine emanation which came upon Jesus at His baptism and left before His death, perhaps in the Garden of Gethsemane. According to them, Jesus *did* die, but the Christ did *not* die. They insisted, as Michael Green put it, that "the heavenly Christ was too holy and spiritual to be soiled by permanent contact with human flesh." In short, they denied the Incarnation, that Jesus is the Christ, and that Jesus Christ is both God and Man. John realized that these people were not true Christians, and so he warned his readers against them by showing that the Gnostics did not have the marks of true children of God." ~William MacDonald<sup>3</sup>

9. Why was it important to testify to *physically* seeing, hearing, and touching the Word of Life, especially after the resurrection? See John 1:14; 20:27-31; Acts 4:19-20; 1 Corinthians 15:1-5, 12-19; 2 Peter 1:16-18.

**John 1:14 – 14** *And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

**John 20:27-31 – 27** Then He said to Thomas, "*Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.*" **28** Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" **29** Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed." **30** *Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.*

**Acts 4:19-20 – 19** But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; **20** *for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.*"

**1 Corinthians 15:1-5 – 1** Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, **2** by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. **3** *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.*

**1 Corinthians 15:12-19 – 12** Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? **13** But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; **14** *and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. 15* Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because *we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. 16* For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; **17** and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. **18** Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. **19** If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

**2 Peter 1:16-18 – 16** For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but *we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17* For when He received honor and

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<sup>3</sup> William MacDonald, [\*Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments\*](#), ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 2308.



glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased" – **18** and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

The Bible writers attested to seeing Jesus as man. He had a physical body and lived as a man. Jesus' humanity was necessary for our salvation. Also seeing Jesus in the flesh after His resurrection shows that He did indeed rise from the dead. He didn't come back as a spirit. He was still man, still bore the marks of His crucifixion.

Because Jesus is God's revelation of Himself, He has a very special name: "*The Word of Life*" (1 John 1:1). This same title opens John's Gospel: "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*" (John 1:1). Why does Jesus Christ have this name? Because Christ is to us what our words are to others. Our words reveal to others just what we think and how we feel. Christ reveals to us the mind and heart of God. He is the living means of communication between God and men. To know Jesus Christ is to know God! ~Warren Wiersbe<sup>4</sup>

10. In verse 2 John says the Word of Life was *manifested*. Define *manifested* [Strong's #5319 (NIV *appeared*)]. Now see some of the other places where the word is used: John 3:21; Romans 16:26; 1 Peter 1:20; 1 John 3:5, 8; 4:9, 14. From those references, what do you learn about some of the reasons the Word of Life was manifested?

Manifested—make clear, reveal, to make visible, to make known what has been hidden or unknown.

**John 3:21 – 21** "But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God." *Here manifested is used to show that when we come to the Light, it reveals that our deeds have been created in God.*

**Romans 16:26 – 26** but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith; *the mystery of Jesus Christ is now made visible so that the nations can be saved.*

**1 Peter 1:20 – 20** For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you. *Jesus was made manifest, revealed, appeared for our sake.*

**1 John 3:5 – 5** You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. *Jesus appeared to take away sins.*

**1 John 3:8 – 8** the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. *Jesus appeared to destroy the works of the devil.*

**1 John 4:9 – 9** By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. *God's love was manifested/made visible by His sending His Son into the world.*

**1 John 4:14 – 14** We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. *We have seen [because He was made visible/revealed] to us that God sent Him to be the Savior of the world.*

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<sup>4</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 474.

Incredible. Just incredible that God would do this for sinful man. What love and pity He extends to us! Just think about why God sent Jesus from the above verses! Amazing love!

11. After coming in contact with the manifested Word of Life, what did John and the other disciples do according to verse 2? What message did they communicate (verse 2)?

They testified and proclaimed the eternal life, which was with the Father and made manifest/visible/revealed/appeared to the disciples.

12. What do you learn about *the eternal life* according to verse 2?

It was testified to and proclaimed by the disciples.

It was with the Father.

It was manifested/made visible/revealed to the disciples.

13. Why would John and the other disciples take such pains to “testify and proclaim” that message about *the eternal life* from verse 2? See verse 3 for your answer.

They proclaim it so “you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

14. Trace the word *life* in verses 1-3. What truths unfold about *the life* in those verses? See also John 11:25-26; 14:6; 2 Timothy 1:10; 1 John 5:11-12, 20.

Verse 1 we see the Word of Life which is described in verse 1. Then we learn in verse 2 that the life [Life] was manifested/revealed/appeared to which the disciples testified. They proclaimed the message of eternal life [Eternal Life], which was with the Father.

**John 11:25-26 – 25** Jesus said to her, “*I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, 26* and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?”

**John 14:6 – 6** Jesus said to him, “*I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.*”

**2 Timothy 1:10 – 10** but now has been revealed by the appearing of *our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,*

**1 John 5:11-12 – 11** And the testimony is this, that *God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12* He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

**1 John 5:20 – 20** And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. *This is the true God and eternal life.*

15. Verse 3 picks up John’s thoughts from verse 1. Verse 2 is a little parenthetical aside that provides helpful details about the Word of Life. Now in verse 3, we read of John’s purpose in writing his letter. What is his purpose in writing according to verse 3?

“So that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

16. Define *fellowship* [Strong’s #2842] from verse 3.

“Fellowship does not mean social relations, but that his readers were to be partakers (or, partners) with John in possessing eternal life (cf. Phil. 1:5; 1 Pet. 5:1; 2 Pet. 1:4). John writes not only to affirm the physical reality of Jesus (vv. 1, 2) but also to produce salvation in the readers. That genuine Christians are never “out of fellowship” is clear, since this verse equates fellowship with salvation.” [MacArthur, John, Jr., ed. 1997. [The MacArthur Study Bible](#). Electronic ed. Nashville, TN: Word Pub.]

“Thus, a joint-participation on the part of the Christian in John’s first-hand knowledge of the Lord Jesus, will issue in a real, practical, intelligent fellowship (companionship) with the Lord Jesus.” ... “Just so, to have fellowship with the Lord Jesus in the sense of companionship, the saint must have common likes and dislikes with the Lord Jesus, he must love what He loves, namely, righteousness, and hate what He hates, namely, sin. He must have a common nature, the divine nature, He must have a common Father, God, our Lord in His deity, the saint as a human being (Heb. 2:11). It is these things held in common on the part of the Lord Jesus and the saint that form the basis of the fellowship and make it possible.” [Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. [Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader](#). Vol. 13. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.]

“This word ‘fellowship’ is one of the important words in this letter. ... The idea in the word is that of one person having a joint-participation with another in something possessed in common by both. A very touching use of the verbal form of this word was found in a fourth century inscription; a doctor of medicine had put up an inscription to his wife who had also studied medicine, and who had died. It read, “as with you alone I shared my life.” How beautiful it is when a sinner saved by grace comes to the sunset of life and can say to the Lord Jesus, “as with you alone I have shared by life.” ~Kenneth Wuest<sup>5</sup>

17. Explain how John’s comments about *fellowship* follow his train of thought from verses 1-2. In other words, how does the context help us understand John’s point about fellowship in verse 3?

What they had seen and heard about *The Life*, who gives eternal life to all who come to Him, they now proclaim to “us” so we might have eternal life and enjoy fellowship with God and the resulting fellowship with one another.

18. Why is it crucial that we understand the need for fellowship with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ as we see in verse 3?

We must have come to *the Life* for eternal life if we are going to have fellowship with the Father and with Jesus. Fellowship is the result of salvation and the ongoing turning away from sin. We see in verses 1-3 that Jesus

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<sup>5</sup> Kenneth S. Wuest, [Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader](#), vol. 13 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 95–96.

came so we could have fellowship with the Father and with the Son. Without salvation, there is no fellowship with God.

19. How do we gain that fellowship with God? See John 3:14-16, 36; Acts 4:12; 10:42-43; Ephesians 2:8-10; 1 John 5:11-12.

**John 3:14-16 – 14** "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; **15** so that *whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.* **16** "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, *that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*

**John 3:36 – 36** "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

**Acts 4:12 – 12** "And *there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.*"

**Acts 10:42-43 – 42** "And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly *to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead.* **43** "Of Him all the prophets bear witness *that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.*"

**Ephesians 2:8-10 – 8** For by grace *you have been saved through faith;* and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; **9** not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. **10** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

**1 John 5:11-12 – 11** And the testimony is this, that *God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.* **12** He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

Only through faith in Jesus—there is no other way.

20. What reason does John give in verse 4 for telling them about the Word of Life in the previous verses?

So that our joy may be made complete.

21. How would his reader's understanding of those truths from verses 1-3 bring John joy? If his reader's understood that there is salvation in no one else, if they have come to know and have fellowship with God, then John also knows that they will have fellowship with one another and with him. His joy will be complete.

22. How can those truths from verses 1-3 bring *you* joy today?

The truths that at an appointed time, God revealed the Lord Jesus Christ to mankind as *The Way, The Truth, The Life* is truly stunning. What joy to think that I can fellowship with the Eternal One today and every day because of Jesus' willing giving up of His life for me. Oh, precious life-changing truths!

"There is something that every believer can do for his Lord. He must be able to tell of what he has tasted and handled of the Word of Life, and if he has not tasted and handled it, then he is not a child of God at all. The best teaching in the world is experimental. Nothing wins upon men like personal witnessing—not merely teaching the doctrine as we find it in the Book, but as we have felt it in its living power upon our own

# Scripture Paths Bible Studies

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hearts. When we begin to tell of its effect upon ourselves, it is wonderful what power there is upon others in that testimony.” ~Charles Spurgeon<sup>6</sup>

“We have now such supernatural conversation with God and the Lord Christ as is an earnest and foretaste of our everlasting abode with them, and enjoyment of them, in the heavenly glory. See to what the gospel revelation tends—to advance us far above sin and earth and to carry us to blessed communion with the Father and the Son. See for what end the eternal life was made flesh—that he might advance us to eternal life in communion with the Father and himself.” ~Matthew Henry<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Charles Spurgeon, [\*Spurgeon Commentary: 1 John\*](#), ed. Elliot Ritzema, Spurgeon Commentary Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014), 1 Jn 1:1.

<sup>7</sup> Matthew Henry, [\*Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume\*](#) (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2443.

— 1 John —  
Lesson #4 Chapter 1:5-10  
Teacher's Guide

Before you begin this lesson, prepare your heart by asking the Lord for help in understanding His Word and for wisdom in applying it. May you be blessed as you dig into this passage!

1. By way of review, what message was proclaimed in verses 1-3? One of the reasons for that preached message is given in verse 3. What is it?  
The message that was proclaimed is that they had seen, heard, touched the Word of Life, who gives eternal life. He was a real person, and his life was seen and put on display. Another reason for proclaiming this message is so John's readers could have fellowship with John and with God the Father and with Jesus Christ, His Son.
2. What is it about the message from verses 1-3 that will bring joy to John? See verse 4. Being able to testify about the Word of Life, that He is the eternal life, and that fellowship with God the Father is possible through His Son, Jesus brings great joy to John.
3. In verse 5 John declares, "This is the message we have from Him and announce to you." Define *announce* [Strong's #312 (ESV *proclaim*; NKJV, NIV *declare*)]. See also John 4:25; Acts 20:20, 27; 1 Peter 1:12 to get a better sense of the word.  
Declare; disclose; bring tidings of.

**John 4:25: 25** The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, *He will declare* all things to us."

**Acts 20:20: 20** *how I did not shrink from declaring* to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house,

**Acts 20:27: 27** "For *I did not shrink from declaring* to you the whole purpose of God.

**1 Peter 1:12: 12** It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things *which now have been announced* to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.

4. Where does the message originate according to verse 5?  
The message originates from Jesus, the Word of Life, the eternal life.
5. John began his letter proclaiming things we need to know. Now what announcement does John want us to know and understand from verse 5?  
He wants us to know that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness.
6. What observations can you make about God, His character, and His ways from verse 5?  
This is a message worth proclaiming! Jesus wants us to know this about the Father. It's highly important that we understand this about the Father.

God is Light. He is all light.

No darkness resides in Him. No darkness lives in Him at all—none.

- a. Next, look up the following verses to discover what God wants us to understand about Himself as revealed in verse 5. See Psalm 104:1-2; Zephaniah 3:5; 1 Timothy 6:16; James 1:17; Revelation 21:22-24.

**Psalm 104:1-2: 1** Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very great; You are clothed with splendor and majesty, **2** *Covering Yourself with light as with a cloak, Stretching out heaven like a tent curtain.*

**Zephaniah 3:5: 5** *The LORD is righteous within her; He will do no injustice. Every morning He brings His justice to light; He does not fail. But the unjust knows no shame.*

**1 Timothy 6:16: 16** *who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.*

**James 1:17: 17** Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from *the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.*

**Revelation 21:22-24: 22** I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

**23** *And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. 24* *The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.*

7. John has already introduced the idea that salvation ushers us into *fellowship with God* in verses 1-4. From there, John revealed more information about God in verse 5. What implications do those truths about God from verse 5 have upon our lives if we want to have fellowship with God? See Acts 26:18; Romans 13:12-14; Ephesians 5:7-14; 1 Peter 2:9-11.

To have fellowship with God, we must walk in the light as He is in the light. We must come to know the Word of Life so we can have fellowship with Him. We are to lay aside the deeds of darkness and walk as children of light.

**Acts 26:18: 18** *to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'*

**Romans 13:12-14: 12** The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us *lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.* **13** Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. **14** But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

**Ephesians 5:7-14: 7** Therefore do not be partakers with them; **8** for you were formerly darkness, *but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light* **9** (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), **10** trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. **11** Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; **12** for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. **13** But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. **14** For this reason it says, "Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you."



**1 Peter 2:9-11: 9** But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him *who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light*; **10** for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY. **11** Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.

8. What contrasts are presented in verse 6?

**1 John 1:6: 6** If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;

If we walk in darkness, we do not practice the truth.

If we walk in the light, we do practice the truth.

If we say we have fellowship with Him, then we will walk in the light.

If we say we have fellowship with Him, we won't walk in darkness.

We are liars when we say we walk in the light but actually live in the darkness.

9. John is making a crucial point about the Christian life in verse 6. Explain what *fellowship with God, practice, light, and darkness* have to do with each other as revealed in verses 5-6.

If we want to have fellowship with God, then we must walk in the light as He is in the Light. He is all light, and there is no darkness in Him. This is an all important message that we must understand. If we want to enjoy fellowship with God, then we must leave the deeds of darkness and walk in the light. When we do so, we are living out the truth. Our deeds aren't making us liars.

"All walking in darkness is a not doing of the truth." ~Marvin Vincent<sup>1</sup>

10. Describe what it means to "walk in the darkness." See also Romans 2:8; 2 Timothy 3:8; James 5:19.

**Romans 2:8: 8** but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.

**2 Timothy 3:8: 8** Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith.

**James 5:19: 19** My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back,

To walk in the darkness is to be selfish, selfishly ambitious, not obeying the truth, opposing the truth, being depraved in mind, one who has strayed from the truth.

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<sup>1</sup> Marvin Richardson Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887), 315.

11. Define *practice* [Strong's #4160 (NIV *live the truth*)] from verse 6. Also see John 3:21, the only other place John uses this phrase, *practice the truth*. Practice, do, make a habit. Do continually, make it a practice to do.

"Right action is true thought realized. Every fragment of right done is so much truth made visible" (Westcott). [Vincent, Marvin Richardson. 1887. [Word Studies in the New Testament](#). Vol. 2. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.]

**John 3:21: 21** "But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

12. In contrast to the scenario painted in verse 6, what clear progression will show in our lives according to verse 7?

If we walk in the light (as He Himself is in the Light), then we have fellowship with one another.

If we walk in the light (as He Himself is in the Light), then the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.

13. John continues to make his point about fellowship. What do you learn about where fellowship originates from verses 1-7? If you desire to deepen your relationships among believers, what do you need to understand about fellowship according to verses 1-7?

Fellowship with believers stems from our fellowship with God. Fellowship begins with rightly understanding the truths about God, His Son, and how we are to live in relationship to Him. Fellowship with God is always *in the light*, so our fellowship with one another also must reflect that and encourage each other to be *in the light*. True fellowship with God must be based on accurate understanding and belief about Him. This also means that true fellowship with one another is founded upon right doctrine and right belief about God. There is no true fellowship if we don't see God accurately and believe what is true of Him.

14. John ends verse 7 with these words, "and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." What does our being made righteous through the sacrifice of Jesus have to do with walking in the light and having fellowship with one another according to verses 5-7?

No true fellowship with others can be found in unrighteousness. There is no fellowship with one another if we aren't in fellowship with God. This is so important that John announces and proclaims this message to us. To walk in darkness is to lie and not practice the truth resulting in a break in our relationship with God. To be cleansed of our sin means we can enter into communion with God—and therefore, with one another.

"O the unspeakable effectiveness of Christ's sacrifice; it extends to all sins (1 John 1:7): past, present, without exception, and all sins to come!" ~John Flavel<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> John Flavel, editor, Richard Rushing, *Voices from the Past, Volume 1* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), page 21.

“His blood has a double consideration: not only atonement and reconciliation, but also purging and sanctification. He offered Himself not just to make atonement, but also to sanctify us by the sprinkling of His blood.” ~John Owen<sup>3</sup>

15. Lest his comments in verses 5-7 be misunderstood and misapplied, John provides more truth in verse 8 to counteract any wrong thinking about the Christian life. What do you learn in verse 8?

**1 John 1:8: 8** If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

- a. What kinds of situations tempt us to deny that we have sinned? See also Ephesians 4:20-25; Colossians 3:8-10.

Whenever I lose sight of my exceeding sinfulness and the great holiness of God. When my heart is hardened and I am spiritually dull, distracted, focused on myself, and not making God's interests my priority, when I make pleasing self my goal and end.

**Ephesians 4:20-25: 20** But you did not learn Christ in this way, **21** if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, **22** that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, **23** and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, **24** and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. **25** Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.

**Colossians 3:8-10: 8** But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. **9** Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, **10** and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—

16. What point is John making between *what we say* and the way *we walk* that we must learn to apply in our lives from verses 5-8?

If we say we have fellowship with Him

But we walk in darkness

We lie and do not practice the truth.

If we say we have no sin

We deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

If we walk in the light

We have fellowship with one another

And the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

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<sup>3</sup> John Owen, editor Richard Rushing, *Voices from the Past, Volume 1* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), page 161.

17. Once we recognize our sin and see how it has broken our previous fellowship with our dear Father, what is the solution according to verse 9?

Simply confess our sins and God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Ahhhhh....

18. What parts of verse 9 do you find take the most faith to believe and trust in when you sin?

To really believe that if I simply go to Him confessing my sin that He will completely and totally forgive me of my sin. I will be completely cleansed of all my unrighteousness. *So amazing!*

a. What do the following Scriptures teach us about confessing and forsaking sin?

See Psalm 32:5; 38:17-18; 66:16-20; Proverbs 28:13-14; Luke 18:13-14.

**Psalm 32:5: 5** I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"; And You forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah. *When I confess my sin, the Lord forgives me. I cannot hide my sin from Him.*

**Psalm 38:17-18: 17** For I am ready to fall, And my sorrow is continually before me. **18** For I confess my iniquity; I am full of anxiety because of my sin. *We can be fearful about our sin, but when we confess our sin to God, He forgives us.*

**Psalm 66:16-20: 16** Come and hear, all who fear God, And I will tell of what He has done for my soul. **17** I cried to Him with my mouth, And He was extolled with my tongue. **18** If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear; **19** But certainly God has heard; He has given heed to the voice of my prayer. **20** Blessed be God, Who has not turned away my prayer Nor His lovingkindness from me. *Oh the wonders that God has done for my soul! When I am quick to confess my sin, the Lord forgives me. His lovingkindness keeps Him from turning away from me.*

**Proverbs 28:13-14: 13** He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion. **14** How blessed is the man who fears always, But he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity. *Confession finds compassion. There is blessing in confession that stems from a healthy fear of the Lord.*

**Luke 18:13-14: 13** "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' **14** "I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted." *Humility and confession go hand in hand. The Lord is merciful to the humble.*

19. What do we learn about God's character in verse 9?

He is faithful. He is righteous. I love meditating on His righteousness in relation to His forgiveness. His righteousness demands satisfaction for sins, but because Jesus paid the price for us, then He justly and righteously forgives us. He is forgiving, merciful, compassionate, long-suffering, patient! He is holy and gives His own holiness to those who seek Him.

*"He that is pardoned and justified by Me is entirely washed from all his sins and only needs the daily forgiveness of the daily defilement he contracts in traveling through a sinful world. Once washed, justified and accepted by Me, ye are clean before God." J. C. Ryle [Daily Readings: From All Four Gospels for Morning and Evening, June 29 evening; EP Books, Welwyn Garden City, UK, 2015]*

*"Once joined to Christ and cleaned in His blood, they are completely absolved and free from all spot of guilt and are counted without blame before God. But, for all this, they need every day, as they walk through this world, to confess their daily failures, and to sue for daily pardon. They require, in short, a daily washing of their feet, over and above the great washing of justification, which is theirs the moment they first believe." J. C. Ryle [Daily Readings: From All Four Gospels for Morning and Evening, June 29 evening; EP Books, Welwyn Garden City, UK, 2015]*

- a. When we understand those truths about God, how can it give us courage to go to Him and confess our sin? See also Hebrews 4:14-16; 10:19-23; 11:6. First, there is no other way to get my sins taken care of. Second, He keeps His promises to forgive me of all my sin. Third, He has provided Jesus so I can have my sins forgiven. Fourth, when I go to Him and confess, He forgives me. No penance, no extracting of further promises, no deeds that must be done. Simple, but oh so life-changingly effective!

**Hebrews 4:14-16: 14** Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. **15** For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. **16** *Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

**Hebrews 10:19-23: 19** Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, **20** by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, **21** and since we have a great priest over the house of God, **22** *let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.* **23** Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;

**Hebrews 11:6: 6** And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. *Just love this!!!!*

"The sinner deserves to die for his sins. Since God is a just and righteous God, sin cannot absolutely escape unpunished. God must deny Himself to be unjust, but this He can never do. . . .As God is just, He is also true, and must make good the threatenings that have gone out of His mouth: 'In the day you eat of it you shall surely die (Genesis 2:17). God cannot break His word. O sirs, there is no standing before a God that is a consuming fire, a just judge, and a holy God, unless we have one that is mighty to undertake for us and satisfy divine justice; one mighty to

pacify divine wrath, bear divine threatenings, and mighty to forgive sin! The Father is just in forgiving our sins in Christ (1 John 1:9)." ~Thomas Brooks<sup>4</sup>

20. If we are unwilling to repent of our sin and confess it to God, what is really going on?  
See verse 10.

We are making God a liar. We make Him a liar when we say we have no sin. We make Him a liar when we don't believe His promise of forgiveness. We make Him a liar when we try to atone for our sin ourselves. We make Him a liar when we don't even go to Him for forgiveness.

21. What does John mean when he says at the end of verse 10, "His Word is not in us"? See also 1 John 1:8; 2:4; John 5:37-38; 8:37; 17:17; 2 John 1:1-2.

The Word and truth are synonymous! When we have the Word in us, we have the truth in us. The Word and truth abiding in us also keeps us from sinning and saying we don't sin! **John 17:17: 17** "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

**1 John 1:8: 8** If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**1 John 2:4: 4** The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

**John 5:37-38: 37** "And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form. **38** "You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent.

**John 8:37: 37** "I know that you are Abraham's descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.

**2 John 1-2: 1** The elder to the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in truth; and not only I, but also all who know the truth, **2** for the sake of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever:

22. Think about how 1 John 1:5-10 applies to your life today.

- a. *Today*, if, or better, when you sin, what is God's assessment of what is going on in your heart and life according to these verses?

When I sin, I walk into the darkness, but when I confess, I live back in the light again because Jesus' blood covers all my sin. When I confess my sin to God, He forgives me, and I am restored to fellowship with Him. As soon as I confess my sin, the Lord keeps His Word and forgives me—no matter how often or heinous my sin is. *Amazing!*

- b. *Today*, if you sin, what do you need to do according to verses 5-10?

Confess! Confess quickly, believingly, trusting in the work of Jesus to cover over my sin. It is a true act of faith to believe that Jesus' blood covers my sin and that as soon as I confess my sin, the Lord forgives me.

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas Brooks, editor Richard Rushing, *Voices from the Past, Volume 2* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2016), page 96.

- c. *Today*, if you do not put 1 John 1:9 into practice, what will be the result? I make God a liar. I am rejecting His provision. I am saying I know better than God about how to deal with my sin! *Oh my!*
- d. After you confess and forsake your sin, *when* do you experience the results of applying 1 John 1:9? Why do you sometimes delay in applying 1 John 1:9? Immediately. I delay because I am unbelieving. I don't believe that God will really forgive me...or because I want to do penance before I turn to Jesus and accept the gift of His righteousness applied to me.
- e. What truths from verses 5-10 have impacted you the most this week? What are some ways you want to try to implement what you've learned? The complete holiness and "lightness" of God. I want to live thinking on that so that I turn from the deeds of darkness to live in the light with Him. If I am "hiding" from fellowship it means I am harboring unconfessed sin in my heart for something. I want to mentally keep believing and trusting that when I confess my sin, that immediately Christ's righteousness is applied to me. *Incredible!*

*"Father, I have sinned."*

—Luke 15:18

It is quite certain that those whom Christ has washed in his precious blood need not make a confession of sin, as culprits or criminals, before God the Judge, for Christ has for ever taken away all their sins in a legal sense, so that they no longer stand where they can be condemned, but are once for all accepted in the Beloved; but having become children, and offending as children, ought they not every day to go before their heavenly Father and confess their sin, and acknowledge their iniquity in that character?

Nature teaches that it is the duty of erring children to make a confession to their earthly father, and the grace of God in the heart teaches us that we, as Christians, owe the same duty to our heavenly Father. We daily offend, and ought not to rest without daily pardon. For, supposing that my trespasses against my Father are not at once taken to him to be washed away by the cleansing power of the Lord Jesus, what will be the consequence? If I have not sought forgiveness and been washed from these offences against my Father, I shall feel at a distance from him; I shall doubt his love to me; I shall tremble at him; I shall be afraid to pray to him: I shall grow like the prodigal, who, although still a child, was yet far off from his father.

But if, with a child's sorrow at offending so gracious and loving a Parent, I go to him and tell him all, and rest not till I realize that I am forgiven, then I shall feel a holy love to my Father, and shall go through my Christian career, not only as saved, but as one enjoying present peace in God through Jesus Christ my Lord. There is a wide distinction between confessing sin *as a culprit*, and confessing sin *as a child*. The Father's bosom is the place for penitent confessions. We have been cleansed once for all, but our feet still need to be washed from the defilement of our daily walk as children of God. ~Charles Spurgeon<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening: Daily Readings* (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1896). February 18, Evening.



— 1 John —  
Lesson #5 Chapter 2 Overview  
Teacher's Guide

The goal of this lesson is to teach you how to look at and begin to study a text of Scripture. Observation is a necessary part of Bible study, yet all too often it can be overlooked or rushed through. Simply put, observation is the practice of noticing what God has placed in His Word. *At this stage* in our Bible study, I only want you to notice and then record what you observe in the chapter. You're not making any interpretations about what the Scriptures mean or how they apply to your life—that will come later, I promise.

Don't rush through this lesson. Set aside time this week to peer into the living and abiding Word of God. Rich treasures are waiting for you!

I've included Chapter 2 (NASB) at the end of this lesson so you can print it out and mark it up if you'd like. I find it helps me see items more easily if I'm marking and noting things as I go.

1. SUMMARIZE. To begin, read through Chapter 2. Now, summarize the contents of Chapter 2. This is not the time to be super detailed; instead, think of trying to tell a 4th grader the contents of the chapter.<sup>1</sup>

a. Summarize paragraph 1 (verses 1-2).

John is writing so the believers wouldn't fall into sin, yet he encourages them that if they do sin, he reminds them that they have an Advocate in Jesus who stands before the Father on behalf of believers.

b. Summarize paragraph 2 (verses 3-6).

John then desires to build up the believers by telling them that they will know they have come to know God if they keep His commandments. If we don't keep His commandments, we are liars and reveal that the truth is not in us. If we do keep His commandments, God's love is perfected in us; we are in Him and will walk in the same manner as He walked.

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<sup>1</sup>The method and process of observation in Bible study does God honor, as we stop, observe, and consider each and every one of His recorded Words, in their context. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the debt I owe to the Precept Inductive Bible Studies observation method, which I have adapted in my studies. As far as I know, the method is the brainchild of Kay Arthur, though I've encountered a number of others who have also come up with similar ways for observing the text. The point of observation is to slow down and really look at what God has preserved for us in His Word. What I've created here is simply another variation to help us peer more closely at the Scriptures—for our good and His glory.

c. Summarize paragraph 3 (verses 7-11).

John reminds them, he is not telling them anything new or radical. From the very beginning God has revealed that when we walk in the light, we will love one another. Hateful, unloving ways reveal that we still walk in the darkness.

d. Summarize paragraph 4 (verses 12-14).

John lists the reasons he is writing to different groups among the believers—little children, young men, and fathers. The little children have their sins forgiven; the fathers know God; the young men because they have overcome the evil one.

e. Summarize paragraph 5 (verses 15-17).

John admonishes his readers not to love the world or the things of the world. Love for the world reveals a heart that isn't transformed by the Lord.

f. Summarize paragraph 6 (verses 18-25).

John then moves into discussing that false teachers have infiltrated the church in these "last times." Yet, he teaches that when they left the fellowship and sound doctrine it showed that they really weren't believers at all. Those who deny that Jesus is the Messiah also denies the relationship between Father and Son.

g. Summarize paragraph 7 (verses 26-27).

John writes to them so they are wise about those who are trying to deceive them with false doctrine. Yet, he encourages them that the Holy Spirit abides in them to help them know the truth.

h. Summarize paragraph 8 (verses 28-29).

John closes the chapter by encouraging them to abide in Him, so they won't be ashamed when He appears. He reminds them since God is righteous, all who are "in Him" will practice righteousness since they born of God.

2. SUMMARIZE. After reviewing the chapter and what you wrote for your summaries, ask yourself: *What is the main point of this chapter?* How do all these details and events reveal the main idea of the chapter? Record your answer below.

This chapter is all about reminding the believers of what they already know and have been taught so they won't be led astray by wrong thinking, wrong, teaching, and wrong examples.

3. TITLE. Now you're ready to title your chapter. Your 3-5 word title should reflect the contents of the chapter. Remember, a title's purpose is to help you remember what is in each chapter.

Truth Fixes False Teaching

Truth Anchors Our Walk

Let me encourage you . . .

I just want to give you a heads up that identifying the pronouns for God and Jesus Christ in Chapter 2 will tax your brain! Unlike most of the other biblical writers, where we can count on the rule of the “nearest antecedent” to help us identify the pronoun, John is a bit more cryptic. [The nearest antecedent rule is simply look for the closest noun that would identify who the pronouns are referring to.] John thinks more globally and collectively so that identifying who is the focus of his pronouns becomes more difficult.

So, if you’ve started Lesson #5 and are feeling confused, you are not alone! I have found that referring back to Chapter 1 and looking at what John stated in Chapter 1 has helped *some*, like when John talks about the Light (compare 1:5-7 with 2:8-10). *But I’ve also erased my markings a few times already as I’ve been working! And I might change them again soon!* Also know that in almost every instance, whether you mark a pronoun as referring to God the Father or Jesus Christ, it won’t impact doctrine. This is super comforting, don’t you think?!

Listen to these commentators talk about identifying the pronouns: *For John, Jesus is so closely linked with the Father that a precise distinction between the Persons of the Godhead sometimes seems irrelevant. Fellowship is with both the Father and the Son (1:3) and to know One of Them intimately is to know the Other.* [Walvoord, John F., and Roy B. Zuck, Dallas Theological Seminary. 1985. [The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures](#). Vol. 2. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.]

*The PRONOUNS are ambiguous as to whether they refer to God the Father or God the Son. In v. 6 the context demands “the Son” (as do 3:2, 5, 7, 16; 4:17). However, for John, there is a fluidity between the redemptive and sanctifying actions of the Triune God.* [Utley, Robert James. 1999. *The Beloved Disciple’s Memoirs and Letters: The Gospel of John, I, II, and III John*. Vol. Volume 4. Study Guide Commentary Series. Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International.]

As you go over your lesson review how and why you chose to mark your pronouns a certain way based on the clues in the text. *But don’t get too crazy about it all since even the commentary writers were having trouble identifying which member of the Trinity was John’s focus.*

Have fun, ask the Lord for help, and thank Him for the gift of the Holy Spirit, who helps us understand and study God’s Word! Remember, God is pleased when we wrestle with His Word, desiring to understand every jot and tittle of it!

Grace, peace, and perseverance to you!  
Lisa

4. MARK and LIST. On the *1 John Bible Text* handout mark any key words you see in the chapter. *God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit* are always key words. It’s easiest to start with these “God” words first. Next mark words or phrases that are repeated at least 3 times. Mark any other words that seem important to the chapter or are strongly emphasized.

You can mark words or phrases by creating a symbol or using a certain colored pencil every time it appears. This will enable you to see at a glance how often a word is used in the chapter or note a progression of thought.

- a. Next, *list the phrase containing the key words* on a separate sheet of paper. This step will allow you to pull together the information you noted from marking the key words. Be sure to cite the verse references when you list your key word information.

For example, with *God* as your key word you would begin to make a list of the information you discovered every time God is mentioned in 1 John Chapter 2. Your Chapter 2 list about *God* should begin by looking something like the one below.

Verse 5—*God* is love

Verse 13—*God* is Father. He is knowable.

Fun study tip to try: Mark any key/repeated words that you notice appear all the way through the book, even if their use in individual chapters may not fit the “3 times or more” rule. This will allow you to trace major themes and an author’s thoughts throughout the book.

## God

Verse 1 we have an Advocate with the Father

Verse 3 we know we have come to know Him [God], if we keep His [God’s] commandments

Verse 4 the one who says, “I have come to know Him [God]” and does not keep His [God’s] commandments is a liar

Verse 5 whoever keeps His [God’s] Word

Verse 5 the love of God has been perfected

Verse 5 we know that we are in Him [God]

Verse 6 when he who says he abides in Him [God]

Verse 8 writing a new commandment which is true in Him [God] and in you

[Verse 8 the true Light (God, mostly marked this because of chapter 1)]

[Verse 9 the one who says he is in the Light (God, mostly marked this because of chapter 1)]

[Verse 10 the one who loves his brother abides in the Light (God, mostly marked this because of chapter 1)]

Verse 13 because you know the Father

Verse 14 and the Word of God abides in you

Verse 15 the love of the Father is not in him

Verse 16 all that is in the world...is not from the Father

Verse 17 the one who does the will of God lives forever

Verse 20 you have an anointing from the Holy One [God]

Verse 22 the antichrist denies the Father and the Son

Verse 23 whoever denies the Son does not have the Father

Verse 23 whoever confesses the Son has the Father also

Verse 24 if what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father

Verse 25 this is the promise He Himself made to us: eternal life

Verse 29 if you know He (Jesus) is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him (God).

*Note: For John, Jesus is so closely linked with the Father that a precise distinction between the Persons of the Godhead sometimes seems irrelevant. Fellowship is with both the Father and the Son (1:3) and to know One of Them intimately is to know the Other. [Walvoord, John F., and Roy B. Zuck, Dallas Theological Seminary. 1985. [The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures](#). Vol. 2. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.]*

*The PRONOUNS are ambiguous as to whether they refer to God the Father or God the Son. In v. 6 the context demands "the Son" (as do 3:2, 5, 7, 16; 4:17). However, for John, there is a fluidity between the redemptive and sanctifying actions of the Triune God. [Utley, Robert James. 1999. The Beloved Disciple's Memoirs and Letters: The Gospel of John, I, II, and III John. Vol. Volume 4. Study Guide Commentary Series. Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International.]*

## Jesus Christ

Verse 1 we have an Advocate (Jesus) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous

Verse 2 He Himself is the propitiation for our sins

Verse 6 when he who says he abides in Him [God], he will walk in the same manner as He [Jesus] walked.

