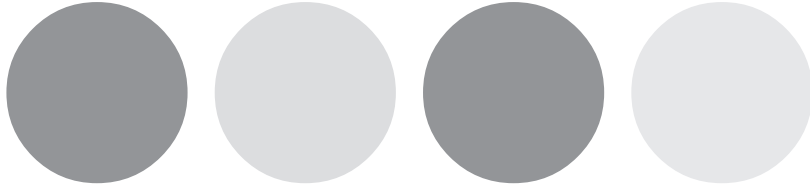
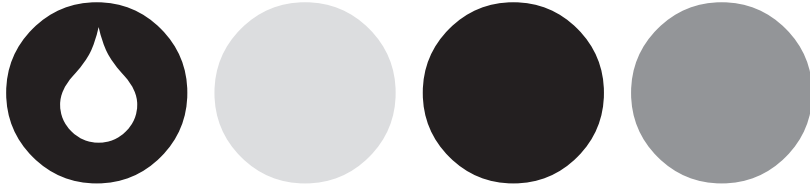
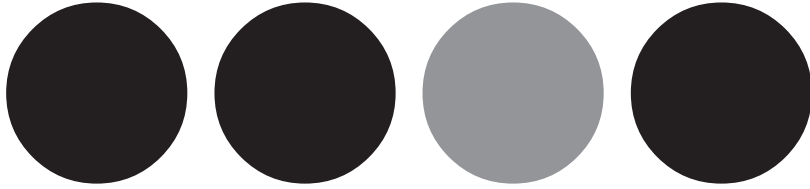


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1 J o h n

Welcome to this study on 1 John!

It was John who wrote of Jesus, “when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.” Our hope is that through this study you will indeed behold Jesus more clearly and become more like him.

This is an inductive study (meaning that the goal is to allow the text to speak for itself, rather than beginning with a topic or too many preconceived notions). We’ll go more into that later.

A few quick tips for getting the most out of this study:

(1) Prepare well: If you will spend 1-3 hours (or more) each week on this, you will really see this book come alive. If you give time to every section, you will become a confident and competent student of the Bible.

(2) Attend Bible study consistently and share: Bible studies are exactly like pot-lucks in that if no one brings anything, they don’t work. Prepare your food (the study), come and share your insights. If your entire study is committed to doing so, it will be an exciting semester. If not, it won’t

(3) Pray before hand: In Proverbs it tells us, “Ears that hear and eyes that see— the LORD has made them both.” Ask God to open your ears and eyes to understand this book. As the Psalmist prayed: “Open my eyes that I might see wonderful things written in your law.”

The only reason we are doing this study is to change the world. If you take this seriously and apply its truths, God will change your life. If God changes your life, you will change the world. That is a promise.

Enjoy!



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1 John format

First, John

John tells us in his gospel that he is writing that we "may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." (1 Jn. 20:31) In other words, he is pretty straightforward: he wants his readers to believe so that they might live. In 1 John he writes, "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life." (1 Jn. 5:13). In other words, he is writing this letter to strengthen the faith of those who have believed. John is a very "Christocentric" writer—Christ is "central." In light of this, take some time to consider the following passages and questions.

John 1:1-18: Why do you think John referred to Jesus as logos (the Word/Idea)?

John 1:1-18: From this passage, who is Jesus? Write specifics.

John 1:1-18: Why do you think the world "did not know him"?

John 1:1-18: Think of a time when an idea of yours became a reality. How does this shed light on the "Word" becoming "flesh"?

John 20:24-29: Do you relate to Thomas? How? What do you think Jesus meant in verse 29?

This study of 1 John will be unique in some aspects and straightforward in others. It will be an *inductive study*, which means that we will primarily be coming to the Scripture with only one agenda: to hear what it says to us. There will be few guiding questions, no topics we are focusing on and no outside commentary included in this study.

We'll go more into that in a bit.

That said, we are including a page called "**First, John.**" (See upper left) As you may know, the apostle John wrote 1 John. He also wrote the gospel of John. John's writings are very unique and he brings a powerful perspective to the topics he writes about. One only needs to compare his gospel to those of Matthew, Mark and Luke to see the unique depth and beauty of his style.

1 John 1:1-4

Read and reread

Read these verses 2 or 3 times just to acquaint yourself with this section. Try to hear the flow and tone.

Connect

Are there any words or how this section relates to its context. Look for connecting phrases ("in," "therefore," "because," "and," and words, phrases and ideas that the section you are studying shares with its context.

Dissect

Express one of all of the components of this section. Make sure you know what it really says. Make 10-20 (or more) short observations here.

Correlate

Are there any other verses/passages that relate to this one? How may remember some or you may see a cross-referencing link. A good rule of thumb is to work your way out when doing this: same book, same chapter, same statement.

Conclude

Review your summary of what this section means. Give your interpretation. Share your work. Make sure your conclusion is biblical and factual.

Collide

What is new? How does this apply to my life? It may be a changed belief or behavior. If so in the format, then it should lead to the future, to some general or specific. There may even be a very specific situation that comes to mind. For instance: "If I am really God's son (1:1) then I should be happy to much about what my non-believing friends of me and I should share the gospel with him/her." Get this section "collide" with your life!

Many of John's themes are seen in his 5 books (the gospel, the three epistles and Revelation). We'll begin with a page of passages from John's other writings (primarily his gospel) that align with some of the themes we are studying that week. You may use this page in one of the following ways:

- (1) As a devotional guide. This can help you to really "live" out of these concepts. Each "First, John" page has 5 sections with a question accompanying it. (We would suggest this option.)
- (2) As a Bible study primer. You may just want to read through each section and consider the question before starting. It will get your mind running on the topic.

Then come the *inductive sections* (pictured at middle and lower left). Inductive study is done under the assumption that there is one "meaning" of a text. It may have various applications, based on whomever is reading it, but it really does "mean" something objective. If we apply some basic tools that allow us to examine the text, we will be able to glean the primary meaning.

Once we've done that, the truths we've studied can begin to change our lives.

Here is an overview of how to complete these 6 sections.

Read and Reread - Each week we want to simply begin by doing a couple quick read-throughs of the passage we're studying. Resist the temptation to stop and ponder, just buzz through the section a couple times. You may want to include the sections before and after the passage to help you gain the context and recognize the

1 J o

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flow. You may also want to read it in a couple different translations, so you get a sense for different ways the words and phrases are translated (the New American Standard and English Standard versions are in the appendix of this study). This should take you about 10-15 minutes.

Connect - Now take a few minutes to build some bridges between the section you are studying and its context. If the section begins with the word “therefore,” find out what it is *there for*. Look for concepts, words, phrases and cause-effect words that the passage shares with its context. For example: what can the way John uses the term “little children” in 2:1 teach us about the meaning of 2:12-14?

Dissect - After establishing the context of the passage, it is time to pull it apart. To dissect is to cut out individual pieces of something for study. In this section you must answer the question *what does this say?* (Observations) That is very different than *what does this mean.* (Interpretations) If someone can challenge your conclusions here, you’ve probably answered *what does this mean.* This is a bit tedious, and you may feel like you are just rewriting the passage. However, like a good detective, you must go through this exercise if you are going to prevent yourself from coming to premature and incorrect conclusions. Pay attention to grammar, cause-effect words, contrasts and comparisons and repetition. You may even phrase some observations in the negative (e.g., “I noticed that he *didn’t* write...”)

Correlate - In the process of gaining insight into a passage, you may want to peruse some other Scripture to see what they teach about the topic. Many Bibles have cross references (the miniscule letters next to some word in your Bible). A concordance can also help in this. Also, you may go to a site like biblegateway.com and enter a word to see where else it appears. The advantage to using a concordance is that you know when you are comparing the same Greek word. A worthy investment. A good rule of thumb in correlation is to work your way out: same book, same author, same testament, whole Bible. Often times authors will use words in similar ways across their writings. Also, the New Testament was written in Greek, while the Old Testament was written in Hebrew and Aramaic. Ultimately, however, the *do* have the same Author.

Conclude - This is the section where you will answer the question *what does this mean?* This is your conclusion. Make sure your conclusions follow from your observations and make them Biblically and logically defensible. If you get stuck (which you probably will) you may take a look at Matthew Henry’s Concise commentary on the book (located in the appendix of this study). This is only a tool, but it might help to get someone else’s perspective.