Verse 12 your sins have been forgiven you for His [Jesus'] name's sake

Verse 13 you know Him [Jesus] who has been from the beginning

Verse 14 you know Him [Jesus] who has been from the beginning

Verse 22 who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ

Verse 22 the antichrist denies the Father and the Son

Verse 23 whoever denies the Son does not have the Father

Verse 23 whoever confesses the Son has the Father also

Verse 24 if what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father

Verse 27 the anointing you received from Him [Jesus] abides in you (My reason for marking this as Jesus is found in verse 24 where John states that what we heard from the beginning we are to let abide in us and then we will abide in the Son and in the Father. Since the Son is listed first, I went with that.)

Verse 27 His [Jesus'] anointing teaches you about all things (same reasoning as stated above)

Verse 27 you abide in Him [Jesus] (same reasoning as stated above)

Verse 28 little children, abide in Him (Jesus) so that when He (Jesus) appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him (Jesus) in shame at His (Jesus') coming

Verse 29 if you know He (Jesus) is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him (God).

## Know

Verse 3 by this we know we have come to know Him

Verse 4 the one who says I have come to know Him

Verse 5 by this we know that we are in Him

Verse 11 the one who hates his brother... does not know where he is going

Verse 13 because you know Him who has been from the beginning

Verse 13 children because you know the Father

Verse 14 fathers because you know Him who has been from the beginning

Verse 18 this we know that it is the last hour

Verse 20 we have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know

Verse 21 I have not written because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it

Verse 29 if you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him

## Dark

Verse 8 the darkness is passing away

Verse 9 hates his brother is in the darkness until now

Verse 11 hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness

Verse 11 the darkness has blinded his eyes

## Light

Verse 8 the true Light is already shining

Verse 9 the one who says he is in the Light

Verse 10 the one who loves his brother abides in the Light

## Sin

Verse 1 writing that you may not sin

Verse 1 if anyone sins, we have an Advocate

Verse 2 He Himself if the propitiation for our sins

Verse 12 little children your sins have been forgiven you

## Righteous

Verse 1 Jesus Christ the righteous

Verse 29 if you know He is righteous

Verse 29 you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him

## Abides

Verse 6 the one who says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same manner

Verse 10 the one who loves his brother abides in the Light

Verse 14 the Word of God abides in you  
Verse 24 let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning  
Verse 24 if what you heard from the beginning abides in you  
Verse 24 you also will abide in the Son and in the Father  
Verse 27 the anointing which you received from Him abides in you  
Verse 27 you abide in Him  
Verse 28 little children, abide in Him

## Beginning

Verse 7 an old commandment which you have had from the beginning  
Verse 13 you know Him who has been from the beginning  
Verse 14 you know Him who has been from the beginning  
Verse 24 let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning  
Verse 24 if what you heard from the beginning abides in you

## I am writing/I have written

Verse 1 I am writing these things to you...that you may not sin  
Verse 7 I am not writing a new commandment to you  
Verse 8 I am writing a new commandment to you  
Verse 12 I am writing to you little children ... sins forgiven  
Verse 13 I am writing to you fathers because you know Him  
Verse 13 I am writing to you young men because you have overcome the evil one  
Verse 13 I have written to you children because you know the Father  
Verse 14 I have written to you fathers because you know Him  
Verse 14 I have written to you young men because you are strong  
Verse 21 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth...  
Verse 26 these things I have written concerning those who are trying to deceive you

## Walk/stumbling

Verse 6 the one who says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same manner as He walked  
Verse 10 the one who abides in the light...there is no cause for stumbling in him

## True/truth

Verse 8 a new commandment which is true in Him and in you  
Verse 8 the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining  
Verse 21 I have not written because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it [the truth]  
Verse 21 no lie is of the truth  
Verse 27 His anointing is true and is not a lie



## Lie/liar

Verse 4 the one who does not keep His commandments is a liar

Verse 21 no lie is of the truth

Verse 22 who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ

Verse 26 I have written to those who are trying to deceive you

Verse 27 His anointing...is true and is not a lie

## Antichrist

Verse 18 you heard that antichrist is coming

Verse 18 even now many antichrists have appeared

Verse 19 they [antichrists] went out from us, but they [antichrists] were not really of us; for if they [antichrists] had been of us, they [antichrists] would have remained with us; but they [antichrists] went out, so that it would be shown that they [antichrists] all are not of us.

Verse 22 this is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son

## World

Verse 2 He Himself is the propitiation for our sins...also for those of the whole world

Verse 15 do not love the world nor the things in the world

Verse 15 if anyone loves the world the love of the Father is not in him

Verse 16 for all that is in the world... is not from the Father, but is from the world

Verse 17 the world is passing away and also its [the world's] lusts

## Commandments/Word/will of God

Verse 3 we know Him if we keep His commandments

Verse 4 if he does not keep His commandments, he is a liar

Verse 5 whoever keeps His word, God's love is perfected

Verse 7 I am not writing a new commandment to you

Verse 7 I am writing an old commandment which you have had from the beginning

Verse 7 the old commandment is the word which you have heard

Verse 8 I am writing a new commandment...which is true in Him and in you

Verse 14 the word of God abides in you

Verse 17 the one who does the will of God lives forever

## Love

Verse 5 whoever keeps His Word in him the love of God has been perfected

Verse 10 the one who loves his brother abides in the light

Verse 15 do not love the world nor the things in the world

Verse 15 if anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him

## Hate

Verse 9 the one who says he is in the light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness

Verse 11 the one who hates his brother is in the darkness

5. MARK and LIST. Mark any *commands* that are listed in the chapter. Look for things the author is telling his readers to do or be. Now, list them on your separate sheet of paper in the same way you did for the key words.

Verse 15 do not love the world nor the things in the world

Verse 24 let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning

Verse 28 little children, abide in Him

6. MARK and LIST. Mark words or phrases that are being *compared or contrasted*. Words like *as, likewise, in the same manner, or like* will help you find words or phrases being compared. Contrasting words like “light/dark” or “love/hate” and the word “but” will help you find words or phrases that are being contrasted. Now list what you discovered about comparisons and contrasts on the extra paper you’ve been using.

See observation sheet.

7. MARK. Mark transition terms: *therefore, wherefore, finally*. Sometimes an author has his own kind of transition term that lets you know he is making a switch to a new topic, so be sure to look for those kinds of terms. (Generally, these are at the beginning of a paragraph.)

See observation sheet.

8. MARK. Mark any time *so that* is used. In putting together your list, look for what comes before the “so that” which will bring about or produce some kind of result. For example, in Philippians 1:10 “so that” appears, but in order to understand its significance you need to also look at verse 9. Your entry for Philippians 1:9-10 might say something like, “Paul prays that the Philippians’ love would abound in real knowledge and all discernment *so that* they would be able to approve the things that are excellent and live sincerely and blamelessly until the day of Christ.” I think you will be so blessed by this part of your observation time!

Verse 1 I am writing these things to you *so that* you may not sin

Verse 19 they [the false teachers] went out *so that* it might be shown that they all are not of us

Verse 28 abide in Him *so that* when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming

9. MARK. Mark expressions of time—words like *shortly, quickly, soon, for a little while*.  
See observation sheet.

10. MARK. Mark words that are synonyms of each other. For example: *Paul and Timothy are bond-servants* from 1:1.

Name synonyms—little children (verse 1, 28), beloved (verse 7), children (verse 18)

11. LIST. List any *attributes* of God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit that you notice in this chapter. You'll start this list by going back up to your listed "God" words that you marked earlier in #4 and #5. An attribute is a characteristic or quality used to describe an object or person.

For example, you might read John 3:16, "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*" From this verse we see that God is *loving* [because He loved the world]; He is *giving* [because He gave His Son]; He is *eternal* [because only the eternal can offer eternal life].

## Attributes of God

Verse 1, 13 God is Father

Verse 3 God is knowable

Verse 3 God is sovereign King, mighty, and powerful who gives commands to be obeyed

Verse 5 God is love

Verse 5, 6 God is relational. He desires us to live with Him and near Him.

Verses 8-10 God is light.

Verse 8 God is true.

Verse 13, 14, 17 God is eternal. He is from the beginning. He exists forever and sustains eternity.

Verse 20 God is holy.

Verses 24-25 God is near. He abides in us.

## Attributes of Christ

Verse 1, 29 Jesus is righteous.

Verse 1 Jesus is our Advocate.

Verse 6 Jesus was incarnate—had a human body, walked on earth with man.

Verse 13, 14 Jesus is eternal. He has been from the beginning.

Verse 13, 14 Jesus is knowable, relational.

Verse 22 Jesus is the Messiah.

Verse 23 Jesus is the Son of God.

Verses 24-25 Jesus is near. He abides in us.

Verse 28 Jesus is coming again.

Verse 28 Jesus is judge. We do not want to shrink from Him in shame.

12. LIST. Look for lists of words, phrases, or related thoughts. Number the lists within the Bible text, then record your list out to the side in the margin or on a separate sheet of paper. This will help you see the thought progression of the author or the results of some action.

For example, in 1 John 1:1 we find a list about the *Word of Life*. We discover 1) the Word of Life was from the beginning; 2) John heard the Word of Life; 3) John

saw the Word of Life with his own eyes; 4) John looked at the Word of Life; 5) John touched the Word of life with his hands.

See observation sheet.

13. NOTE. Be sure to mark or write down any “nuggets” you observed which you thought were interesting, spurred on some thought, or made you want to study further. I never cease to be motivated and thrilled at the thought of Jesus coming again from verse 28. I am so comforted that Jesus is my Advocate in verse 1. How I need Him to advocate for me!!! I love the simple wisdom of knowing that those who leave the fellowship of believers weren't believers to begin with (verse 19). This makes it so much easier to discern what's happening among our relationships.

*Remember*, the purpose of this lesson is to observe and take note of what is in the chapter. You are not making any interpretations or applications to your life right now. Your task at this time is to simply look for the treasures that God has put in each chapter.

As you do this lesson, take time to worship and thank the Lord that He has preserved His Word for you to study. Admire and marvel at what He placed in this chapter for you to notice. There really isn't any other time in our studies where we simply look at, think on, and study God's Word for itself, so have fun with this lesson! And may the Lord be blessed by your labors!

# Scripture Paths Bible Studies

*Names of recipients*  
vs 1 my little children  
vs 7 Beloved  
vs 12 little children  
vs 13 Beloved  
vs 14 Beloved  
vs 15 Beloved  
vs 16 Beloved  
vs 17 Beloved  
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vs 95 Beloved  
vs 96 Beloved  
vs 97 Beloved  
vs 98 Beloved  
vs 99 Beloved  
vs 100 Beloved

*John uses names as a transition point*

**Scripture Paths Bible Studies**

*Look for different uses of "know"*

**1 John Chapter 2**

1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;

2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

3 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him;

6 the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

7 Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard.

8 On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining.

9 The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now.

10 The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

*speaking of his time on earth*

*see 1:5*

# Scripture Paths Bible Studies

vs. 14

Scripture Paths Bible Studies

11 But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

12 I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake.

13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father.

14 I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour.

19 They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.

20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know.

1c3+

pluperfect verb



# Scripture Paths Bible Studies

## Scripture Paths Bible Studies

21 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth.

22 Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.

23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.

24 As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.

25 This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life.

— see John 3:14-16; 6:4

26 These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.

27 As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.

28 Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

29 If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.

- △ god
- + Jesus
- ✓ Spirit
- Know
- dark
- light
- Sin
- Contaminated

- abides
- beginning
- I am writing I have written
- so that
- walk
- + true/truth
- liar
- X antichrist
- World
- love
- hate

- see command 5
- commendments!
- word
- c ← comparison
- ← c → contrast
- TTT transitive + ending

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— 1 John —  
Lesson #6 Chapter 2:1-11  
Teacher's Guide

As you prepare to dive into this week's study, ask the Lord for His help in understanding and applying His Word. Our passage in this lesson ties in closely with the end of 1 John chapter 1. Please read 1 John 1:5-10 and 2:1-11 to get a running start at the text.

1. To whom is John writing according to 1 John 2:1? John uses this term of endearment for this first time in his letter, though he goes on to use it 7 more times. What does John convey by using this name for his readers in 1 John 2:1 and 2:12, 13, 28, 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21?

My little children. He is communicating tenderness to them. They are "my" little children to him which shows the relationship of love. Because they are his little children, it is a term of endearment, not derision or condescension. When John uses this term in his letter, he is also reminding them that they need instruction and guidance because they are only "little children," after all.

2. If you summed up John's message in 1 John 1:5-10, he's saying, "Y'all are sinners!" With that in mind, what is his purpose in writing according to 1 John 2:1? Because "y'all are sinners!" then it's helpful to know John's reasoning. He doesn't want them to sin or fall into sin. But he also tells them about their great Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous One, who stands before the Father on their behalf—when they do fall into sin.

- a. What does his purpose statement in 1 John 2:1 teach us about sin, holiness, and the Christian life? See also Romans 6:1-2, 12-13; 1 Corinthians 15:34; Titus 2:11-13.

**Romans 6:1-2** What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

**Romans 6:12-13** Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

**1 Corinthians 15:34** Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.

**Titus 2:11-13** For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,

John is teaching that though we all sin, we are not to remain in it, make it a pattern, excuse it, or purpose to do sin as believers. Instead, we find John showing us the way out of sin that separates us from God and allows us to

fellowship with Him again. The Christian life is a life of turning away from sin, of pursuing holiness, and continually going to the One who can wash away our sin.

3. After stating his purpose in writing his letter in 1 John 2:1, what wonderful news does John give his readers in the rest of verse 1?

We have an Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous. Here we find hope, help, and strengthening to move forward.

a. From verse 1 make as many observations as you can about our advocate. We have an advocate if we sin. Our advocate is with the Father. Our advocate is always in the throne room before the Father, ready to plead on our behalf. Our advocate is Jesus Christ. Our advocate is righteous.

b. Define *advocate* [Strong's #3875 (NIV *one who speaks to the Father in our defense*)].  
Wuest: "one who undertakes and champions your cause. Moulton and Milligan define; "a friend of the accused person, called to speak to his character, or otherwise enlist the sympathy of the judges."

MacArthur: "Perhaps a modern concept of the term would be a defense attorney. Although Satan prosecutes believers night and day before the Father due to sin (Rev. 12:10), Christ's High-Priestly ministry guarantees not only sympathy but also acquittal (Heb. 4:14-16)." [MacArthur, John, Jr., ed. 1997. The MacArthur Study Bible. Electronic ed. Nashville, TN: Word Pub.]

Stott: "If he should sin, he does not need another justification from the divine Judge. He is a child of God; he needs the Father's forgiveness." [Stott, John R. W. 1988. The Letters of John: An Introduction and Commentary. Vol. 19. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.]

From Kenneth Wuest: "As a physician might say to his patient: 'Your trouble is obstinate: the poison is in your blood, and it will take a long time to eradicate it. But I do not tell you this to discourage you or make you careless; no, on the contrary, to make you watchful and diligent in the use of the remedy'; so the apostle says: 'My little children, these things I am writing to you in order that ye may not sin.'" "If, however, we fall into sin, let us not lose heart, for we have an Advocate with the Father ... Our Advocate does not plead that we are innocent or adduce extenuating circumstances. He acknowledges our guilt and presents His vicarious work as the ground of our acquittal. He stands in the Court of Heaven a Lamb as it had been slain (Rev. 5:6), and the marks of His sore passion are a mute but eloquent appeal: 'I suffered all this for sinners, and shall it go for naught?'" [Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader. Vol. 13. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.]

4. Why do we *need* an advocate? See John 3:36; John 16:8; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; Hebrews 2:16-18; 1 Peter 3:18; Revelation 12:10.

**John 3:36: 36** "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." *If we don't have an Advocate, then the wrath of God abides on us.*

**John 16:8: 8** "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; *If we don't have an Advocate, then judgment abides on us.*

**1 Thessalonians 1:10: 10** and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come. *Without an Advocate, we will not be rescued from the wrath to come.*

**Hebrews 2:16-18: 16** For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. **17** Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. **18** For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted. *Without an Advocate, we don't have the help we need, who will make propitiation for us before the Father. Our Advocate comes to our aid when we are tempted and fall into sin. He is a merciful and faithful high priest.*

**1 Peter 3:18: 18** For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; *Without an Advocate, we would have no one to bring us to God, who died in our place and put death to death, making us alive in the spirit.*

**Revelation 12:10: 10** Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, *for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.*

Why do we need an Advocate? Without His intervention and strong defense that He has rescued us from wrath and judgment, we would be lost. He makes His argument before the Father and the Father accepts His plea on our behalf. Oh, blessed Advocate, thank you for being willing to stand before the Father for me. I would be lost, lost, lost without You. No one else would ever undertake to stand for me. Thank you, Righteous One, that you stand in my place and plead for me.

"Our Advocate is always in fellowship with the Father in order that if the saint loses fellowship with Him through cherished and unconfessed sin, He might plead our cause on the basis of His precious blood, and bring us back into fellowship again. The word "facing" brings us to this solemn thought, that when we saints sin the Lord Jesus must face the Father with us and our sin. The saint has been saved in His precious blood so that he may be able to keep from sinning, and when he does sin, he wounds the tender heart of the Saviour, and forces Him to face God the Father with that saint whom He has saved in His precious blood. How that should deter us from committing acts of sin!" ~Kenneth Wuest<sup>1</sup>

5. John further explains the blessing of having Jesus Christ, the righteous One, as our Advocate in verse 2. What more do you learn about Jesus from 1 John 2:2?

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 13 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 109–110.

He is the propitiation for our sins. He Himself—He doesn't send a representative. And not just me alone! But for the whole world!

6. What do you learn about *propitiation* from the following texts? See Romans 3:21-26; 5:10; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 4:10.

**Romans 3:21-26: 21** But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, **22** even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; **23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **24** being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; **25** whom *God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith*. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; **26** for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. *God put Jesus on display when He came to earth to provide propitiation for us which we receive by faith. Jesus did this in His blood. This act of propitiation reveals His complete righteousness that causes God to pass over the sins previously committed. His propitiation shows He is perfectly just and is able to be the justifier for those who place their faith in Him.*

**Romans 5:10: 10** For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. *Jesus died so I could be reconciled to God. I am saved because Jesus conquered death. His resurrection means I have life, hope, and rescue!*

**Hebrews 2:17: 17** Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. *Jesus had to come to earth as a man, so He could fully enter into mankind's troubles, yet that identification with mankind made Him an even better high priest to show mercy and to faithfully act on our behalf and provide propitiation for our sins.*

**1 John 4:10: 10** In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. *God sent Jesus to be the propitiation for my sins! Imagine! What wondrous love is this? How can it be?*

a. Now add to your understanding by defining *propitiation* [Strong's #2434 (NIV *atonement sacrifice*)].

Jesus is the atoning sacrifice, the much-needed satisfaction needed to reconcile God with man.

Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown: "He is to us all that is needed for propitiation "in behalf of our sins"; *the propitiatory sacrifice, provided by the Father's love, removing the estrangement, and appeasing the righteous wrath, on God's part, against the sinner.*" [Jamieson, Robert, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown. 1997. Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible. Vol. 2. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.]

Wuest: "That from without which occasioned the alienation between God and man, was sin. It was the guilt of sin that separated man from his creator. Our Lord on the Cross assumed that guilt and paid the penalty in His own blood, and thus removed the cause of alienation. Now a holy and righteous God can bestow mercy upon a believing sinner on the basis of justice satisfied. *Our Lord provided a satisfaction for the demands of the broken law. That satisfaction is the hilasmos (ἵλασμος).* The Greek has it, "He Himself is a satisfaction." *The intensive pronoun is used.* The point is that the Old Testament priest offered an animal sacrifice, but not himself as the sacrifice. This wonderful New Testament Priest is both the Priest and the Sacrifice." [Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader.* Vol. 13. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.]

Matthew Henry: "He is the expiatory victim, the propitiatory sacrifice that has been offered to the Judge for all our offences against his majesty, and law, and government. The Mediator of intercession, the Advocate for us, is the Mediator of redemption, the propitiation for our sins. *It is his propitiation that he pleads.*" [Henry, Matthew. 1994. *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume.* Peabody: Hendrickson.]

Barclay: "*The great aim of all religion is fellowship with God, to know him as friend and to enter with joy, and not fear, into his presence. It therefore follows that the supreme problem of religion is sin, for it is sin that interrupts fellowship with God. It is to meet that problem that all sacrifice arises. By sacrifice, fellowship with God is restored.* So, the Jews offered—night and morning—the sin offering in the Temple. That was the offering, not for any particular sin but for all people as sinners; and, as long as the Temple lasted, it was made to God in the morning and in the evening. The Jews also offered their trespass offerings to God; these were the offerings for particular sins. The Jews had their Day of Atonement, whose ritual was designed to atone for all sins, known and unknown. *It is with that background that we must approach this picture of propitiation.* . . . When John says that Jesus is the hilasmos for our sins, he is, we think, bringing all these different meanings together into one. *Jesus is the person through whom guilt for past sin and defilement from present sin are removed. The great basic truth behind this word is that it is through Jesus Christ that our fellowship with God is first restored and then maintained.*" [Barclay, William. 2002. *The Letters of John and Jude.* 3rd ed. The New Daily Study Bible. Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press.]

7. To maintain doctrinal precision and to understand our text accurately, read the following quotes about Jesus' propitiation for *the whole world* (1 John 2:2).
  - a. "This text states that there is a sense in which Jesus is the propitiation for the sins of the elect and non-elect—"the whole world." It is not that Jesus satisfies the sin of the non-elect, for faith is the trigger that fires the gun of propitiation, but He is the satisfaction for sin offered, presented, and available to the whole world. Granted, only the elect believe, but the non-elect have a real gospel preached to them, a gospel that offers satisfaction for sins and reconciliation to God through faith

in Jesus Christ. The fact that the non-elect do not believe does not nullify the legitimacy of the offer. The offer is not a mere farce, but is true, Jesus is the propitiation available to the entire world of men, elect and non-elect alike. The elect, through faith, receive propitiation and the non-elect, because of their refusal to believe, do not receive it. The elect are not propitiated before they believe. Satisfaction is available, but not applied until faith in Christ is enacted." ~Jack Hughes<sup>2</sup>

- b. "The propitiation is as wide as the sin' (Bengel). If men do not experience its benefit, the fault is not in its efficacy. Düsterdieck (cited by Huther) says, 'The propitiation has its real efficacy for the whole world; to believers it brings life, to unbelievers death.'" ~Marvin Vincent<sup>3</sup>
- c. "The pardon for sin is offered to the whole world, but received only by those who believe (cf. 4:9, 14; John 5:24). There is no other way to be reconciled to God." ~John MacArthur<sup>4</sup>
- d. What do you learn from the following Scriptures about the salvation? See John 1:29; 3:16; 6:51; 1 Timothy 2:6; Hebrews 2:9; 1 John 4:14.

**John 1:29: 29** The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God *who takes away the sin of the world!*

**John 3:16: 16** "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

**John 6:51: 51** "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; *if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.*"

**1 Timothy 2:6: 6** who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.

**Hebrews 2:9: 9** But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, *so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.*

**1 John 4:14: 14** We have seen and testify that *the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.*

God sent the Son to be the Savior for the world, though that offered salvation must be received, taken up, believed upon by faith so the recipient can receive the full benefits of that proffered salvation.

- e. Now look up the following Scriptures to explain how you can appropriate or gain that offered salvation from Luke 24:46-47; John 1:12-13; 3:16, 36; 20:31; Romans 10:8-9.

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<sup>2</sup> From Jack Hughes' own personal study notes on the passage. Used by permission.

<sup>3</sup> Marvin Richardson Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887), 325–326.

<sup>4</sup> John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1965.

**Luke 24:46-47: 46** and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, **47** and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. *It must be proclaimed.*

**John 1:12-13: 12** But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, **13** who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. *It must be believed.*

**John 3:16: 16** "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. *It must be believed and received to gain eternal life.*

**John 3:36: 36** "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." *It must be believed (which includes obedience) to see life.*

**John 20:31: 31** but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. *It is in believing that we have life in His name.*

**Romans 10:8-9: 8** But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, **9** that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. *It is preached, heard, and then confessed and believed that Jesus is Lord and because He rose from the dead, we can be saved.*

f. In each of the quotes above in this question, what careful distinction do the authors make? Why is it important to understand that distinction?

Faith is the trigger that fires the gun of propitiation. The gospel is offered to the world, but that gracious gift must be believed upon by faith before its effects can be received. Faith in the gospel message activates the gracious gift.

Why is it important to understand that distinction? Without believing by faith, then we have universalism where Jesus saves the world without the world responding by faith to this incredible act of grace and mercy on God's part. The gospel is offered to all, but it requires an act of faith on our part to receive salvation.

8. How can we tell if Jesus has become our advocate and propitiation for our sins according to 1 John 2:3?

**1 John 2:3: 3** By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

We will keep His commandments. Such a simple test, but absolutely true! I couldn't keep God's commandments prior to my salvation! I tried but failed. I couldn't sustain fervor, zeal, motivation to even want to obey without Jesus rescuing me.



9. Twenty-three times in the rest of his letter, John uses the word *know* [*ginosko*, Strong's #1097] except for the 6 times he uses the synonym *oida* [Strong's #1492] in 1 John 3:2; 5:15, 18-20. Using your study Bible notes, a commentary, or online word study resources, explain the difference between the two words. What do you learn?

Wuest: "We do know" is *ginōskō* (**γινωσκω**), "to know by experience" as contrasted to *oida* (**οιδα**), "absolute, immediate knowledge of a fact once for all." This knowledge that we know Him is knowledge gained by experience day by day, experiential knowledge gained from the experience of keeping His commandments." [Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*. Vol. 13. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.]

Vincent: "Perceive. By experience, from day to day; distinguished from **οἶδαμεν** (*oida*) we know, expressing absolute, immediate knowledge of a fact once for all." [Vincent, Marvin Richardson. 1887. *Word Studies in the New Testament*. Vol. 2. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.]

It's the difference between experientially knowing God and knowing the truths and facts about God. Both are important and a true believer will have both "knowledges" about God, while an unbeliever can only boast of knowing the facts/truths about God, though it is in a darkened understanding. *Ginosko* means comprehension and up close and personal knowledge, while *oida* is to see, observe, perceive. Both are important and *oida* is not a lesser knowledge. Both are necessary for the believer.

Wuest: "The principle is that it is not enough to understand the theory; we must put it into practice. E.g., what makes an artist? Not merely learning the rules of perspective and mixture of colors, but actually putting one's hand to brush and canvas. First attempts may be unsuccessful, but skill comes by patient practice. Compare Rembrandt's advice to his pupil Hoogstraten, 'Try to put well in practice what you already know; and in doing so you will, in good time, discover the hidden things which you inquire about.' To know about Christ, to understand the doctrine of His person and work is mere theory; we get to know Him and to know that we know Him by practice of His precepts." [Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*. Vol. 13. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.]

10. Try rewriting 1 John 2:3 using the *ginosko* definition to replace *know*.

**1 John 2:3: 3** By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

By this we comprehend what it means to know Him in a real, experiential, "face to face" kind of way and have come into a relationship with God when we keep His commandments.

Wuest translates it this way: "And in this we know experientially that we have come to know Him experientially and are in that state at present, if we are continually having a solicitous, watchful care in keeping His precepts."

11. John tells us if we have come to know Christ, we will keep His commandments. Define *keep* from verse 3.

To keep, guard, attend to carefully, to observe, to do so vigilantly, diligently, faithfully out of fear of disobeying the Lord.

Vincent: "A military term. Lit., garrisoned. Rev., guarded." [Vincent, Marvin Richardson. 1887. Word Studies in the New Testament. Vol. 1. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.]

Wuest: "Keep" is *tēreō* (τηρεω), "to attend to carefully, to guard, observe." *The word does not merely speak of the act of obeying His commands, but of a solicitous desire that we do not disobey any of them but on the other hand, that we obey them perfectly. It is that holy fear of disobeying God as expressed in the word phobos (φοβος) (fear), used in I Peter as defined by Wardlaw: "This fear is self-distrust; it is tenderness of conscience; it is vigilance against temptation; it is the fear which inspiration opposes to highmindedness in the admonition, 'be not highminded but fear.' It is taking heed lest we fall; it is a constant apprehension of the deceitfulness of the heart, and of the insidiousness and power of inward corruption. It is the caution and circumspection which timidly shrinks from whatever would offend and dishonor God and the Saviour." It is the saint's love for God's Word and his guardianship of that Word lest it be dishonored.* Alford defines *tēreō* (τηρεω), "to watch, guard" as *some precious thing*. The verb is present subjunctive, which speaks of continuous action. *It is the habitual, moment by moment safeguarding of the Word by the saint lest he violate its precepts.* Robertson says that "the Gnostics boasted of their superior knowledge of Christ, and John here challenges their boast by an appeal to experiential knowledge of Christ which is shown by keeping His commandments." [Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader. Vol. 13. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.]

12. What do "keeping" Christ's commandments reveal about our "knowing" Him according to verses 3-5?

**1 John 2:3-5** By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:

Our lives will reveal whether or not we really know Him. The obedience in our lives and hearts and motivations shows that we have come to know Him and be known by Him. If we say we know Him, but fail to attend to and keep God's Word in our hearts and lives then we don't really know Him.

"But whoever habitually is with a solicitous care keeping His Word, truly, in this one the love of God has been brought to its completion, with the present result that it is in that state of completion. In this we have an experiential knowledge that in Him we are." [Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader. Vol. 13. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.]

Spurgeon's quote below helps show how "love is perfected in us." There is no fear in us when we keep God's commandments.

Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown: "Love here answers to knowledge in 1 Jn 2:3. In proportion as we love God, in that same proportion we know Him, and vice versa, until our love and knowledge shall attain their full maturity of perfection." [Jamieson, Robert, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown. 1997. *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*. Vol. 2. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.]

J. Vernon McGee: "*If you love Him, you will do more than keep His commandments; you will do something extra for Him. . . . My friend, verse 5 is very important. Let me repeat it: "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected [that is, realized in practice]: hereby [by this] know we that we are in him." When the love of God is perfected in you, it means that you have passed the commandments and you just want to please God.* I suggest that you take an inventory of yourself. What is your attitude toward sin? Does it trouble you? Does it break your fellowship with the Father? Does it cause you to cry out in the night, "Oh, God, I'm wrong, and I want to confess the wrong I have done. I want fellowship with You." On that basis God will restore fellowship with us, and the assurance of salvation comes to our hearts." [McGee, J. Vernon. 1997. *Thru the Bible Commentary*. Electronic ed. Vol. 5. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.]

Depend on it that the lack of practical obedience to Christ is the root of nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of our doubts and fears. The roots of our fears are in our sins. Search there, and you shall find the cause of soul-trouble. I believe many a child of God walks in darkness because he does not obey the Word of the Lord. Take for your motto the sentence that the mother of Jesus addressed to the servants at the marriage in Cana of Galilee—"Whatever he says to you, do it!" (John 2:5). Do you often hear the precept with never a thought of heeding it? Then beware lest you 'suddenly . . . be broken, and there will not be healing' (Prov 29:1). ~Charles Spurgeon<sup>5</sup>

13. In verse 5, John writes that *whoever keeps His Word, in him the love of God has been perfected (made complete NIV)*. How is God's love shown to be completed or perfected in us when we keep His commandments?

When we obey His commands, it shows that His love has been at work in us. We would never keep His commandments without His love being resident in our lives and the abiding work of the Holy Spirit at salvation.

"The obedient child of God is characterized, not by any representative trait or quality of his own personality, but merely as the subject of the work of divine love: as the sphere in which that love accomplishes its perfect work." ~Kenneth Wuest<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Charles Spurgeon, *Spurgeon Commentary: 1 John*, ed. Elliot Ritzema, Spurgeon Commentary Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014), 1 Jn 2:3.

<sup>6</sup> Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. [\*Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader\*](#). Vol. 13. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

14. Another test for whether we have come to know Christ as Savior and Lord is found in verse 6. What do you learn?

Verse 6: By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

The one who says he abides in Him will walk like Jesus walked. In other words, if we say we are in Him then we're going to live and do and be just like Jesus.

"We cannot claim to live in him unless we behave like him." [Stott, John R. W. 1988. The Letters of John: An Introduction and Commentary. Vol. 19. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.]

15. Define *abide* [Strong's #3306 (NIV *claims to live in Him*)].

Wuest: "It is *menō* (μενω). Thayer gives, "to abide, to remain, to sojourn, tarry." The word refers, in a connection like this, more than merely to position. It is used very often of persons abiding in a home, which implies more than mere position, but rather fellowship, communion, dependence, harmony, friendship. ... To abide in the Lord Jesus therefore implies not only position, but relationship. It implies fellowship, friendship, dependence, harmony, communion." [Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader. Vol. 13. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.]

Vincent: "Bengel notes the gradation in the three phrases "to know Him, to be in Him, to abide in Him; knowledge, fellowship, constancy." [Vincent, Marvin Richardson. 1887. Word Studies in the New Testament. Vol. 2. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.]

16. How do verses 3-6 provide insight about those who "say" they know Christ and those who "keep" His commandments? What's the difference between the two groups based on these verses?

Those who say they know Christ but don't keep, obey, or do God's Word. Because the "sayers" don't do, then they are liars and the truth is not in them.

Those who *keep* His commandments both say and do what they say. Those who keep God's Word have the love of God perfected, completed in them. They know, say, do God's Word because they are motivated by God's love for them—and in response, show their love for God.

17. In verses 7-8 what do you learn about the new commandment John is writing to his dear friends? What do you learn about the old commandment from verses 7-8?

**1 John 2:7-8** Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard. On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining.

My restatement: Beloved, I'm not telling you anything new. What I'm telling you is what God has commanded from the very start. I'm telling you the Word of God which you have already heard. Yet, in some ways, beloved, I am telling you something new. It's a new commandment that is true in God and is true in your lives as well because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining.

The new commandment is one John is writing to them. The new commandments is true in Him and in them because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining.

The old commandment is not what John is writing to them because they have had the old commandment from the beginning. The old commandment is what they have already heard.

18. Anytime you might be confused about something John is saying, it's helpful to remember that he frequently repeats the things Jesus said. Our text is one place where it's helpful to review what Jesus taught about a "new command." How do the following verse references provide insight into verses 7-8? See John 13:34-35; 15:12; 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:21; 2 John 5.

**John 13:34-35** *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

**John 15:12** *"This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you."*

**1 John 3:11** *For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another;*

**1 John 3:23** *This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.*

**1 John 4:21** *And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.*

**2 John 5** *Now I ask you, lady, not as though I were writing to you a new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning, that we love one another.*

Jesus taught His disciples a new commandment that they are to love one another as a way to show they are His disciples. We are to love one another in the way that the Lord has loved us. If we love God, then we are to love one another. Yet, this commandment isn't anything new. God has always desired that we love one another.

19. What is happening in the lives and hearts of true followers of Jesus Christ according to the end of verse 8? See also John 8:12; 12:46; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 5:8.

**1 John 2:8** *On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining.*

In the hearts and lives of all true believers, God is causing the darkness to pass away because the true Light of Jesus Christ is shining in their lives.

**John 8:12** Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; *he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.*"

**John 12:46** "I have come as Light into the world, *so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness.*

**2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; *the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*

**Ephesians 5:8** *for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light.*

Oh the glory and wonder of this truth!

20. If the true Light is shining in your life and the darkness of sin is passing away (verse 8), then what are the results according to verses 9-11? What do you learn about those who still walk in darkness according to verses 9-11?

**1 John 2:9-11: 9** The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. **10** The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. **11** But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

The results? We will love our brother. We will abide in the light. (And so, will not stumble in sin.)

Those who still walk in darkness hates his brother. The one who walks in darkness does not abide in the light. The one who walks in darkness stumbles. The one who walks in darkness doesn't know where he is going. He is blind in his spiritual darkness.

"Habitually conducting one's self in the sphere of darkness is indicative of an unsaved state." ~Kenneth Wuest<sup>7</sup>

21. Why does living in the light help us with our love problem? See 1 John 4:19-21; 5:1-2. How can that be encouraging when we are struggling to love someone as the Lord commands us?

**1 John 4:19-21: 19** We love, because He first loved us. **20** If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. **21** And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also. *Because God is light, then we will live in the light as He does. There is no darkness in Him and the darkness of our sin will also be chased away. When we come to know God, then we have the ability to love others because we have experienced His love for us. Because we are His children, then we now gain the ability to love others. Loving others is a tangible way to show that we have come to know God. Oy! So convicting!*

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<sup>7</sup> Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 13 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 122.

**1 John 5:1-2: 1** Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. **2** By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. *It's a fact. If we love God, love keeping His Word, then, of course, we will love the brethren. It will just happen. The only thing that impedes this progress in us is sin.*

“He who hates his brother, is both a stumbling-block to himself, and stumbles against himself and everything within and without; he who loves has an unimpeded path” [Bengel]. John has in mind Jesus’ words, John 11:9–10.” ~Robert Jamieson<sup>8</sup>

“Jesus answered, ‘Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him (John 11:9-10).’”

“Christ stands as our advocate alone before God’s bar and pleads before the Father. Whatever can rightly be charged upon us, He accepts the whole charge upon Himself, acknowledging the crimes to be His own. And this, He must do. If He hides the sin, or lessens it, He is faulty; if He leaves it still upon us, we die. He must then take our iniquity to Himself, make it His own, and so deliver us.” ~John Bunyan<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, vol. 2 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 528.

<sup>9</sup> John Bunyan, *Voices from the Past, Volume 1* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), 148.



— 1 John —  
Lesson #7 Chapter 2:12-17  
Teacher's Guide

This week's passage contains much soul-encouragement and heart-piercing exhortation. May you be strengthened, humbled, and blessed in your study!

1. John seeks to encourage his readers after his piercing comments in the previous section. Verses 12-14 can best be seen as an aside or pause in the apostle's teaching. John wants his readers to know how dear they are to him. Leon Morris explains this section best when he writes, "Considerable ingenuity has been expended on the way we should understand these terms (referring to children, fathers, young men)." And "it is best to regard the division as a stylistic device, adding emphasis."<sup>1</sup>

Rather than getting stuck trying to figure out the groupings for the different people mentioned in these verses or the reason for the tense changes, what do we know *for sure* about those to whom John writes his letter? List what you learn from verses 12-14. He's writing to little children who have their sins forgiven for His name's sake and because they know the Father. He's writing to fathers because they know Him who has been from the beginning. He's writing to young men because they have overcome the evil one, they are strong, and the Word of God abides in them.

Leon Morris notes, "Two sequences, each with a threefold address, to *children, fathers, and young men* now follow. Considerable ingenuity has been expended on the way we should understand these terms and on the change of tense from 'I write' to 'I wrote' (in the Gk. of vs 13c, 14). It may be argued that knowledge accords with fathers (those old in the faith), and strength with young men. But as all the qualities ought to be found in all believers it is best to regard the division as a stylistic device, adding emphasis. 'All Christians are (by grace, not nature) children in innocence and dependence on the heavenly Father, young men in strength, and fathers in experience' (C. H. Dodd, *The Johannine Epistles* [Hodder, 1946], pp. 38–39). *John's readers have the forgiveness of sins, the knowledge of God, the word of God abiding in them, and victory over the evil one* (italics added)."<sup>2</sup>

While Leon Morris says the tense changes in verses 12-14 can be attributed to writing style and emphasis, William Barclay provides a further plausible reason for John's change in tense in verses 12-14. He writes, "A more likely explanation is this. When John says *I am writing*, he is thinking of what he is at the moment writing and of what he still has to say; when he says *I have written*, he is thinking of what has already been written and his readers have already read. The sense would then be that the whole letter—the part already written, the part being written and the part still to come—is all designed to remind Christians of who and whose they are and of what has been done for them. *For John, it was of supreme importance that Christians*

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<sup>1</sup> Leon L. Morris, "1 John," in *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, ed. D. A. Carson et al., 4th ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 1402.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

*should remember the status and the benefits they have in Jesus Christ, for these would be their defense against error and against sin (italics added)."*<sup>3</sup>

2. Why did John take the time to encourage his readers (as he does in verses 12-14)? See 1 John 1:6-8; 2:3-6, 9-11 to be reminded of the issues he was tackling in his letter. Now consider *why* John gives the assurances he does in verses 12-14.

Some of the issues John's readers are facing:

**1 John 1:6-8: 6** If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; **7** but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. **8** If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. *They needed help dealing with those who say they have fellowship with God and yet walk in darkness. John makes it clear that you cannot say you have fellowship with God and not walk in the Light. The two are mutually exclusive of each other.*

**1 John 2:3-6: 3** By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. **4** The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; **5** but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: **6** the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked. *Again, they needed more bolstering in dealing with those (or even themselves) who say they know God and yet don't keep or obey Him. John makes it clear that our profession and lives will match up.*

**1 John 2:9-11: 9** The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. **10** The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. **11** But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes. *Here again, John's readers needed help discerning those who were truly walking with the Lord and those who were merely giving lip service to Him. Another way to know for certain whether someone has been changed from the inside out is their love for the brethren. If there is not love for the brethren then they are still in darkness.*

John's readers needed a lot of help and wisdom in discerning who was really a believer and who wasn't. They were so distracted by the "noise" and speeches and disclaimers that they didn't know which end was up. John continually encourages his readers about their true spiritual state, so they can gain confidence in assessing what others were saying and whether their "saying" matched up with their "doing."

Why does John give the specific assurances that he does? Little children are so happy to know their sins are forgiven! And for all young in the Lord, we want to know that Jesus has forgiven us and washed away our sin. He also encourages them that they know the Father. Little ones love pointing out their fathers to others, and here, young believers know, recognize, and emulate their new, very dear Father. John assured the fathers that they did indeed know the father though they may have been beleaguered and worn down by trials and sin. For the

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<sup>3</sup> William Barclay, *The Letters of John and Jude*, 3rd ed., The New Daily Study Bible (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 57.

fathers to be encouraged that they do indeed know the Father was a blessing to their souls. John encouraged the young men in their zeal and diligence of the things of the Lord. They are fighters and strong. They have overcome the evil one. For young men, this encouragement would be especially bolstering.

3. Let's take some time to examine each group and consider what John desires to convey about them. In 1 John 2:12, John writes to his beloved children in the faith. He frequently addresses his readers as *children* in this letter (see 1 John 2:1, 12, 13, 18, 28; 3:1, 2, 7, 10, 18; 4:4; 5:2, 21). According to verse 12, what do we know about this group?

He calls them *little* children. And he recognizes that their sins have been forgiven.

4. *Based on his description* of children in verse 12, how would you describe his readers? See John 1:12; Acts 10:43; Ephesians 1:7; 1 John 1:7 to form your answer.

Children of God—little or not, young or not, wise or not—children of God have their sins forgiven, have received Him, have believed in Him for forgiveness of sins, and are cleansed from all sin.

Ahhh.... now that is bottom line thinking! That is one of the most foundational truths we need to live in. Everything else about us hinges on this first step. How glorious to know our sins for forgiven. And every day, I need to be a little child and come to Him for cleansing from the stains of my many sins of pride, unbelief, selfishness, and more.

**John 1:12: 12** But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,

**Acts 10:43: 43** "Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins."

**Ephesians 1:7: 7** In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace

**1 John 1:7: 7** but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

5. John uses two different words for children in verses 12-14. In verse 12 the term indicates family relationship and is like calling them "wee bairns" as the Scottish used to do. In verse 13, John uses a word that indicates the "training of children." It carries with it the idea that children need discipline and instruction. In verse 13, what do we learn about the children who need guidance, teaching, and training? How would that information about them in verse 13 encourage John's readers, in light of the word's meaning?

In verse 13, the children who have been disciplined and instructed by their Father, know and love their Father. Their training and instruction has produced that relationship every child longs for—a relationship with their father—and here, every spiritual child longs for closeness and growing intimacy with their Heavenly Father.

6. How is the reminder that all believers are children (see again John's use of the term in this epistle: 1 John 2:1, 12, 13, 18, 28; 3:1, 2, 7, 10, 18; 4:4; 5:2, 21) an important one for

us to grasp and seek to abide by? What are some general characteristics of children that are necessary when it comes to knowing the Lord?

Understanding that I am a child, dependent, needy, needing instruction, correction, and training keeps my heart humble and seeking the Lord. My soul needs this reminder because I am so apt to think I am "bigger and more mature" than I am, making me resistant to God's correction and guidance.

Children trust their parents. Children don't worry about where their next meal is going to come from or how to pay for it or obtain it. Children love just being near their parents and find comfort there. Children are foolish, so need the training that a parent can give. Even when a child fights against a parent's guidance and training, the child is also comforted by that same parent.

7. After addressing his readers as children, John expands his encouragement to "fathers." What do we learn about those who are *fathers* in verses 13-14? The word "know" here means to know the Lord in a relational, intimate, and experiential way. See also Luke 10:22; John 8:19, 54-55; 14:7, 9.

The fathers have known Him who has been from the beginning. They have intimately known the Lord.

**Luke 10:22: 22** "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him." *Those who know the Son also know the Father. The Son reveals the Father to those He chooses.*

**John 8:19: 19** So they were saying to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also." *When we know Jesus, then we know the Father also.*

**John 8:54-55: 54** Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God'; **55** and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word. *Those who do not keep God's Word are liars and do not know the Father.*

**John 14:7: 7** "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him." *If we know Jesus then we know the Father also. No introductions necessary!*

**John 14:9: 9** Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? *He who has seen Jesus has seen the Father.*

He who has seen Jesus has seen the Father which is why **Hebrews 1:3** is so helpful and important to understand: **3** *And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.* When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

8. What do we learn about the God the fathers know? For a look at a few verses on this topic, see Deuteronomy 33:26-27; Psalm 33:6-12; 90:1-2; Isaiah 43:10-13; Jeremiah 9:23-24; John 17:3; 1 John 2:13-14.

**Deuteronomy 33:26-27: 26** *"There is none like the God of Jeshurun, Who rides the heavens to your help, And through the skies in His majesty. 27 "The eternal God is a dwelling place, And underneath are the everlasting arms; And He drove out the enemy from before you, And said, 'Destroy!"*

**Psalm 33:6-12: 6** *By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host. 7 He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deeps in storehouses. 8 Let all the earth fear the LORD; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. 9 For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast. 10 The LORD nullifies the counsel of the nations; He frustrates the plans of the peoples. 11 The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart from generation to generation. 12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, The people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance.*

**Psalm 90:1-2: 1** *Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. 2 Before the mountains were born Or You gave birth to the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.*

**Isaiah 43:10-13: 10** *"You are My witnesses," declares the LORD, "And My servant whom I have chosen, So that you may know and believe Me And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, And there will be none after Me. 11 "I, even I, am the LORD, And there is no savior besides Me. 12 "It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed, And there was no strange god among you; So you are My witnesses," declares the LORD, "And I am God. 13 "Even from eternity I am He, And there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it?"*

**Jeremiah 9:23-24: 23** *Thus says the LORD, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; 24 but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the LORD.*

**John 17:3: 3** *"This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*

**1 John 2:13-14: 13** *I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father. 14 I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.*

9. What is it about being a *father* that is true, or should be true, for all believers? See also John 14:7; Ephesians 4:13; Philippians 3:10; Hebrews 5:13-14; 1 John 2:3, 4, 13; 5:20.

**John 14:7: 7** *"If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him." Father believers know that when they know the Son, they know the Father also.*

**Ephesians 4:13: 13** *until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. Father believers grow in their faith and maturity. As they grow in their knowledge and relationship with the Son, they know the Father also.*

**Philippians 3:10: 10** that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; *Father believers desire to know the Son in all ways and experience that close relationship with Him.*

**Hebrews 5:13-14: 13** For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. **14** But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil. *Father believers are accustomed to the word of righteousness and have their senses trained to discern good and evil.*

**1 John 2:3: 3** By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. *Father believers keep His commandments.*

**1 John 2:4: 4** The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; *Father believers aren't just saying that they know Him. They really do.*

**1 John 2:13: 13** I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father. *Father believers know Him, the One who has been from the beginning.*

**1 John 5:20: 20** And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. *Father believers are in Him who is true and in His Son Jesus Christ. Father believers know the Son of God has come. They also know the true God and have eternal life.*

10. What do we learn about those who are *young men* according to verses 13-14? John is writing to the young men because they have overcome the evil one, are strong, and the Word of God abides in them.

11. Why would these characteristics be essential for all believers to possess? See Psalm 119:9-11; John 16:33; 1 Corinthians 16:13; Ephesians 6:10-12; 1 Peter 1:22-25; 1 John 4:4; 5:4-5.

**Psalm 119:9-11: 9** How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word. **10** With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments. **11** Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You. *It's essential that all believers seek the Lord with their whole heart, so that they may keep their way pure and not sin against the Lord.*

**John 16:33: 33** "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." *It's essential that all believers remember that Jesus gives us peace, that we can gain His courage, even in tribulation, because He overcame the world.*

**1 Corinthians 16:13: 13** Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. *It's essential that all believers be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, and be strong.*

**Ephesians 6:10-12: 10** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. **11** Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. **12** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. *It's essential that all believers be strong in the*



Lord and in the strength of His might, that they put on the full armor of God so they can stand firm against the schemes of the devil for our battle is not against flesh and blood.

**1 Peter 1:22-25: 22** Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, **23** for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. **24** For, "ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS, AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF, **25** BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER." And this is the word which was preached to you. *It's essential for all believers, since they have been born again, that they purify their souls for a sincere love of the brethren.*

**1 John 4:4: 4** You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. *It's essential for all believers to remember that they are overcomers because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.*

**1 John 5:4-5: 4** For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. **5** Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? *It's essential for all believers to remember that whatever is born of God overcomes the world because of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.*

"The source of their strength is not innate but has been imparted to them. 'The Word of God' refers not to Christ but rather to the message of God as brought by Him and now embodied in the inspired Scriptures. Strength is imparted as God's Word 'abides,' is at home, in the mind and will and finds expression in daily conduct. King justly remarks, 'All big Christians have been Bible Christians; all who have been greatly blessed to others have been themselves steeped in it.'" ~D. Edmond Hiebert<sup>4</sup>

"To sum up all, I can imagine John, at the point at which he has arrived in the composing of this letter, — the point of enforcing the brotherhood of believers and its antagonism to the world, — *pausing to ask himself, will these counsels of mine be understood and obeyed? Will those to whom they are addressed receive them as they are given, in faithfulness and affection?* He is moved to make an earnest, and what may be a last appeal to them." ~Robert S. Candlish (italics added)

Candlish further imagines John writing, "What I am writing to you, I write in the fulness of my heart. I know that you believe in Jesus; I give you all credit for being Christians indeed. I appeal to you, by all the motives and considerations that should weigh with you as such. I appeal to you in every view of your Christianity, as little children, fathers, young men. And by all that is implied in your being little children, fathers, young men, I beseech you to hear me. So 'I write unto you.' Take kindly what I write unto you, as little children, fathers, young men. . . . Be persuaded to give heed to what I write or have written; to love the brotherhood; and not to love the world." ~Robert S. Candlish<sup>5</sup>

12. John now continues to instruct his "little children" about temptations they may face. What command does he give in verse 15?

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<sup>4</sup> D. Edmond Hiebert, "An Expository Study of 1 John Part 3 (of 10 Parts): An Exposition of 1 John 2:7-17," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 145 (1988): 432.

<sup>5</sup> Robert S. Candlish, *First Epistle of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, reprinted 1979, originally 1877), 141-142.



Do not love the world nor the things in the world.

a. Why is it important to heed this command according to the end of verse 15? Because if any loves the world, then the love of the Father is not in him.

b. What does the end of verse 15 teach us about our relationship with the Lord? See also Matthew 6:24; Mark 12:30; Luke 16:13; James 4:4.

**Matthew 6:24: 24** "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

**Mark 12:30: 30** AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.'

**Luke 16:13: 13** "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

**James 4:4: 4** You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

A choice must be made. We can't dilly dally in the middle between two worlds. We can't say we love the Lord and yet in all practicality still love the world. We must choose the Lord for He is the only choice that is good for our souls.

13. Describe what it looks like to love the world based on this small sampling of verses: John 15:19; Galatians 1:10; 1 Timothy 6:9-10; 2 Timothy 4:10; 1 John 3:17; 4:5.

**John 15:19: 19** "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. *The world loves its own. But when we are the Lord's, we will find ourselves at odds with the world. To love the world is not to leave it, but God chose us out of the world.*

**Galatians 1:10: 10** For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ. *When we love the world we seek the favor of men, rather than God. When we love the world, we are not Christ's servants.*

**1 Timothy 6:9-10: 9** But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. **10** For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. *When we love the world and riches we fall into many ensnaring temptations, bringing grief upon ourselves and wandering away from the faith.*

**2 Timothy 4:10: 10** for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. *When we love the world, we will desert Christ.*

**1 John 3:17: 17** But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? *When we love the world, we will close our heart against our brother's needs.*

**1 John 4:5: 5** They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them. *When we love the world, we will speak like the world—and the world will listen.*

14. What are some ways we can turn away from the world and its enticements? See Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 6:14; Colossians 3:1-5; 1 John 5:4-5.

**Romans 12:1-2: 1** Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. **2** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. *Offer ourselves as a living and holy sacrifice to the Lord and be transformed in renewing our minds.*

**Galatians 6:14: 14** But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. *Consider ourselves as dead to the world and its allurements.*

**Colossians 3:1-5: 1** Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **2** Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. **3** For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. **4** When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. **5** Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. *Keep seeking the things above. Set our minds on the things above because we have died to this life.*

**1 John 5:4-5: 4** For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. **5** Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? *Remember that whatever is born of God, whatever is of faith—wins out over the world.*

15. What things are in the world according to verse 16? Where do these things come from? The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the boastful pride of life.

These things most definitely do not come from the Father. They are from the world.

16. Loving the world and the things of the world means prizing the things our flesh desires. What does God want us to understand about our flesh, its desires, and loving Him? See Mark 4:19; Romans 13:14; Galatians 5:16, 19-26; Titus 2:11-14; 1 Peter 2:11; 1 John 2:15-17.

**Mark 4:19: 19** but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. *God wants us to understand the unprofitability and great detriment the world and its ways have upon our spiritual lives.*

**Romans 13:14: 14** But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts. *We are commanded not to make provision for the flesh—to feed it, to strengthen it, to enable it.*

**Galatians 5:16: 16** But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. *If we walk by the Spirit, we simply will not carry out the desire of the flesh—plain and simple!*

**Galatians 5:19-26: 19** Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, **20** idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, **21** envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. **22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. **24** Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. **25** If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. **26** Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another. *Those who practice the deeds of the flesh are still fleshly and lost in sin. The fruit of the Spirit reveals a completely different set of fruit in our lives. If we belong to Jesus, then we will crucify the flesh with its passions and desires.*

**Titus 2:11-14: 11** For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, **12** instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, **13** looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, **14** who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. *We are to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and pursue righteousness.*

**1 Peter 2:11: 11** Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. *We are to abstain from fleshly lusts that do battle against the soul.*

**1 John 2:15-17: 15** Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. **16** For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. **17** The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. *If we love the world, it just proves that the Father is not in us. Those things are temporary and fleeting but doing God's will has eternal blessing.*

17. When do the things we *see* become a danger to our hearts and our love for God? See Genesis 3:6; 6:2; Joshua 7:20-21; Job 31:1; Psalm 119:36-37; 2 Peter 2:13-15.

**Genesis 3:6: 6** When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. *She examined to the point that she thought it was delightful and decided that she knew better than God what was best for her. Her desire made her reject God's command to her and to Adam.*

**Genesis 6:2: 2** that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. *They saw and looked to the point of taking them for themselves.*

**Joshua 7:20-21: 20** So Achan answered Joshua and said, "Truly, I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel, and this is what I did: **21** when I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I coveted them and took them; and behold, they are concealed in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath it." *I saw, I coveted, I took, I concealed.*

**Job 31:1: 1** "I have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin? *Gazing...more than a glance.*

**Psalm 119:36-37: 36** Incline my heart to Your testimonies And not to dishonest gain. **37** Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity, And revive me in Your ways. *Turn eyes away from vanity. If eyes are turned away then there is not the danger of dishonesty and sin.*

**2 Peter 2:13-15: 13** suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you, **14** having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children; **15** forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; *Eyes full of sin that never cease from sin. They look. They entice. They forsake. They go astray.*

18. The boastful pride of life is a trap any of us can fall into. What do you learn about this particularly tricky temptation and how to escape it from Psalm 49:5-6; 10-13, 16-20; 52:1-9; 127:1-2; Proverbs 27:1-2; James 4:13-17?

**Psalm 49:5-6: 5** Why should I fear in days of adversity, When the iniquity of my foes surrounds me, **6** Even those who trust in their wealth And boast in the abundance of their riches? *Recognize the danger of those who trust in their wealth and boast in the abundance of their riches. This is foolhardy because their destruction is near.*

**Psalm 49:10-13: 10** For he sees that even wise men die; The stupid and the senseless alike perish And leave their wealth to others. **11** Their inner thought is that their houses are forever And their dwelling places to all generations; They have called their lands after their own names. **12** But man in his pomp will not endure; He is like the beasts that perish. **13** This is the way of those who are foolish, And of those after them who approve their words. Selah. *All die. But the unbeliever thinks that their legacy is forever, but man in his pomp and pride will not endure. It is foolish to think so.*

**Psalm 49:16-20: 16** Do not be afraid when a man becomes rich, When the glory of his house is increased; **17** For when he dies he will carry nothing away; His glory will not descend after him. **18** Though while he lives he congratulates himself— And though men praise you when you do well for yourself— **19** He shall go to the generation of his fathers; They will never see the light. **20** Man in his pomp, yet without understanding, Is like the beasts that perish. *We are told not to fear those who become rich and have glory for when he dies, he carries nothing away with him.*

**Psalm 52:1-9: 1** Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man? The lovingkindness of God endures all day long. **2** Your tongue devises destruction, Like a sharp razor, O worker of deceit. **3** You love evil more than good, Falsehood more than speaking what is right. Selah. **4** You love all words that devour, O deceitful tongue. **5** But God will break you down forever; He will snatch you up and tear you away from your tent, And uproot you from the land of the living. Selah. **6** The righteous will see and fear, And will laugh at him, saying, **7** "Behold, the man who would not make God his refuge, But trusted in the abundance of his riches And was strong in his evil desire." **8** But as for me, I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the lovingkindness of God forever and ever. **9** I will give You thanks forever, because You have done it, And I will wait on Your name, for it is good, in the presence of Your godly ones. *God will judge those who in pride do not honor Him. Better for us to wait on the Lord.*

**Psalms 127:1-2:** **1** Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman keeps awake in vain. **2** It is vain for you to rise up early, To retire late, To eat the bread of painful labors; For He gives to His beloved even in his sleep. *Unless we depend upon the Lord, all our labors in this life are in vain. They amount to nothing in the end.*

**Proverbs 27:1-2:** **1** Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth. **2** Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; A stranger, and not your own lips. *Don't boast about what you will do tomorrow because you have no power over the future. We know the God who does though.*

**James 4:13-17:** **13** Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." **14** Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. **15** Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that." **16** But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. **17** Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin. *Boasting is sin. Our lives are a vapor. We need to submit our plans to the Lord.*

19. James 4:1-10 contains similar admonishments. What do you learn about love for the world from James? What is James' answer for turning away from a love for the world?

**James 4:1-10:** **1** What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? **2** You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. **3** You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. **4** You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. **5** Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? **6** But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." **7** Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. **8** Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. **9** Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. **10** Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

In James, love for the world and its ways results in quarrels and conflicts. James views friendship with the world as hostility toward God. The answer to turning away from this foolish path is to submit to God, draw near to Him, repent, mourn over sin and humble ourselves before the Lord.

20. What do we know about the world according to verse 17? What contrasting picture is provided in verse 17?

The world is passing away and also its lusts.

But the one who does the will of God lives forever.

21. What do we know about those who do God's will? See Matthew 7:21; Mark 3:35; 1 Peter 4:2; 1 John 2:17.

**Matthew 7:21: 21** "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. *Those who do God's will enter heaven.*

**Mark 3:35: 35** "For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother." *Those who do God's will are Jesus' siblings—part of His family because God is their Father.*

**1 Peter 4:2: 2** so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. *We are to spend the rest of our lives here on earth for the will of God.*

**1 John 2:17: 17** The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. *The one who does God's will lives forever because he has eternal life.*

22. How would understanding the truths contained in verse 17 help us live differently? If we really believed and understood the passing and temporal nature of all created things, we wouldn't invest in them so heavily. We would build into that which does last forever—God's will, God's Word, God's ways.

"Here is the true answer to the craving for permanence in the human heart. It is realized in 'the one doing the will of God'. The present active participle characterizes him as actively engaged in doing God's will rather than pursuing the fleeting lusts of the world." ~D. Edmond Hiebert<sup>6</sup>

"Say then, brethren, whether this world is worthy of a Christian's affections? I do not hesitate to say, it is not: for it affords nothing that is capable of satisfying an immortal soul; and the poor gratifications it does afford, are all perishing even whilst they are in our hands." ~Charles Simeon<sup>7</sup>

"Stop considering the world precious with the result that you love it, and the things in the world. If anyone as a habit of life is considering the world precious and is therefore loving it, there does not exist the love possessed by the Father in him. Because everything which is in the world, the passionate desire of the flesh, and the passionate desire of the eyes, and the insolent and empty assurance which trusts in the things that serve the creature life, is not from the Father as a source but is from the world as a source. And the world is being caused to pass away, and its passionate desire. But the one who keeps on habitually doing the will of God abides forever." ~Kenneth Wuest<sup>8</sup>

"The answer to the lusts of the flesh (1 John 2:16) is to cultivate the desire to see Christ." ~Rick Goertzen

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<sup>6</sup> D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1991), 104.

<sup>7</sup> Charles Simeon, *Horae Homileticae: James to Jude*, vol. 20 (London: Holdsworth and Ball, 1833), 402.

<sup>8</sup> Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 13 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 128.



— 1 John —  
Lesson #8 Chapter 2:18-29  
Teacher's Guide

“When you go to God in any duty, take your heart aside and say, 'O my soul, I am now engaged in the greatest work that a creature was ever employed about; I am going into the awful presence of God upon business of everlasting moment. O my soul, leave trifling now; be composed, be watchful, be serious; this is no common work, it is soul-work; it is work for eternity; it is work which will bring forth fruit to life or death in the world to come.' Pause awhile and consider your sins, your wants, your troubles; keep your thoughts awhile on these before you address yourself to duty.” ~John Flavel<sup>1</sup>

1. Who does John address in verse 18? What had he been discussing with them in verses 15-17?

Children.

In verses 15-17 John had been admonishing them not to love the world nor the things of the world. He reminded them that the world and its lusts will pass away, but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

2. How does verse 17 provide a lead in for verse 18?

John ends verse 17 talking about those who will live forever...and then it's almost like he thinks, "Oh yes, speaking of forever...you need to know that it is the last days before forever comes. I want to tell you about what life will be like in those last days."

3. How does John view the times in which he lives according to verse 18? What do you learn from the other Bible writers about how they viewed the times in which they too were living? See Romans 13:11; 1 Timothy 4:1; James 5:3; 1 Peter 4:7; Jude 18.

He believes he is living in the last days. Paul also believed that it was the last hour when he wrote. James, Peter, and Jude all wrote about the times in which they lived as being the last hour. It moved them to write urgently and live purposefully.

**Romans 13:11: 11** Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed.

**1 Timothy 4:1: 1** But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,

**James 5:3: 3** Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure!

**1 Peter 4:7: 7** The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.

**Jude 18: 18** that they were saying to you, "In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts."

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<sup>1</sup> John Flavel, *Keeping the Heart* (...Christian Heritage, 2012), 32 maybe.



4. What had John's "children" heard according to verse 18? What do you learn about this person from Paul's instructions to the Thessalonians in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12? They had heard that antichrist was coming.

Paul taught about the antichrist that he is the man of lawlessness, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every "religion" and displays himself as God. Right now he is restrained. But God will slay this lawless one with the breath of His mouth and bring an end to the appearance of his coming, which is in accord with Satan's activity of power, signs, and false wonders, deception.

**2 Thessalonians 2:1-12:** **1** Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, **2** that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. **3** Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, **4** who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. **5** Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? **6** And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. **7** For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. **8** Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; **9** that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, **10** and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. **11** For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, **12** in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

5. What else does John tell his children in 1 John 2:18? What is the connection between the antichrists and the last times? What do we learn about the many antichrists from 1 John 2:18-19, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7?

Even now...as John was writing to them...many antichrists had already appeared on the scene. This influx of false teachers indicates it is the last times! If it was the last times when John was writing, then it is most certainly the last times now during our time!

**1 John 2:18-19: 18** *Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour.* **19** They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but *they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.*

**1 John 2:22: 22** Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is *the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.*

**1 John 4:3: 3** and *every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.*

**2 John 7: 7** *For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.*

6. What do we learn about the antichrists from verse 19? How does verse 19 help us evaluate the attitudes and actions of professed believers?

They went out—they left the fellowship, which showed that they were really not believers. If they had been of us (believers), they would have remained in the fellowship. Verse 19 helps us understand that those who leave the realm of biblical doctrine and teach what is false reveal that they aren't believers at all though they said they were. Verse 19 helps us recognize that unbelievers can masquerade as believers for a time, but they can't maintain it. They will eventually leave the fellowship of biblical believers and try to take as many with them who are drawn to their "new fellowship" of heretical false teaching.

7. What contrast is presented between those described in verse 19 and those in verse 20? You all have an anointing (of the Holy Spirit who leads you in truth). They do not.

This is what protects you from error, but they fall into it.

They went out. You remained.

They weren't really of the fellowship of believers. You are.

8. What do you learn about the word *anointing* from 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 1 John 2:20, 27; 4:13?

**2 Corinthians 1:21-22: 21** Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, **22** who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge. *God anointed us. He sealed us and gave us the Spirit as a pledge.*

**1 John 2:20: 20** But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. *Believers all have the anointing from God, which gives us insight into what is true and right.*

**1 John 2:27: 27** As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him. *Believers' anointing abides in us. Our anointing teaches us about all things, is true. And we have been taught to abide in God by the anointing we have received.*

**1 John 4:13: 13** By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. *We will abide in Him and He in us because He has anointed us, that is, given us His Spirit.*

a. Based on what you learned from those passages (2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 1 John 2:20, 27; 4:13), what is John saying about his children in verse 20?

God has done this work in them. They are believers. They have received the Holy Spirit from God, who will lead them into all truth.

b. Based on what you learned from those passages (2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 1 John 2:20, 27; 4:13), what is John saying about you from verse 20?

The same is true for me. When we are saved, we are given the pledge and gift of the Holy Spirit, who protects us from error and leads us into truth.

9. In verse 20 John rather abruptly ends his sentence with “you all know.” What is it that believers *know* according to verse 21?

Believers know the truth. No lie of a false teacher is of the truth. Because of the Holy Spirit helping them, believers are able to smell something fishy when it comes to false teaching. They may not know what it is specifically, but they are wary and unwilling to embrace it.

10. What truth do believers know and cling to or you could say, what lies do unbelievers spout? See verse 22.

The truth that believers know and cling to is that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah.

Unbelievers, especially false teachers, deny that Jesus is the Christ, the long-awaited, long-foretold Messiah.

Unbelievers, especially false teachers, deny the Father and the Son.

Believers believe God’s Word and promises, while unbelievers disbelieve Him.

11. What do we know for sure about anyone who denies ~~that Jesus is the Christ~~ according to verse 23?

Anyone who denies Jesus does not have the Father. That’s it. It’s just the case.

12. In what way does denying ~~that Jesus is the Christ~~ lead to denying the Father? See ~~John 5:23; 1 John 4:14~~. See John 8:18-19; 10:30; 14:9-10; 1 John 5:9.

**John 8:18-19: 18** “I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me.” **19** So they were saying to Him, “Where is Your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also.” *The Father testifies about Jesus that He is true so when someone denies Jesus then it comes back around to the Father so that they deny Him.*

**John 10:30: 30** “I and the Father are one.” *Since Jesus and the Father are One together, then to deny One is to deny the Other.*

**John 14:9-10: 9** Jesus said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?” **10** “Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. *If we have seen Jesus, we have seen the Father, so to deny Jesus is to deny the Father also.*

**1 John 5:9: 9** If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son. *God has testified as to the righteousness, holiness, and supreme worthiness of His Son, so when we deny Jesus, we are saying that God’s testimony isn’t good enough for us.*

13. What are we supposed to do according to verse 24?

Let that abide in us which we heard from the beginning. If what we heard from the beginning abides in us, then we will abide in the Son and in the Father. Doctrine precedes practice.

14. In what way can we hinder the truths we learned from the beginning? What is the outcome when we are faithful to stand firm in the truths we learned from the beginning? See verse 24.

We can hinder the truths we learned from the beginning by not thinking on them, practicing them, being purposeful in them.

When we are faithful to stand firm in the truths we learned from the beginning then we will abide, live with, be anchored in, commune with the Son and the Father. The truths we heard from the beginning undergirds the life.

15. What promise is repeated in verse 25? Who made the promise? See also John 5:39; 10:28; 12:50; 2 Corinthians 1:20; 1 John 5:11-13.  
Eternal life.

Who made the promise? He Himself! Haha! Now as to who that is...it's not unreasonable to point to either the Father or the Son. The Father promised eternal life. He conceived it before time began and sent His Son to bring it about. The Son also promised and taught the Father's promises and since He and the Father are One then the promises are Jesus' as well. According to the context and the nearest antecedent rule, then it would be Father since He was the last one mentioned in verse 24. As one commentary writer noted, God is the promiser as seen in **2 Corinthians 1:20**: *For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us. I lean heavily toward the promise coming from God and then Jesus taught it while He was on earth, so that God's promise was His as well.*

**1 John 5:11-13: 11** And the testimony is this, that *God has given us eternal life*, and this life is in His Son. **12** He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. **13** These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. *The Father.*

**John 5:39: 39** "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; *it is these that testify about Me*; The Father.

**John 10:28: 28** and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. *Jesus.*

**John 12:50: 50** "I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me." The Father.

16. What situation is described in verse 26? What is John's solution according to verse 26? There were those who were trying to deceive the believers. John's solution was to write to them and tell them the truth and remind them of the truth they have already heard and been taught.

17. What deceptions does John seek to correct in his letter thus far? See 1 John 1:6, 8, 10; 2:3-4, 9, 15, 18-19, 22-23.

**1 John 1:6: 6** If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; *He is correcting the false teaching that you don't have to change, that you can live any way you want after coming to know the Lord Jesus as Savior, that your life doesn't have to change.*

**1 John 1:8: 8** If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. *He is correcting the false teaching that after becoming Christians, we no longer sin. Oh goodness! That's so ludicrous!*

**1 John 1:10: 10** If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. *Again, he is correcting the false teaching that we won't sin anymore once we become Christians.*

**1 John 2:3-4: 3** By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. **4** The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; *He is correcting the false teaching that you don't need to obey God or follow Him to be a Christian. It makes me cringe to contemplate this and especially the affront it is to our good and gracious God, who lovingly sent His Son to die on the cross for us so we could be rescued from the wrath to come, yet there are those who claim the salvation but won't obey, follow, and love God back.*

**1 John 2:9: 9** The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. *He is correcting the false teaching that you can be a Christian and harbor bitterness against a brother.*

**1 John 2:15: 15** Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. *He is correcting the false teaching that you can be a Christian and follow the world and love its ways.*

**1 John 2:18-19: 18** Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. **19** They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us. *He is correcting the false teaching that those who leave the fellowship of believers are still believers—one of "us."*

**1 John 2:22-23: 22** Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. **23** Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. *He is correcting the false teaching that you can be a Christian and not believe all the truths about the Lord Jesus or about the Father. Both errors have serious repercussions for us spiritually.*

18. List what you learn about the anointing from verse 27.

We have received the anointing.