Collide - If this study doesn’t change your life, it was a waste of time. That is serious. If you are doing this just so you will *know* more, it may be a step backward. You know the whole bit about equal and opposite reactions. There should be a real response to this. Maybe your thinking does need to change. Maybe it is a behavior. Maybe it is something you are doing that you shouldn’t. Maybe it is something you aren’t doing that you should. Maybe it is an issue of your heart. Maybe you just aren’t characterized by something. We predict that no one who studies 1 John can come away unscathed.

That is it. We really pray that this will change your life; that you will know Jesus better because of it and will become more like Him.

1 J o

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Introduction to 1 John

John and his life

“The other apostles were dead, but John remained—the last living intimate friend of Jesus. The aged apostle was living in Ephesus, a port city Paul first evangelized four decades earlier. John regarded the Christians in every town within a hundred miles as his personal responsibility, and now a clique of pseudo-Christian teachers was wreaking confusion in John’s flock. His response was a letter sent to each church in the province of Asia, the letter we call 1 John.”

Timeline

Jesus’ public ministry	28-30 AD
John an apostle in Jerusalem	30-70
Jewish rebellion	66-70
Romans destroy Jerusalem, Christians flee	70
John in Ephesus	70-95
Domitian is Emperor of Rome	81-96
Gospel of John is written	85-90
Epistles of John written	90-95
Domitian persecutes Christians; John is exiled to the island of Patmos and writes Revelation	95-96
John in Ephesus until his death	96-100 ¹

Occasion and Purpose

John tells us that he is writing to these believers that they may “know that [they] have eternal life.” The word “know” is used throughout and is significant.

Much of 1 John is written in response to false, *synchronistic* teachings; especially *gnosticism* (*gnosis* means “knowledge” in Greek).

To “synchronize” is to fuse or combine, thus synchronistic teachings were the melding of eastern spiritual philosophies with orthodox Christian doctrine.

Gnosticism was one such synchronism. Here’s the basic gist of gnosticism:

“Gnostics stressed salvation through ‘knowledge’ (Greek *gnosis*). They saw themselves as privileged individuals who, unlike others, had been granted divine insight into their heavenly origin and hoped at death to be released from the prison of their bodies and to be reunited with God in heaven. They affirmed a sharp dualism between spirit and matter. The origins of the movement are disputed and there is no evidence of clearly defined Gnostic systems of thought in the first century. (Gnostic texts, as well as critiques by Christian writers such as Irenaeus, survive from the second century.) But the tendencies that emerged more clearly in the second century may have already influenced people in the first. Characteristic implications of Gnostic dualism included the ideas that:

- the divine Christ could not possibly get himself entangled with human flesh, which is inherently evil.
- since salvation means deliverance from the material world—including the body—it makes no difference how people behave in their earthly lives.”²

As you read through 1 John, look for John’s arguments against Gnosticism.

- *Did Christ really come in the flesh?*
- *How do we know if we are truly enlightened or have knowledge?*

¹The above information comes from the introduction to “1, 2 & 3 John” in the NavPress *Life Change Series* © 1988

²The above information comes from the IVP book *Exploring the New Testament: A Guide to the Letters & Revelation* edited by Marshall, Travis & Paul © 2002

first, **John**

Take a few minutes to consider each of the following five passages with their accompanying questions. You may want to incorporate these into your daily devotion or just spend some time considering them before you prepare your study. Our hope is that these will help you to gain a fuller understanding of John and his writings and that you will be able to really “live out of” these things.

Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11 - *What might we learn about John from when Jesus first called him?*

Mark 3:13-19; Luke 9:51-56 - *Why do you think Jesus might have called John a “Son of Thunder”?*

Matthew 17:1-13 - *How do you think this experience would have affected you, if you were John?*

John 13:23; 20:1,2; 21:7, 20 - *What do you think is the significance of John referring to himself as the disciple “whom Jesus loved.” Finish the following sentence: “I am the disciple whom ...”*

John 20:30-31 - *What was John’s motivation in writing the book of John? What might that tell us about his motives in writing his letters?*

1 J O h n survey

When you receive a letter from a loved one, what is the first thing you do? You probably read it from start to finish. This is exactly how you should begin an inductive study.

Read 1 John 2 or 3 times (preferably in multiple translations).

Each time, try to avoid stopping. Just read it through. Do make sure to keep your mind engaged though—don't just go through the motions.

After reading through the book, complete the following steps:

Step 1 - Answer the following questions

What is the tone of the book?

What words, phrases or ideas were repeated throughout the book?

Step 2 - Give titles

The following sections are somewhat arbitrary, though they reflect a change in idea. In an effort to gain an idea of the major topics in the letter, give these sections titles.

1:1 - 4 _____

1:5 - 2:11 _____

2:12 - 14 _____

2:15 - 17 _____

2:18 - 27 _____

2:28 - 3:10 _____

3:11 - 24 _____

4:1 - 6 _____

4:7 - 5:5 _____

5:6 - 12 _____

5:13 - 21 _____

1 J O

h n survey [continued]

Step 3 - Discover the purpose statements

Ten different times John writes "I write ... because/so." This is John explaining his purposes for writing. Find those 10 times and record them here.

- (1) _____
- (2) _____
- (3) _____
- (4) _____
- (5) _____
- (6) _____
- (7) _____
- (8) _____
- (9) _____
- (10) _____

How would you sum up John's overall purpose? _____

Step 4 - Outline

Use the space below and/or on the back of this sheet to make a general outline of the book.

first, John

John tells us in his gospel that he is writing that we “may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” (Jn. 20:31) In other words, he is pretty straightforward: he wants his readers to believe so that they might live. In 1 John he writes, “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.” (1 Jn 5: 13). In other words, he is writing this letter to strengthen the faith of those who have believed. John is a very “Christocentric” writer—Christ is “central.” In light of this, take some time to consider the following passages and questions.

John 1:1-18: Why do you think John referred to Jesus as logos (the Word/Idea)?

John 1:1-18: From this passage, who is Jesus? Write specifics.

John 1:1-18: Why do you think the world “did not know him”?

John 1:1-18: Think of a time when an idea of yours became a reality. How does this shed light on the “Word” becoming “flesh”?

John 20:24-29: Do you relate to Thomas? How? What do you think Jesus meant in verse 29?

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1:1-4

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Read and reread

Read this section 2 or 3 times just to become acquainted with them. Try to hear the flow and tone.

Connect

Jot down a few notes on how this section relates to its context. Look for connecting phrases (“so,” “therefore,” “because,” etc.) and words, phrases and ideas that the section you are studying shares with its context.

Where else in 1 John does John write about his purpose in writing?

Dissect

Separate out all of the components of this section. Make sure you know what it really says. Make 10 - 20 (or more!) strict observations below.

What does John tell us about why he is writing?

Correlate

Are there any other verses/passages that relate to this one? You may remember some or you may use a cross-referencing tool. A good rule of thumb is to work your way out when doing this: same book, same author, same testament.

John 20:24-29

Conclude

Record your summary of what this section means. Give your interpretation. Show your work. Make sure your conclusion is biblical and logical.

Why might John be emphasizing the fact that they experienced Jesus through the senses (sight and touch)?

Collide

Ask yourself, "How does this apply to my life?" It may be a changed belief or behavior. If it is the former, then it should lead to the latter. Go from general to specific. There may even be a very specific situation that comes to mind. For instance: "If I am really God's son (3:1) then I shouldn't worry so much about what my roommate thinks of me and I should share the gospel with him/her." Let this section "collide" with your life!

first, John

Light is a prominent symbol in John's writing. We first encounter this in 1 John 1:5-2:2. First, spend some time exploring John's use of light in Jesus' teachings.

John 1:1-13: Why is Jesus referred to as "the light of men"? What are some things that characterize light and what do you think light symbolizes here?

John 1:1-13: The word "understand" in verse 5 can be translated in a few ways: understand, comprehend, overcome. What do you think it means that the darkness has not "overcome" the light? What do you think it means that the darkness has not "understood"/"comprehended" the light?

John 3:16-21: How does Jesus refer to light as testimony or evidence? (I.e., if light were a piece of evidence in God's courtroom, how would it be used to judge people's lives—according to this section.)

John 8:12: What do you think it means to walk in light/darkness?

John 9:5; 12:34-36, 46: Here Jesus emphasizes His imminent departure. Now that Jesus is no longer on the earth, where does light come from? Who is the "light of the world" now?

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1:5-2:2***Read and reread***

Read this section 2 or 3 times just to become acquainted with them. Try to hear the flow and tone.

Connect

Jot down a few notes on how this section relates to its context. Look for connecting phrases ("so," "therefore," "because," etc.) and words, phrases and ideas that the section you are studying shares with its context.

Dissect

Separate out all of the components of this section. Make sure you know what it really says. Make 10 - 20 (or more!) strict observations below.

Record the if/then type statements (cause and effect).

Correlate

Are there any other verses/passages that relate to this one? You may remember some or you may use a cross-referencing tool. A good rule of thumb is to work your way out when doing this: same book, same author, same testament.

John 8:31-32

Conclude

Record your summary of what this section means. Give your interpretation. Show your work. Make sure your conclusion is biblical and logical.

Collide

Ask yourself, "How does this apply to my life?" It may be a changed belief or behavior. If it is the former, then it should lead to the latter. Go from general to specific. There may even be a very specific situation that comes to mind. For instance: "If I am really God's son (3:1) then I shouldn't worry so much about what my roommate thinks of me and I should share the gospel with him/her." Let this section "collide" with your life!

Can a Christian take sin lightly? Do you?

first, John

1 John has some very challenging teachings, possibly this is because of how challenged John was by Jesus' teachings. Spend some time hearing from Jesus on the topic of love and obedience.

John 14:15-24: What is the connection between love and obedience?

John 14:15-24: What is an area of your life where you can demonstrate your love for Jesus through obedience? (Remember, love is typically measured by costliness!)

John 15:1-17: What does it mean to "bear fruit"?

John 15:1-17: What is Jesus' definition of "obedience"?

John 13:34-35: What is "new" about Jesus' commandment to love?

1 J o h n

2:3-11

Read and reread

Read this section 2 or 3 times just to become acquainted with them. Try to hear the flow and tone.

Connect

Jot down a few notes on how this section relates to its context. Look for connecting phrases (“so,” “therefore,” “because,” etc.) and words, phrases and ideas that the section you are studying shares with its context.

Knowing and being assured are a big part of this letter. You see that in 2:3 -5. Where else do you see this in 1 John?

Dissect

Separate out all of the components of this section. Make sure you know what it really says. Make 10 - 20 (or more!) strict observations below.

Correlate

Are there any other verses/passages that relate to this one? You may remember some or you may use a cross-referencing tool. A good rule of thumb is to work your way out when doing this: same book, same author, same testament.

John 15:1-17

James 2:14-26

Conclude

Record your summary of what this section means. Give your interpretation. Show your work. Make sure your conclusion is biblical and logical.

Collide

Ask yourself, "How does this apply to my life?" It may be a changed belief or behavior. If it is the former, then it should lead to the latter. Go from general to specific. There may even be a very specific situation that comes to mind. For instance: "If I am really God's son (3:1) then I shouldn't worry so much about what my roommate thinks of me and I should share the gospel with him/her." Let this section "collide" with your life!

What do you think it means to "walk in the same way in which [Jesus] walked"?

first, **John**

Are you in or out? You may know, but do you “KNOW”? When gnostics taught, it always sowed seeds of spiritual discontent. “Am I in?” “Am I in in?” Hierarchies, competition, envy and discouragement followed. John wanted to let his readers know one truth: if you know Jesus, you’re as in as in gets and you know all there is to know. Where did he get this? From Jesus Himself.

John 14:1-21: What do you think it means that Jesus has gone to prepare a place for you in His Father’s house?

John 14:1-21: What does it mean to you that Jesus “will not leave you as [an] orphan”?

John 16:27-33: How does Jesus describe our relationship with the Father through Him?

John 16:27-33: What hope does it give you that Jesus has “overcome the world”?

John 3:19; 5:41-44; 7:13; 12:42, 43: How does the love of the world and the things of the world (“the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions.”) affect our relationship to Christ and the Father?

1 J O h n

2:12-17

Read and reread

Read this section 2 or 3 times just to become acquainted with them. Try to hear the flow and tone.

Connect

Jot down a few notes on how this section relates to its context. Look for connecting phrases (“so,” “therefore,” “because,” etc.) and words, phrases and ideas that the section you are studying shares with its context.

How has John used “children” or “little children” elsewhere?

Dissect

Separate out all of the components of this section. Make sure you know what it really says. Make 10 - 20 (or more!) strict observations below.

There is a difference between an *indicative* statement and an *imperative* statement. The former is a statement of fact, while the latter is a command to do something. What types of statements are 12-14?

Correlate

Are there any other verses/passages that relate to this one? You may remember some or you may use a cross-referencing tool. A good rule of thumb is to work your way out when doing this: same book, same author, same testament.

Conclude

Record your summary of what this section means. Give your interpretation. Show your work. Make sure your conclusion is biblical and logical.

Collide

Ask yourself, "How does this apply to my life?" It may be a changed belief or behavior. If it is the former, then it should lead to the latter. Go from general to specific. There may even be a very specific situation that comes to mind. For instance: "If I am really God's son (3: 1) then I shouldn't worry so much about what my roommate thinks of me and I should share the gospel with him/her." Let this section "collide" with your life!

Why does what we love matter so much? In what ways do you love the world and the things of the world?

Believing in Christ is a dominant theme in John, and Jesus goes on to emphasize abiding. What does that mean? Take some time to meditate on Jesus' teachings on the matter. Hopefully it will enlighten you as you encounter these topics in 1 John.

John 8:12-59: How does one's perspective on Christ explain their relationship to God?

John 12:1-6: How would you describe the difference between Mary's view of Jesus and that of Judas? What do you think ultimately led Judas to betray Jesus?

John 8:31, 32: Look up "abide" ("hold to" [NIV], "continue"[NASB]) in a dictionary. Why do you think it is important not only to believe but to abide in Christ?

John 14:16-26; 15:25-27; 16:4-10: What do you think are some of the primary roles of the Holy Spirit in your life?

John 6:22-71: What, in your opinion, was the main difference between the former disciples (described in verse 66) and the 12?

1 J O**h n**
2:18-28; 4:1-6***Read and reread***

Read this section 2 or 3 times just to become acquainted with them. Try to hear the flow and tone.

Connect

Jot down a few notes on how this section relates to its context. Look for connecting phrases (“so,” “therefore,” “because,” etc.) and words, phrases and ideas that the section you are studying shares with its context.

Dissect

Separate out all of the components of this section. Make sure you know what it really says. Make 10 - 20 (or more!) strict observations below.

Correlate

Are there any other verses/passages that relate to this one? You may remember some or you may use a cross-referencing tool. A good rule of thumb is to work your way out when doing this: same book, same author, same testament.

Matthew 24:3-8

John 15:18-25

Galatians 1:6-9; 3:1-3

Philippians 3:2-3; 3:17-4:1

Colossians 2:6-23

1 Timothy 6:20, 21

2 Timothy 4:9-15

2 Peter 2

Conclude

Record your summary of what this section means. Give your interpretation. Show your work. Make sure your conclusion is biblical and logical.

Collide

Ask yourself, "How does this apply to my life?" It may be a changed belief or behavior. If it is the former, then it should lead to the latter. Go from general to specific. There may even be a very specific situation that comes to mind. For instance: "If I am really God's son (3:1) then I shouldn't worry so much about what my roommate thinks of me and I should share the gospel with him/her." Let this section "collide" with your life!

You are susceptible to deception. How can you avoid the pitfalls of false teachings and not be deceived?

Abiding in Christ means not abiding in other things. Continuing on this topic, explore more deeply what it means to abide in Christ and not elsewhere.

John 6:35-59: What do you think Jesus meant in verse 56?

John 15:1-17: Earlier you looked “abide” up in a dictionary. What is Jesus’ definition of “abide”?

John 15:1-16: What does abiding look like—how can you abide? What are the inevitable results?