We received the anointing from Him who abides in you—the Holy Spirit (we know this from other texts since it's not spelled out in verse 27).

Because of this special work by the Holy Spirit (the one who abides in us) we don't need someone to teach us truth (implied—because He is true and leads us into all truth. Again, this is not spelled out in verse 27 but is taught in other texts).

His anointing (that is the Holy Spirit abiding in you) teaches you about all things.

His teaching is true. And is not a lie.

And it has been taught from all from the beginning that you abide in Him.

19. What is the anointing that we have received? See 1 John 2:20-21; 3:24; John 14:26; 16:13; Acts 5:32; Romans 8:9, 14.

**1 John 2:20-21: 20** *But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. 21* I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth.

**1 John 3:24: 24** The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that *He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.*

**John 14:26: 26** *"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.*

**John 16:13: 13** *"But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.*

**Acts 5:32: 32** *"And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."*

**Romans 8:9: 9** However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed *the Spirit of God dwells in you.* But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

**Romans 8:14: 14** For all who are being *led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*

20. Based on what John has just said in verses 18-27, why would receiving the Holy Spirit at salvation be so important? What can you be assured about what the Holy Spirit will reveal according to verse 27?

There are many false teachers arising, so it's wonderfully encouraging to know God has provided help for His children by giving us His Holy Spirit, who protects us, leads us, and guides us into the truth of the Word of God.

The Holy Spirit will always reveal truth. He always works in concert with the Word of God.

21. What final command in this chapter is given in verse 28? What reason is given for obeying that command according to verse 28?

Abide in Him (Jesus). The reason? So that when He (Jesus) appears, we will have confidence that we belong to Him, that He has forgiven us, and removed our stains of sin and guilt, nor will we shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

22. What do you learn about the one who abides from 1 John 2:6, 10, 14, 24, 27-28; John 15:5-6, 10?

**1 John 2:6: 6** the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked. *The one who abides in Him will walk like Jesus did.*

**1 John 2:10: 10** The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. *The one who abides in Him will live in the Light. He will not stumble in the darkness.*



**1 John 2:14: 14** I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one. *The one who abides in Him will rest in and live upon the Word of God.*

**1 John 2:24: 24** As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. *The one who abides in Him will live upon and rest in what they have heard from the beginning. The one who abides in Him will abide in the Son and in the Father.*

**1 John 2:27-28: 27** As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him. **28** Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. *The one who abides in Him will have the Holy Spirit abiding in Him as well. The Holy Spirit will teach all that is true to those who abide in Him. The one who abides in Him will not shrink away from Jesus in shame at His coming. The one who abides in Him will have confidence when Jesus appears again.*

**John 15:5-6: 5** "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. **6** "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. *The one who abides in Him will bear much fruit by the Father's help and working.*

**John 15:10: 10** "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. *The one who abides in Him will keep God's commandments and rest in and live upon the Father's love in the same way that Jesus has done with the Father.*

23. Verse 29 reveals another reason why we won't shrink in shame from the Lord Jesus at His second coming. Explain what you learn.

We know He is righteous. But we won't shrink in shame because everyone who is born of Him practices righteousness because He is righteous.

24. John seeks to shore up the believers by dismantling deceptions and teaching the truth. What truths from this lesson have encouraged you and built up your faith?

The incredible gift of the Holy Spirit. What a treasure He is!

The list looking at the deceptions John was writing to correct is also mind-boggling and so timely and relevant for us! It was very helpful to go down that list and consider how those lies about the Lord and His Word are still infiltrating the church and believers are being deceived into believing them.

"The whole body of the saints. . . whom he exhorts to abide in Christ, that is, in the exercise of faith on him, of hope in him, and love to him; and to hold to him the head, and to hold fast his word and Gospel, and abide by his truth and ordinances, and adhere to his cause and interest, and not to be moved away on any consideration." ~John Gill<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament, vol. 3*, The Baptist Commentary Series (London: Mathews and Leigh, 1809), 633–634.



“He (John) was so anxious for their spiritual lives that he said over and over, “Remain in him; don’t let anyone lead you away from him.” ~Cornerstone Biblical Commentary<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Grant Osborne, Philip W. Comfort, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Vol 13: John and 1, 2, and 3 John* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2007), 347.

— 1 John —  
Lesson #9 Chapter 3 Overview  
Teacher's Guide

The goal of this lesson is to teach you how to look at and begin to study a text of Scripture. Observation is a necessary part of Bible study, yet all too often it can be overlooked or rushed through. Simply put, observation is the practice of noticing what God has placed in His Word. *At this stage* in our Bible study, I only want you to notice and then record what you observe in the chapter. You're not making any interpretations about what the Scriptures mean or how they apply to your life—that will come later, I promise.

Don't rush through this lesson. Set aside time this week to peer into the living and abiding Word of God. Rich treasures are waiting for you!

I've included Chapter 3 (NASB) at the end of this lesson so you can print it out and mark it up if you'd like. I find it helps me see items more easily if I'm marking and noting things as I go.

1. SUMMARIZE. To begin, read through Chapter 3. Now, summarize the contents of Chapter 3. This is not the time to be super detailed; instead, think of trying to tell a 4th grader the contents of the chapter.<sup>1</sup>
  - a. Summarize paragraph 1 (verses 1-3).  
John reminds his readers of God's great love so they could become children of God. As children of God, we don't yet know what we will be like after God's sanctification of us is complete, but we do know that we will be like Jesus. The hope of being like Jesus motivates us to be pure in all our behavior, thought, and purposes.
  - b. Summarize paragraph 2 (verses 4-10).  
John then reminds his readers that those who make it a habit and practice to engage in sin, don't really know the Lord. No one who is born of God practices sin because we have been made into God's children. This is one of the ways we can tell who belongs to the Lord and who doesn't.

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<sup>1</sup>The method and process of observation in Bible study does God honor, as we stop, observe, and consider each and every one of His recorded Words, in their context. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the debt I owe to the Precept Inductive Bible Studies observation method, which I have adapted in my studies. As far as I know, the method is the brainchild of Kay Arthur, though I've encountered a number of others who have also come up with similar ways for observing the text. The point of observation is to slow down and really look at what God has preserved for us in His Word. What I've created here is simply another variation to help us peer more closely at the Scriptures—for our good and His glory.

c. Summarize paragraph 3 (verses 11-12).

From the beginning, God has desired that we love one another, unlike Cain who killed his brother out of jealousy.

d. Summarize paragraph 4 (verses 13-22).

Don't be surprised if the world hates you because you are no longer of the world. Those who do not love the brethren aren't truly believers. We know how to love the brethren because we have the example of Jesus who laid down His life for us. Yet, if our conscience is burdened because of our many weaknesses and failures to love the brethren, there is comfort knowing that God knows the true desires of our hearts. If we are right with God and man, then we can have confidence as we pray for others that God will hear and answer our prayers.

e. Summarize paragraph 5 (verses 23-24).

God commands us to believe in Jesus and to love one another. The keeping of God's commands is proof that we abide in Him and that His Spirit abides in us.

2. SUMMARIZE. After reviewing the chapter and what you wrote for your summaries, ask yourself: *What is the main point of this chapter?* How do all these details and events reveal the main idea of the chapter? Record your answer below.

The main point of chapter 3 is to discover the life, deeds, and motivations of the children of God.

3. TITLE. Now you're ready to title your chapter. Your 3-5 word title should reflect the contents of the chapter. Remember, a title's purpose is to help you remember what is in each chapter.

God's Children Gloriously Transformed

How to Identify God's Children

4. MARK and LIST. On the *1 John Bible Text* handout mark any key words you see in the chapter. *God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit* are always key words. It's easiest to start with these "God" words first. Next mark words or phrases that are repeated at least 3 times. Mark any other words that seem important to the chapter or are strongly emphasized.

You can mark words or phrases by creating a symbol or using a certain colored pencil every time it appears. This will enable you to see at a glance how often a word is used in the chapter or note a progression of thought.

- a. Next, *list the phrase containing the key words* on a separate sheet of paper. This step will allow you to pull together the information you noted from marking the key words. Be sure to cite the verse references when you list your key word information.

# Scripture Paths Bible Studies

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For example, with *God* as your key word you would begin to make a list of the information you discovered every time God is mentioned in 1 John Chapter 2. Your Chapter 2 list about *God* should begin by looking something like the one below.

Verse 5—*God* is love

Verse 13—*God* is Father. He is knowable.

Fun study tip to try: Mark any key/repeated words that you notice appear all the way through the book, even if their use in individual chapters may not fit the “3 times or more” rule. This will allow you to trace major themes and an author’s thoughts throughout the book.

## God

Verse 1 See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us

Verse 1 that we would be called children of God

Verse 1 the world does not know us because it did not know Him

Verse 2 now we are children of God

Verse 8 the Son of God appeared for this purpose

Verse 9 no one who is born of God practices sin

Verse 9 because His [God’s] see abides in him

Verse 9 he cannot sin because he is born of God

Verse 10 by this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious

Verse 10 anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God

Verse 17 how does the love of God abide in him

Verse 20 for God is greater than our heart

Verse 21 we have confidence before God

Verse 22 whatever we ask we receive from Him [God]

Verse 22 we keep His [God’s] commandments

Verse 22 do the things that are pleasing in His [God’s] sight

Verse 23 this is His [God’s] commandment

Verse 23 we believe in the name of His [God’s] Son Jesus

Verse 23 just as He [God] commanded us

Verse 24 the one who keeps His [God’s] commandments abides in Him [God], and He [God] in him

Verse 24 we know by this that He [God] abides in us

Verse 24 by the Spirit whom He [God] has given us

## Jesus Christ

Verse 2 we know that when He [Jesus] appears, we will be like Him [Jesus], because we will see Him [Jesus] just as He [Jesus] is

Verse 3 everyone who has this hope fixed on Him [Jesus] purifies himself, just as He [Jesus] is pure

Verse 5 you know that He [Jesus] appeared in order to take away sins

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Verse 5 in Him [Jesus] there is no sin

Verse 6 no one abides in Him [Jesus] sins; no one who sins has seen Him [Jesus] or knows Him [Jesus]

Verse 7 the one who practices righteousness is righteous just as He [Jesus] is righteous

Verse 8 the Son of God appeared for this purpose

Verse 16 we know love by this that He [Jesus] laid down His [Jesus] life for us

Verse 23 we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ

## Holy Spirit

Verse 24 He abides in us by the Spirit whom He has given us

## Love

Verse 1 see how great a love the Father has bestowed on us

Verse 10 nor the one who does not love his brother

Verse 11 that we should love one another

Verse 14 because we love the brethren

Verse 14 he who does not love abides in death

Verse 16 we know love by this

Verse 17 how does the love of God abide in him

Verse 18 let us not love with word or with tongue

Verse 23 and love one another just as He commanded us

## Hate

Verse 13 don't be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you

Verse 14 he [implied: who does not love] abides in death

Verse 15 everyone who hates his brother is a murderer

## Practice

Verse 4 everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness

Verse 7 the one who practices righteousness is righteous

Verse 8 the one who practices sin is of the devil

Verse 9 no one who is born of God practices sin

Verse 10 anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God

## Abide

Verse 6 no one who abides in Him sins

Verse 9 His seed abides in him

Verse 10 anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God

Verse 14 he who does not love abides in death

Verse 15 no murderer has eternal life abiding in him

Verse 17 how does the love of God abide in him

Verse 24 the one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He [implied: abides] in him.

Verse 24 we know by this that He abides in us...His Spirit

## Appear

Verse 2 it has not appeared as yet what we will be

Verse 2 we know that when He appears

Verse 5 you know that He appeared in order to take away sins

Verse 8 the Son of God appeared for this purpose

## Sin

Verse 4 everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness

Verse 4 and sin is lawlessness

Verse 5 He appeared to take away sins

Verse 5 in Him there is no sin

Verse 6 no one who abides in Him sins

Verse 6 no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him

Verse 8 the one who practices sin is of the devil

Verse 8 for the devil has sinned from the beginning

Verse 9 no one who is born of God practices sin

Verse 9 and he cannot sin because he is born of God

## True/truth

Verse 18 love...in deed and truth

Verse 19 we will know by this that we are of the truth

## Commandment

Verse 22 we keep His commandments

Verse 23 this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son

Verse 23 love one another just as He commanded us

Verse 24 the one who keeps His commandments abides in Him

## Righteous/righteousness

Verse 7 the one who practices righteousness is righteous just as He is righteous

Verse 10 anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God

Verse 12 his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous

## Heart

Verse 17 sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him

Verse 19 will assure our heart before Him  
Verse 20 in whatever our heart condemns us  
Verse 20 God is greater than our heart and knows all things  
Verse 21 if our heart does not condemn us

5. MARK and LIST. Mark any *commands* that are listed in the chapter. Look for things the author is telling his readers to do or be. Now, list them on your separate sheet of paper in the same way you did for the key words.

## Commands

Verse 7 *make sure* no one deceives you

[Verse 11 talking about a command they heard previously, though it isn't commanded directly in the text: that *we should love one another*]

Verse 13 *do not be surprised*, brethren, if the world hates you

(Verse 16 *we ought to lay down* our lives for the brethren)

Verse 18 *let us not love* with word or with tongue, but in deed and in truth

[Verse 23 is like verse 11 above. It's talking about a command they heard previously, though it isn't commanded directly in the text: that *we believe* in the name of His Son AND (implied *we love* one another)]

6. MARK and LIST. Mark words or phrases that are being *compared or contrasted*. Words like *as, likewise, in the same manner, or like* will help you find words or phrases being compared. Contrasting words like "light/dark" or "love/hate" and the word "but" will help you find words or phrases that are being contrasted. Now list what you discovered about comparisons and contrasts on the extra paper you've been using.

See observation sheet.

7. MARK. Mark transition terms: *therefore, wherefore, finally*. Sometimes an author has his own kind of transition term that lets you know he is making a switch to a new topic, so be sure to look for those kinds of terms. (Generally, these are at the beginning of a paragraph.)

John is much more direct and doesn't use the usual transition terms as much. John's transition terms are more like an address, like to *children* and phrases like *we know* or *this is*.

Verse 2 *beloved*, now we are children of God

Verse 5 *you know* He appeared to take away sins

Verse 7 *little children*, make sure no one deceives you

Verse 10 *by this* the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious...

Verse 11 *for this is the message* which you have heard from the beginning

Verse 14 *we know* that we have passed out of death into life

Verse 16 *we know* love by this...

Verse 18 *little children*, let us not love with word or with tongue...

Verse 19 *we will know by this* that we are of the truth



# Scripture Paths Bible Studies

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Verse 21 *beloved*, if our heart...

Verse 23 *this is His commandment*...

8. MARK and LIST. Mark any time *so that* is used. In putting together your list, look for what comes before the “so that” which will bring about or produce some kind of result. For example, in Philippians 1:10 “so that” appears, but in order to understand its significance you need to also look at verse 9. Your entry for Philippians 1:9-10 might say something like, “Paul prays that the Philippians’ love would abound in real knowledge and all discernment *so that* they would be able to approve the things that are excellent and live sincerely and blamelessly until the day of Christ.” I think you will be so blessed by this part of your observation time!

See observation sheet.

9. MARK. Mark expressions of time—words like *shortly, quickly, soon, for a little while*.

Verse 2 *now*

Verse 8 *beginning*

Verse 11 *beginning*

Verse 15 *eternal life*

10. MARK. Mark words that are synonyms of each other. For example: *Paul and Timothy are bond-servants* from 1:1.

See observation sheet.

11. LIST. List any *attributes* of God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit that you notice in this chapter. You’ll start this list by going back up to your listed “God” words that you marked earlier in Question #4. An attribute is a characteristic or quality used to describe an object or person.

For example, you might read John 3:16, “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*” From this verse we see that God is *loving* [because He loved the world]; He is *giving* [because He gave His Son]; He is *eternal* [because only the eternal can offer eternal life].

## Attributes of God

Verse 1 God is love; God is Father; God is generous and gives

Verse 2 God is Father

Verse 8 God is Father to Jesus

Verse 9 God is holy

Verse 10 God is righteous and loving

Verse 21 God is to be feared

Verse 21 God is faithful

Verse 21 God is accessible and able to be pleased

Verse 23, 24 God is king who commands

Verse 24 God draws near (abides)

## Attributes of Jesus Christ

Verse 2 Jesus appears, real, coming, He shares His likeness

Verse 3 He is pure, holy, righteous

Verse 5 He is purposeful and came to take away sins

Verse 5 He is holy, no sin

Verse 7 He is righteous

Verse 8 He appeared to destroy the works of the devil

Verse 16 He is sacrificial

## Attributes of Holy Spirit

Verse 24 the Holy Spirit abides in us

12. LIST. Look for lists of words, phrases, or related thoughts. Number the lists within the Bible text, then record your list out to the side in the margin or on a separate sheet of paper. This will help you see the thought progression of the author or the results of some action.

For example, in 1 John 1:1 we find a list about the *Word of Life*. We discover 1) the Word of Life was from the beginning; 2) John heard the Word of Life; 3) John saw the Word of Life with his own eyes; 4) John looked at the Word of Life; 5) John touched the Word of life with his hands.

See observation sheet.

13. NOTE. Be sure to mark or write down any “nuggets” you observed which you thought were interesting, spurred on some thought, or made you want to study further.

I am still meditating on the power of knowing that we are children of God and how that should change everything for us.

I love thinking on verses 5 and 8 and the reasons Jesus appeared—to take away sin and destroy the works of the devil. What power, hope, and practical help for us!

*Remember*, the purpose of this lesson is to observe and take note of what is in the chapter. You are not making any interpretations or applications to your life right now. Your task at this time is to simply look for the treasures that God has put in each chapter.

As you do this lesson, take time to worship and thank the Lord that He has preserved His Word for you to study. Admire and marvel at what He placed in this chapter for you to notice. There really isn't any other time in our studies where we simply look at, think on, and study God's Word for itself, so have fun with this lesson! And may the Lord be blessed by your labors!

Scripture Paths Bible Studies

1 John Chapter 3

1 See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, [that] we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

5 You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.

6 No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.

7 Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous;

8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

11 For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, [that] we should love one another;

children of God  
1. don't know yet what we will be  
2. when He appears we will be like Him  
3. we will see Him just as He is  
4. Purify  
He appeared  
1. vs 5 took away sins  
vs 8  
2. destroy works of devil

when we love the brethren it shows/proves  
we are God's children (vs 10)  
we heard & obey the message from the beginning (vs 11)  
we are truly saved (vs 14)  
we love in deed & truth (vs 18)

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# Scripture Paths Bible Studies

3cc vs. 11

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12 notes Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.

13 Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.

14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

19 We will know by this that we are of the truth and will assure our heart before Him

20 in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;

22 and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

23 This is His commandment that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.

24 The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

Δ God      --- practice      commandment      CCC comments  
 + Jesus      ■ abide      ■ righteous      [so that] [that]  
 ✓ Spirit      ■ appear      ♥ heart      ← S → synonymous  
 ♥ love      // sin  
 ☹ hate      ■ truth (A)      - comparison  
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— 1 John —  
Lesson #10 Chapter 3:1-10  
Teacher's Guide

Charles Spurgeon comments on this passage saying, “As dear Dr. Hawker said concerning this, here is a chapter in every word and a sermon in every letter. How it opens with a “Behold!” because it is such a striking portion of sacred Scripture, that the Holy Ghost would have us pay particular attention to it. “Behold!” says he, “read other Scriptures if you like, with a glance, but stop here. I have put up a way-mark to tell you there is something eminently worthy of attention buried beneath these words.”<sup>1</sup>

Ask the Lord to prepare your heart for life-changing truths contained in this lesson! This section of John’s letter showcases important aspects of our lives as children of God. Its truths have power to encourage and strengthen us, whether we are new to the faith or mature in Christ.

1. What thought ties 1 John 2:29 with 1 John 3:1?  
That of being born of God from verse 29 and then John exploring the idea of being children of God.
2. What command is given at the beginning of 1 John 3:1?  
See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us.
3. Define *bestowed* (Strong’s #1325 [ESV, HCSB *given*; NIV *lavished*]). See Colossians 1:25 and 1 Timothy 4:14 to gain a bit more insight into the word.  
To give, add. Lavish is used to indicate the great love that motivates the giver.  
“The perfect tense is used here to indicate that the gift becomes a permanent possession of the recipient. God has placed His love upon the saints in the sense that they have become the permanent objects of His love. One of the results of this love in action is that we are called sons of God.” [Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*. Vol. 13. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.]  
**Colossians 1:25: 25** Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God *bestowed on me for your benefit*, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God,  
**1 Timothy 4:14: 14** Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was *bestowed on you* through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.
4. How is God’s love for us revealed according to 1 John 3:1? What do you learn about that immense privilege from John 1:12; 2 Corinthians 6:16-18; Galatians 3:26; Revelation 21:7?  
God’s love for us is revealed in calling us “children of God.”

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<sup>1</sup> Spurgeon, C. H. 1856. “The Beatific Vision.” In *The New Park Street Pulpit Sermons*, 2:70. London: Passmore & Alabaster.

It is an immense privilege to be God's child because of who He is. He is the Lord God Almighty, the great I Am, the eternally existing One, the complete in Himself One, the Great Giver, the Holy One—that God deigns to be called our Father and to welcome us as sons. Amazing love, how can it be, that Thou My God, shouldst die for me?!

**John 1:12: 12** But as many as received Him, to them He gave *the right to become children of God*, even to those who believe in His name,

**2 Corinthians 6:16-18: 16** Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; *And I will be their God, and they shall be My people.* **17** "Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. **18** "And *I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,*" Says the Lord Almighty.

**Galatians 3:26: 26** *For you are all sons of God* through faith in Christ Jesus.

**Revelation 21:7: 7** "He who overcomes will inherit these things, *and I will be his God and he will be My son.*

5. What is a unique result of our special relationship with God according to the second half of 1 John 3:1? What did Jesus have to say about this reality? See John 8:19; 15:18-21; 16:3.

The world does not know us because it did not know Him.

**John 8:19: 19** So they were saying to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father; *if you knew Me, you would know My Father also.*"

**John 15:18-21: 18** "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. **19** "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; *but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.* **20** "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. **21** "But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me.

**John 16:3: 3** "These things they will do because they have not known the Father or Me.

6. In contrast to the world, who did not know God (1 John 3:1), what is true of us according to 1 John 3:2?

We know that when He appears, we will be like Him! We will see Him just as He is!

7. The word *now* indicates a change has taken place. What change is John referring to from verse 2? See also John 1:12; Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 3:26; 4:5-7; Ephesians 1:5.

Right now, we are children of God. We don't have to wait. It's not predicated on anything else taking place. Now, right now, we are children of God.

**John 1:12: 12** But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, *The change comes from our belief in His name that indicates salvation.*

**Romans 8:14-17: 14** For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. **15** For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" **16** The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, **17** and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. *The change indicates that we have been adopted as sons. The Holy Spirit Himself testifies that we are children of God. We are heirs along with Christ.*

**Galatians 3:26: 26** For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. *The verse says it all...you are all sons of God through faith in Christ.*

**Galatians 4:5-7: 5** so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. **6** Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" **7** Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God. *He redeemed us so that we could receive the adoption as sons. And because we are sons, God has given us His Spirit. How can this be?!!!*

**Ephesians 1:5: 5** He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, *In His will that is full of kindness, He predestined us, He chose us before time began to adopt us to be His sons through Jesus.*

8. What does John mean when he says in 1 John 3:2, *it has not appeared as yet what we shall be*? See 1 John 3:2 for some clues, then look at Romans 8:18-25; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Philippians 3:21; 2 Peter 1:4.

We're don't know what our completed salvation will be like or look like. All we know is that we will be like Jesus.

**Romans 8:18-25: 18** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. **19** For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. **20** For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope **21** that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. **22** For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. **23** And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. **24** For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? **25** But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it. *There is glory that will be revealed to us. We will be set free from our slavery to corruption and will gain the freedom of the glory of truly becoming God's children. We eagerly await the adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.*

**2 Corinthians 3:18: 18** But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. *We are being transformed so that in that final day, we will be like Him.*

**Philippians 3:21: 21** who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. *The Lord will transform our weak bodies into conformity with His own glorious body.*



**2 Peter 1:4: 4** For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. *We can become partakers of the divine nature!*

9. Where do we place our hope according to 1 John 3:3? See also 1 Peter 1:3 as an added encouragement. What is the result of our hope according in verse 3? See also 2 Corinthians 6:18-7:1; 1 Peter 1:13-16, 22.

We place our hope on Him.

**1 Peter 1:3: 3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, *God, in His great mercy, has caused us to be born again to a living hope.*

As a result of our hope, we purify ourselves because Jesus is pure and we want to be just like Him.

**2 Corinthians 6:18: 18** "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.

**2 Corinthians 7:1: 1** *Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

**1 Peter 1:13-16: 13** Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, *fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.* **14** *As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance,* **15** *but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior;* **16** *because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."*

**1 Peter 1:22: 22** *Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,*

- a. As you review 1 John 3:1-3 what amazing truths move you to worship the Lord for His great work?

I can hardly believe that He would choose to call us sons and daughters. And as the text says, His great love motivated Him to do this so we could be His children. There was no other way. Why God would do this is hard to fathom, but oh, I'm so thankful He did! It's also a great love. He isn't doling out His love to me. He is slathering it on in blessing. And then there are my blessings that await when our salvation is completed.

10. Define *practice* [Strong's #4160 (NKJV, HCSB *commits*; NIV *breaks*)]. Note how the same word is used by John in 1 John 1:6; 2:29; 3:4, 7, 8, 9, 10.

Practice=to do, to fulfill, a habitual practice

**1 John 1:6: 6** If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; *We do not do, fulfill, practice the truth.*

**1 John 2:29: 29** If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him. *The practicing of righteousness reveals our pedigree. The one who does righteousness is born again.*

**1 John 3:4: 4** Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. *The ongoing doing of sin.*

**1 John 3:7: 7** Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; *the continual going back to doing what is right.*

**1 John 3:8: 8** the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. *The continual going back to sin.*

**1 John 3:9: 9** No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. *There is no long term, habitual practice, doing of sin in one who is born again.*

**1 John 3:10: 10** By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. *Those who practice, do, engage in righteousness are of God and those who do not, are not of Him.*

- a. After considering the point John is making in 1 John 3:4, why is *practice* a better translation choice (as used in the NASB and ESV) than *commits* or *breaks* as the NKJV, NIV, and HCSB use?

To commit or break the law of God sounds like even a one-time sin is enough to show you are not born again. To practice sin reveals an ongoing going back to sin. Habit, practice, going back to is far different in motive and purpose than occasional sins.

11. The same Greek word for *practice* is also used in Matthew 6:1; Romans 10:5; Galatians 3:12; 1 Thessalonians 4:10; 2 Peter 1:10. What do you learn about the word as you see how it's used in these verses?

In these verses *practice* again reveals an ongoing habit of doing something. It's the habit of a life, the focus, and force.

**Matthew 6:1: 1** "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

**Romans 10:5: 5** For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness.

**Galatians 3:12: 12** However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "He who practices them shall live by them."

**1 Thessalonians 4:10: 10** for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more,

**2 Peter 1:10: 10** Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;

12. What insight does that little word study (questions 10 and 11) give you into John's use of "practice" in 1 John 3:4?

The one who makes a habit of sinning also makes a habit of doing lawlessness.

- a. What does the *habitual practice* of sin teach us about the inner workings of someone's heart and their spiritual life? See also John 8:31, 34-36; Romans 6:8-13; 2 Corinthians 5:17, 21; 2 John 9.

**John 8:31: 31** So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;

**John 8:34-36: 34** Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. **35** "The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever.

**36** "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

**Romans 6:8-13: 8** Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, **9** knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. **10** For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. **11** Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. **12** Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, **13** and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

**2 Corinthians 5:17: 17** Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

**2 Corinthians 5:21: 21** He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

**2 John 9: 9** Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.

The habitual practice of sin reveals that someone is not truly a disciple of Jesus who continues in His Word. It reveals that they are still bound in sin and not set free from their slavery to sin. It reveals that death is still master over them in their life, that sin reigns in their life and are instruments of unrighteousness. It reveals that they are not a new creature in Christ, who has had Jesus take on his sin. And finally, it reveals that they do not abide in, live in, the teaching of God. They live outside of God's commands.

- b. Verse 4 could also be translated, "Everyone who makes a practice of sinning, breaks the law, in fact, sin is the breaking of God's law and throwing off the law of God." How is the *habitual* breaking of God's law incompatible in the life of a believer? See Psalm 1:2; 119:97; Romans 7:12, 21-23.

**Psalms 1:2: 2** But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.

**Psalms 119:97: 97** O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.

**Romans 7:12: 12** So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

**Romans 7:21-23: 21** I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. **22** For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, **23** but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

A believer delights in the law of the Lord. He loves it and spends his time thinking on it. He loves that the Law of God is holy, righteous, and good and desires to live it out. He struggles against his fleshly desires to sin because of the Spirit within him. His new life in Christ makes him war against the flesh rather than giving into it.

13. John reminds his readers of two things they know. What are these truths according to 1 John 3:5?

Jesus appeared to take away sins.

In Jesus there is no sin.

14. How does the information in 1 John 3:5 support what John has been saying in 1 John 2:28-1 John 3:5?

John has been teaching that true believers don't engage in habitual sin or desire to do so because of their new life in Christ. He points out the whole reason Jesus came was to take away sins and that Jesus Himself is sinless. If someone says they belong to Jesus but has a habit and practice of engaging in sin, then their lives reveal that they don't really know Jesus in a saving, life-transforming way.

15. By way of review, let's look again at what the word *abides* means when John uses it in 1 John 3:6. Please define *abides* [Strong's #3306 (NIV *lives*; HCSB *remains*)]. See also John 15:10; 1 John 2:6; 3:9, 24.

Abide, remain, continue, tarry, to be present, to live there, to endure. Marvin Vincent says, "It represents a condition maintained by communion with God and by the habitual doing of His will." [Vincent, Marvin Richardson. 1887. [Word Studies in the New Testament](#). Vol. 2. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.]

**John 15:10: 10** "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. *Keeping God's commandments is synonymous with abiding in His love. The two go hand in hand.*

**1 John 2:6: 6** the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked. *Abiding leads to imitating.*

**1 John 3:9: 9** No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. *Sin in the believer is incompatible with the new life. Because we have literally become God's children, then we will not abide in sin.*

**1 John 3:24: 24** The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us. *The Holy Spirit helps us and keeps us abiding in the Lord and His ways.*

Kenneth Wuest says, "(3:6) The words "abideth" and "sinneth" are used here to designate a certain class of individual. *Character is shown by one's habitual actions, not the extraordinary ones.* The tense of the verbs is present, the kind of action, continuous, habitual. Thus, "every one who habitually is abiding in Him," is a saved person, and, "every one who habitually is sinning," an unsaved person. *A Christian as a habit of life is abiding in fellowship with the Lord Jesus. Sin may at times enter his life. But sin is the exception, not the rule.* The unsaved person as a habit of life sins continually. "Sinneth" is present in tense, continuous action being indicated. The person who is abiding in Christ is not habitually sinning. The child of God as a habit of life, does righteousness, and sin is not a habit with him. John is not teaching sinless perfection here. Vincent says: "*John does not teach that believers do not sin, but is speaking of a character, a habit. Throughout the Epistle, he deals with the ideal reality of life in God, in which the love of God and sin exclude each other as light and darkness.*" He does not deny that a Christian sins at times. Indeed he admits the possibility of sin in the Christian's life in 1:9, and forbids sin in 2:1. **What John denies here is that a Christian sins habitually.** He denies that the life of a Christian is wholly turned towards sin as is that of the unsaved person."

16. In 1 John 3:6 John gives us his own explanation of what abiding is like. What do you see in verse 6 that helps explain *abiding*?

Abiding in Christ means we shun sinning and turn away from wickedness and unrighteousness. Abiding means we have seen him and know him, and we do not make it a practice to sin.

(3:6) The words "abideth" and "sinneth" are used here to designate a certain class of individual. *Character is shown by one's habitual actions, not the extraordinary ones.* The tense of the verbs is present, the kind of action, continuous, habitual. Thus, "every one who habitually is abiding in Him," is a saved person, and, "every one who habitually is sinning," an unsaved person. A Christian as a habit of life is abiding in fellowship with the Lord Jesus. Sin may at times enter his life. But sin is the exception, not the rule. The unsaved person as a habit of life sins continually. "Sinneth" is present in tense, continuous action being indicated. The person who is abiding in Christ is not habitually sinning. The child of God as a habit of life, does righteousness, and sin is not a habit with him. John is not teaching sinless perfection here. Vincent says: "John does not teach that believers do not sin, but is speaking of a character, a habit. Throughout the Epistle, he deals with the ideal reality of life in God, in which the love of God and sin exclude each other as light and darkness." He does not deny that a Christian sins at times. Indeed he admits the possibility of sin in the Christian's life in 1:9, and forbids sin in 2:1. *What John denies here is that a Christian sins habitually. He denies that the life of a Christian is wholly turned towards sin as is that of the unsaved person.*<sup>2</sup>

~Kenneth Wuest

17. What is John concerned about for his *little children* in verse 7? What truths does he remind them about to help protect them in verses 7-8?

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<sup>2</sup> Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*. Vol. 13. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Make sure no one deceives you. False teachers will try to deceive you by telling you it's okay to keep sinning and living as you have always done, which is an out and out lie. The truth is that the one who is righteous is the one who practices righteousness...just like Jesus. The truth is that the one who habitually engages in sin is of the devil, who has always sinned. The truth is that the Son of God appeared for this very purpose—to destroy the works of the devil.

18. John states in verse 7 that “the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.” What obvious connection does John want us all to understand about the life of a believer? See John 8:41, 44; 1 John 2:12-13, 29; 3:1-3.

That because we are children of God and have been born again, we will, *of course*, desire to live righteously because He, our great Rescuer, is righteous.

**John 8:41: 41** “You are doing the deeds of your father.” They said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God.” **John 8:44: 44** “You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. *Those who are not born again continue to do the desires of their father, the devil. They show that they are still of his nature.*

**1 John 2:12-13: 12** I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake. **13** I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father. *God's children have their sins forgiven and then know the Father and seek to overcome the evil one.*

**1 John 2:29: 29** If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him. *'Nuf said! Perfecto.*

**1 John 3:1-3: 1** See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. **2** Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. **3** And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. *Because we are God's children, we know that when Jesus appears, we will be like Him, and because we have this hope, we purify ourselves so we will be like Him.*

a. Paul makes this same correlation in 2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1. What is the expectation for all God's children?

**2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1: 16** Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, “I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. **17** “Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE,” says the Lord. “AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you. **18** “And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,” Says the Lord Almighty. **1** Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.



God expects that all His children will come out from the world and be separate from it. Because He is our Father, then we will cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit and "perfect" holiness out of our fear, reverence, and love for the Lord.

19. Trace the word *appear* from 2:28 to 3:10. What do you learn about the Lord Jesus' "appearing" on earth?

**1 John 2:28: 28** Now, little children, abide in Him, so that *when He appears*, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

**1 John 3:2: 2** Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know *that when He appears, we will be like Him*, because we will see Him just as He is.

**1 John 3:5: 5** You know that *He appeared in order to take away sins*; and in Him there is no sin.

**1 John 3:8: 8** the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. *The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.*

When Jesus appears, we won't shrink away from Him in shame if we abide in Him. When He appears, we will be like Him! He came to earth to take away sins and to destroy the works of the devil! Oh what grand and glorious truths!

20. What are some examples of the works of the devil (verse 8)? See John 8:12, 44; Acts 10:38; 1 Corinthians 7:5; 2 Corinthians 4:4; James 3:14-16.