John 15:18-25: What are some things that are encouraging about the fact that the world hated Jesus and did not recognize who He was?—God incarnate!

John 17:6-19: What does it mean to be “in” the world but not “of” the world?

1 J O**h n**
2:28-3:10***Read and reread***

Read this section 2 or 3 times just to become acquainted with them. Try to hear the flow and tone.

Connect

Jot down a few notes on how this section relates to its context. Look for connecting phrases (“so,” “therefore,” “because,” etc.) and words, phrases and ideas that the section you are studying shares with its context.

Dissect

Separate out all of the components of this section. Make sure you know what it really says. Make 10 - 20 (or more!) strict observations below.

What event does it say will make us “become like Him”?

Correlate

Are there any other verses/passages that relate to this one? You may remember some or you may use a cross-referencing tool. A good rule of thumb is to work your way out when doing this: same book, same author, same testament.

Conclude

Record your summary of what this section means. Give your interpretation. Show your work. Make sure your conclusion is biblical and logical.

What does it mean that “when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.”?

What are “the works of the devil” and in what ways did Jesus “destroy” them?

Collide

Ask yourself, “How does this apply to my life?” It may be a changed belief or behavior. If it is the former, then it should lead to the latter. Go from general to specific. There may even be a very specific situation that comes to mind. For instance: “If I am really God’s son (3: 1) then I shouldn’t worry so much about what my roommate thinks of me and I should share the gospel with him/her.” Let this section “collide” with your life!

What is the power of identity and hope in obedience?

The Beatles said it: "All you need is love." If there is one virtue that almost everyone would esteem, it's love. If there is one thing almost everyone would ascribe to God it is that He is a loving God. These things are true, but love, like many words, can mean a lot of things. How did Jesus love? How did He define love? Let's find out.

John 13:1-20: What do you think it means that Jesus "loved them to the end"?

John 13:1-20: What does it mean for you to "wash one another's feet"? How are you doing in this?

John 13:31-35: Why is God glorified in Christ's love?

John 13:34:35: Jesus said, "as I have loved you, you also must love one another." How did Jesus love us? How do we love "as" he has loved us?

John 15:9-17: We tend to want to translate "abide in my love" as a command to be constantly aware of Jesus' love for us. However, in context, this seems to be an injunction for us to love others. If you translate this "let your life be lived in the type of love that I had for you," what are some specific situations where you could better "abide in his love"?

1**J****o****h n**
3:11-24***Read and reread***

Read this section 2 or 3 times just to become acquainted with them. Try to hear the flow and tone.

Connect

Jot down a few notes on how this section relates to its context. Look for connecting phrases ("so," "therefore," "because," etc.) and words, phrases and ideas that the section you are studying shares with its context.

Dissect

Separate out all of the components of this section. Make sure you know what it really says. Make 10 - 20 (or more!) strict observations below.

Correlate

Are there any other verses/passages that relate to this one? You may remember some or you may use a cross-referencing tool. A good rule of thumb is to work your way out when doing this: same book, same author, same testament.

Genesis 4:1-16

Matthew 5:21-26

John 15:18-27

Conclude

Record your summary of what this section means. Give your interpretation. Show your work. Make sure your conclusion is biblical and logical.

Collide

Ask yourself, "How does this apply to my life?" It may be a changed belief or behavior. If it is the former, then it should lead to the latter. Go from general to specific. There may even be a very specific situation that comes to mind. For instance: "If I am really God's son (3:1) then I shouldn't worry so much about what my roommate thinks of me and I should share the gospel with him/her." Let this section "collide" with your life!

What seemed to be Cain's motive? How does a competitive spirit prevent us from looking to others needs?

What is an area where you need to stop viewing others with envy or competitiveness so that you can be freed to love?

God is fearless. There isn't anything that He's afraid of. Therefore, His love is perfect. What does fear have to do with love? Consider what risks loving involves, and some examples of fearless love.

John 3:16-17: Why is it important to know that God was the initiator in our relationship of love—by sending His Son?

John 4:1-46: What kind of woman was this? How did Jesus love her? What did Jews think about Samaritans back then? How did Jesus love this town of Samaritans?

John 10:7-18: What makes Jesus the "Good Shepherd"?

John 21:15-19: What are the three commands of Jesus to Peter? What are they all based on? Thinking about the John 10 passage, how do you think Jesus is asking Peter to love as He loved?

John 12:1-8: How was Mary's act a demonstration of "fearless love" for Jesus?

1 J o h n

4:7-21

Read and reread

Read this section 2 or 3 times just to become acquainted with them. Try to hear the flow and tone.

Connect

Jot down a few notes on how this section relates to its context. Look for connecting phrases (“so,” “therefore,” “because,” etc.) and words, phrases and ideas that the section you are studying shares with its context.

The word “love” is used 26 times in 1 John. There are 105 verses in the entire book, so that means love is mentioned nearly every 4 verses. Go through the book and write down the various statements John makes about love. Then write John’s “doctrine of love” (basically, finish the statement “love is...” according to John).

Dissect

Separate out all of the components of this section. Make sure you know what it really says. Make 10 - 20 (or more!) strict observations below.

Correlate

Are there any other verses/passages that relate to this one? You may remember some or you may use a cross-referencing tool. A good rule of thumb is to work your way out when doing this: same book, same author, same testament.

Conclude

Record your summary of what this section means. Give your interpretation. Show your work. Make sure your conclusion is biblical and logical.

What does fear have to do with love?

How would perfect love “cast out” fear?

Collide

Ask yourself, “How does this apply to my life?” It may be a changed belief or behavior. If it is the former, then it should lead to the latter. Go from general to specific. There may even be a very specific situation that comes to mind. For instance: “If I am really God’s son (3: 1) then I shouldn’t worry so much about what my roommate thinks of me and I should share the gospel with him/her.” Let this section “collide” with your life!

Love is probably best measured in cost. What are some costs you are struggling to pay in order to love as John commands us (comfort, reputation, possessions, etc.)?

Write a message to God, yielding these things to Him in order to become a loving person.

Jesus wasn't enough. He really wasn't. He actually told us it was better for Him to go so that someone better could come. It wasn't Mohammed, Buddha or Joseph Smith. It was the Holy Spirit. He comes into our lives to do things only He can do. Below you can explore some of the work He does in people's lives. You may reflect on how He has worked in your life in ways no one else could.

John 6:25-29: What is the ultimate "work" God requires of us?

John 10:1-16: What are the key things that describe Jesus' sheep? What do they do and how do they relate to their Shepherd and to those who are not their Shepherd.

John 16:13-15: Whom does the Spirit "glorify"? What, therefore, do you think the Spirit will cause the life of those He inhabits to do?

John 16:25-33: How has Jesus overcome the world, and why should that cause us to "take heart"?

John 20:1-18: How has Jesus overcome the world, and why should that cause us to "take heart"?

1**J****o****h n**
5:1-12***Read and reread***

Read this section 2 or 3 times just to become acquainted with them. Try to hear the flow and tone.

Connect

Jot down a few notes on how this section relates to its context. Look for connecting phrases ("so," "therefore," "because," etc.) and words, phrases and ideas that the section you are studying shares with its context.

Dissect

Separate out all of the components of this section. Make sure you know what it really says. Make 10 - 20 (or more!) strict observations below.

What is confusing to you about this passage? Write down a few things that are unclear, try to come to conclusions about what they might mean (on the next page) and come to study prepared to ask your questions to the group.

Correlate

Are there any other verses/passages that relate to this one? You may remember some or you may use a cross-referencing tool. A good rule of thumb is to work your way out when doing this: same book, same author, same testament.

Conclude

Record your summary of what this section means. Give your interpretation. Show your work. Make sure your conclusion is biblical and logical.

Why do you think John equates love and faith? How does faith promote love?

Why aren't God's "commands burdensome"?

What does it mean to "overcome the world"?

Collide

Ask yourself, "How does this apply to my life?" It may be a changed belief or behavior. If it is the former, then it should lead to the latter. Go from general to specific. There may even be a very specific situation that comes to mind. For instance: "If I am really God's son (3: 1) then I shouldn't worry so much about what my roommate thinks of me and I should share the gospel with him/her." Let this section "collide" with your life!

How have you lived as though God's commands *are* burdensome?