**John 8:12: 12** Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life." *The works of the devil are in darkness.*

**John 8:44: 44** "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. *The works of the devil are murder and lies. He has always been this way.*

**Acts 10:38: 38** "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. *The works of the devil are oppression, not doing good, wreaking havoc upon any and all of God's creation. He seeks to bring misery and condemnation.*

**1 Corinthians 7:5: 5** Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. *The works of the devil are to tempt us to sin—and to sin grievously—and to not use self-control.*

**2 Corinthians 4:4: 4** in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. *The works of the devil are to blind the minds of the unbelieving to keep them in darkness and not see the glory and hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ.*



**James 3:14-16: 14** But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. **15** This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. **16** For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. *The works of the devil are bitter jealousy, selfish ambitions, arrogance, lying, spouting of earthly, natural, demonic wisdom, jealousy, disorder, and every evil thing.*

21. In this passage, we discover two reasons Jesus “appeared.” What are they from verses 5 and 8?

Jesus came to take away sins and to destroy the works of the devil.

- a. See also John 8:31-32; Romans 13:14; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Corinthians 5:17, 21; Galatians 5:1; 1 John 1:9; 2:29; 3:5, 8. Now consider what impact those two realities should have upon how you view your salvation. Next consider what impact those two realities should have upon how you live each day.

**John 8:31-32: 31** So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; **32** and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”

**Romans 13:14: 14** But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

**1 Corinthians 10:13: 13** No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

**2 Corinthians 5:17: 17** Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

**2 Corinthians 5:21: 21** He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

**Galatians 5:1: 1** It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

**1 John 1:9: 9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

**1 John 2:29: 29** If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.

**1 John 3:5: 5** You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.

**1 John 3:8: 8** the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

Jesus appeared to help us know the truth and set us free from our bondage, so we will put on the Lord Jesus and not make provision for our flesh. He has provided a way of escape from our temptations, so we don't have to give into sin. We are new creations—the old things have passed

away and new things have come. Through Jesus we can become the righteousness of God, so we can be cleansed from our sin, to be righteous, not sin, to be set free from the devil's evil deeds.

Regarding my salvation: I am set free. My salvation is not an insurance policy but a complete and total redesign of my heart and life. I have been transformed by grace.

Regarding my day to day living: I have hope. I have help. I don't have to live tied to my old ways. I have been set free to newness of life in Jesus—in righteousness, to walk in the Light, to be like Him.

“Destroy” is in the Greek text *λυω* (λυω), “to loosen, dissolve.” Westcott comments: “The works of the devil are represented as having a certain consistency and coherence. They show a kind of solid front. But Christ, by His coming, has revealed them in their complete unsubstantiality. He has ‘undone’ the seeming bonds by which they were held together.” But He has done more than that. By the blood of His Cross He has paid for sin, made a way of escape from the arch enemy of men’s souls, defeated the purposes of the devil, and will finally bring about his complete downfall.”<sup>3</sup> ~Kenneth Wuest

“Who but he could have ever redeemed us from sin and death? Who but he could have ever destroyed for us those works of the devil? Think what would have been the state of the world, if he had never become incarnate; what slaves we must have been if he had not liberated us; and what a death we must have undergone, if he had not died in our stead! Verily, if we felt our obligations as we ought, we should scarcely pass a moment without adverting to them, and magnifying him with songs of praise and thanksgiving. Let us dwell on the delightful thought, which, wherever it is entertained, creates a heaven upon earth: and in a little time our deliverance shall be complete; and we shall unite with all the hosts of heaven “in singing Hallelujah to God and to the Lamb for ever and ever.”<sup>4</sup>  
~Charles Simeon

22. What iron clad promise and truth does John state in verse 9 that refutes false teaching about the life of a believer? How is that incredible promise an encouragement to your own heart when you find yourself discouraged in your battle against sin?

**1 John 3:9: 9** *No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*

Because we have been born again and are now children of God, we will not practice sin...we cannot sin. How crazy is that?! Even though we sin—and John acknowledges that truth in other verses—how amazing is it to know that because we have been made new into God's children, we have the possibility *now* to *not sin* when we couldn't help but sin *before*.

23. According to verse 10, what is *obvious* (ESV, HCSB *evident*; NKJV *manifest*; NIV *how we know*)? See also Matthew 7:15-20; Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Timothy 5:24-25; 2 Timothy 3:9.

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<sup>3</sup> Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*. Vol. 13. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

<sup>4</sup> Simeon, Charles. 1833. *Horae Homileticae: James to Jude*. Vol. 20. London: Holdsworth and Ball.

**1 John 3:10: 10** By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: *anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.*

**Matthew 7:15-20: 15** "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. **16** "You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? **17** "So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. **18** "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. **19** "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. **20** "So then, you will know them by their fruits.

**Galatians 5:19-21: 19** Now *the deeds of the flesh are evident*, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, **20** idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, **21** envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

**1 Timothy 5:24-25: 24** *The sins of some men are quite evident*, going before them to judgment; for others, their sins follow after. **25** Likewise also, *deeds that are good are quite evident*, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed.

**2 Timothy 3:9: 9** But they will not make further progress; *for their folly will be obvious to all*, just as Jannes's and Jambres's folly was also.

24. John MacArthur has said the old Puritans used to teach the Christian life wasn't one of *perfection* but rather one of *direction* and *affection*, which showed the heart's transformation.<sup>5</sup> How does that line up with what John is teaching in verse 10? See also 2 Timothy 2:13.

Our direction and affection shows our heart transformation! When we know the Lord as Savior and Father, then we will desire to do the things that God loves! God is faithful to work in us because of His seed abiding in us. Daniel Akins quote below is excellent at showing these truths!

**2 Timothy 2:13: 13** If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

"In summarizing this section of the epistle, the child of God is reminded of his unique calling and heritage. The believer's life is one marked by righteousness. Sin does not characterize the child of God. Our pattern is the Righteous One, Jesus Christ, who came to destroy the works of the devil and the power of sin. Those who have been born of God live a life that resembles the righteous life of Christ. The child has the distinguishing marks of his parent. Therefore the child comes to imitate, and even embody, the distinguishing marks of his parent."<sup>6</sup> ~Daniel Akin

"The gospel demands and also creates holiness of character; and wherever it works effectively upon the heart and conscience, it produces purity in the life."<sup>7</sup> ~Charles Spurgeon

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<sup>5</sup> From John MacArthur's sermon on Ephesians 4:17-24, "What's Wrong with Everybody?"

<sup>6</sup> Akin, Daniel L. 2001. *1, 2, 3 John*. Vol. 38. The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>7</sup> Spurgeon, C. H. 1897. "The Sinful Made Sinless." In *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, 43:142-43. London: Passmore & Alabaster.

— 1 John —

Lesson #11 Chapter 3:11-24

Teacher's Guide

Read 1 John chapter 3 in preparation for this lesson. Take particular note of how John *shifts* from one topic to the next. Ask the Lord for help in seeing and applying the rich and *convicting* treasures tucked into this section of John's letter!

1. By way of review, what two qualities "prove" we are children of God according to 1 John 3:10?

God's children will practice righteousness and love the brethren.

2. What thought at the end of verse 10 does John now begin to address in 1 John 3:11? How long has that message been taught? See 1 John 3:11, then refer to 1 John 1:1; 2:7, 24.

Love for the brethren is now picked up and explored in verse 11. This message has been taught from the very beginning. Since John cites Cain who killed his brother, it's obvious he's thinking as far back as creation.

**1 John 3:11: 11** For this is *the message which you have heard from the beginning*, that we should love one another;

**1 John 1:1: 1** *What was from the beginning*, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—

**1 John 2:7: 7** Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, *but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning*; the old commandment is the word which you have heard.

**1 John 2:24: 24** As for you, *let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning*. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.

3. What negative example of love is given in 1 John 3:12? What things do you learn about that negative example in verse 12?

Cain killed his brother. Cain was only acting like his father, the evil one. Cain's deeds were evil. Abel's deeds were righteous.

4. How does that negative example from verse 12 fit right in with what John stated in 1 John 3:10?

The children of the devil are obvious. They act like their father, the evil one. When we don't love the brethren, we show we are children of the devil.

5. What command is given in verse 13?

Do not be surprised if the world hates you.

6. First John 3:13 might seem to come out of nowhere, yet it is still in line with what John has been addressing in verses 10-12. How does verse 13 connect to John's previous statements in verses 10-12?

Fits in with the statement in verse 10 that the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious. One of the ways God's children are revealed is that they walk in righteousness and love the brethren. The children of the devil are of the world—and the world hates Christians. The world hates those who love God and love His ways.

7. In verse 14, what does loving the brethren reveal?

That we have passed out of death and into life.

8. When John talks about having "passed out of death into life," what is he describing? See also John 3:16; 5:24; Ephesians 2:1, 5.

How when we come to know the Lord Jesus as Savior, we are no longer spiritually dead. We now have eternal life and life in Him. Interesting to note that in John 5:24 Jesus used that exact phrasing. We are made alive in Christ, now that we are born again.

**John 3:16: 16** "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

**John 5:24: 24** "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

**Ephesians 2:1: 1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,

**Ephesians 2:5: 5** even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

9. We learn in our passage one of the hallmarks of a Christian's life is love for believers. *Why?* See Matthew 25:40; John 13:35; 15:12, 17. What is the result of that testimony of love for other believers? See Ephesians 1:15; Colossians 1:3-6.

Loving the brethren shows that we are truly believers. It shows that we have passed out of death and into new life in Christ.

**Why?** Because believers will desire to serve the Lord and understand that as they love others, they are showing love to Jesus, which will spur them on even more. Believers will love the brethren because they want to be like Jesus!

**Matthew 25:40: 40** "The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'

**John 13:35: 35** "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

**John 15:12: 12** "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.

**John 15:17: 17** "This I command you, that you love one another.

**The result?** The result is that the testimony of Jesus spreads and others hear about it. It brings praise and honor to the Lord when we do so.

**Ephesians 1:15: 15** For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints,

**Colossians 1:3-6: 3** We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, **4** since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; **5** because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel **6** which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth;

10. In verse 14 John explains that love for the brethren is another confirmation of our salvation. Why would love for believers be a *means of assurance* that you are truly redeemed and rescued from sin and darkness? See John 8:44; Romans 1:28-32; Galatians 5:19-24; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 1 Peter 1:22-23; 1 John 3:8-10.

**John 8:44: 44** "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. *Love for the brethren is not something the evil one does. Love shows the change in our nature.*

**Romans 1:28-32: 28** And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, **29** being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, **30** slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, **31** without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; **32** and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them. *Love for the brethren doesn't even register in the unbelieving life.*

**Galatians 5:19-24: 19** Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, **20** idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, **21** envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. **22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. **24** Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. *Love for the brethren is a natural outflow of the Holy Spirit's work in us.*

**2 Timothy 3:1-5: 1** But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. **2** For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3** unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, **4** treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, **5** holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. *Love for the brethren is certainly not the characteristic of the age.*

**1 Peter 1:22-23: 22** Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, **23** for you have been born again not of seed which is

perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. *Love for the brethren is part of being born again.*

**1 John 3:8-10: 8** the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. **9** No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. **10** By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. *Love for the brethren is one way we can see we belong to God.*

All these verses show that love for the brethren will show up and grow in the life of a believer. Not loving the brethren isn't really an option since the Holy Spirit resides in us and He wants us to love the brethren. It is a reassurance that the Lord is at work in our lives and that we really do belong to God.

11. John makes sure we take a good look at this quality in a believer's life. What truth does he drive home in verse 15? How does John remove any wiggle room we might want to take? See verse 15 again and Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28.

**1 John 3:15: 15** Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that *no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.*

**Matthew 5:21-22: 21** "You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not commit murder' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' **22** "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.

**Matthew 5:27-28: 27** "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; **28** but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Love for the brethren reveals that we do have eternal life. Hatred toward others just shows that the devil is their father.

12. How do we even know what love is? See verse 16, then John 10:11; 15:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:8.

We know love by this, that Jesus laid down His life for us.

**John 10:11: 11** "I am the good shepherd; *the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.*

**John 15:13: 13** "Greater love has no one than this, *that one lay down his life for his friends.*

**1 Thessalonians 2:8: 8** Having so fond an affection for you, *we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives,* because you had become very dear to us.

13. Most of the time, we're not called to literally give up our life for the sake of another, yet we are called to give of ourselves, nonetheless. What are some ways this sacrificial living might show up in our lives? See Romans 12:9-16; Ephesians 4:2-3; Philippians 2:3-4; 1 Peter 3:8-9; 1 John 3:17.



Everything in these verses gives us a chance to die to ourselves and give up our preferences and self promotion.

**Romans 12:9-16: 9** Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. **10** *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;* **11** not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; **12** rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, **13** *contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.* **14** Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. **15** Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. **16** Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

**Ephesians 4:2-3: 2** with all humility and gentleness, with patience, *showing tolerance for one another in love,* **3** *being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

**Philippians 2:3-4: 3** *Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit,* but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; **4** do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

**1 Peter 3:8-9: 8** To sum up, all of you be *harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit;* **9** *not returning evil for evil or insult for insult,* but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.

**1 John 3:17: 17** But *whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him,* how does the love of God abide in him?

- a. What are some challenges we might face in dying to ourselves and showing love to the brethren?

The biggest challenge would be my own heart in overcoming sin and self. The next big hurdle would be choosing to believe that God's way of dying to self is actually the best way to live and will bring the most joy. Another hurdle would be the brethren themselves—sometimes they are harder to love than at other times, but it doesn't really matter if I have loving the Lord as my highest priority. Sometimes dying to self is just plain old hard when my flesh wants what it wants and fights the Spirit's urgings.

14. How is 1 John 3:18 *another* example of loving the brethren? As you answer, pay special attention to what John has just said in verses 16-17.

Loving with deed and truth makes us put our love into action. Word and tongue allow us to theorize and pontificate, but deed and truth make us live like Jesus—in the truest way! Deed and truth will require us to lay down our lives for the brethren and to give of our goods and treasures and time for their sake.

15. What point is John making in verse 18, especially as it relates to his instruction about loving believers? See also Mark 7:9-13; 1 Corinthians 13:1; James 2:14-17.

Loving the brethren can't stay in our heads or even in our hearts, it must be expressed to them. It must be acted upon. It can't be like Lady Catherine de Bourgh who said, "If I had ever learned to play the piano, I would have been a true proficient." She was a legend in her own mind. We can certainly be the hero in loving the brethren if it stays just in our minds and hearts.

**Mark 7:9-13: 9** He was also saying to them, "You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition. **10** "For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother, is to be put to death'; **11** but you say, 'If a man says to his father or his mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is to say, given to God),' **12** you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother; **13** thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that."

**1 Corinthians 13:1: 1** If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

**James 2:14-17: 14** What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? **15** If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, **16** and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? **17** Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

May the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you (1 Thessalonians 3:12).

16. By the time we finish reading 1 John 3:11-18, most, if not all of us, will be thoroughly convicted and aware of our failure to love in such an excellent and God-exalting way. How does John seek to reassure us in verses 19-20?

**1 John 3:19-20: 19** We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him **20** in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things.

John wants us to know that when we love the brethren, we can assure ourselves that even when we feel like we are failing, the Lord knows our heart and its desire to love. There is such comfort in these words.

"The foregoing exhortation may have awakened a misgiving in our minds: 'Am I loving as I ought?' Our failures in duty and service rise up before us, and 'our heart condemns us'."<sup>1</sup> ~David Smith

17. Why is it better to assure our hearts *in the truth* than by what our hearts feel? You might think this is a no-brainer to answer, yet in reality, we often try to elicit "feelings" of assurance rather than living upon the truth we find in God's Word. List what you learn about the *truth* we need to apply to our hearts all the time, *and even more* when we feel like failures. See Proverbs 21:2; 1 Corinthians 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Philippians 1:6; 1 John 2:28; 3:20; 5:14.

What I feel may be way off base. The best choice is always to inform my feelings by what is true from God's Word. The truth doesn't change but my perception of "reality" and how I am doing changes, can be out and out wrong, or misinformed.

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, David. n.d. "The Epistles of John." In *The Expositor's Greek Testament: Commentary*, 5:187. New York: George H. Doran Company.

**Proverbs 21:2: 2** Every man's way is right in his own eyes, But the Lord weighs the hearts. *I need to remember that I don't always see myself or my motives accurately. The only One who does is the Lord. He is the One who judges me.*

**1 Corinthians 15:10: 10** But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me. *God's grace is working in me to help me do what is right, even when I feel like a failure and less than able.*

**2 Corinthians 5:17: 17** Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. *The truth is that because I am a new creature in whom the old ways have passed away, I can in Christ love others in new ways.*

**Philippians 1:6: 6** For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. *The Lord continues His redeeming work. Failure in the past doesn't ensure failure in the present.*

**1 John 2:28: 28** Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. *When I live closely with the Lord then I won't be ashamed—that applies to loving the brethren.*

**1 John 3:20: 20** in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things. *The Lord knows my heart's desires and knows that I want to do better when it comes to loving the brethren.*

**1 John 5:14: 14** This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. *I can pray about my desires and ask Him to make them reality in my life.*

18. *What picture of God does John paint for us in 1 John 3:19-20 to help us when we are deeply aware of our own unfaithfulness in the things of God?*

We see a God who wants us to use truth, the truth found in His Word, to assure our hearts, to find comfort and hope there. We see a God who sees our hearts and doesn't desire to condemn but looks for the motives and desires to do what is right. How incredible is He?!?! Even in our failure He still urges us to try again, to do better. He is always faithful even in the face of our unfaithfulness. He sees and calls to mind our past acts of love for the brethren and adds it to our "account." He washes our sin and evil motives when we draw near to Him in faith, sorrow, and failure because He is so faithful, kind, and compassionate.

- a. Now add to your answer what you learn from Psalm 139:1-4; John 21:17; 2 Timothy 2:13; Hebrews 6:10-11; 10:22-23.

**Psalm 139:1-4: 1** O LORD, You have searched me and known me. **2** You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. **3** You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. **4** Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, You know it all.

**John 21:17: 17** He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep.

**2 Timothy 2:13: 13** If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

**Hebrews 6:10-11: 10** For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints. **11** And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end,

**Hebrews 10:22-23: 22** let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. **23** Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;

“Our hearts condemn us—that is inevitable. But God is greater than our hearts; he knows all things. Not only does he know our sins; he also knows our love, our longings, the nobility that never fully works itself out, our penitence; and the greatness of his knowledge gives him the sympathy which can understand and forgive. It is this very knowledge of God which gives us our hope. ‘Man’, as the thirteenth-century scholar Thomas Aquinas said, ‘sees the deed, but God knows the intention.’ Other people can judge us only by our actions, but God can judge us by the longings which never became deeds and the dreams which never came true.”<sup>2</sup> ~William Barclay

19. With such a view of God comforting our troubled hearts, what is the result? See 1 John 3:21-22.

**1 John 3:21-22: 21** Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; **22** and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

We can be comforted that God will answer our prayers regarding love for the brethren and for any other thing that is in line with His will and His Word.

Kenneth Wuest's Translation of 1 John 3:21-22. “Divinely-loved ones, if our heart is not condemning us, a fearless confidence we constantly have facing God (the Father), and whatever we are habitually asking, we keep on receiving from Him, because His commandments we are habitually keeping with solicitous care, and the things which are pleasing in His penetrating gaze we are habitually doing.”<sup>3</sup>

20. As always, we want to consider the *context* of our passage. We've often seen and heard 1 John 3:21-22 in relation to prayer, yet it's so helpful to remember John's point about praying is still very much tied to the context of the passage. How does this encouragement about God hearing our prayers (in verses 21-22) fit in with the overall flow from our passage (1 John 3:11-24) about loving the brethren?

When we are discouraged about our failures in loving the brethren, we can be encouraged that God sees and knows our heart's desires (because we know the children of God will love the brethren. It's what God does. And

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<sup>2</sup>Barclay, William. 2002. *The Letters of John and Jude*. 3rd ed. The New Daily Study Bible. Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press.

<sup>3</sup>Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*. Vol. 13. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

it's what His children do too.) So then when we come in heartbroken sorrow over our failures, we can be comforted knowing the Lord hears our prayers and will answer them according to His will.

“Once a condemning heart has been silenced by resting on God’s knowledge of all things, there comes a new **confidence before God**. “Confidence” here translates *parrēsia*, which John had not used since his thematic statement in 2:28 (cf. 4:17; 5:14). The halfway point in his argument had now been reached. As a result of active participation in the truth by real deeds of love, Christians can calm their disapproving **hearts** and achieve boldness in prayer, and their prayers will be answered because they, as believers, are consciously subject to God’s will (they **obey His commands** [cf. 2:3] **and do what pleases Him**). This presumes, of course, that the requests themselves are made in subjection to God’s will (5:14–15).” ~The Bible Knowledge Commentary<sup>4</sup>

21. What “conditions” for answered prayer does John cite in verse 22?  
We keep His commandments. We do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

- a. How are those “conditions” meant to reassure the hearts of believers? See also Psalm 119:57-61; Matthew 7:21; John 9:31; Colossians 1:10; Hebrews 13:21; 1 John 2:3.

**Psalm 119:57-61: 57** The LORD is my portion; I have promised to keep Your words. **58** I sought Your favor with all my heart; Be gracious to me according to Your word. **59** I considered my ways And turned my feet to Your testimonies. **60** I hastened and did not delay To keep Your commandments. **61** The cords of the wicked have encircled me, But I have not forgotten Your law.

**Matthew 7:21: 21** “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.

**John 9:31: 31** “We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him.

**Colossians 1:10: 10** so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

**Hebrews 13:21: 21** equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

**1 John 2:3: 3** By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

God wants His children to have confidence that their obedience is pleasing to Him. He wants us to understand that only true believers do obey Him for the long haul.

22. What is God’s commandment for us according to 1 John 3:23? See also John 6:29; 13:34; 14:12-15.

That we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another.

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<sup>4</sup>Walvoord, John F., and Roy B. Zuck, Dallas Theological Seminary. 1985. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Vol. 2. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

**John 6:29: 29** Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

**John 13:34: 34** "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

**John 14:12-15: 12** "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father. **13** "Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. **14** "If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. **15** "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

- a. What assurance is given for the one who keeps God's commandments according to verse 24? See also John 14:17; Romans 8:9, 14, 16; 1 Thessalonians 4:8; 1 John 4:13.

The one who keeps God's commandments abides in Him. And we have His Spirit who abides in us. God has given us His Spirit as a blessing and a promise that we will live with Him in heaven someday.

**John 14:17: 17** that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but *you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.*

**Romans 8:9: 9** However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, *if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.* But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

**Romans 8:14: 14** For all who *are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*

**Romans 8:16: 16** *The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,*

**1 Thessalonians 4:8: 8** So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the *God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.*

**1 John 4:13: 13** By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because *He has given us of His Spirit.*

23. As always, God wants us to consider our Christian life *today*. We're never called to account for our salvation or our obedience *tomorrow*. We can rejoice in how we obeyed *yesterday* or repent of how we didn't obey *yesterday*, but the Christian life is about living upon God's Word *today*. So, *today*, dear friend, what comforts, assurances, convictions, and proddings have you received through the Spirit of God working through the Word? So many comforts *today*, yet, it's not because of my faithfulness or lack of it but because the Lord is so merciful. How I long to give Him a benefit for all the kindness He has shown me. How I long for more—more faithfulness, more love to Thee, O Lord, more love to Thee.

(3:19, 20) "Smith is helpful here "The foregoing exhortation may have awakened a misgiving in our minds: 'Am I as loving as I ought?' Our failures in duty and service rise up before us, and 'our heart condemns us.' So the apostle furnishes a grand reassurance: 'Herein shall we get to know that we are of the truth, and in His presence shall assure our heart, whereinsoever our heart condemn us, because, etc.' The reassurance is two-fold: (1) The worst that is in us is known to God, and still He cares for us and desires us. Our

discovery has been an open secret to Him all along. (2) He 'readeth everything'—sees the deepest things, and these are the real things. This is the true test of a man: Is the deepest that is in him the best? Is he better than he seems? His failures lie on the surface: is there a desire for goodness deep down in his soul? Is he glad to escape from superficial judgments and be judged by God who 'readeth everything?' who sees 'with larger eyes than ours,' to make allowance for us all?" David was a man after God's own heart because the general tenor of his life was habitually Godward. The Psalms give the real David." ~Kenneth Wuest<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*. Vol. 13. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.



— 1 John —  
Lesson #12 Chapter 4 Overview

TEACHER'S GUIDE

The goal of this lesson is to teach you how to look at and begin to study a text of Scripture. Observation is a necessary part of Bible study, yet all too often it can be overlooked or rushed through. Simply put, observation is the practice of noticing what God has placed in His Word. *At this stage* in our Bible study, I only want you to notice and then record what you observe in the chapter. You're not making any interpretations about what the Scriptures mean or how they apply to your life—that will come later, I promise.

Don't rush through this lesson. Set aside time this week to peer into the living and abiding Word of God. Rich treasures are waiting for you!

I've included Chapter 4 (NASB) at the end of this lesson so you can print it out and mark it up if you'd like. I find it helps me see items more easily if I'm marking and noting things as I go.

1. **SUMMARIZE.** To begin, read through Chapter 4. Now, summarize the contents of Chapter 4. This is not the time to be super detailed; instead, think of trying to tell a 4th grader the contents of the chapter.<sup>1</sup>

a. Summarize paragraph 1 (verses 1-6).

John ends chapter 3 talking about how we know we have the Spirit abiding in us. That spurs him on to write about the need to test every spirit and how to know you have God's Spirit and are listening to His Spirit, not that of a false teacher. Those who have God's Spirit within them confess that Jesus came in the flesh and do not listen to what the world teaches, which helps us discern truth from error.

b. Summarize paragraph 2 (verses 7-14).

John continues to equip believers by helping them discern between true believers and false professors. One of the first qualities is that of love for others because God Himself is love. John reasons that because God, out of

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<sup>1</sup>The method and process of observation in Bible study does God honor, as we stop, observe, and consider each and every one of His recorded Words, in their context. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the debt I owe to the Precept Inductive Bible Studies observation method, which I have adapted in my studies. As far as I know, the method is the brainchild of Kay Arthur, though I've encountered a number of others who have also come up with similar ways for observing the text. The point of observation is to slow down and really look at what God has preserved for us in His Word. What I've created here is simply another variation to help us peer more closely at the Scriptures—for our good and His glory.

love, sent His Son to die for our sins, then we too are to show that sacrificial love for the brethren. When we love each other, God is put on display, so that God can be seen in us, and is a testimony of the Father and the Son.

c. Summarize paragraph 3 (verses 15-21).

When we come to know God, we abide which leads to love which leads to more abiding and so on. As we live in close fellowship with God, love is perfected, matured, in us. As we grow in love, our fears are subdued, and we love others.

2. SUMMARIZE. After reviewing the chapter and what you wrote for your summaries, ask yourself: *What is the main point of this chapter?* How do all these details and events reveal the main idea of the chapter? Record your answer below.

The main point of this chapter is learning that God's children must learn discernment in what they hear, learn that they are to live in love, and show love to others.

3. TITLE. Now you're ready to title your chapter. Your 3-5 word title should reflect the contents of the chapter. Remember, a title's purpose is to help you remember what is in each chapter.

Discernment and Love—Hallmarks of a Believer

4. MARK and LIST. On the *1 John Bible Text* handout mark any key words you see in the chapter. *God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit* are always key words. It's easiest to start with these "God" words first. Next mark words or phrases that are repeated at least 3 times. Mark any other words that seem important to the chapter or are strongly emphasized.

You can mark words or phrases by creating a symbol or using a certain colored pencil every time it appears. This will enable you to see at a glance how often a word is used in the chapter or note a progression of thought.

- a. Next, *list the phrase containing the key words* on a separate sheet of paper. This step will allow you to pull together the information you noted from marking the key words. Be sure to cite the verse references when you list your key word information.

For example, with *God* as your key word you would begin to make a list of the information you discovered every time God is mentioned in 1 John Chapter 2. Your Chapter 2 list about *God* should begin by looking something like the one below.

Verse 5—*God* is love

Verse 13—*God* is Father. He is knowable.

Fun study tip to try: Mark any key/repeated words that you notice appear all the way through the book, even if their use in individual chapters may not fit the “3 times or more” rule. This will allow you to trace major themes and an author’s thoughts throughout the book.

## God

Verse 1 test spirits to see if they are from God

Verse 2 by this you know the spirit of God

Verse 2 Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God

Verse 3 every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God

Verse 4 you are from God, little children

Verse 4 Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world

Verse 6 we are from God

Verse 6 he who knows God listens to us

Verse 6 he who is not from God does not listen to us

Verse 7 love is from God

Verse 7 everyone who loves is born of God and knows God

Verse 8 the one who does not love does not know God

Verse 8 God is love

Verse 9 the love of God was manifested in us

Verse 9 God sent His only Son

Verse 10 not that we loved God

Verse 10 but that He loved us and [implied: He] sent His Son

Verse 11 is God so loved us

Verse 12 no one has seen God at any time

Verse 12 if we love one another, God abides in us

Verse 12 His love is perfected in us

Verse 13 we know we abide in Him and He in us

Verse 13 He has given us of His Spirit

Verse 14 the Father has sent the Son

Verse 15 Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God

Verse 16 believed the love which God has for us

Verse 16 God is love

Verse 16 the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him

Verse 17 as He is, so also are we in this world (see verse 12)

Verse 19 He first loved us

Verse 20 if someone says, *I love God* and hates his brother

Verse 20 hates...cannot love God who he has not seen

Verse 21 this is the commandment we have from Him [God], the one who loves God should love his brother

## Jesus

Verse 2 every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God

Verse 3 every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God

Verse 9 God sent His only begotten Son into the world so we might live through Him

Verse 10 He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins

Verse 14 the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world

Verse 15 whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God...

## Holy Spirit

Verse 2 by this you know the Spirit of God...

Verse 13 He has given us of His Spirit

## Love

Verse 7 beloved, let us love one another

Verse 7 love is from God

Verse 7 everyone who loves is born of God

Verse 8 God is love

Verse 9 the love of God was manifested in us

Verse 10 in this is love

Verse 10 not that we loved God, but that He loved us

Verse 11 if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another

Verse 12 if we love one another...His love is perfected in us

Verse 16 have believed the love which God has for us

Verse 16 God is love

Verse 16 the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him

Verse 18 no fear in love

Verse 18 perfect love casts out fear...the one who fears is not perfected in love

Verse 19 we love because He first loved us

Verse 20 if someone says *I love God* ...cannot love God whom he has not seen

Verse 21 the one who loves God should love his brother also

## Hate/Not Love

Verse 8 the one who does not love does not know God

Verse 20 and hates his brother, he is a liar

Verse 20 for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen...

## Abide

Verse 12 God abides in us

Verse 13 we know that we abide in Him and He in us

Verse 15 God abides in him and he in God

Verse 16 the one who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him

## World

Verse 1 false prophets have gone out into the world

Verse 3 antichrist... is already in the world

Verse 4 greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world

Verse 5 they are from the world; they speak as from the world; the world listens to them

Verse 9 God sent His Son into the world

Verse 14 Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world

Verse 17 as He is, so also are we in this world

## Spirit/Spirits

Verse 1 do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits

Verse 2 every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ

Verse 3 every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God

Verse 3 this is the spirit of the antichrist

## By this you know/By this

Verse 2 By this you know the Spirit of God

Verse 6 by this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error

Verse 9 by this the love of God was manifested in us

Verse 10 in this is love

Verse 13 by this we know that we abide in Him

Verse 17 by this, love is perfected with us

## Fear

Verse 18 there is no fear in love

Verse 18 but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment

Verse 18 the one who fears is not perfected in love

## Know

Verse 2 by this you know the Spirit of God

Verse 6 We are from God; he who knows God listens to us

Verse 6 by this we know the spirit of truth

Verse 8 the one who does not love does not know God

Verse 13 by this we know that we abide in Him

Verse 16 we have come to know and have believed the love

5. MARK and LIST. Mark any *commands* that are listed in the chapter. Look for things the author is telling his readers to do or be. Now, list them on your separate sheet of paper in the same way you did for the key words.

Verse 1 do not believe every spirit—and with that command is also—test the spirits

Verse 7 let us love one another

Verse 11 we also ought to love one another

Verse 21 the one who loves God should love his brother also

6. MARK and LIST. Mark words or phrases that are being *compared or contrasted*. Words like *as, likewise, in the same manner, or like* will help you find words or phrases being compared. Contrasting words like “light/dark” or “love/hate” and the word “but” will help you find words or phrases that are being contrasted. Now list what you discovered about comparisons and contrasts on the extra paper you’ve been using.

See observation sheet.

7. MARK. Mark transition terms: *therefore, wherefore, finally*. Sometimes an author has his own kind of transition term that lets you know he is making a switch to a new topic, so be sure to look for those kinds of terms. (Generally, these are at the beginning of a paragraph.)

See observation sheet.

8. MARK and LIST. Mark any time *so that* is used. In putting together your list, look for what comes before the “so that” which will bring about or produce some kind of result. For example, in Philippians 1:10 “so that” appears, but in order to understand its significance you need to also look at verse 9. Your entry for Philippians 1:9-10 might say something like, “Paul prays that the Philippians’ love would abound in real knowledge and all discernment *so that* they would be able to approve the things that are excellent and live sincerely and blamelessly until the day of Christ.” I think you will be so blessed by this part of your observation time!

9. MARK. Mark expressions of time—words like *shortly, quickly, soon, for a little while*.

See observation sheet.

10. MARK. Mark words that are synonyms of each other. For example: *Paul and Timothy are bond-servants* from 1:1.

See observation sheet.

11. LIST. List any *attributes* of God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit that you notice in this chapter. You’ll start this list by going back up to your listed “God” words that you marked earlier in Question #4. An attribute is a characteristic or quality used to describe an object or person.

For example, you might read John 3:16, “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but*

*have eternal life.*” From this verse we see that God is *loving* [because He loved the world]; He is *giving* [because He gave His Son]; He is *eternal* [because only the eternal can offer eternal life].

## Attributes of God

Verse 1, 2, 3 God’s attributes are seen in those who represent Him. His attributes are communicable.

Verse 2, 12 God is also Spirit.

Verse 4 God is great, strong, mighty, and helps the believer overcome.

Verse 4, 6 God creates. God is Father.

Verse 6, 7, 8, 9, 16 God is love.

Verse 7 God is knowable.

Verse 9 God’s love can be seen in us. God is active. He sent His Son to propitiate our sins.

Verse 10, 19 God is the initiator. He loved us first. He is the first cause of all things. He is eternal, powerful, good, and wise. He is compassionate.

Verse 12, 13, 15, 16 God abides. He has fellowship with man. *How amazing is that?!*

Verse 16 God loves His children. He is compassionate, pities, helps, actively intervenes, initiates.

Verse 21 God is king who commands. He desires that we love like He does.

## Attributes of Jesus Christ

Verse 2 Jesus is fully God and fully man.

Verse 3 Jesus is God and is aligned with the Father.

Verse 9 Jesus is God’s only begotten Son. He is God, eternal, gives life.

Verse 10 He is holy, covers over our sin, sacrifices Himself for our sake, motivated by love and obedience.

Verse 14 Jesus goes forth from the Father. He obeyed the Father. He was sent out from the Father. He comes from the Father. He is God Himself.

Verse 15 Jesus is God’s Son.

## Attributes of the Holy Spirit

Verse 2 the Holy Spirit aligns Himself with the Father. The Holy Spirit confesses that Jesus came in the flesh.

Verse 13 the Holy Spirit was given to believers by God to give help, so we can have fellowship with the Father.

12. LIST. Look for lists of words, phrases, or related thoughts. Number the lists within the Bible text, then record your list out to the side in the margin or on a separate sheet of paper. This will help you see the thought progression of the author or the results of some action.

For example, in 1 John 1:1 we find a list about the *Word of Life*. We discover 1) the Word of Life was from the beginning; 2) John heard the Word of Life; 3) John saw the Word of Life with his own eyes; 4) John looked at the Word of Life; 5) John touched the Word of life with his hands.

See observation sheet.



13. NOTE. Be sure to mark or write down any “nuggets” you observed which you thought were interesting, spurred on some thought, or made you want to study further. I am still mulling over and asking the Lord to help me mine the depths from verses 17-18 about love being perfected and that perfected love casts out all fear. These truths have serious implications for how we live and how we handle fear and anxiety.

*Remember*, the purpose of this lesson is to observe and take note of what is in the chapter. You are not making any interpretations or applications to your life right now. Your task at this time is to simply look for the treasures that God has put in each chapter.

As you do this lesson, take time to worship and thank the Lord that He has preserved His Word for you to study. Admire and marvel at what He placed in this chapter for you to notice. There really isn't any other time in our studies where we simply look at, think on, and study God's Word for itself, so have fun with this lesson! And may the Lord be blessed by your labors!

Scripture Paths Bible Studies

1 John Chapter 4

1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.

3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

4 You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

5 They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them.

6 We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

12 No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

The Spirit of the Antichrist  
1 not from God  
2 already in the world  
3 overcome by Jesus  
4 from the world  
5 speak as if from the world  
6 world listens to them  
7 not from God  
8 false prophet  
9 spirit of error

He loved us  
1. might be through Christ  
2. Son propitiation for sins  
3. love others

# Scripture Paths Bible Studies

## Scripture Paths Bible Studies

13 By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

14 We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

16 We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us, God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

17 By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment, because as He is, so also are we in this world.

18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

19 We love, because He first loved us.

20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar, for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

21 And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

△ God	≡ fear	ccc "comments"
+ Jesus	= know	[ ] so that
✓ Spirit	≡ terms of endearment	+ con → contrast
♥ love		→ com + comparison
✗ hate/not love		⓪ Time
≡ abide		
≡ world		
≡ spirit/spirits		
[ ] By this you know/ By this		

— 1 John —  
Lesson #13 Chapter 4:1-6  
Teacher's Guide

Read 1 John chapter 4 to discover practical help in discerning truth from error. Ask the Lord to open your eyes to ways you can apply the truths from this section to your life.

1. First John 3:24 ends with John explaining how we can know the Lord Jesus abides in us. What helpful information is given in 1 John 3:24?

We know He will abide in us because He has given us of His Holy Spirit.

2. What is the *connecting thought or word* between John's encouragement in 1 John 3:24 and his shift in focus in 1 John 4:1?

Spirit. He talks about the Holy Spirit abiding in us and then that sparks a thought that some people might wonder how they can tell if others have the true/right/same spirit within them.

3. What command is given in 1 John 4:1 and to whom?

Do not believe every spirit.

Test every spirit to see whether they are from God.

This command is to "beloved" who are the little children and fellow believers John has been writing to.

4. What *reason* is given for this wise counsel according to verse 1? How does the reason for the command make *obeying* this command of utmost importance? See also Jeremiah 29:8-9; Matthew 7:15; 24:4-5, 11, 24; Ephesians 6:11-17; 2 Peter 2:1.

The reason for the needed testing is because "many false prophets have gone out into the world."

That reason places an urgency upon the command that makes it of utmost importance that we not believe every spirit, but test them to see if they are truly of God's Spirit. So helpful since many believers just accept all teaching since someone says they are a Christian. Believing and then following the misleading, false spirits can have damning consequences.

**Jeremiah 29:8-9: 8** "For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Do not let your prophets who are *in your midst* and your diviners *deceive* you, and do not listen to the dreams which they dream. **9** 'For they prophesy *falsely* to you in My name; I have not sent them,' declares the Lord.

**Matthew 7:15: 15** "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

**Matthew 24:4-5: 4** And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one *misleads* you. **5** "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' *and will mislead many*.

**Matthew 24:11: 11** "Many false prophets will arise *and will mislead many*.

**Matthew 24:24: 24** "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to *mislead*, if possible, even the elect.

**Ephesians 6:11-17: 11** Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to *stand firm against the schemes of the devil*. **12** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. **13** Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. **14** Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, **15** and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; **16** in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. **17** And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

**2 Peter 2:1: 1** But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be *false teachers among you*, who will secretly introduce *destructive* heresies, even *denying the Master* who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

5. As you consider how to implement 1 John 4:1, what *quality or qualities* must every believer possess and/or employ? See Proverbs 14:15; John 5:39; Acts 17:11-12; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 Timothy 6:20; 2 Timothy 3:14; Titus 1:9; Jude 3-4.

The qualities every believer must possess and/or employ is discernment, biblical wisdom and sense, a knowledge of the Scriptures and how to handle them well. To do this regularly is also important, just as the Bereans did. We are called/commanded to examine everything carefully and then hold fast that which is good which implies that there are bad things we don't hold onto, but instead get rid of. The guarding of what has been entrusted shows its great value. We are to continue in these things—it's not a one off. The truth of the gospel and our faith in it must be fought for and maintained.

**Proverbs 14:15: 15** The naive believes everything, But the sensible man considers his steps.

**John 5:39: 39** "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;

**Acts 17:11-12: 11** Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, *examining the Scriptures daily* to see whether these things were so. **12** Therefore many of them believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men.

**1 Thessalonians 5:21: 21** But *examine everything carefully; hold fast* to that which is good;

**1 Timothy 6:20: 20** O Timothy, *guard* what has been entrusted to you, *avoiding* worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called "knowledge"—

**2 Timothy 3:14: 14** You, however, *continue* in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them,

**Titus 1:9: 9** *holding fast* the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

**Jude 3-4: 3** Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you *contend earnestly* for the faith which was once for all handed down



to the saints. **4** For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this *condemnation, ungodly* persons who turn the grace of our God into *licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord*, Jesus Christ.

6. It might seem a bit daunting to obey the command given in 1 John 4:1, yet John doesn't leave us hanging. How do verses 2-3 help you "test" a teacher's message?

We can test a message by listening to see if it lines up with the truth contained in verses 2-3. Does it confess that Jesus has come in the flesh? Does it confess that Jesus came from God? We must understand that those who don't confess those basic, essential truths about Jesus are lost in their sins. They are not from God. They possess the spirit of the antichrist that is now in the world.

7. What's the big deal about not recognizing that Jesus came in the flesh or acknowledging Him as God (verses 2-3)? See John 1:14; 1 John 1:2; 2:22, 23; 2 John 7.

Well for one thing, God says that He did come in the flesh. The Word of God affirms it. Kind of nullifies anything else. John said it. The Father testified that it was true. Only liars and antichrists say Jesus didn't come in the flesh. They are also unbelievers and deceivers when they don't acknowledge that Jesus came in the flesh.

**John 1:14: 14** And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

**1 John 1:2: 2** and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us—

**1 John 2:22: 22** Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.

**1 John 2:23: 23** Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.

**2 John 7: 7** For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.

a. Now look at Hebrews 2:14-15; 9:11-12; 10:4, 10, 19-22 to gain further insight into why it's essential to recognize Jesus' full humanity and deity.

**Hebrews 2:14-15: 14** Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, **15** and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. *If we don't recognize Jesus' full humanity and deity, then our faith is in vain.*

**Hebrews 9:11-12: 11** But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; **12** and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. *If we don't recognize*

*Jesus' full humanity and deity, then there is no sacrifice for our sins. We needed a fully human sacrifice, whose blood would be shed so we could find eternal redemption.*

**Hebrews 10:4: 4** For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. *If we don't recognize Jesus' full humanity and deity, then we are lost in our sins.*

**Hebrews 10:10: 10** By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. *If we don't recognize Jesus' full humanity and deity, then we won't be sanctified.*

**Hebrews 10:19-22: 19** Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, **20** by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, **21** and since we have a great priest over the house of God, **22** let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. *If we don't recognize Jesus' full humanity and deity, then we cannot draw near to God, have assurance of faith, or have our hearts and bodies sprinkled clean.*

b. What kind of fallout in our faith can happen as a result of denying Jesus' life on earth "in the flesh"?

We will be lost, lost in our sins, without hope of assurance, unable to fellowship with the Father. Oh the fallout is *huge!*

"To deny the reality of the incarnation has certain definite consequences.

- (1) It is to deny that Jesus can ever be our example. If he was not in any real sense a man, living under the same conditions as other men and women, he cannot show them how to live.
- (2) It is to deny that Jesus can be the high priest who opens the way to God. The true high priest, as the writer to the Hebrews saw, must be like us in all things, knowing our weaknesses and our temptations (Hebrews 4:14–15). To lead people to God, the high priest must be human, or else he will be pointing them to a road which it is impossible for them to take.
- (3) It is to deny that Jesus can in any real sense be Saviour. To save men and women, he had to identify himself with those he came to save.
- (4) It is to deny the salvation of the body. Christian teaching is quite clear that salvation is the salvation of the whole person. The body as well as the soul is saved. To deny the incarnation is to deny the possibility that the body can ever become the temple of the Holy Spirit.
- (5) By far the most serious and terrible thing is that to deny the incarnation is to deny that there can ever be any real union between God and human beings. If spirit is altogether good and the body is altogether evil, God and humanity can never meet, as long as we are human. They might meet when we have cast off the body and become *disembodied* spirits. But the great truth of the incarnation is that here and now there can be real communion between God and humanity.



Nothing in Christianity is more central than the reality of the humanity of Jesus Christ." ~William Barclay<sup>1</sup>

8. What do you learn about the *spirit of the antichrist* from verse 3? They have heard about it. It is coming. In fact, it is already in the world.

a. What else do you learn from 1 John 2:18-24 and 2 John 7-9 about that spirit?

**1 John 2:18-24: 18** Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. **19** They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us. **20** But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. **21** I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth. **22** Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. **23** Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. **24** As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. *The antichrist is coming in the last hour. Many antichrists have appeared. In fact, that's how we know it is the last hour. They went out from the brethren, from the body of believers to do their own thing. This shows that they are not true believers. They are liars. They deny Jesus is the Christ. They deny the Father and the Son.*

**2 John 7-9: 7** For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. **8** Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward. **9** Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. *Many antichrist deceivers have gone out into the world. They are the ones who do not acknowledge Jesus as coming in the flesh. They go too far in their teaching, not remaining in the teaching of God. It all shows they do not have God as their Father and Jesus as their Savior.*

9. How does John affirm his little children in verse 4? Why would John's readers need his encouragement after what he's just said in verses 1-3?

You are from God. You have overcome them. Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

Knowing there are many antichrists and deceivers in the world who are teaching these heresies can be unsettling. It is encouraging to know that God is greater than the spirit of the antichrist and can protect them, the little children. John seeks to assure, strengthen, and equip the brethren in this letter. He is so encouraging!

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<sup>1</sup> Barclay, William. 2002. *The Letters of John and Jude*. 3rd ed. The New Daily Study Bible. Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press.

10. In 1 John 4:4, John says we have overcome *them*. Who is he talking about according to verses 1-4?

The false teachers, the ones who have, who are, the spirit of the antichrist. They are in the world. They have departed the faith. Yet for believers who abide in the true teaching, then the Holy Spirit within will help them win the battle.

11. What spiritual reality is John referring to when he says, “greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4)? See John 14:16-17; Romans 8:9-11; 1 John 3:24; 4:13, 16.

**John 14:16-17: 16** “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; **17** that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

**Romans 8:9-11: 9** However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. **10** If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. **11** But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

**1 John 3:24: 24** The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

**1 John 4:13: 13** By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

**1 John 4:16: 16** We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

John is talking about the gift of the Holy Spirit who resides in us from the moment of our new birth. What wondrous love is this that we can have such a marvelous gift bestowed on us?!

12. Explain how the truths of 1 John 4:4 should have an impact upon how you live, think, and respond to what’s going on around you.

We can know we truly are God’s children. We don’t have to be in doubt.

We win. Because we have the Holy Spirit residing in us, then we overcome them. They cannot win, nor are they stronger than God.

We are not of the world like they are.

Knowing we can overcome them helps us be bold, to stand firm, and to be strong in faith.

13. What else do you learn about *them* according to verse 5?

They are from the world. They speak like the world. The world listens to them. Wow! So simple! The children of God and the children of the devil are obvious (1 John 3:10).

14. In contrast to “them,” what do you learn about *us* according to verse 6?

We are from God. He who knows God listens to us. Those who don’t know God don’t listen to us.

15. Compile a list of how you can *test* the messages you may hear or read from the following passages in Deuteronomy 13:1-5; Romans 16:17-18; 2 Corinthians 11:12-15; Ephesians 4:11-16; Hebrews 13:7-8.

**Deuteronomy 13:1-5:** **1** "If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, **2** and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' **3** you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. **4** "You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him. **5** "But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has counseled rebellion against the LORD your God who brought you from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, to seduce you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from among you.

**Romans 16:17-18:** **17** Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. **18** For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

**2 Corinthians 11:12-15:** **12** But what I am doing I will continue to do, so that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting. **13** For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. **14** No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. **15** Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

**Ephesians 4:11-16:** **11** And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, **12** for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; **13** until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. **14** As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; **15** but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, **16** from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

**Hebrews 13:7-8:** **7** Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. **8** Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

You can test the messages you hear.

1. If they tell you to go after other gods, don't follow them or their teaching.
2. Watch their lives. Are they causing dissension? Does trouble follow wherever they go? Do they seek to hinder forward movement in the faith? Are they slaves of their appetites or of Christ? Do they have smooth and flattering speech that seeks to deceive?

3. Are they seeking places and positions of honor? Are they boasting in themselves or their accomplishments? Do they seek authority?
4. Are they seeking to equip the saints, to build them up to maturity?
5. Do they teach new and trendy things? Do they deviate from the Scriptures and standard Christian belief and practice? Do they scheme and maneuver themselves into positions of influence?
6. Can you imitate their faith or is there something that puts you off? If so, don't listen to their teaching. Their teaching should line up with truths from of old. They should stick to the ancient paths.

- a. How would the principles gained from the above passages help you grow in discernment, wisdom, and steadfastness in your faith and the building up of the body of Christ?

So helpful! The verses above provide a gridwork to sift the content of what we hear and to examine the lives of those who claim authority to teach. It gives comfort and confidence that we can protect ourselves from going off the path and follow false teachers.

16. What are some steps you have taken—or possibly, need to take—to skillfully obey this command to test and assess any reading or teaching you receive?

The best steps are simply to be in the Word, to study regularly. The number one thing is to grow in your hermeneutical skills—your how to study the Bible skills. When you know how to study the bible well and grow in your skills, you will be less likely to be taken in. The number two thing is to have a good foundation of doctrine in God, man, sin, and salvation. This well-rounded teaching will also protect you from false teaching.

- a. What attitudes should also be present as we test and assess the messages being taught? See Galatians 6:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 5:12-14; 1 Timothy 1:3-5; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:6-8.

**Galatians 6:1: 1** Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. *Gentleness and humility, recognizing how close we always are to falling into sin ourselves.*

**1 Thessalonians 2:13: 13** For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe. *Faith and a willingness to receive God's Word as taught by faithful men. Not being argumentative or puffed up.*

**1 Thessalonians 5:12-14: 12** But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, **13** and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. **14** We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone. *Not be unruly or fainthearted, nor ungrateful toward my leaders and think I know better. To be patient.*

**1 Timothy 1:3-5: 3** As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, **4** nor to pay attention to myths

and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith. **5** But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. *A firm commitment to stick close to faithful teaching rather than being captivated by the new and scintillating.*

**Hebrews 13:17: 17** Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you. *To not fight against my leaders, to have a submissive spirit.*

**1 Peter 5:6-8: 6** Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, **7** casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. **8** Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. *To humble myself under the Lord and trust Him, rather than being anxious and desiring to be in control.*

17. As believers, we are responsible to make use of the resources God gives us and to seek to strengthen ourselves spiritually and doctrinally. What do you learn from Hebrews 5:11-14 and Hebrews 6:1-2 about how, when, and why we should do that?

**Hebrews 5:11-14: 11** Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. **12** For though *by this time* you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not *solid food*. **13** For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. **14** But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

**Hebrews 6:1-2: 1** Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, **2** of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

We are to grow in maturity, skill, and wisdom in the Scriptures. We are to expect that we would learn to eat the meat of the Word instead of being content to just be milk-drinkers. We are to train ourselves to discern good and evil, which comes from the teaching we are receiving.

18. You may go brain dead and feel woefully deficient at countering a false teacher's claims, yet what encouragement is given in our text (1 John 4:1-6) even if we lack maturity in the faith or skill in the Scriptures?

We see in this passage the basic ways we can protect ourselves from a false teacher. We do need to do the first thing. We must not accept everything we hear as true just because it is called "Christian". It's so encouraging to just read these verses and see that God protects us and wants us to be equipped to deal with those who seek to deceive us. They are obvious. Their deeds are obvious if we will just stop and consider them.

19. What do you learn about those who *hear/listen* to God's Word and those who teach it from 1 John 4:1-6?

Those who hear and listen to God's Word and desire to be faithful to it must learn to be discerning. They confess that Jesus came in the flesh from God. Those who hear and listen to God's Word are ultimately victors against those who do not believe the message about God's Son nor put their faith in Him. Those who hear and listen to God's Word are not from the world, they don't speak like the world, and the world does not listen to them. Those who hear and listen to God's Word are heard and listened to by others who hear and listen to God's Word. Those who hear and listen to God's Word are governed by the spirit of truth.

- a. Now consider what you learn about those who hear/listen to God's Word and those who teach it from John 3:29; 5:24-25; 8:43, 47; 10:27-28. What do you see?

**John 3:29: 29** "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made full.

**John 5:24-25: 24** "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. **25** "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

**John 8:43: 43** "Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word.

**John 8:47: 47** "He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God."

**John 10:27-28: 27** "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; **28** and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

Those who hear and listen to God's Word rejoice when they hear it. They love the sound of God's voice proclaimed by their teachers. Those who hear and listen to God's Word have eternal life and have passed out of death into life because they believe the message of salvation. Those who hear and listen to God's Word are of God and prove they are of God's flock. They follow Him, will have eternal life, will never perish, and cannot be snatched out of God's hand.

- b. How can the truths you have uncovered in this question give you wisdom in counseling others or even your own heart? Is there any one truth or principle that stands out to you right now?

I think the biggest thing is the assurance and confidence God wants us to have in discerning the genuineness of someone's teaching or their profession of faith. I love how the Lord equips us and helps to navigate the ins and outs of daily life. The phrase that stands out to me right now is from verse 5, "they speak as from the world". What an excellent way to discern someone's teaching or profession!

"The Spirit teaches us "of *all things*" (1 John 2:27). False teachers have a way of "riding a hobby"—prophecy or sanctification or even diet—and neglecting the *whole* message of the Bible. Jesus implies that



we are to live by “*every* word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4). Paul was careful to preach “*all* the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). “*All* Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable” (2 Tim. 3:16).”

“If you ignore or neglect *any* part of the Bible, you invite trouble. You must read and study the *whole* Book, and be able to “rightly divide” it (2 Tim. 2:15); that is, you must “handle it accurately” (cf. NASB). You should discern in the Bible what God says to different people at different times; there are passages that apply specifically to the Jews, or to the Gentiles, or to the church (1 Cor. 10:32). You must be careful to distinguish between them. Though all of the Bible was written *for* you, not all of it was written *to* you. False teachers, however, pick (out of context) only what they want, and often apply to believers today passages that were given only for ancient Israel.” ~Warren Wiersbe<sup>2</sup>

“There are many today who are saying more than the Scriptures say so that we need to be very careful. Just because a man comes along saying, “Lord, Lord,” does not mean that we should love him. That may be the man who is more dangerous than a rattlesnake because he may be teaching a false doctrine. He may not really be teaching the Word of God, although he carries a big Bible under his arm. ~J. Vernon McGee<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W. 1996. *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Vol. 2. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>3</sup> McGee, J. Vernon. 1997. *Thru the Bible Commentary*. Electronic ed. Vol. 5. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

— 1 John —  
Lesson #14 Chapter 4:7-14  
Teacher's Guide

Read all of 1 John chapter 4 to get a running start for this week's text! John Flavel said, "When you go to God in any duty, take your heart aside and say, 'O my soul, I am now engaged in the greatest work that a creature was ever employed about; I am going into the awful presence of God upon business of everlasting moment. O my soul, leave trifling now; be composed, be watchful, be serious; this is no common work, it is soul-work; it is work for eternity; it is work which will bring forth fruit to life or death in the world to come.' Pause awhile and consider your sins, your wants, your troubles; keep your thoughts awhile on these before you address yourself to duty."

1. John closed chapter 3 with the reminder that Jesus Himself commanded us to believe in Him and love one another. Briefly summarize John's train of thought from 1 John 3:23-24 into 1 John 4:1-6.

The true test of a believer is one who obeys the Lord and abides in Him. Believers are able to do this because God has given us His Holy Spirit. Upon using the word *spirit*, John launches into how believers can discern between the Spirit of God and the spirits of the world when they hear preaching and teaching. John reminds his readers that false teachers will go out into the world, do not confess that Jesus came in the flesh, they are from the world, and the world listens to them.

2. In 1 John 4:7 John resumes the topic of love for one another. What things do you learn about love from verse 7?

We are commanded to love one another. Love is from God. Everyone who loves is born of God. Everyone who loves knows God.

3. What straightforward truth do you learn about those who don't have a love for the brethren according to verse 8?

The one who does not love the brethren doesn't know God because love is from God. We love others when we know God, so if we don't love others then we don't know God.

4. First John 4:7-8 is meant to be another of John's assurances of salvation for the believer. Review 1 John 3:10, 14, 23-24 and 1 John 4:7-8 to see how love for the brethren reveals a redeemed and transformed life.

**1 John 3:10: 10** By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. *We know we have a transformed life because we practice righteousness and love the brethren—in fact, this is obvious to all. It's not hidden or hard to see.*

**1 John 3:14: 14** We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. *We know we have a transformed life (and that we have passed out of death into life) because we love the brethren.*

**1 John 3:23-24: 23** This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. **24** The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us. *We know we have a transformed life because we believe in the name of Jesus, obey God's commands, and love one another, and have the Spirit so that we abide in God and He in us.*

**1 John 4:7-8: 7** Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. **8** The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. *We know we have a transformed life because when we come to know God—who is love Himself—then we are made life Him, which means we will love the brethren.*

a. What further ways does John provide to help you see if your testimony of faith in Jesus Christ is genuine? See 1 John 1:5-10; 2:3-6, 9, 15, 19, 23; 3:6-10, 14; 4:20.

**1 John 1:5-10: 5** This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. **6** If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; **7** but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. **8** If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **10** If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. *My faith is genuine when I walk in the light, have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. My faith is genuine when I admit I do sin and need Jesus' cleansing.*

**1 John 2:3-6: 3** By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. **4** The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; **5** but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: **6** the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked. *My faith is genuine when I keep His commandments. In fact, this obedience reveals that the love of God has been perfected in me. Genuine faith walks in the same manner as He walked.*

**1 John 2:9: 9** The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. *My faith is genuine when I walk in the light and love my brother.*

**1 John 2:15: 15** Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. *My faith reveals itself as genuine when I do not love the world or the things of the world.*

**1 John 2:19: 19** They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are

not of us. *My faith is genuine when I remain among the brethren, when I do not go out into the world.*

**1 John 2:23: 23** Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. *My faith is genuine when I confess the Son, which means I have God as my Father and He abides in me.*

**1 John 3:6-10: 6** No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.

**7** Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; **8** the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. **9** No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. **10** By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. *My faith is genuine when I do not practice sin, instead I practice righteousness and love the brethren.*

**1 John 3:14: 14** We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. *My faith reveals itself as genuine when I love the brethren. It shows that I have truly passed out of death into life.*

**1 John 4:20: 20** If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. *My faith reveals itself as genuine when I say I love God AND love the brethren. Loving God includes loving the brethren.*

5. How is God's love revealed toward us according to verse 9? What reason is given in verse 9 for God doing this marvelous thing?

God's love is revealed to us, for us in that He sent His only begotten Son into the world. God did this so that we would have life in Him, that we would live through Him.

6. John says God sent His Son into the world so we might live through Him. What does John mean by that statement? First, see 1 John 5:11, then see John 11:25-26; 14:6; Colossians 3:3-4 as you put together your answer.

**1 John 5:11: 11** And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

**John 11:25-26: 25** Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, **26** and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"

**John 14:6: 6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

**Colossians 3:3-4: 3** For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. **4** When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

God sent His Son into the world so we might live through Him because only in Jesus is found eternal life. Jesus Himself attests that He is this life and is able to impart it to others. He says He is the life and that no one who

believes in Him will die (spiritually). The life we are given from Jesus is hidden away in Him, it is found only in Him—and this life will be with Jesus in His glory.

7. Now take a moment to consider what John is telling us about God in verse 9. How can the truths contained in verse 9 provide the hope and foundation we need when we struggle to believe that God really loves us? See also John 3:16; Romans 5:8-10; 8:31-32.

**1 John 4:9: 9** By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

**John 3:16: 16** "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

**Romans 5:8-10: 8** But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. **9** Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. **10** For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

**Romans 8:31-32: 31** What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? **32** He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

These verses and more attest that God does indeed love us (and He cannot lie). His love is not merely an academic, head knowledge kind of love, but a real, life changing, active, involved, warm-hearted love that moved God to act on our behalf. The fact that God sent His Son into the world for our sakes shows how much He loves us. He gave us His Son when we hated Him, so now that we love Him and gratefully serve Him, we can trust that He will also intervene and help us.

8. What is the perfect definition of love according to 1 John 4:10? Why is this the gold standard for assessing love, rather than relying on how we love Him (as stated in verse 10)?

The perfect definition of love is seen in God's love for us. He sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. This definition becomes the "gold standard for assessing love" when we understand that we are not the standard of what love is—God is the standard by which we judge and assess love. We see in that short definition that love is sacrificial. It is active, intentional, generous, chooses to give the very best, universal in its scope, is without partiality, understanding of our need and met it in Jesus, proactive (before we even asked—which would never even happen since no one seeks God on their own).

"These passages abundantly prove, that, as the gift of Christ to us was the fruit of the Father's love, so it was an instance of His love, that infinitely outweighs all else that He ever has done, or ever can do, for sinful man." ~Charles Simeon<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Simeon, Charles. 1833. *Horae Homileticae: James to Jude*. Vol. 20. London: Holdsworth and Ball.

9. Propitiation isn't one of those words we commonly use, yet for the believer it is a precious truth! Define *propitiation* as used in verse 10 [Strong's #2434 (NIV *atoning sacrifice*)].

To conciliate, to cover over, to appease and reconcile. To satisfy. To appease and render favorable.

Because Jesus appeased God's wrath by the shedding of His blood as the perfect sacrifice for sin, then we have no fear that we will be rejected for Jesus' sacrifice renders us favorable in God's sight.

"The pagan worshipper brought gifts to his god to appease the god's wrath and make him favorable in his attitude towards him. But the God of Christianity needs no gifts to appease His wrath and make Him favorable towards the human race. Divine love springs spontaneously from His heart. His wrath against sin cannot be placated by good works. Only the infliction of the penalty of sin, death, will satisfy the just demands of His holy law which the human race violated, maintain His government, and provide the proper basis for His bestowal of mercy, namely, divine justice satisfied. This is the *hilasmos* that sacrifice which fully satisfies the demands of the broken law. It was our Lord's death on Calvary's Cross." [Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader. Vol. 13. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.]

"Propitiation is something God does to make it possible for men to be forgiven. "God is light," and therefore He must uphold His holy Law. "God is love," and therefore He wants to forgive and save sinners. How can God forgive sinners and still be consistent with His holy nature? The answer is the cross. There Jesus Christ bore the punishment for sin and met the just demands of the holy Law. But there, also, God reveals His love and makes it possible for men to be saved by faith." [Wiersbe, Warren W. 1996. The Bible Exposition Commentary. Vol. 2. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.]

"For the honour of God's moral government, it was necessary that his hatred against sin should be made manifest, and that, if mercy were exercised towards fallen man, it should be only in a way that would consist with the rights of justice, and preserve the honour of God's broken law. This could only be done by a vicarious sacrifice, a sacrifice of equal value with the souls of all mankind. Such a sacrifice could be made by none but our incarnate God; who therefore assumed our nature, that he might expiate sin by the sacrifice of himself, and make himself "a propitiation for the sins of the whole world." What love then was here; that God should send his only-begotten Son into the world for such an end as this! Had he sent him to instruct us by his doctrine and example, it had been a stupendous act of love: but to send him on purpose that he might bear our sins in his own body on "the tree," and die in our stead, "the just for the unjust, to bring us to God;" this is a love that is utterly incomprehensible: it has heights and depths that can never be explored." [Simeon, Charles. 1833. Horae Homileticae: James to Jude. Vol. 20. London: Holdsworth and Ball.]

10. List what you learn about propitiation by looking up the following verses: Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2; then look at Leviticus 4:34-35 and Hebrews 9:6-14.



**Romans 3:25: 25** whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; *Propitiation came through the "means" of Jesus dying on the cross for our sins. We gain this "benefit" by and through faith in Christ. Because of Jesus propitiating our sins, God passes over them, so that there is no offense between us and God.*

**Hebrews 2:17: 17** Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. *Jesus, as our merciful and faithful high priest, did what was necessary to appease God so that His wrath against man's sin was satisfied. God initiated this act because man on his own would never have acted to remove the offense.*

**1 John 2:2: 2** and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. *Jesus Himself is the propitiation for our sins—in fact, it is so effective that it is made available to the whole world for all the sins ever committed or will be committed.*

**Leviticus 4:34-35: 34** 'The priest is to take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and all the rest of its blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar. **35** 'Then he shall remove all its fat, just as the fat of the lamb is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offerings, and the priest shall offer them up in smoke on the altar, on the offerings by fire to the Lord. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him in regard to his sin which he has committed, and he will be forgiven. *It was necessary that Jesus our high priest offer Himself as the sacrifice for sin, for the sins we committed. Only then would we be forgiven.*

**Hebrews 9:6-14: 6** Now when these things have been so prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle performing the divine worship, **7** but into the second, only the high priest enters once a year, not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance. **8** The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed while the outer tabernacle is still standing, **9** which is a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience, **10** since they relate only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation. **11** But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; **12** and not through the blood of goats and calves, *but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.* **13** For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, **14** *how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? Christ's sacrifice obtains eternal redemption for us. The offences that caused such a breach between us and God are covered over and removed by Christ's perfect atonement of our sins. I am humbled and in awe of this kindness and love on God's part for us—and that I have been the recipient of His mercy... how can this be?!*

“The English word “propitiate” means “to appease and render favorable.” That was the pagan meaning of the Greek word. The pagan worshipper brought gifts to his god to appease the god’s wrath and make him favorable in his attitude towards him. But the God of Christianity needs no gifts to appease His wrath and make Him favorable towards the human race. Divine love springs spontaneously from His heart. His wrath against sin cannot be placated by good works. Only the infliction of the penalty of sin, death, will satisfy the just demands of His holy law which the human race violated, maintain His government, and provide the proper basis for His bestowal of mercy, namely, divine justice satisfied. This is the *hilasmos* (ἱλασμος), that sacrifice which fully satisfies the demands of the broken law. It was our Lord’s death on Calvary’s Cross.” ~Kenneth Wuest<sup>2</sup>

11. Have you ever felt alienated from God? Estranged from Him? Have you felt unloved or think you must be a terrible disappointment to Him? John’s words of hope in verse 10 are the answer to all your fears and struggles! The answer is not in your efforts to love the Lord but instead lies in *His love for you*. How can God’s initiating, immovable, intentional love toward you help you think rightly when those feelings of inadequacy, guilt, or fear put a stranglehold on your joy in the Lord?

Because God initiated this act of love and sought to make a way that I might enter into fellowship with Him forever, then I must tell myself the truth when I struggle to believe that He truly does love me and wants to have a relationship with me. I so often fear I am a disappointment to Him, that I am lacking and that He is waiting for me to “do more” but that is wrong thinking and is a dishonor to the Lord. He loves me.

How Thou canst think so well of us,  
And be the God Thou art,  
Is darkness to my intellect,  
But sunshine to my heart.  
~F. W. Faber<sup>3</sup>

12. What should God’s great love prompt in us according to verse 11? Why do we need this admonition to love?

God’s great love prompts us to love one another. Obviously, we need this admonition to love the brethren because it’s not natural to us to love others. We naturally love ourselves but we don’t love the brethren until we become God’s children.

13. Why is it important that we obey this command to love one another according to verses 7-11?

It shows that we are God’s children. Love comes from God, so if we don’t love others, then we don’t know God. God teaches us how to love others by His love for us!

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<sup>2</sup> Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*. Vol. 13. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

<sup>3</sup> Barclay, William. 2002. *The Letters of John and Jude*. 3rd ed. The New Daily Study Bible. Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press.

14. Within John's discussion on God's love for us and our love for others, what do you learn about God in the beginning of verse 12? What is the *connection* between our obeying the command to love the brethren and John's statement about God's nature from verses 11-12? See also John 13:35; 1 John 4:20-21 to help you form your answer.

In verse 12 we learn that no one has seen God at any time because He is Spirit, yet when we love one another, He is "seen." The connection is that because God cannot be seen, the way to "see Him" is to love one another. When we love one another, we show our family resemblance and God is seen.

**John 13:35: 35** "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

**1 John 4:20-21: 20** If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. **21** And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

"He can be seen, however, in the lives of those who demonstrate His love to others. There are no exceptions to who has seen God ("no one"), and there are no exceptions to the time frame ("has ever")."  
~Daniel Akin<sup>4</sup>

15. One of the big takeaways from this section in John's letter is seen again in verse 12. John states, "If we love one another, God abides in us." What big truth does John want us to understand? See verses 7 and 12.

**1 John 4:7: 7** Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

**1 John 4:12: 12** No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

When we are the Lord's, when He is our Father and we become His children, there is no exception—we will love the brethren. We will look like our Father and live it out. God abides in His children and His children love like He does.

16. When we obey the command to love the brethren, what dual realities are at work in us according to the beginning of verse 13?

We abide in Him.

He abides in us.

17. Define *perfected* [Strong's #5048 (NIV *made complete*)]. Also see 1 John 2:5 and 4:17-18.

To complete. To bring to an end, to completeness. To accomplish, to finish. **"His love is brought to its goal in us." [Lenski]**

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<sup>4</sup> Akin, Daniel L. 2001. *1, 2, 3 John*. Vol. 38. The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

"If saints have this agapē (ἀγάπη) love habitually for one another, that shows that this love which God is in His nature, has accomplished its purpose in their lives. It has made us loving and self-sacrificial in our characters. This love has been brought to its human fulness in the lives of the saints. The verb "is perfected" is perfect in tense, speaking of a past completed act having present results." Translation: "If we habitually are loving one another, God in us is abiding, and His love has been brought to its fulness in us, and exists in that state of fulness." [Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*. Vol. 13. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.]

"It has obtained its completion in and upon us. God's love is not perfected in him, but in and with us. His love could not be designed to be ineffectual and fruitless upon us; when its proper genuine end and issue are attained and produced thereby, it may be said to be perfected; so faith is perfected by its works, and love perfected by its operations. When the divine love has wrought us to the same image, to the love of God, and thereupon to the love of the brethren, the children of God, for his sake, it is therein and so far perfected and completed, though this love of ours is not at present perfect, nor the ultimate end of the divine love to us." How ambitious should we be of this fraternal Christian love, when God reckons his own love to us perfected thereby!" [Henry, Matthew. 1994. *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*. Peabody: Hendrickson.]

"If you want to know what God is like, you can look at what He has done for us and what we should do for one another. This invisible God actually lives in us. The love He has for us is made visible and complete as we love one another. This is the way the world sees God's love, as it is expressed by Him through our lives. **Only as God's love completes its purpose of reaching out to those He loves—the world (John 3:16)—is His love complete or fulfilled.**" ~Holman New Testament Commentary<sup>5</sup>

18. John again seeks to give assurance about real faith. How do we know we abide in the Lord according to verse 13? When John uses the word *abide* here in verse 13, he's talking about what kind of person? See 1 John 2:6, 10; 3:6, 9, 14.