How have you been living as though you have no chance of overcoming the world?

How should your life look different in view of these two truths?

Hey, didn't John write 2 or 3 books of the Bible? Actually he wrote 5. The last one is Revelation ... Oh yeah. 1 John 5:13-21 is committed to warnings and assurances. Look over Jesus' words to the churches in Revelation. What encouragements, warnings and assurances does He provide for these afflicted believers—through the pen of John?

(Ephesus) Revelation 2:1-7: What were they doing well? What did they miss? What was Jesus' assurance to them? What does it mean to "forget" your first love?*

(Smyrna) Revelation 2:8-11: Why does Jesus say this church is "rich"? What assurance do they have from Jesus?

(Pergamum) Revelation 2:12-17: What seems to be at the core problem in Pergamum? What are Jesus' warnings and assurances for them?

(Thyatira) Revelation 2:18-29: What do you think Jesus is asking this church to "hold on to," in verse 25? Having studied 1 John, what do you hope the One "who searches hearts and minds" will find in your heart and mind?

(Sardis) Revelation 3:1-6: In light of 1 John, what do you think might not have been "complete" in God's sight about their deeds. What might it look like to look awake but be asleep spiritually?

(Philadelphia) Revelation 3:7-13: How does the image of Jesus' advocating for those He loves in verse 9 affect you?

(Laodicea) Revelation 3:14-22: What is the significance of verse 20, considering Jesus is talking to a church?

...hey, that was 7 this week!

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5:13-21***Read and reread***

Read this section 2 or 3 times just to become acquainted with them. Try to hear the flow and tone.

Connect

Jot down a few notes on how this section relates to its context. Look for connecting phrases (“so,” “therefore,” “because,” etc.) and words, phrases and ideas that the section you are studying shares with its context.

Dissect

Separate out all of the components of this section. Make sure you know what it really says. Make 10 - 20 (or more!) strict observations below.

Why does John say that he wrote this letter?

Write down at least 6 things that John wants us to be assured of.

Correlate

Are there any other verses/passages that relate to this one? You may remember some or you may use a cross-referencing tool. A good rule of thumb is to work your way out when doing this: same book, same author, same testament.

John 15:7

Ephesians 3:11, 12

Hebrews 4:14-16

James 1:5-8

James 4:1-10

Conclude

Record your summary of what this section means. Give your interpretation. Show your work. Make sure your conclusion is biblical and logical.

What does it mean to pray “according to God’s will”?

Collide

Ask yourself, “How does this apply to my life?” It may be a changed belief or behavior. If it is the former, then it should lead to the latter. Go from general to specific. There may even be a very specific situation that comes to mind. For instance: “If I am really God’s son (3:1) then I shouldn’t worry so much about what my roommate thinks of me and I should share the gospel with him/her.” Let this section “collide” with your life!

John ends his letter with the statement “Little children, keep yourselves from idols.” What idols do you think he was referring to?

What do you think it would look like to “keep yourself” from these idols?

Are there any idols in your life that you need to “keep yourself” from?

1 J O h n

summary

You've spent a lot of time pouring over this letter. Take some time to go back through and process some of the lessons you've learned.

Read 1 John 2 or 3 times (preferably in multiple translations).

Each time, try to avoid stopping. Just read it through. Do make sure to keep your mind engaged though—don't just go through the motions.

After reading through the book, complete the following steps:

Step 1 - Distill out Main Points

Go through all of your studies and record the main lesson or theme from each:

Study 1 - 1 John survey: _____

Study 2 - 1 John 1:1-4: _____

Study 3 - 1 John 1:5-2:2: _____

Study 4 - 1 John 2:3-11: _____

Study 5 - 1 John 2:12-17: _____

Study 6 - 1 John 2:18-28. 4:1-6: _____

Study 7 - 1 John 2:29-3:10: _____

Study 8 - 1 John 3:11-24: _____

Study 9 - 1 John 4:7-5:1: _____

Study 10 - 1 John 5:1-12: _____

Study 11 - 1 John 5:13-21: _____

Step 2 - Record Top Lessons Learned

Take a few minutes and look over your chapter summary. Spend some time praying over these things and see which ones God really impresses on your heart—the main lessons from this study.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____



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Introduction, The Incarnate Word

¹What 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--
²and 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--
³what 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.
⁴These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

God Is Light

⁵This 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.
⁶If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;
⁷but 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.
⁸If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.
⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

1 John 2

Christ Is Our Advocate

¹My 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;
²and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.
³By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.
⁴The 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;
⁵but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected By this we know that we are in Him:
⁶the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.
⁷Beloved, 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.
⁸On 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.
⁹The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now.
¹⁰The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.
¹¹But 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.
¹²I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake.
¹³I 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.
¹⁴I 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.

Do Not Love the World

¹⁵Do not love the world nor the things in the world If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.
¹⁶For 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.
¹⁷The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.
¹⁸Children, 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.

¹⁹They 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.

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

²¹I 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.

²²Who 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.

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

²⁴As 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 Promise Is Eternal Life

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

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

²⁷As 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.

²⁸Now, 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.

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

1 John 3

Children of God Love One Another

¹See 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.

²Beloved, 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.

³And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

⁴Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

⁵You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.

⁶No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.

⁷Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous;

⁸the 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.

⁹No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

¹⁰By 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.

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

¹²not as 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.

¹³Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.

¹⁴We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

¹⁵Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

¹⁶We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

¹⁷But 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?

¹⁸Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

¹⁹We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him

²⁰in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things.

²¹Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;

²²and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

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

²⁴The 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

Testing the Spirits

¹Beloved, 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.

²By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God;

³and 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.

⁴You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

⁵They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them.

⁶We 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.

God Is Love

⁷Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

⁸The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

⁹By 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.

¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

¹¹Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

¹²No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

¹³By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

¹⁴We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

¹⁵Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

¹⁶We 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.

¹⁷By 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.

¹⁸There 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.

¹⁹We love, because He first loved us.

²⁰If 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.

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

1 John 5

Overcoming the World

¹Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him.

²By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.

³For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

⁴For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.

⁵Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

⁶This 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.

⁷For there are three that testify:

⁸the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

⁹If 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.

¹⁰The 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.

¹¹And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

¹²He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

This Is Written That You May Know

¹³These 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.

¹⁴This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

¹⁵And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

¹⁶If 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.

¹⁷All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not leading to death.

¹⁸We 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.

¹⁹We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

²⁰And 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.

²¹Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

1 John

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1 John 1

The Word of Life

¹That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. ²The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. ³We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴We write this to make our joy complete.

Walking in the light

⁵This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. ⁷But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

⁸If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

1 John 2

Christ Our Advocate

¹My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. ²He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. ³And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. ⁴Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, ⁵but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may be sure that we are in him: ⁶whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

The New Commandment

⁷Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. ⁸At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. ⁹Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. ¹⁰Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. ¹¹But whoever 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.

¹²I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name’s sake. ¹³I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, children, because you know the Father. ¹⁴I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

Do Not Love the World

¹⁵Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world-- the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions--is not from the Father but is from the world. ¹⁷And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

Warning Concerning Antichrists

¹⁸Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. ¹⁹They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. ²⁰But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. ²¹I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth.

²²Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. ²³No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also. ²⁴Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵And this is the promise that he made to us--eternal life.

²⁶I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. ²⁷But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything--and is true and is no lie, just as it has taught you--abide in him.

Children of God

²⁸And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming. ²⁹If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

1 John 3

¹See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ²Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

⁴Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. ⁵You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. ⁶No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. ⁷Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. ⁸Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. ⁹No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. ¹⁰By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

Love One Another

¹¹For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. ¹²We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. ¹³Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. ¹⁴We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. ¹⁵Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

¹⁶By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? ¹⁸Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

¹⁹By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; ²⁰for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. ²¹Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; ²²and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. ²³And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. ²⁴Whoever keeps his commandments abides in him, and he in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

1 John 4

Test the Spirits

¹Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. ²By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. ⁴Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. ⁵They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

God Is Love

⁷Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

¹³By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. ¹⁶So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. ¹⁷By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. ¹⁸There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. ¹⁹We love because he first loved us. ²⁰If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

1 John 5

Overcoming the World

¹Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. ²By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. ³For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. ⁴For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith. ⁵Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Testimony Concerning the Son of God

⁶This is he who came by water and blood--Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. ⁷For there are three that testify: ⁸the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree. ⁹If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son. ¹⁰Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son. ¹¹And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹²Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

That You May Know

¹³I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life. ¹⁴And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. ¹⁵And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

¹⁶If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life--to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that. ¹⁷All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.