Because He has given us His Spirit. When you come to know the Lord, the Holy Spirit comes to reside within you and when that happens then we know that we abide in Him and He abides in us.

Those who *abide* are believers.

**1 John 2:6: 6** the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

**1 John 2:10: 10** The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

**1 John 3:6: 6** No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.

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<sup>5</sup> Walls, David, and Max Anders. 1999. *I & II Peter, I, II & III John, Jude*. Vol. 11. Holman New Testament Commentary. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

**1 John 3:9: 9** No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

**1 John 3:14: 14** We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

19. What special gift has God given us according to 1 John 4:13? See John 14:16-17; 1 John 3:24.

The Holy Spirit.

**John 14:16-17: 16** "I will ask *the Father*, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be *with you forever*; **17** that is the Spirit of truth, whom *the world cannot receive*, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

**1 John 3:24: 24** The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that *He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us*.

- a. What else do you learn about the Holy Spirit's role and works from John 3:3-5; 7:39; Acts 5:32; Romans 8:14; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:13-14; 1 John 2:27?

**John 3:3-5: 3** Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." **4** Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" **5** Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. *When we are born again by the Holy Spirit, we enter into the kingdom of God.*

**John 7:39: 39** But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. *When we believe in Jesus by faith for salvation, we are given the Holy Spirit.*

**Acts 5:32: 32** "And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him." *The Holy Spirit is given by God to those who obey Him.*

**Romans 8:14: 14** For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. *The Holy Spirit leads God's children.*

**1 Corinthians 6:19: 19** Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? *The Holy Spirit resides in the temple of my body! I have a new owner residing in my "house/tent/dwelling."*

**2 Corinthians 1:22: 22** who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge. *The Holy Spirit is a pledge that God will take me to heaven and will complete the work He began in me. I am sealed in God by the Holy Spirit.*

**2 Corinthians 5:5: 5** Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge. *Again, the Holy Spirit is a pledge of our future inheritance. What a tremendous gift the Holy Spirit is to us!*

**Ephesians 1:13-14: 13** In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, **14** who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory. *The Holy Spirit is the Holy Spirit of Promise! He is the pledge that God intends to keep His promise to us that He will redeem us for His glory.*

**1 John 2:27: 27** As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him. *We are anointed with the Holy Spirit who abides in us. He teaches us spiritual truths and opens God's Word to us. He teaches us truth that always lines up with the Scriptures.*

“It is encouraging to remember that the “Helper” was sent to replace the physical presence of Christ. In fact, Jesus promised that He would not leave them as orphans because of the Helper's coming (**Jn. 14:17**), the Helper would enable the disciples to do greater things (**Jn. 14:12**) and the abiding presence of the Helper would also mean the abiding presence of Christ and the Father through the Holy Spirit (**Jn. 14:16-24**). All believers have that same Holy Spirit!” ~Jack Hughes

“Where the Holy Spirit is, there will always be *deep conviction of sin, and true repentance for it*. It is His special office to convince of sin (John 16:8). He shows the exceeding holiness of God. He teaches the exceeding corruption and infirmity of our nature. He strips us of our blind self-righteousness. He opens our eyes to our awful guilt, folly and danger. He fills the heart with sorrow, contrition, and abhorrence for sin, as the abominable thing which God hates. He that knows nothing of all this, and saunters carelessly through life, thoughtless about sin, and indifferent and unconcerned about his soul, is a dead man before God. He has not the Spirit of Christ.” ~J.C. Ryle<sup>6</sup>

20. What testimony does John again repeat for his readers in verse 14? Why does he want believers to understand this crucial point? See verses 9-10; John 3:16; Romans 5:18; 1 John 2:1-2.

We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

**1 John 4:9-10: 9** By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. **10** In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

**John 3:16: 16** “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

**Romans 5:18: 18** So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

**1 John 2:1-2: 1** My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; **2** and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

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<sup>6</sup> J. C. Ryle, *Old Paths: Being Plain Statements of Some of the Weightier Matters of Christianity* (London: Charles J. Thynne, 1898), 282–283.

John wants believers to understand the reason the Father sent the Son is so we would live—we would live through Jesus! The Father sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins, that we would have eternal life and be justified to life in Christ. This is so huge! The Holy Spirit is such a gift to us! How wondrous that God gave Him to reside in believers simply for our good, help, and to help us give God glory. We have the power of God residing in us, yet we often live without His help, not relying on His strength to overcome our sins and weaknesses.

21. Believers have not yet seen Him, yet they love the Lord Jesus (1 Peter 1:8) and testify about Him. Briefly, what is your “testimony” about Jesus and His saving work? Verse 14 says, “We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son into the world to be the Savior of the world.” I too must testify that Jesus is my Savior through the Father’s persistent kindness, mercy, and grace to me. I tried to wrestle my way into His presence, to win His favor, not understanding that all I needed to do was throw myself upon Jesus for my salvation. The Lord rescued me from my sin, from myself, from death into life. I am so incredibly grateful for the Lord’s kindness to me in this! I still remember the lost, disillusioned feeling of not being able to know the Lord or be near Him. To be able to enter into His presence and draw near to Him, to be called His, to be His, is such a gift. I can’t ever discharge my debt of love to the Father for rescuing me from sin and Satan by sending Jesus to be my Savior. Even now, all these years later (since 1981), I rejoice to know the Lord. What a privilege!

“What was that message? “The Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.” There is salvation; there is a Christ ready to save. Look to Him, blind eyes; look to Him, dead souls; look to Him.” ~J.C. Ryle<sup>7</sup>

“In the love of Christ to us is both the *reason* and the *model*, for our love to each other. Was His love to us unmerited? We also should freely exercise love even to the evil and unthankful. Did His love lead Him to forego the glory and felicity of heaven, and to submit to the accursed death of the cross for us? Such should be our love to our fellow-creatures: there should be no measure of labour or self-denial which we should not willingly exercise for the good of others; yea, even to the laying down of our life for them. Here then we see *the proper duty of this season*: search out the poor, the sick, and the afflicted, that you may administer to them the consolations they stand in need of: and especially exert yourselves to see what you can do for *the souls of men*—This is the work that will most assimilate you to Christ, and will best prove the sincerity of your love to Him.” ~Charles Simeon<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Spurgeon, Charles. 2014. *Spurgeon Commentary: 1 John*. Edited by Elliot Ritzema. Spurgeon Commentary Series. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>8</sup> Simeon, Charles. 1833. *Horae Homileticae: James to Jude*. Vol. 20. London: Holdsworth and Ball.



— 1 John —

Lesson #15 Chapter 4:15-21

Teacher's Guide

In this last section in chapter 4, John again seeks to encourage the believers. As you prepare to do your lesson, ask the Lord to help you believe and trust in the assurances He has placed in His Word.

1. In the book of 1 John, John seeks to assure and strengthen his beloved friends by reminding them of the truth. Summarize what he told them in 1 John 4:1-6.

In 1 John 4:1-6 John teaches his little children how to test the spirits—that is to discern false teachers and their teaching from true, biblical teachers. The Holy Spirit within them will help them discern these distinctions in teaching, focus, and motives. His counsel is very clear and will be a huge blessing to them.

- a. From there, please summarize John's teaching in 1 John 4:7-14.

John then reminds his friends to love the brethren but seeks to encourage them that loving others is a given if they have come to know the God who is Love. He encourages them that as they show love to the brethren, they become tangible representatives of God Himself, so that others can see Him on display in their love for each other. This too is another work of the Holy Spirit within them.

2. Verse 14 ended by mentioning what we have seen and testified. What is that testimony (verse 14)?

We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

3. What do true believers confess or acknowledge according to the first part of 1 John 4:15? Now add to your answer from John 17:8; 1 John 2:23; 4:2; 5:5, 10; 2 John 7.

True believers confess that Jesus is the Son of God.

**John 17:8: 8** for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me. *True believers receive the Word of God as from God and they believe them.*

**1 John 2:23: 23** Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. *True believers confess the Son. They belong to the Father.*

**1 John 4:2: 2** By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. *True believers confess that Jesus has come in the flesh. Only those who are in the Lord can do this.*

**1 John 5:5: 5** Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? *True believers overcome the world because they believe that Jesus is the Son of God.*

**1 John 5:10: 10** The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son. *A true believer has the testimony of God in his own heart that Jesus is the Son of God and he believes it.*

**2 John 7: 7** For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. *A true believer acknowledges Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh.*

4. When someone makes the confession found in verse 15, what is true of that person (verse 15)?

God abides in him and he in God.

“Testimony about Jesus tells more than what Jesus did—save from sin. It also tells who he is—the Son of God. Again, all this goes against false teachers. They apparently claimed Jesus could not be human, thus could not die on the cross. On the other hand, Scripture claims that anyone who acknowledges this Savior they have seen is a true Christian, living in union with God.” ~The Holman New Testament Commentary<sup>1</sup>

5. The verb tense for both *know* and *believe* from verse 16 indicates that at a point in time in the past an action took place, the results of which continue into the present. What is true of all believers according to the first part of verse 16?

All believers have come to know—and have believed—the love which God has for us.

This is a challenge for any who struggle with believing that God loves them. All true believers at some level *must* accept the truth given here that God loves them, and He loves them so much He sent His Son to die for them. You can't be saved without accepting and believing that truth on some level.

6. The second half of verse 16 explains how experiencing and trusting in God's love is possible. What do you learn?

God is love.

The one who abides in love abides in God.

God abides in the one who abides in Him.

7. We've looked at *abides* before, but let's take time to refresh our memory about the word's meaning. Define *abides* [Strong's #3306 (NIV *lives in*; HCSB *remains in*)]. Add to your understanding of the word by looking at John 14:17; 1 John 3:9; 4:12-13, 15-16.

Abide means to dwell, reside. To sojourn, tarry. It implies fellowship, communion, dependence, harmony, friendship. *We see this fellowship, harmony, friendship aspect in John 14:17 and the close, dependent relationship we have with the Lord.*

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<sup>1</sup>Walls, David, and Max Anders. 1999. *I & II Peter, I, II & III John, Jude*. Vol. 11. Holman New Testament Commentary. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

**John 14:17: 17** that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

**1 John 3:9: 9** No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

**1 John 4:12-13: 12** No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. **13** By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

**1 John 4:15-16: 15** Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. **16** We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

8. Since you have defined *abide* in the question above, rewrite verses 15-16 using synonyms of abide. How did this little exercise help bring home some of the truths John wants us to understand about our relationship with the Lord?

**1 John 4:15-16: 15** Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. **16** We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

Whoever testifies that Jesus is the Son of God, then we know that God dwells in him, and he dwells with and enjoys fellowship with the Lord God Almighty. We have come to know God's love for us and have believed that He does indeed love us. We know that God is love Himself, and the one who lives in love does so because he lives with and dwells in close proximity to the Lord—and God dwells in him.

He wants us to understand that when we come to know the Lord, we live in proximity to the Lord and reside in His presence. We don't do our own thing any longer.

9. John begins verse 17 with the words *by this*, providing a bridge ~~from~~ between the point he made in verses 15-16 to verse 17. What do you learn about love in verse 17 that is directly tied to verses 15-16?

Because we abide in the Lord and God resides in us, then love is perfected, matured, made complete in us. When we have this close relationship with the Lord, then we have confidence for the coming day of judgment. We are not afraid because our righteousness is the Lord Jesus Christ.

10. Define *perfected* [Strong's #5048 (NIV *made complete*)]. See also John 17:23; Hebrews 10:14; 1 John 2:5; 4:12 where the same word is used.

Has been made complete and remains that way. It is finished and exists in its finished results.

**John 17:23: 23** I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me. *Abiding leads to being perfected in unity.*

**Hebrews 10:14: 14** For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. *The Lord Jesus perfected for all time those who know Him—by His one offering!*

**1 John 2:5: 5** but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him. *Those who obey God, know God and thus, God's love has truly been perfected.*

**1 John 4:12: 12** No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. *When we know the Lord and He abides in us which results in us loving others. This truly shows that His love is perfected in us.*

11. What is the result of that completed love according to verse 17? What reason is given for that result in verse 17?

The result is that we will have confidence to stand before the Lord on the day of judgment. John says the reason for this is because as He is, so also are we in this world. We look like Jesus. We act like Jesus. We are God's children, whose lives are transformed, so that we aren't afraid to enter into the Lord's presence.

12. Okay, let's take a step back a minute and consider what John is telling us here in this section of his letter. Who confesses that Jesus is God according to verse 15 and 1 John 3:23; 4:2; 5:1, 5? What is true of those people (verse 15)?

Those who confess that Jesus is God are believers.

What is true of believers? They confess Jesus; they abide in God and He abides in them. They love one another and keep God's commandments. They love the Father and His children. They overcome the world.

**1 John 4:15: 15** Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

**1 John 3:23: 23** This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.

**1 John 4:2: 2** By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God;

**1 John 5:1: 1** Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him.

**1 John 5:5: 5** Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

13. As a result of verse 15, what is true for believers according to the beginning of verse 16? Why is that possible? See the second half of verse 16.

When we confess Jesus is God, then it is because we know and believe the love that God has for us. This is possible because the one who believes in God, abides in Him and He abides in them.

14. Because of this close relationship with God, what is the result for all God's children? See verse 17.

His love is perfected in us. We have confidence in the day of judgment. We are like Him.

15. In verse 18, John begins with the statement, "There is no fear in love." What did John just discuss in verse 17 that might be a cause for fear? See also Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10, 18-19; 1 John 2:28.

The coming day of judgment.

**Romans 8:14-15: 14** For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. **15** For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" *When we are God's sons, we don't need to fear judgment. We are adopted!*

**1 Corinthians 3:10-15: 10** According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. **11** For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. **12** Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, **13** each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. **14** If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. **15** If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. *When we are God's sons, we don't need to fear judgment because our sins will be burned. Our sins will not be counted against us in the day of judgment.*

**2 Corinthians 5:10: 10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. *When we are God's sons, we don't need to fear judgment because we will only be judged for the good we have done. The bd is covered by Christ's blood.*

**2 Corinthians 5:18-19: 18** Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, **19** namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. *When we are God's sons, we don't need to fear judgment because we are reconciled with God through Christ. Our trespasses are not counted against us.*

**1 John 2:28: 28** Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. *When we are God's sons, we don't need to fear judgment because we abide in Him and know Him.*

16. What is the answer for our hearts when we fear God's judgment? See verse 18. Why is that the perfect answer for counseling believers to think rightly about the Lord, condemnation, and judgment? See 1 John 4:18; Psalm 34:22; Romans 5:18-19, 21; 8:1-4, 15, 31-34.

We don't need to fear judgment because fear involves punishment, but we are never going to receive punishment. God's love is perfected in us. We must come to know the Lord as Savior.

**1 John 4:18: 18** There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

**Psalm 34:22: 22** The Lord redeems the soul of His servants, And *none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned.*

**Romans 5:18-19: 18** So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so *through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.* **19** For as through the one man's

disobedience the many were made sinners, even so *through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous*.

**Romans 5:21: 21** so that, as sin reigned in death, even so *grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*.

**Romans 8:1-4: 1** Therefore *there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*. **2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. **3** For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, **4** so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

**Romans 8:15: 15** For *you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"*

**Romans 8:31-34: 31** What then shall we say to these things? *If God is for us, who is against us?* **32** He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? **33** Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; **34** who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). But a Christian does not fear future judgment, because Christ has suffered his judgment for him on the cross. "Truly, truly I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life" (John 5:24, NASB). "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1, NASB). For a Christian, judgment is not future; *it is past*. His sins have been judged already at the cross, and they will never be brought against him again." ~Warren Wiersbe<sup>2</sup>

17. In the bigger picture of 1 John 4:7-21, John is discussing *love for the brethren*. Why would John's subject matter about loving believers be a source of fear for us on the day of judgment? See 1 John 4:20-21.

**1 John 4:20-21: 20** If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. **21** And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

Because we recognize how often we fail to love the brethren in the way we should. If we love God, we will love the brethren. Simple. But kind of scary when we realize how often we fail.

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<sup>2</sup>Wiersbe, Warren W. 1996. *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Vol. 2. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

18. What assurance does John again give the believers to help them overcome their fear of failing to obey this command to love the brethren and then experience God's judgment? See 1 John 4:19, also see 1 John 4:10 and Matthew 25:31-46.

**1 John 4:19: 19** We love, because He first loved us.

**1 John 4:10: 10** In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

**Matthew 25:31-46: 31** "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. **32** "All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; **33** and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. **34** "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. **35** 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; **36** naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' **37** "Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? **38** 'And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? **39** 'When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' **40** "The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.' **41** "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; **42** for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; **43** I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.' **44** "Then they themselves also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?' **45** "Then He will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' **46** "These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

We will love because God loves us, and He sent His Son to cover over our sins. When He is our Father, we do the things that He loves.

19. Let's simplify this section even more. True believers will do what according to 1 John 4:19?

True believers will love.

- a. If someone does not love the brethren, what does this say about them according to 1 John 4:7-8, 20.

**1 John 4:7-8: 7** Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. **8** The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

**1 John 4:20: 20** If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

They don't know God.



- b. According to 1 John 4:17, what will believers have or possess on the day of judgment when God judges men according to their faith in Christ or by their deeds (because of the absence of their faith in Christ)?

**1 John 4:17: 17** By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

Believers will have/possess His Spirit who resides in us. We will be like Him.

- c. What comfort does a believer have on the day of judgment according to the end of 1 John 4:17?

We are comforted because we are like our Father. In the end, on the day of judgment, our relationship with our Father means we escape judgment. We look and act like our Father.

20. What assurances have you gleaned from verses 15-21 that bring you hope and give you joy?

We have the assurance that when we confess Jesus, God abides in us. His love is perfected in us. We don't need to fear judgment. God's perfect love will cast out fear. We will love because He loved us. The one who loves God will love His brother.

"Mr. Fleming, in his "Fulfilling of the Scriptures," relates the case of a most hardened sinner who was put to death in the town of Ayr. It pleased the Lord to bring him to repentance when in prison, and so full was his assurance of pardoning mercy that, when he came to the place of execution, he could not help crying out to the people, under the sense of pardon, "Oh, He is a great Forgiver! He is a great Forgiver!" and he added, "Now hath perfect love cast out fear. I know God hath nothing to say against me, for Jesus Christ hath paid all; and those are free whom the Son makes free." ~G. S. Bowes.<sup>3</sup>

"Between the fear of a slave and the fear of a child, we can all perceive a great distinction. Between the fear of God's great power and justice which the devils have, and that fear which a child of God has when he walks in the light with his God, there is as much difference, surely, as between hell and heaven." ~Charles Spurgeon<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Spurgeon, C. H. 2009. *My Sermon Notes & 2: Genesis to Malachi*. Vol. 1. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

<sup>4</sup>Spurgeon, C. H. 1902. "A Fear to Be Desired." In *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, 48:494. London: Passmore & Alabaster.

— 1 John —  
Lesson #16 Chapter 5 Overview

Teacher's Guide

The goal of this lesson is to teach you how to look at and begin to study a text of Scripture. Observation is a necessary part of Bible study, yet all too often it can be overlooked or rushed through. Simply put, observation is the practice of noticing what God has placed in His Word. *At this stage* in our Bible study, I only want you to notice and then record what you observe in the chapter. You're not making any interpretations about what the Scriptures mean or how they apply to your life—that will come later, I promise.

Don't rush through this lesson. Set aside time this week to peer into the living and abiding Word of God. Rich treasures are waiting for you!

I've included Chapter 5 (NASB) at the end of this lesson so you can print it out and mark it up if you'd like. I find it helps me see items more easily if I'm marking and noting things as I go.

1. **SUMMARIZE.** To begin, read through Chapter 5. Now, summarize the contents of Chapter 5. This is not the time to be super detailed; instead, think of trying to tell a 4th grader the contents of the chapter.<sup>1</sup>
  - a. Summarize paragraph 1 (verses 1-4).  
We know we are children of God when we believe in Jesus, love the brethren, and obey His commands, which are not a burden at all. Ultimately, all who are born of God overcome the world through their faith.
  - b. Summarize paragraph 2 (verses 5-12).  
The one who overcomes the world is the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God, who came by water and blood and of whom the Holy Spirit testifies. In fact, the water, blood, and Spirit all agree that Jesus is the Son of God. God has put His seal of approval on this testimony and has

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<sup>1</sup>The method and process of observation in Bible study does God honor, as we stop, observe, and consider each and every one of His recorded Words, in their context. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the debt I owe to the Precept Inductive Bible Studies observation method, which I have adapted in my studies. As far as I know, the method is the brainchild of Kay Arthur, though I've encountered a number of others who have also come up with similar ways for observing the text. The point of observation is to slow down and really look at what God has preserved for us in His Word. What I've created here is simply another variation to help us peer more closely at the Scriptures—for our good and His glory.

Himself testified that Jesus is His Son. God has said that eternal life can only be found in Jesus for without our hope in Him (Jesus) we do not have life.

c. Summarize paragraph 3 (verses 13-15).

John reminds his readers that the reason he has written what he has is so they will *know* that they have eternal life. He reminds them (and us) that when we are confident that we have eternal life, we can also be confident that God will answer our prayers when we ask anything according to His will.

d. Summarize paragraph 4 (verses 16-17).

Continuing with the theme of prayer, John gives instruction to pray for those who commit sins. He also talks about not praying for those who commit sin that ultimately leads to spiritual death. All sin and need prayer, but there are those whose sin leads to their spiritual death.

e. Summarize paragraph 5 (verses 18-21).

John reminds his readers that no one who is born of God stubbornly practices sin. God Himself keeps His children so that the evil one cannot touch them. The world lies in the power of the evil one, but not God's children. Believers know the Son of God has come into the world, He has given us understanding so we would know Him, the One true God who gives eternal life. Knowing this true God keeps us from idolatry.

2. SUMMARIZE. After reviewing the chapter and what you wrote for your summaries, ask yourself: *What is the main point of this chapter?* How do all these details and events reveal the main idea of the chapter? Record your answer below.

In this final chapter, John wants to reassure his readers about who truly knows God and who doesn't.

3. TITLE. Now you're ready to title your chapter. Your 3-5 word title should reflect the contents of the chapter. Remember, a title's purpose is to help you remember what is in each chapter.

That You May Know

That We May Know Him

4. MARK and LIST. On the *1 John Bible Text* handout mark any key words you see in the chapter. *God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit* are always key words. It's easiest to start with these "God" words first. Next mark words or phrases that are repeated at least 3 times. Mark any other words that seem important to the chapter or are strongly emphasized.

You can mark words or phrases by creating a symbol or using a certain colored pencil every time it appears. This will enable you to see at a glance how often a word is used in the chapter or note a progression of thought.

- a. Next, *list the phrase containing the key words* on a separate sheet of paper. This step will allow you to pull together the information you noted from marking the key words. Be sure to cite the verse references when you list your key word information.

For example, with *God* as your key word you would begin to make a list of the information you discovered every time God is mentioned in 1 John Chapter 2. Your Chapter 2 list about *God* should begin by looking something like the one below.

Verse 5—*God* is love

Verse 13—*God* is Father. He is knowable.

Fun study tip to try: Mark any key/repeated words that you notice appear all the way through the book, even if their use in individual chapters may not fit the “3 times or more” rule. This will allow you to trace major themes and an author’s thoughts throughout the book.

## God

Verse 1 whoever believes Jesus...is born of God

Verse 1 whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him [God]

Verse 2 we love the children of God

Verse 2 when we love God and observe His [God's] commandments

Verse 3 this is the love of God

Verse 3 that we keep His commandments

Verse 3 His [God's] commandments are not burdensome

Verse 4 whatever is born of God overcomes the world

Verse 5 overcomes the world...believes that Jesus is the Son of God

Verse 9 the testimony of God is greater

Verse 9 the testimony of God is this

Verse 9 He [God] has testified concerning His [God's] Son

Verse 10 the one who believes in the Son of God

Verse 10 the one who does not believe God has made Him [God] a liar

Verse 10 not believed the testimony that God has given concerning His [God's] Son

Verse 11 God has given us eternal life

Verse 11 this life is in His Son

Verse 12 he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life

Verse 13 you who believe in the name of the Son of God

Verse 14 the confidence which we have before Him

Verse 14 if we ask anything according to His [God's] will

Verse 14 He [God] hears us

Verse 15 we know that He [God] hears us

Verse 15 the requests which we have asked from Him [God]

Verse 16 God will for him give life  
Verse 18 no one who is born of God sins  
Verse 18 He [Jesus] who was born of God keeps him  
Verse 19 we know that we are of God  
Verse 20 we know that the Son of God  
Verse 20 that we may know Him [God] who is true  
Verse 20 we are in Him [God] who is true in His [God's] Son  
Verse 20 this is the true God

## Jesus Christ

Verse 1 whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ  
Verse 5 he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God  
Verse 6 this is the One [Jesus] who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ  
Verse 9 He [God] has testified concerning His [God's] Son  
Verse 10 the one who believes in the Son of God  
Verse 10 testimony ... that God has given concerning His [God's] Son  
Verse 11 this life is in His [God's] Son  
Verse 12 He who has the Son has the life  
Verse 12 he who does not have the Son of God  
Verse 13 you who believe in the name of the Son of God  
Verse 18 He who was born of God  
Verse 20 we know that the Son of God  
Verse 20 we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ

## Holy Spirit

Verse 6 it is the Spirit who testifies because the Spirit is the truth  
Verse 8 the Spirit and the water and the blood—the 3 are in agreement

## Love

Verse 1 whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him  
Verse 1 the Father loves the child born of Him  
Verse 2 we love the children of God  
Verse 2 when we love God  
Verse 3 this is the love of God

## Believe

Verse 1 whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God  
Verse 5 overcomer is the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God  
Verse 10 the one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself

Verse 10 the one who does not believe God has made him a liar

Verse 10 because he has not believed in the testimony of God

Verse 13 these things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God

## Testimony/testify

Verse 9 if we receive the testimony of men

Verse 9 the testimony of God is greater

Verse 9 for the testimony of God is this

Verse 9 He has testified concerning His Son

Verse 10 the one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself

Verse 10 he who does not believe ...in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son

Verse 11 and the testimony is this—God has given eternal life, life in His Son

## Ask/Request

Verse 14 if we ask anything according to His will

Verse 15 we know He hears us in whatever we ask

Verse 15 we know we have the requests which we have asked from Him

Verse 16 he shall ask and God will for him give life

Verse 16 I do not say he should make request for this

## Know

Verse 2 by this we know, that we love the children of God

Verse 13 so that you may know that you have eternal life

Verse 15 and if we know that He hears us

Verse 15 we know that we have the requests we have asked of Him

Verse 18 we know that no one who is born of God sins

Verse 19 we know that we are of God

Verse 20 we know that the Son of God has come

Verse 20 we may know Him who is true

## Life

Verse 11 God has given us eternal life

Verse 11 and this life is in His Son

Verse 12 He who has the Son has the life

Verse 12 he who does not have the Son does not have the life

Verse 13 that you may know you have eternal life

Verse 16 ask and God will for him give life

Verse 20 this is the true God and eternal life

## Death

Verse 16 committing a sin not leading to death

Verse 16 God will for him give life for those who commit sin not leading to death

Verse 16 there is a sin leading to death

Verse 17 there is a sin not leading to death

## Born

Verse 1 believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God

Verse 1 loves the Father loves the child born of Him

Verse 4 whatever is born of God overcomes the world

Verse 18 no one who is born of God sins

Verse 18 He who was born of God keeps him

## Sin

Verse 16 sees a brother committing a sin not leading to death

Verse 16 give life to those who commit sin not leading to death

Verse 16 there is a sin leading to death

Verse 17 all unrighteousness is sin

Verse 17 there is a sin not leading to death

Verse 18 no one who is born of God sins

## So That

Verse 13 I have written to you who believe...so that you may know you have eternal life

Verse 20 we know the Son of God has come and given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true

## By this you know/By this

Verse 2 by this we know that we live the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments

## This is

Verse 3 this is the love of God

Verse 4 this is the victory that has overcome the world

Verse 6 this is the One who came by water and blood

Verse 9 the testimony of God [is this] that He has testified concerning His Son

Verse 11 the testimony [is this] that God has given us eternal life

Verse 11 this (life) is in His Son

Verse 20 this is the true God and eternal life



5. MARK and LIST. Mark any *commands* that are listed in the chapter. Look for things the author is telling his readers to do or be. Now, list them on your separate sheet of paper in the same way you did for the key words.

Only in verse 21: Guard yourselves from idols

6. MARK and LIST. Mark words or phrases that are being *compared or contrasted*. Words like *as, likewise, in the same manner, or like* will help you find words or phrases being compared. Contrasting words like “light/dark” or “love/hate” and the word “but” will help you find words or phrases that are being contrasted. Now list what you discovered about comparisons and contrasts on the extra paper you’ve been using.

See observation sheet.

7. MARK. Mark transition terms: *therefore, wherefore, finally*. Sometimes an author has his own kind of transition term that lets you know he is making a switch to a new topic, so be sure to look for those kinds of terms. (Generally, these are at the beginning of a paragraph.)

See observation sheet.

8. MARK and LIST. Mark any time *so that* is used. In putting together your list, look for what comes before the “so that” which will bring about or produce some kind of result. For example, in Philippians 1:10 “so that” appears, but in order to understand its significance you need to also look at verse 9. Your entry for Philippians 1:9-10 might say something like, “Paul prays that the Philippians’ love would abound in real knowledge and all discernment *so that* they would be able to approve the things that are excellent and live sincerely and blamelessly until the day of Christ.” I think you will be so blessed by this part of your observation time!

See observation sheet.

9. MARK. Mark expressions of time—words like *shortly, quickly, soon, for a little while*.

See observation sheet.

10. MARK. Mark words that are synonyms of each other. For example: *Paul and Timothy are bond-servants* from 1:1.

See observation sheet.

11. LIST. List any *attributes* of God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit that you notice in this chapter. You’ll start this list by going back up to your listed “God” words that you marked earlier in Question #4. An attribute is a characteristic or quality used to describe an object or person.

For example, you might read John 3:16, “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*” From this verse we see that God is *loving* [because He loved the world]; He is *giving* [because He gave His Son]; He is *eternal* [because only the eternal can offer eternal life].

## God

Verse 1 God is creator, originator, Father

Verse 2 He is Father, worthy of love and obedience

Verse 3 He provides a way for us to love Him; He is gracious, provider, initiator

Verse 4 He is Father, victorious Father

Verse 5 He is Father to Jesus

Verse 9 He is great—in power, might, authority

Verse 9 He proclaims. He is true. He gives authority to His message. He affirms.

Verse 10 God is true.

Verse 11 He is eternal. He imparts life—eternal life.

Verse 14 He hears us. He answers prayer. He has power to answer prayer.

Verse 15—the same as verse 14

Verse 18 He is holy.

Verse 20 He is true. He is eternal. Unchanging. Trustworthy. Faithful.

## Jesus

Verse 1 Jesus is Messiah, the Christ

Verse 5 He is the Son of God

Verse 6 He is fully man who died for us.

Verse 11-12 He gives life to those who believe in Him

Verse 13 He gives eternal life

Verse 18 Jesus protects, holds, keeps God's children

Verse 19 Jesus is true, holy, faithful, unchanging, trustworthy.

## Spirit

Verse 6 the Spirit testifies about Jesus; He is true; He speaks what is true; He speaks as the Father and the Son speaks

Verse 8 the Spirit testifies and does not contradict anything that the Father and Son proclaim

12. LIST. Look for lists of words, phrases, or related thoughts. Number the lists within the Bible text, then record your list out to the side in the margin or on a separate sheet of paper. This will help you see the thought progression of the author or the results of some action.

For example, in 1 John 1:1 we find a list about the *Word of Life*. We discover 1) the Word of Life was from the beginning; 2) John heard the Word of Life; 3) John saw the Word of Life with his own eyes; 4) John looked at the Word of Life; 5) John touched the Word of life with his hands.

See observation sheet.

13. NOTE. Be sure to mark or write down any “nuggets” you observed which you thought were interesting, spurred on some thought, or made you want to study further.

I just love seeing how specifically John writes about what “we know.” The “argument” in verses 5-12 is genius as John continues to build upon truth about Jesus. The section on prayer from verses 13-17 is also fascinating. It will be great to look at verses 16-17 and get that sorted.

*Remember*, the purpose of this lesson is to observe and take note of what is in the chapter. You are not making any interpretations or applications to your life right now. Your task at this time is to simply look for the treasures that God has put in each chapter.

As you do this lesson, take time to worship and thank the Lord that He has preserved His Word for you to study. Admire and marvel at what He placed in this chapter for you to notice. There really isn't any other time in our studies where we simply look at, think on, and study God's Word for itself, so have fun with this lesson! And may the Lord be blessed by your labors!

Scripture Paths Bible Studies

1 John Chapter 5

1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

5 Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

6 This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.

7 For there are three that testify:

8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

9 If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son.

10 The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son.

11 And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

# Scripture Paths Bible Studies

## Scripture Paths Bible Studies

12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

14 This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

16 If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this.

17 All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not leading to death.

18 We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him.

19 We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

20 And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ.

This is the true God and eternal life.

21 Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

god  $\Delta$   
Jesus +  
Holy Spirit  $\checkmark$   
love  $\heartsuit$   
believe  $\Rightarrow$   
testimony  $\Rightarrow$   
justify  $\Rightarrow$

ask / request ???  
know  $\Rightarrow$   
so that [ ]  
[ By this you know / by this ]  
this is  $\circ$   
death  $\square$  life  $\square$

time  $\circ$   
 $\rightarrow$  com  $\leftarrow$  comparison  
 $\leftarrow$  son  $\rightarrow$  contra



— 1 John —

Lesson #17 Chapter 5:1-12

Teacher's Guide

John's final words to his beloved friends are ones of continued encouragement and assurance in the faith. Ask the Lord to help you take to heart the confidence and joy He wants you to have in your relationship with Him!

1. What do you learn about those John refers to as *whoever* or *everyone* from 1 John 5:1? Those who believe that Jesus is the Christ are born of God. Those who love the Father love the child born of Him.
2. Why is verse 1 so encouraging considering John's admonition in 1 John 4:21? 1 John 4:21 commands us to love God and love our brothers, yet in 5:1 we have John's encouragement that anyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God and that anyone who loves the Father will also love the brethren.
3. What other assurance does John remind his beloved children in 1 John 5:2? We *know* that we love God's children (the brethren) when we love God and observe/keep His commandments. I love his circular reasoning that shows how these things are connected. It all begins and is sustained by becoming one of God's children through faith in Jesus.
4. John teaches us that *whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ* "is born again." He also reminds us that *whoever loves the Father* will, of course, "love the child born of Him." John also reminds us that *when we love God and observe His commandments* we can be comforted and confident that we will also "love the children of God." Why are these truths important for *you* to know and believe today? How are these truths a litmus test of salvation?  
They are a litmus test because there is always fruit or a change as a result of being saved. Growth may be slow and not always in the areas we think but change will be evident.

These truths are encouraging to know that God is so faithful to bring about change. The Lord makes us like Himself. How I long to be more like HIM!

- a. John seems to belabor the point (in verses 1-2) that if we are the Lord's children then we will most assuredly love the brethren. How does that tie in with his previous teaching from 1 John 3:9-16?  
It's the same argument/proof that if we are the Lord's then we will look, act, think, and desire the things that our Father does. We will bear the family resemblance when it comes to living righteously and showing love to the brethren.

5. *For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments* (NASB). If you stop and consider the beginning of verse 3, you might wonder if John means *our* love *for* God or *His* love *for* us. Kenneth Wuest sheds some light on the phrase by deciphering the Greek for us. He writes, “In the expression “the love of God,” we have the objective genitive, in which the noun in the genitive case (God), receives the action of the noun of action (love). Thus, we are to understand that John means “the love for God.”<sup>1</sup> The NIV translated it, “This is love for God: to obey his commands.” Similarly, the HCSB translated the phrase, “For this is what love for God is: to keep His commands.” Based on this helpful information, how does the beginning of verse 3 simplify life for us?