¹⁸We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.

¹⁹We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

²⁰And 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. He is the true God and eternal life. ²¹Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

1 John

This epistle is a discourse upon the principles of Christianity, in doctrine and practice. The design appears to be, to refute and guard against erroneous and unholy tenets, principles, and practices, especially such as would lower the Godhead of Christ, and the reality and power of his sufferings and death, as an atoning sacrifice; and against the assertion that believers being saved by grace, are not required to obey the commandments. This epistle also stirs up all who profess to know God, to have communion with him, and to believe in him, and that they walk in holiness, not in sin, showing that a mere outward profession is nothing, without the evidence of a holy life and conduct. It also helps forward and excites real Christians to communion with God and the Lord Jesus Christ, to constancy in the true faith, and to purity of life.

Chapter 1**Verses 1-4**

That essential Good, that uncreated Excellence, which had been from the beginning, from eternity, as equal with the Father, and which at length appeared in human nature for the salvation of sinners, was the great subject concerning which the apostle wrote to his brethren. The apostles had seen Him while they witnessed his wisdom and holiness, his miracles, and love and mercy, during some years, till they saw him crucified for sinners, and afterwards risen from the dead. They touched him, so as to have full proof of his resurrection. This Divine Person, the Word of life, the Word of God, appeared in human nature, that he might be the Author and Giver of eternal life to mankind, through the redemption of his blood, and the influence of his new-creating Spirit. The apostles declared what they had seen and heard, that believers might share their comforts and everlasting advantages. They had free access to God the Father. They had a happy experience of the truth in their souls, and showed its excellence in their lives. This communion of believers with the Father and the Son, is begun and kept up by the influences of the Holy Spirit. The benefits Christ bestows, are not like the scanty possessions of the world, causing jealousies in others; but the joy and happiness of communion with God is all-sufficient, so that any number may partake of it; and all who are warranted to say, that truly their fellowship is with the Father, will desire to lead others to partake of the same blessedness.

Verses 5-10

A message from the Lord Jesus, the Word of life, the eternal Word, we should all gladly receive. The great God should be represented to this dark world, as pure and perfect light. As this is the nature of God, his doctrines and precepts must be such. And as his perfect happiness cannot be separated from his perfect holiness, so our happiness will be in proportion to our being made holy. To walk in darkness, is to live and act against religion. God holds no heavenly fellowship or intercourse with unholy souls. There is no truth in their profession; their practice shows its folly and falsehood. The eternal Life, the eternal Son, put on flesh and blood, and died to wash us from our sins in his own blood, and procures for us the sacred influences by which sin is to be subdued more and more, till it is quite done away. While the necessity of a holy walk is insisted upon, as the effect and evidence of the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus, the opposite error of self-righteous pride is guarded against with equal care. All who walk near to God, in holiness and righteousness, are sensible that their best days and duties are mixed with sin. God has given testimony to the sinfulness of the world, by providing a sufficient, effectual Sacrifice for sin, needed in all ages; and the sinfulness of believers themselves is shown, by requiring them continually to confess their sins, and to apply by faith to the blood of that Sacrifice. Let us plead guilty before God, be humble, and willing to know the worst of our case. Let us honestly confess all our sins in their full extent, relying wholly on his mercy and truth through the righteousness of Christ, for a free and full forgiveness, and our deliverance from the power and practice of sin.

Chapter 2**Verses 1, 2**

When have an Advocate with the Father; one who has undertaken, and is fully able, to plead in behalf of every one who applies for pardon and salvation in his name, depending on his pleading for them. He is "Jesus," the Saviour, and "Christ," the Messiah, the Anointed. He alone is "the Righteous One," who received his nature pure from sin, and as our Surety perfectly obeyed the law of God, and so fulfilled all righteousness. All men, in every land, and through successive generations, are invited to come to God through this all-sufficient atonement, and by this new and living way. The gospel, when rightly understood and received, sets the heart against all sin, and stops the allowed practice of it; at the same time it gives blessed relief to the wounded consciences of those who have sinned.

Verses 3–11

What knowledge of Christ can that be, which sees not that he is most worthy of our entire obedience? And a disobedient life shows there is neither religion nor honesty in the professor. The love of God is perfected in him that keeps his commandments. God's grace in him attains its true mark, and produces its sovereign effect as far as may be in this world, and this is man's regeneration; though never absolutely perfect here. Yet this observing Christ's commands, has holiness and excellency which, if universal, would make the earth resemble heaven itself. The command to love one another had been in force from the beginning of the world; but it might be called a new command as given to Christians. It was new in them, as their situation was new in respect of its motives, rules, and obligations. And those who walk in hatred and enmity to believers, remain in a dark state. Christian love teaches us to value our brother's soul, and to dread every thing hurtful to his purity and peace. Where spiritual darkness dwells, in mind, the judgment, and the conscience will be darkened, and will mistake the way to heavenly life. These things demand serious self-examination; and earnest prayer, that God would show us what we are, and whither we are going.

Verses 12–14

As Christians have their peculiar states, so they have peculiar duties; but there are precepts and obedience common to all, particularly mutual love, and contempt of the world. The youngest sincere disciple is pardoned: the communion of saints is attended with the forgiveness of sins. Those of the longest standing in Christ's school need further advice and instruction. Even fathers must be written unto, and preached unto; none are too old to learn. But especially young men in Christ Jesus, though they are arrived at strength of spirit and sound sense, and have successfully resisted first trials and temptations, breaking off bad habits and connexions, and entered in at the strait gate of true conversion. The different descriptions of Christians are again addressed. Children in Christ know that God is their Father; it is wisdom. Those advanced believers, who know Him that was from the beginning, before this world was made, may well be led thereby to give up this world. It will be the glory of young persons to be strong in Christ, and his grace. By the word of God they overcome the wicked one.

Verses 15–17

The things of the world may be desired and possessed for the uses and purposes which God intended, and they are to be used by his grace, and to his glory; but believers must not seek or value them for those purposes to which sin abuses them. The world draws the heart from God; and the more the love of the world prevails, the more the love of God decays. The things of the world are classed according to the three ruling inclinations of depraved nature. 1. The lust of the flesh, of the body: wrong desires of the heart, the appetite of indulging all things that excite and inflame sensual pleasures. 2. The lust of the eyes: the eyes are delighted with riches and rich possessions; this is the lust of covetousness. 3. The pride of life: a vain man craves the grandeur and pomp of a vain-glorious life; this includes thirst after honour and applause. The things of the world quickly fade and die away; desire itself will ere long fail and cease, but holy affection is not like the lust that passes away. The love of God shall never fail. Many vain efforts have been made to evade the force of this passage by limitations, distinctions, or exceptions. Many have tried to show how far we may be carnally-minded, and love the world; but the plain meaning of these verses cannot easily be mistaken. Unless this victory over the world is begun in the heart, a man has no root in himself, but will fall away, or at most remain an unfruitful professor. Yet these vanities are so alluring to the corruption in our hearts, that without constant watching and prayer, we cannot escape the world, or obtain victory over the god and prince of it.

Verses 18–23

Every man is an antichrist, who denies the Person, or any of the offices of Christ; and in denying the Son, he denies the Father also, and has no part in his favour while he rejects his great salvation. Let this prophecy that seducers would rise in the Christian world, keep us from being seduced. The church knows not well who are its true members, and who are not, but thus true Christians were proved, and rendered more watchful and humble. True Christians are anointed ones; their names expresses this: they are anointed with grace, with gifts and spiritual privileges, by the Holy Spirit of grace. The great and most hurtful lies that the father of lies spreads in the world, usually are falsehoods and errors relating to the person of Christ. The unction from the Holy One, alone can keep us from delusions. While we judge favourably of all who trust in Christ as the Divine Saviour, and obey his word, and seek to live in union with them, let us pity and pray for those who deny the Godhead of Christ, or his atonement, and the new-creating work of the Holy Ghost. Let us protest against such antichristian doctrine, and keep from them as much as we may.