It helps us narrow down and get at the most important thing—my love for God will show when I obey His commands.

- a. How is the beginning of verse 3 tied to what John had just said in verse 2? The end of verse 2 talks about loving God and keeping His commandments and that’s exactly how John begins verse 3. Our love for God is seen in keeping His commandments. We show love for Him by doing the things He loves and lining ourselves up with Him.

6. What do you learn about God’s commands according to the end of verse 3? They are not burdensome!

- a. Why is it important for us to remember this crucial aspect of obedience? It’s important because we often think obeying the Lord is a burden. We find our obedience tiresome. Oh, what folly and ingratitude when that is the frame of our hearts! It’s important when we are asked to do something we don’t want to do or that we find hard to do so that we can reframe our hearts and see our obedience as a privilege and not unreasonable.

“Disobedience to God’s will is a tragedy—but so is reluctant, grudging obedience. God does not want us to disobey Him, but neither does He want us to obey out of fear or necessity. What Paul wrote about *giving* also applies to *living*: “not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7, nasb).

What is the secret of *joyful* obedience? It is to recognize that obedience is a family matter. We are serving a loving Father and helping our brothers and sisters in Christ. We have been born of God, we love God, and we love God’s children. And we demonstrate this love by keeping God’s commandments.” [Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*. Vol. 13. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.]

- b. Now compare Matthew 11:28-30 with Matthew 23:4; and Acts 15:10 with Galatians 2:4 to see further why and how this statement in 1 John 5:3 is true.

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<sup>1</sup>Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*. Vol. 13. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.



**Matthew 11:28-30** "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. *"For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*

**Matthew 23:4** "They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger. *Men's commands/ways are heavy and weigh us down, but God's commands are easy and light. They will bring rest for our souls.*

**Acts 15:10** "Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?"

**Galatians 2:4** But it was because of the false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage. *We cannot bear the burden of men's systems or commands to seek God's favor.*

God's commandments are not burdensome. The ways that man comes up with for spirituality, access to God, to please Him all place extra burdens on us and don't lead us to peace or comfort. They usher in constraints, pressure, fear, and frustration.

7. Look up the verses that follow to discover God's provision and purpose toward us, so our obedience is not a burden to our souls: Galatians 5:1; Ephesians 2:10; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 8:10; 2 Peter 1:3-4; 1 John 4:13, 18; 5:14-15, 20.

**Galatians 5:1** It was for freedom that *Christ set us free*; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

**Ephesians 2:10** *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.*

**2 Timothy 3:16-17** All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so *that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

**Hebrews 8:10** "FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: *I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS, AND I WILL WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS. AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.*

**2 Peter 1:3-4** seeing that *His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.*

**1 John 4:13** By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because *He has given us of His Spirit.*

**1 John 4:18** There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because *fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.*

**1 John 5:14-15** This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, *He hears us*. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

**1 John 5:20** And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that *we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true*, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

“His commandments are not a burden but a privilege and an opportunity to show our love. The commandments of Christ are indeed difficult; but burdensome they are not, for Christ never laid a commandment on anyone without giving strength to carry it; and every commandment laid upon us provides another chance to show our love. ~William Barclay<sup>2</sup>

“Anything that makes us think that God’s will is burdensome is of the spirit of the world against which we have to fight. If, for instance, we are tempted to think that the restrictions of God’s law—His commandments and precepts—are too stringent, it is the spirit of the world that tempts us to think so, for “His commandments are not burdensome” to those who truly love Him. It is only to the rebellious world that the restrictions of God appear to be too stringent, or that the commands of Christ become burdensome.” ~Charles Spurgeon<sup>3</sup>

8. What does it tell you about your own heart, if you do find yourself complaining and chafing against God’s commands? See 1 John 1:6; 2:4-5, 15-17; 3:10; 4:18; 5:3a; Revelation 2:4. What is the solution? See 1 John 1:9; Revelation 2:5.

**1 John 1:6** If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; *If I complain against God’s commands, I am not walking in fellowship with the Lord. I am in darkness and am not practicing the truth.*

**1 John 2:4-5** The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: *If I complain against God’s commands, I am revealing an unbelieving and possibly unsaved heart. If I don’t keep God’s commands then I am a liar.*

**1 John 2:15-17** Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. *If I complain against God’s commands, I show that I love the world and that my love for the Father has grown cold or was never there to begin with. The one who does the will of God lives forever—has eternal life.*

**1 John 3:10** By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. *If I complain against God’s*

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<sup>2</sup>Barclay, William. 2002. *The Letters of John and Jude*. 3rd ed. The New Daily Study Bible. Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press.

<sup>3</sup>Spurgeon, Charles. 2014. *Spurgeon Commentary: 1 John*. Edited by Elliot Ritzema. Spurgeon Commentary Series. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

commands, I reveal my parentage. Even if I am a believer that is in sin, I still reveal my allegiance to my former master, rather than to my dear Father.

**1 John 4:18** There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. *If I complain against God's commands, I am not walking in God's love and am not being perfected.*

**1 John 5:3a** For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. *If I complain against God's commands, I am see the Lord and this life wrongly. I am certainly not prizing it as the privilege that it is.*

**Revelation 2:4** 'But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. *If I complain against God's commands, I show the true state of my heart and have left my first love.*

The solution? *If I complain against God's commands, I must confess and repent of my sins, which are so grievous!*

**1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

**Revelation 2:5** 'Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.

“Love-prompted obedience finds that God’s commandments are not a crushing burden which exhausts one’s strength and destroys the sense of freedom in Christ. The believer finds that the new life in Christ implants in him a desire to do the will of God and finds that love makes obedience to His commands rewarding, for he realizes that God has given His laws for his own protection and true well-being. He finds in them guidance concerning “what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom. 12:2 NASB). For him ‘the statutes again become songs, and the commandments prove to be the stepping-stones to freedom.’” ~D. Edmond Hiebert<sup>4</sup>

9. What amazing truth is proclaimed in 1 John 5:4? How can that be true? See John 16:33; Romans 8:37; 2 Corinthians 2:14; 1 John 4:4.

Whatever is born of God overcomes the world! Whoa!

How can it be true? It is true because Jesus has overcome the world by His death on the cross. Through Him we also conquer/are victorious. In fact, the Lord Jesus leads us in victory! The Holy Spirit who resides in all believers helps us to be victorious for He is greater than the evil one.

**John 16:33** “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

**Romans 8:37** But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

**2 Corinthians 2:14** But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.

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<sup>4</sup>Hiebert, D. Edmond. 1991. *The Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary*. Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press.

**1 John 4:4** You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

10. What is the *ultimate* way in which our faith is victorious over the world? See John 17:24; Romans 2:7.

**John 17:24** "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

**Romans 2:7** to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;

The ultimate way our faith is victorious over the world is going to heaven and being with Jesus—to realize our eternal life in all its completed glory!

11. As if 1 John 5:1-4 wasn't enough to encourage us, John reiterates what he's just said in verse 5. What further encouragement do you learn from verse 5?

The one who overcomes the world is the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

12. Most assuredly, 1 John 5:6-8 has caused confusion as to what John is getting at in this section. Let's take it slow to discover just what John means. What do you learn about Jesus according to 1 John 5:6?

**1 John 5:6** This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.

Jesus came by water and blood.

Jesus did not come by water only.

The Holy Spirit testifies that this is true because He is true and always speaks what is true.

13. Now, let's identify what John means by *water* and *blood*. As you look at the following verses to understand what John is saying about the *water* and *blood*, consider *when* these events took place in Jesus' ministry and why they were important. See Matthew 3:13-15; John 1:31-34; Hebrews 9:22; Revelation 1:5; 5:9.

**Matthew 3:13-15** Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him. *Jesus was baptized—water. Jesus came to be baptized with water to fulfill all righteousness.*

**John 1:31-34** "I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water." John testified saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. "I did not recognize Him, but *He who sent me to baptize in water* said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' "I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God." *John the Baptist testifies that he baptized Jesus with water and saw the Spirit descend on Him afterwards.*

**Hebrews 9:22** And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. *Jesus died and shed His blood to obtain forgiveness for us. **Blood.***

**Revelation 1:5** and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood— *Jesus died and gave up His blood to release us from our sins.*

**Revelation 5:9** And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. *Jesus purchased us by His blood.*

*Jesus’ earthly, public ministry **began** with His baptism and **culminated** in His death—from water to blood. Both.*

14. Who testifies about Jesus according to 1 John 5:6? See also Matthew 3:16; John 15:26; 16:13-15; 1 Timothy 3:16.

**1 John 5:6** This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.

The One who testifies about Jesus is the Holy Spirit.

**Matthew 3:16** *After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, Notice the key words in this verse—baptized, water, Spirit descended.*

**John 15:26** “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, *The Holy Spirit of truth testifies about Jesus.*

**John 16:13-15** “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. “He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. “All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you. *The Holy Spirit of truth guides us into truth and discloses the things of God to us. He teaches us what we need to know.*

**1 Timothy 3:16** By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory. *The Holy Spirit vindicates or attests to Jesus’ authority and truthfulness as Savior.*

- a. What is the purpose of someone testifying to something or about someone? See Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15; Matthew 18:16; Hebrews 10:28.

**Deuteronomy 17:6** “On the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses, he who is to die shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.

**Deuteronomy 19:15** “A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.

**Matthew 18:16** "But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED.

**Hebrews 10:28** Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

The purpose of a witness is to protect against false testimony and a vindictive person, which is why a witness is not received unless 2 or 3 corroborate it.

15. What point is being made about the Spirit, water, and blood according to verse 8? See John 8:17.

They all testify that Jesus is the Son of God. The Spirit testifying about Him that He is true, the water at His baptism, the blood shed for sinful man that man could be made right with God. All three testify and agree with God's testimony concerning Jesus.

**John 8:17** "Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true.

16. What does John want to impress upon us by making the argument he does in verse 9? How does this make the evidence all the greater that Jesus being God and Savior, came in the flesh to suffer and die in the place of sinful men?

If we believe men, then we should absolutely believe God for His testimony is greater! God Himself testifies that this was Jesus' purpose and that which He fulfilled. All of which means, we can trust the work of Jesus on our behalf. By turning to the Lord Jesus in faith, we can receive forgiveness of sins and enter into that family relationship with God—to be made holy, and to go to heaven.

17. There is a lot of testifying going on in these verses! Who else testifies that these things are true according to the beginning of verse 10?

The one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God also testifies—it is part of His testimony of faith.

18. What do you learn about anyone who rejects the truths they have been told about Jesus? See 1 John 5:10.

The one who rejects the testimony concerning Jesus being God's Son is saying that God is a liar because they reject what God Himself has said.

19. How does John summarize his testimony in 1 John 5:11-12?

God has given us eternal life which is only through God's Son Jesus Christ. If we have the Son—as Savior and Lord—then we have eternal life.

- a. Summarize what you learn about this incredible gift from John 3:14-16; 5:39-40; 10:27-28; Romans 6:22-23; 1 John 2:25; 5:13, 20.



**John 3:14-16** "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

**John 5:39-40** "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.

**John 10:27-28** "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

**Romans 6:22-23** But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**1 John 2:25** This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life.

**1 John 5:13** These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

**1 John 5:20** And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

Whoever believes in the love gift from the Father, and has turned to the Son in faith, will have eternal life. The Scriptures attest to the Son's ability to give us eternal life. When we follow Jesus, we are safe, and will never perish or be taken from God. When we are freed from sin by Jesus, and grow in holiness, we gain eternal life. We are promised eternal life. We can know for sure that we have this precious gift of eternal life. Jesus Himself is eternal and is life...when we know Him, we gain life and eternity in Him.

20. Why does John spend so much time building the argument about those who testify about Jesus? See 1 John 5:5, 11-12.

**1 John 5:5** Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

**1 John 5:11-12** And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

It's essential we believe the testimony given about Jesus because if we don't, we cannot have eternal life. Only in Jesus can we have forgiveness of sins and eternal life with God.

21. How does John 8:12-18 add insight into John's point in 1 John 5:6-12?

**John 8:12-18** Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life." So the Pharisees said to Him, "You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true." Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. "You judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone. "But even if I do judge, My



judgment is true; for I am not alone in it, but I and the Father who sent Me. "Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true. *"I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me."*

Jesus even used "on the testimony of two or three witnesses" to affirm that His message was authentic. The affirmation that what Jesus was saying is true lends even greater weight to Jesus' call to believe and follow Him. He is God and the only means of salvation.

22. What truths from our lesson stands out to you? Why are they significant to you? The wisdom and genius of the circular reasoning in these verses—the first about how we know we are born of God and the second that those who believe in the Son of God must believe the testimony of the witnesses that Jesus is true and the only Savior. Also, the truth that when we don't believe God, we make Him a liar. This makes unbelief a way bigger deal and helps me see how greatly I offend the Lord when I struggle to believe Him or when I don't believe Him.

"The instrument with which this new nature fights against the world is faith. Faith conquers, first, *by regarding the unseen reward that awaits us*. The world comes and offers pleasure as the reward of sin, but faith says, "There are greater pleasures to be had by abstaining from sin." The world says, "Take this gain today," but faith says, "No, I will put what I have out at interest. There is something infinitely better to be had after this." In its beginning, faith generally works in that way; it despises all the treasures of Egypt and values far more the eternal rewards that Christ has laid up for it in heaven.

But as faith grows, it attains to something better than that, for *it recognizes the unseen Presence that is with us*. The world says, "Come with us, and go our way. We will pat you on the back and say that you are a good fellow, and you will have a fine time if you come with us." But faith says, "I do not care how I appear to your eye, for there is another eye that I can see, but you cannot see. God is looking at me, and I am most of all concerned to be right in His sight." Faith realizes that the newborn nature is in the divine presence, and thus makes God's presence to be just as real and just as vivid as the presence of men. That presence of God altogether outweighs the presence of men. That is a higher position than the one I first mentioned, for faith not only regards the unseen reward that awaits the believer, but faith recognizes the unseen presence of God and is moved by an all-constraining desire to please Him." ~Charles Spurgeon<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Spurgeon, Charles. 2014. *Spurgeon Commentary: 1 John*. Edited by Elliot Ritzema. Spurgeon Commentary Series. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

— 1 John —

Lesson #18 Chapter 5:13-21

Teacher's Guide

In this lesson we'll look at John's final words in his letter to his beloved friends. Just like anyone's last words, John's closing admonitions and encouragements come packed with extra emphasis that call us to take notice. Ask the Lord to help you heed these important truths as you study His Word!

1. Who has John been addressing in his letter? See 1 John 5:13. What was his reason for writing according to verse 13?

John wrote to those who believe. John wrote his letter so they would know they have eternal life. He wanted to give them assurance so they wouldn't be afraid.

- a. What else do you notice from the following verses that goes along with John's purpose in verse 13? See John 20:31; 1 John 1:2; 2:19, 25; 4:9; 5:11, 20?

**John 20:31** but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. *This verse goes along with John's purpose in proclaiming what is true about Jesus so they would know, believe, and trust in Jesus and have eternal life.*

**1 John 1:2** and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us. *This verse goes along with John's purpose in showing them the truth about how to gain eternal life.*

**1 John 2:19** They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us. *This verse goes along with John's purpose in showing who is true and who is not.*

**1 John 2:25** This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life. *This verse goes along with John's purpose by reminding us of God's promise that eternal life is in His Son, Jesus.*

**1 John 4:9** By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. *This verse goes along with John's purpose that eternal life comes through Jesus who was sent by God.*

**1 John 5:11** And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. *This verse goes along with John's purpose in showing that God has given us eternal life that is in His Son.*

**1 John 5:20** And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. *This verse goes along with John's purpose that we would know and understand what is true and gain eternal life.*

2. What comfort do you gain from John's encouragement in 1 John 5:13 when life is hard, when you are tempted and beleaguered by sin, when you feel you are failing the Lord in every area of your life, when you are accused by others, or when you are threatened by

false teaching? You don't have to answer all those scenarios specifically, though you're more than welcome to do so if you want! What I would like is for you to consider how John's reassurance sustains and helps you in times of difficulty.

It is such a comfort to read in God's Word the truth about salvation, what it looks like, and what it rests upon—Jesus' righteousness, not my own. This helps me when I am struggling and feel discouraged with myself. I just love that God wants us to know that we have eternal life. He doesn't want us to just guess. He wants us to know and be strengthened by it.

3. In verses 14-15 John continues ministering to the hearts of his readers, which includes us. In verse 14, what *confidence* do we have? What are the parameters of that *carte blanche* statement?

The confidence we have before God Himself is that He hears us. The parameters are that the assurance that God will hear and answer our prayers is that they are *according to His will*.

4. Define *confidence* [Strong's #3954]. John enjoys using this word! What do you learn from how he uses it in 1 John 2:28; 3:21; 4:17; 5:14?

Free and fearful confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance. Wiersbe says it means in this context, "freedom of speech" in relation to prayer.

"The word which John uses for *confidence* is interesting. It is *parrēsia*. Originally, *parrēsia* meant *freedom of speech*, that freedom to speak boldly which exists in a true democracy. Later, it came to mean any kind of confidence. With God, we have freedom of speech. He is always listening, more ready to hear than we are to pray. We never need to force our way into his presence or compel him to pay attention. He is waiting for us to come." [Barclay, William. 2002. The Letters of John and Jude. 3rd ed. The New Daily Study Bible. Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press.]

**1 John 2:28** Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. *In this context, confidence means boldness and an assurance to be in God's presence.*

**1 John 3:21** Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; *In this context, confidence means that when we are not cumbered by condemnation, we have assurance and boldness to be in the Lord's presence.*

**1 John 4:17** By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. *In this context, confidence means that we have confidence that we will not be judged for our sins and failures on the judgment day.*

**1 John 5:14** This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. *In this context, confidence means cheerful courage and boldness in prayer.*

5. How can we be so sure of ourselves when it comes to prayer? See 1 John 3:1-2, 10. We are God's children! Of course, He's going to answer our prayers!

How comforting is that?!

**1 John 3:1-2** See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

**1 John 3:10** By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

6. If we meet the “criteria” of verses 13-14, what do we *know* according to verse 15? The criteria of verses 13-14 is that you believe in the Son of God, have eternal life, and pray according to His will. When we meet the criteria, then we *know* that God hears us in anything and whatever we ask of Him. And, even crazier, we are confident that He will answer us!

7. How should these truths from verses 13-15 impact how you pray? What insights do you gain into God Himself as you think of these verses? If these truths haven’t already prompted you to stop and pray for some of the situations in your life, then please stop right now and take your cares to the Lord for His help and provision. Oh goodness! They should immediately and effectively change my prayer life! God loves His children and hears them. He delights to answer and provide for His children.

I am praying right now! Oh, what a privilege!

8. What’s the connection between the assurance of answered prayer and salvation (1 John 5:13-15)?

God’s children know that He will answer their prayers! Salvation means God hears us!

9. First John 5:16-17 is admittedly a bit challenging to understand properly. The first rule of Bible study is to consider the *context*, so we’ll start there. In verses 14-15, John has been discussing God’s faithfulness to answer prayer. Now in verses 16-17, he teaches on a real-life example that his dear children have faced. From 1 John 5:16-17 describe the situation John brings up *as it relates to the context of God answering prayer*.

They appear to be confused about how to pray for someone who is sinning. John encourages them to pray and keep praying for any sinner who needs to repent and believe so they can enter into life—eternal life. However, in the case of someone who sins in such a way that it leads to death then John counsels not to pray—basically because their heart is so hardened that rescue is nigh impossible.

- a. Next, describe what’s happening with the “brother committing a sin” from verses 16-17. Now describe the struggle that the praying brother (the one who *asks*) finds himself in according to verses 16-17.

There are two brothers described here. One brother who is committing a sin not leading to death. And another brother who is committing a sin that leads to death. We know from verse 17 that all

sin is unrighteousness, but John says here that there is still a sin that does not lead to death. Now that's a crazy statement since we know from Romans 6:23 that the wages of sin is death. Yet, John himself has stated that in 1 John 1:9 that when we confess our sins, God forgives us and cleanses us from all unrighteousness.

The praying brother doesn't know how to pray for the one who is sinning. Basically, the praying brother needs discernment to know if the sinning brother is sinning in the regular, forgivable way or whether the sinning brother has reached the point of no return.

b. Now consider what you know about sin. Explain what happens *when anyone* sins. See Romans 2:5; 5:12; 6:23; James 1:15.

**Romans 2:5** But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

**Romans 5:12** Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—

**Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**James 1:15** Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

When anyone sins, wrath is stored up against them and they stand under the judgment of God. All have sinned and all have died spiritually because of their sin, yet when they turn to Jesus then they receive life—eternal life in Jesus Christ.

c. *When anyone* turns to Christ in faith, repenting of their sin, what is the result? See Acts 26:18; Colossians 1:13-14; 1 John 1:9.

**Acts 26:18** to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

**Colossians 1:13-14** For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

**1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

When anyone turns to the Lord Jesus in faith, then they are forgiven of their sins—flat out, no caveats.

d. Look up the following verses and describe the situation where someone's hard-hearted rejection of the Lord's grace and mercy results in judgment, wrath, and eternal damnation. From these verse references, specifically note *what the person*

*knows* about the Lord, *what the person does* with that knowledge, and *what happens as a result of their rejection* and *why*: Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:23-29; 2 Peter 2:20-22; 1 John 2:19.

**Hebrews 6:4-6** For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame. *What the person knows*: they know all about the Lord and His ways and have received good teaching; *what the person does*: yet they have fallen away from the Lord; *what is the result of their rejection*: they are in a state where it is impossible to renew them to repentance.

**Hebrews 10:23-29** Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near. For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? *What the person knows*: they have been in the assembly and have received the knowledge of the truth; *what the person does*: they sin willfully; *what is the result of their rejection*: there is no longer forgiveness of sins open to them. They have hardened their hearts against the Lord.

**2 Peter 2:20-22** For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them. It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire." *What the person knows*: they enjoyed for a time escape from the world and grew in knowledge of the Lord Jesus; *what the person does*: but they became entangled in the world again so that their new situation is worse than their previous one; *what is the result of their rejection*: they are under judgment.

**1 John 2:19** They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us. *What the person knows*: they had been among the believers and had received all the good teaching and fellowship; *what the person does*: they leave the fellowship and go back to the world; *what is the result of their rejection*: it shows that they were never saved to begin with.

- e. Phew! You are close to unraveling this little Scripture quandary! Your persistence brings such joy to the Lord when you puzzle over His Word and study it so you might know and understand it better! To pull everything together, now try to summarize or restate verses 13-17, adding in what you've discovered from question #9a-d.

John is writing to his friends so they would have assurance that their salvation was real. He affirms that believers can trust God to answer prayers they pray that are according to His will. Then he gives an example of times when God might not answer prayer. In the case of a brother who rejects the truth, God Himself, and the fellowship of believers to go back to the world, John says it's not even worth praying for that person because they hardened their heart against the Lord so repeatedly. We can continue to pray for anyone who sins so they would repent and believe whether unto salvation or sanctification. The sin that leads to death is the heinous sin of hardening the heart and rejecting the truth after experiencing the light and life of Christian teaching and fellowship. All other sins will be forgiven when repented of.

- f. Next, you can read Dr. Jack Hughes' short article about these verses, which is attached to this lesson. I think you'll find it helpful, especially after you worked so hard to figure out what John wants you to know and understand when it comes to being sure of your salvation and the rights and privileges that stem from it.  
Super helpful!

10. In verse 18, what do you learn about the one who is "born of God"? Now look at 1 John 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4.

**1 John 5:18: 18** We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him. *The one who is born of God doesn't practice sin. God keeps him and helps him not to sin. He is so protected by God that the evil one can't touch him.*

**1 John 3:9: 9** No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. *The one who is born of God does not practice sin because he belongs to the Lord and is His child. He's going to be like God.*

**1 John 4:7: 7** Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. *The one who is born of God loves and knows God and loves the brethren.*

**1 John 5:1: 1** Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. *The one who is born of God believes that Jesus is the Messiah, God's Son, and loves the Father and His children.*

**1 John 5:4: 4** For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. *The one who is born of God overcomes the world because he lives by faith!*

11. When you read in verse 18 that no one who is born of God sins, what *other* truths must you keep in mind? See 1 John 1:8-10; 3:7-10.



**1 John 1:8-10: 8** *If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9* If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

**10** *If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. Saying we have not sinned reveals our true spiritual state that we are not saved. Believers all know they are sinners and need Jesus!*

**1 John 3:7-10: 7** Little children, make sure no one deceives you; *the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; 8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. 9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 10* By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. *Notice the word "practice" which give insight and balance on this discussion about sin. Believers don't want to "practice" or continue in sin, though they may be caught up in sin.*

- a. Why would John make such broad statements, like he does in verse 18 and throughout the book, when he's writing to *encourage* his beloved children? As you answer, remember the believers have been struggling with false teachers (1 John 4:1) and "professed" believers who defect from the faith (1 John 2:19). John is giving his friends the tools they need to discern true believers from false professors. It is encouraging to have these "diagnostic" tools when working with people in the church. Much confusion is cleared up when we understand these truths. The sweeping truths get past all the gray area/details that can get in the way. We need to learn to ask and watch for those who believe in Jesus, turn away from sin, and love the brethren.

12. From verse 18, who is the one who *keeps* (ESV *protects*; NIV *keeps him safe*) believers? What else do you learn about our keeping from the following verses? See John 17:12, 15-16; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24; Revelation 3:10.

From verse 18 we read these words, "He [Jesus] who was born of God keeps him [the believer]."

**John 17:12: 12** *"While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled. Here Jesus is the One keeping believers—specifically here it is the disciples.*

**John 17:15-16: 15** *"I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. 16* *"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Here Jesus asks the Father to keep believers.*

**1 Peter 1:5: 5** *who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Here we see that believers are protected by God's power.*

**Jude 24: 24** *Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy. Here it appears to be referring to God the Father who is able to keep you.*

**Revelation 3:10: 10** *'Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Here Jesus says He will keep believers from the hour of testing.*

No matter what, we know that the believer is kept by God. That's a fact!

Just a note: The NKJV misses when it translates this phrase as “he who has been born of God keeps himself.” The better reading for the phrase can be found in the NASB, ESV, HCSB, or NIV. In his commentary, D. Edmond Hiebert writes, “In support of the view that the expression refers to Christ is the fact that the keeping or protection of the believer is a task that the Fourth Gospel assigns to Christ.”

13. What absolute truth is presented at the end of verse 18 that should encourage every believer? This holds true even though we experience what reality according to verse 19? The evil one does not touch the believer because the Lord Jesus holds us/keeps us. This reality holds true even though the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

14. How can we counter any fears we might have about the power Satan or his demons have to harm us? See Romans 16:20; Ephesians 6:11-17; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 1 John 2:13-14.

**Romans 16:20: 20** The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. *We can counter our fears by remembering God's power to crush Satan. The Lord is mighty—Satan has nothing on God!*

**Ephesians 6:11-17: 11** Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. **12** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. **13** Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. **14** Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, **15** and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; **16** in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. **17** And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. *We can counter our fears by remembering that God has given us His armor for the fight in this Satan-dominated world.*

**James 4:7: 7** Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. *We can counter our fears by remembering that if we lean on the Lord and resist the devil, he will flee!*

**1 Peter 5:8-9: 8** Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. **9** But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. *We can counter our fears by remembering that we can resist the evil one, just like all believers do.*

**1 John 2:13-14: 13** I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father. **14** I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one. *We can counter our fears by remembering that when we know the Lord, abiding in Him and He in us, that we overcome the evil one.*

We speak what is true from the Scriptures to comfort our hearts.

“The Christian has an active enemy, but he has also a watchful guardian.” ~B. F. Westcott<sup>1</sup>

15. How does John sum up what he wants his dear children to know and understand in 1 John 5:20?

**1 John 5:20: 20** And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

That the Son of God has come, given us understanding so we would know HIM!!!! That we are in HIM! That He is true! This is eternal life!

16. What further insights do you gain about Him who is *true* from John 1:9; 7:17-18; 17:3; Revelation 15:3; 19:11.

**John 1:9: 9** There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.

**John 7:17-18: 17** “If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself. **18** “He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

**John 17:3: 3** “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

**Revelation 15:3: 3** And they sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, “Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations!

**Revelation 19:11: 11** And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.

Jesus is the TRUE light who enlightens us. Jesus is TRUE—there is no unrighteousness in Him. When we enjoy eternal life in Jesus, we come to know the only TRUE God and the Lord Jesus. All His ways are TRUE. His name is Faithful and True.

17. John lovingly gives one last admonition to his little children. What is it (1 John 5:21)? How does this command naturally follow what John just said about the *true* God? Little children, guard yourself from idols.

Idols are false...they aren't true. Only the Lord is true, and we must follow and love and serve the TRUE God! No idols!

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<sup>1</sup> Barclay, William. 2002. *The Letters of John and Jude*. 3rd ed. The New Daily Study Bible. Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press.

18. What things hang in the balance and are affected when we don't know or abide in the true God or worship Him who is true?

Our salvation hangs in the balance. If we don't know the TRUE One, then we are believing in a false gospel and we are lost.

"It is best to take 'idols' as 'anything which occupies the place due to God' (cf. 1 Thess 1:9). This wider understanding of idolatry fits well with other texts of the New Testament (cf. Eph 5:5; Col 3:5)." ~Daniel Akin<sup>2</sup>

"John was probably not talking about actual idols but about those things that rob Jesus of the worship due him as true God (5:20)" ~Grant Osborne.<sup>3</sup>

"Christians must never be lost in the illusions of idolatrous religion; they must never set up in their hearts an idol which will take the place of God; they must keep themselves from the infections of all false faiths; and they can do that only when they walk with Christ." ~William Barclay<sup>4</sup>

19. What truths from 1 John have impacted you? In what way has your walk with the Lord been fine-tuned by your time in this book?

What hasn't been affected?! Oh my—I have loved my time in this book! I understand it better and see how greatly John desires to comfort, encourage, and strengthen his dear children in the truth. I have been so impacted by what it means to be God's child. Being His child changes everything!

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<sup>2</sup> Akin, Daniel L. 2001. *1, 2, 3 John*. Vol. 38. The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>3</sup> Osborne, Grant, Philip W. Comfort. 2007. *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Vol 13: John and 1, 2, and 3 John*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>4</sup> Barclay, William. 2002. *The Letters of John and Jude*. 3rd ed. The New Daily Study Bible. Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press.

## What is the Sin Not Leading to Death in I Jn. 5:16-17?

by Dr. Jack Hughes

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In 1 John 5:16-17, John, in the preceding context, has just finished saying that if we ask anything according to God's will, God will hear us. Then he gives an example of the kind of prayer that God answers in verses 16-17, "16 *If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this. 17 All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not leading to death.*"

This is a much-debated text, and it contains some interesting statements that have puzzled even the best of scholars. It raises many questions, so let's ask some of them, then I will give you the two best answers and why. We don't have time to cover all the views, so to make things clearer, I will only share the two best views.

Questions that arise when you read this text:

1. *What is the sin leading to death?*
2. *How can you avoid committing the sin leading to death?*
3. *What sins are not the sin leading to death?*
4. *What can you do to help a person if they commit a sin not leading to death?*
5. *How can you tell by looking if a person is committing a sin leading to death or not to death?*
6. *Why shouldn't we make request for the person who commits sin leading to death?*
7. *If the wages of any sin is death, then why does he say "there is a sin not leading to death?"*
8. *What does John mean by death, is he talking about spiritual death or physical death, or both?*
9. *What does the text mean when it says, "God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death?"*
10. *Who is John talking about when he speaks of sin leading to death and sin not leading to death? Are both of these groups believers, or unbelievers, or one of each?*

Those are just some of the questions that the text raises. Those questions don't even include all the grammatical and syntactical questions that have been asked of various portions of the text. I will answer those questions for the two best views.

***Here is what I believe is the second-best view:***

1. The second-best view would understand the sin leading to death as basically any sin that is continued in and not repented of. Do you remember the people in I Corinthians 11 who were taking the Lord's supper in an unworthy manner? Some were struck with sickness, while others were killed by God because they would not repent of their sin (I Corinthians 5).

2. You would avoid the sin leading to death by *not* continuing in any sin with an unrepentant heart.
3. The sin not leading to death would be any sin that a person might be struggling with, but which was repentant about and trying to overcome.
4. You can help a person committing a sin not leading to death by praying for them and asking that God would help them overcome their sin, knowing that as you prayed that is the will of God.
5. You could see if a person was committing a sin not leading to death if you saw genuine repentance in their life.
6. If you did see a person committing a sin leading to death, a sin that they were unwilling to repent of, a sin that caused them to be excommunicated from the church, then you would cease to pray for them knowing that they would be out of the body of Christ and under the judgment of God. (This is a weakness of this view, because when someone continues in sin, even if they are disciplined, we should still pray for their repentance and restoration.)
7. When the text says “there is a sin not leading to death” it is talking about any sin that is confessed to God and repented of, so it does not lead to death.
8. When John mentions death, he is talking about physical death, as the consequences of sin and God’s judgment.
9. When the text says “God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death” it means that God will not punish a believer with physical death if they are faithful to confess and repent of their sin.
10. John is talking about believers in both the sin leading to death and the sin not leading to death.

That is one, legitimate view and a doctrine taught in other places of Scripture that I think holds merit, yet the best view for these verses is the one that follows.

***The best view for the passage, which I think answers the questions we raised about the text, explains what John is communicating about prayer and so fits the context best.***

1. The sin leading to death *is the sin of apostasy*. A person professes to be a Christian, hangs around the saints, hears the gospel completely and thoroughly, then rejects Christianity and gets involved in some sort of aberrant religion. This fits the context of John better. John has already talked about apostates in the near context of I John 2:19, “They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have

remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.”

2. Again, an apostate is a person who has received full revelation about the gospel and has hung around the church and has received as much revelation and experienced the presence of the saints and seen and heard testimonies about the truth, then rejected Christianity and turned away from the faith.
  - a. Let me show you two texts concerning apostates which I believe will help you see why I think this view is the best, and then we will answer the rest of our questions.
    - i. Hebrews 6:4-6 says, “4 For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 and then have fallen away, *it is impossible to renew them again to repentance*, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.”
    - ii. Hebrews 10:23-29, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; 24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near. 26 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, *there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. 28* Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?”
  - b. Second Peter 2:20-22 tells us the last state of an apostate is worse than the first, meaning that in the first state, they are unsaved and yet we can have hope that they might become saved. But the last state—that of an apostate—is someone who is unsaved and has no hope because they have rejected Christ after having seen and heard the truth. For the apostate, the last state has become worse for them than the first.
3. You would avoid committing a sin leading to death by repenting of your sins and being saved.
4. The *only* sin leading to death is the sin of unbelief, and specifically, the sin of apostasy.
5. If a person does commit a sin not leading to death, *which is any sin*, you pray for them.



6. You can see a person committing a sin leading to death if you see them reject Christ and depart from the faith.
7. The reason John says, “I do not request you pray for an apostate” is that there is no hope for them. I don’t think John is saying you can’t pray for them, but remember, that in the verse immediately preceding this text, John talks about praying according to God’s will and God answering your prayer. God says there is no hope for an apostate, so by praying for someone caught in the sin of apostasy you would not be praying according to the will of God.
8. The reason John says “there is a sin not leading to death” is that anyone who has not gone apostate, is either saved or might be saved and therefore it is legitimate to pray for them when they sin.
9. When John talks about death, he is talking about spiritual death leading to the second death, the lake of fire. The apostate, though dead in sin, seals his doom by rejecting the truth he has been thoroughly exposed to, which leads to certain spiritual death and eventually the second death, which is the lake of fire.
10. The text says that by praying for the person committing a sin not leading to death, “God will for him give life.” God both forgives Christians and saves unbelievers who have not gone apostate, giving them life.
11. When John talks about sin leading to death, he is talking about unbelievers who are apostates.