Verses 24–29

The truth of Christ, abiding in us, is a means to sever from sin, and unites us to the Son of God, [Joh 15:3, 4](#). What value should we put upon gospel truth! Thereby the promise of eternal life is made sure. The promise God makes, is suitable to his own greatness, power, and goodness; it is eternal life. The Spirit of truth will not lie; and he teaches all things in the present dispensation, all things necessary to our knowledge of God in Christ, and their glory in the gospel. The apostle repeats the kind words, "little children;" which denotes

his affection. He would persuade by love. Gospel privileges oblige to gospel duties; and those anointed by the Lord Jesus abide with him. The new spiritual nature is from the Lord Christ. He that is constant to the practice of religion in trying times, shows that he is born from above, from the Lord Christ. Then, let us beware of holding the truth in unrighteousness, remembering that those only are born of God, who bear his holy image, and walk in his most righteous ways.

Chapter 3

Verses 1, 2

Little does the world know of the happiness of the real followers of Christ. Little does the world think that these poor, humble, despised ones, are favourites of God, and will dwell in heaven. Let the followers of Christ be content with hard fare here, since they are in a land of strangers, where their Lord was so badly treated before them. The sons of God must walk by faith, and live by hope. They may well wait in faith, hope, and earnest desire, for the revelation of the Lord Jesus. The sons of God will be known, and be made manifest by likeness to their Head. They shall be transformed into the same image, by their view of him.

Verses 3–10

The sons of God know that their Lord is of purer eyes than to allow any thing unholy and impure to dwell with him. It is the hope of hypocrites, not of the sons of God, that makes allowance for gratifying impure desires and lusts. May we be followers of him as his dear children, thus show our sense of his unspeakable mercy, and express that obedient, grateful, humble mind which becomes us. Sin is the rejecting the Divine law. In him, that is, in Christ, was no sin. All the sinless weaknesses that were consequences of the fall, he took; that is, all those infirmities of mind or body which subject man to suffering, and expose him to temptation. But our moral infirmities, our proneness to sin, he had not. He that abides in Christ, continues not in the practice of sin. Renouncing sin is the great proof of spiritual union with, continuance in, and saving knowledge of the Lord Christ. Beware of self-deceit. He that doeth righteousness is righteous, and to be a follower of Christ, shows an interest by faith in his obedience and sufferings. But a man cannot act like the devil, and at the same time be a disciple of Christ Jesus. Let us not serve or indulge what the Son of God came to destroy. To be born of God is to be inwardly renewed by the power of the Spirit of God. Renewing grace is an abiding principle. Religion is not an art, a matter of dexterity and skill, but a new nature. And the regenerate person cannot sin as he did before he was born of God, and as others do who are not born again. There is that light in his mind, which shows him the evil and malignity of sin. There is that bias upon his heart, which disposes him to loathe and hate sin. There is the spiritual principle that opposes sinful acts. And there is repentance for sin, if committed. It goes against him to sin with forethought. The children of God and the children of the devil have their distinct characters. The seed of the serpent are known by neglect of religion, and by their hating real Christians. He only is righteous before God, as a justified believer, who is taught and disposed to righteousness by the Holy Spirit. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil. May all professors of the gospel lay these truths to heart, and try themselves by them.

Verses 11–15

We should love the Lord Jesus, value his love, and therefore love all our brethren in Christ. This love is the special fruit of our faith, and a certain sign of our being born again. But none who rightly know the heart of man, can wonder at the contempt and enmity of ungodly people against the children of God. We know that we are passed from death to life: we may know it by the evidences of our faith in Christ, of which love to our brethren is one. It is not zeal for a party in the common religion, or affection for those who are of the same name and sentiments with ourselves. The life of grace in the heart of a regenerate person, is the beginning and first principle of a life of glory, whereof they must be destitute who hate their brother in their hearts.

Verses 16–21

Here is the condescension, the miracle, the mystery of Divine love, that God would redeem the church with his own blood. Surely we should love those whom God has loved, and so loved. The Holy Spirit, grieved at selfishness, will leave the selfish heart without comfort, and full of darkness and terror. By what can it be known that a man has a true sense of the love of Christ for perishing sinners, or that the love of God has been planted in his heart by the Holy Spirit, if the love of the world and its good overcomes the feelings of compassion to a perishing brother? Every instance of this selfishness must weaken the evidences of a man's conversion; when habitual and allowed, it must decide against him. If conscience condemn us in known sin, or the neglect of known duty, God does so too. Let conscience therefore be well-informed, be heard, and diligently attended to.

Verses 22–24

When believers had confidence towards God, through the Spirit of adoption, and by faith in the great High Priest, they might ask what they would of their reconciled Father. They would receive it, if good for them. And as good-will to men was proclaimed from heaven, so good-will to men, particularly to the brethren, must be in the hearts of those who go to God and heaven. He who thus follows Christ,

dwells in Him as his ark, refuge, and rest, and in the Father through him. This union between Christ and the souls of believers, is by the Spirit he has given them. A man may believe that God is gracious before he knows it; yet when faith has laid hold on the promises, it sets reason to work. This Spirit of God works a change; in all true Christians it changes from the power of Satan to the power of God. Consider, believer, how it changes thy heart. Dost not thou long for peace with God? Wouldst thou not forego all the world for it? No profit, pleasure, or preferment shall hinder thee from following Christ. This salvation is built upon Divine testimony, even the Spirit of God.

Chapter 4

Verses 1–6

Christians who are well acquainted with the Scriptures, may, in humble dependence on Divine teaching, discern those who set forth doctrines according to the apostles, and those who contradict them. The sum of revealed religion is in the doctrine concerning Christ, his person and office. The false teachers spake of the world according to its maxims and tastes, so as not to offend carnal men. The world approved them, they made rapid progress, and had many followers such as themselves; the world will love its own, and its own will love it. The true doctrine as to the Saviour's person, as leading men from the world to God, is a mark of the spirit of truth in opposition to the spirit of error. The more pure and holy any doctrine is, the more likely to be of God; nor can we by any other rules try the spirits whether they are of God or not. And what wonder is it, that people of a worldly spirit should cleave to those who are like themselves, and suit their schemes and discourses to their corrupt taste?

Verses 7–13

The Spirit of God is the Spirit of love. He that does not love the image of God in his people, has no saving knowledge of God. For it is God's nature to be kind, and to give happiness. The law of God is love; and all would have been perfectly happy, had all obeyed it. The provision of the gospel, for the forgiveness of sin, and the salvation of sinners, consistently with God's glory and justice, shows that God is love. Mystery and darkness rest upon many things yet. God has so shown himself to be love, that we cannot come short of eternal happiness, unless through unbelief and impenitence, although strict justice would condemn us to hopeless misery, because we break our Creator's laws. None of our words or thoughts can do justice to the free, astonishing love of a holy God towards sinners, who could not profit or harm him, whom he might justly crush in a moment, and whose deserving of his vengeance was shown in the method by which they were saved, though he could by his almighty Word have created other worlds, with more perfect beings, if he had seen fit. Search we the whole universe for love in its most glorious displays? It is to be found in the person and the cross of Christ. Does love exist between God and sinners? Here was the origin, not that we loved God, but that he freely loved us. His love could not be designed to be fruitless upon us, and when its proper end and issue are gained and produced, it may be said to be perfected. So faith is perfected by its works. Thus it will appear that God dwells in us by his new-creating Spirit. A loving Christian is a perfect Christian; set him to any good duty, and he is perfect to it, he is expert at it. Love oils the wheels of his affections, and sets him on that which is helpful to his brethren. A man that goes about a business with ill will, always does it badly. That God dwells in us and we in him, were words too high for mortals to use, had not God put them before us. But how may it be known whether the testimony to this does proceed from the Holy Ghost? Those who are truly persuaded that they are the sons of God, cannot but call him Abba, Father. From love to him, they hate sin, and whatever disagrees with his will, and they have a sound and hearty desire to do his will. Such testimony is the testimony of the Holy Ghost.

Verses 14–21

The Father sent the Son, he willed his coming into this world. The apostle attests this. And whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. This confession includes faith in the heart as the foundation; makes acknowledgment with the mouth to the glory of God and Christ, and profession in the life and conduct, against the flatteries and frowns of the world. There must be a day of universal judgment. Happy those who shall have holy boldness before the Judge at that day; knowing he is their Friend and Advocate! Happy those who have holy boldness in the prospect of that day, who look and wait for it, and for the Judge's appearance! True love to God assures believers of God's love to them. Love teaches us to suffer for him and with him; therefore we may trust that we shall also be glorified with him, **2Ti 2:12**. We must distinguish between the fear of God and being afraid of him; the fear of God imports high regard and veneration for God. Obedience and good works, done from the principle of love, are not like the servile toil of one who unwillingly labours from dread of a master's anger. They are like that of a dutiful child, who does services to a beloved father, which benefit his brethren, and are done willingly. It is a sign that our love is far from perfect, when our doubts, fears, and apprehensions of God, are many. Let heaven and earth stand amazed at his love. He sent his word to invite sinners to partake of this great salvation. Let them take the comfort of the happy change wrought in them, while they give him the glory. The love of God in Christ, in the hearts of Christians from the Spirit of adoption, is the great proof of conversion. This must be tried by its effects on their temper, and their conduct to their brethren. If a man professes to love God, and yet indulges anger or revenge, or shows a selfish disposition, he gives his profession the lie. But if it is plain that our natural enmity is changed into affection and gratitude, let us bless the name of our God for this seal and earnest of eternal happiness. Then we differ from the false professors, who pretend to love God, whom they have not seen, yet hate their brethren, whom they have seen.

Chapter 5

Verses 1–5

True love for the people of God, may be distinguished from natural kindness or party attachments, by its being united with the love of God, and obedience to his commands. The same Holy Spirit that taught the love, will have taught obedience also; and that man cannot truly love the children of God, who, by habit, commits sin or neglects known duty. As God's commands are holy, just, and good rules of liberty and happiness, so those who are born of God and love him, do not count them grievous, but lament that they cannot serve him more perfectly. Self-denial is required, but true Christians have a principle which carries them above all hinderances. Though the conflict often is sharp, and the regenerate may be cast down, yet he will rise up and renew his combat with resolution. But all, except believers in Christ, are enslaved in some respect or other, to the customs, opinions, or interests of the world. Faith is the cause of victory, the means, the instrument, the spiritual armour by which we overcome. In and by faith we cleave to Christ, in contempt of, and in opposition to the world. Faith sanctifies the heart, and purifies it from those sensual lusts by which the world obtains sway and dominion over souls. It has the indwelling Spirit of grace, which is greater than he who dwells in the world. The real Christian overcomes the world by faith; he sees, in and by the life and conduct of the Lord Jesus on earth, that this world is to be renounced and overcome. He cannot be satisfied with this world, but looks beyond it, and is still tending, striving, and pressing toward heaven. We must all, after Christ's example, overcome the world, or it will overcome us to our ruin.

Verses 6–8

We are inwardly and outwardly defiled; inwardly, by the power and pollution of sin in our nature. For our cleansing there is in and by Christ Jesus, the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Some think that the two sacraments are here meant: baptism with water, as the outward sign of regeneration, and purifying from the pollution of sin by the Holy Spirit; and the Lord's supper, as the outward sign of the shedding Christ's blood, and the receiving him by faith for pardon and justification. Both these ways of cleansing were represented in the old ceremonial sacrifices and cleansings. This water and blood include all that is necessary to our salvation. By the water, our souls are washed and purified for heaven and the habitation of saints in light. By the blood, we are justified, reconciled, and presented righteous to God. By the blood, the curse of the law being satisfied, the purifying Spirit is obtained for the internal cleansing of our natures. The water, as well as the blood, came out of the side of the sacrificed Redeemer. He loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, [Eph 5:25–27](#). This was done in and by the Spirit of God, according to the Saviour's declaration. He is the Spirit of God, and cannot lie. Three had borne witness to these doctrines concerning the person and the salvation of Christ. The Father, repeatedly, by a voice from heaven declared that Jesus was his beloved Son. The Word declared that He and the Father were One, and that whoever had seen him had seen the Father. And the Holy Ghost, who descended from heaven and rested on Christ at his baptism; who had borne witness to Him by all the prophets; and gave testimony to his resurrection and mediatorial office, by the gift of miraculous powers to the apostles. But whether this passage be cited or not, the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity stands equally firm and certain. To the doctrine taught by the apostles, respecting the person and salvation of Christ, there were three testimonies. 1. The Holy Spirit. We come into the world with a corrupt, carnal disposition, which is enmity to God. This being done away by the regeneration and new-creating of souls by the Holy Spirit, is a testimony to the Saviour. 2. The water: this sets forth the Saviour's purity and purifying power. The actual and active purity and holiness of his disciples are represented by baptism. 3. The blood which he shed: and this was our ransom, this testifies for Jesus Christ; it sealed up and finished the sacrifices of the Old Testament. The benefits procured by his blood, prove that he is the Saviour of the world. No wonder if he that rejects this evidence is judged a blasphemer of the Spirit of God. These three witnesses are for one and the same purpose; they agree in one and the same thing.

Verses 9–12

Nothing can be more absurd than the conduct of those who doubt as to the truth of Christianity, while in the common affairs of life they do not hesitate to proceed on human testimony, and would deem any one out of his senses who declined to do so. The real Christian has seen his guilt and misery, and his need of such a Saviour. He has seen the suitableness of such a Saviour to all his spiritual wants and circumstances. He has found and felt the power of the word and doctrine of Christ, humbling, healing, quickening, and comforting his soul. He has a new disposition, and new delights, and is not the man that he formerly was. Yet he finds still a conflict with himself, with sin, with the flesh, the world, and wicked powers. But he finds such strength from faith in Christ, that he can overcome the world, and travel on towards a better. Such assurance has the gospel believer: he has a witness in himself, which puts the matter out of doubt with him, except in hours of darkness or conflict; but he cannot be argued out of his belief in the leading truths of the gospel. Here is what makes the unbeliever's sin so awful; the sin of unbelief. He gives God the lie; because he believes not the record that God gave of his Son. It is in vain for a man to plead that he believes the testimony of God in other things, while he rejects it in this. He that refuses to trust and honour Christ as the Son of God, who disdains to submit to his teaching as Prophet, to rely on his atonement and intercession as High Priest, or to obey him as King, is dead in sin, under condemnation; nor will any outward morality, learning, forms, notions, or confidences avail him.

Verses 13–17

Upon all this evidence, it is but right that we believe on the name of the Son of God. Believers have eternal life in the covenant of the gospel. Then let us thankfully receive the record of Scripture. Always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labour is not in vain in the Lord. The Lord Christ invites us to come to him in all circumstances, with our supplications and requests, notwithstanding the sin that besets us. Our prayers must always be offered in submission to the will of God. In some things they are speedily answered; in others they are granted in the best manner, though not as requested. We ought to pray for others, as well as for ourselves. There are sins that war against spiritual life in the soul, and the life above. We cannot pray that the sins of the impenitent and unbelieving should, while they are such, be forgiven them; or that mercy, which supposes the forgiveness of sins, should be granted to them, while they wilfully continue such. But we may pray for their repentance, for their being enriched with faith in Christ, and thereupon for all other saving mercies. We should pray for others, as well as for ourselves, beseeching the Lord to pardon and recover the fallen, as well as to relieve the tempted and afflicted. And let us be truly thankful that no sin, of which any one truly repents, is unto death.

Verses 18–21

All mankind are divided into two parties or dominions; that which belongs to God, and that which belongs to the wicked one. True believers belong to God: they are of God, and from him, and to him, and for him; while the rest, by far the greater number, are in the power of the wicked one; they do his works, and support his cause. This general declaration includes all unbelievers, whatever their profession, station, or situation, or by whatever name they may be called. The Son leads believers to the Father, and they are in the love and favour of both; in union with both, by the indwelling and working of the Holy Spirit. Happy are those to whom it is given to know that the Son of God is come, and to have a heart to trust in and rely on him that is true! May this be our privilege; we shall thus be kept from all idols and false doctrines, and from the idolatrous love of worldly objects, and be kept by the power of God, through faith, unto eternal salvation. To this living and true God, be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.