**The Letters of John**

Lesson 1

  Fellowship with God and One Another

1 John 1:1-2:2, Romans 8:34

**1**That 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. **2**The 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. **3**We 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. **4**We write this to make our[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%201%3A1%20-%202%3A2&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30545a)] joy complete.

**5**This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. **6**If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. **7**But 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[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%201%3A1%20-%202%3A2&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30548b)] sin.

**8**If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. **9**If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. **10**If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

**2**My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.**2**He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

**Romans 8:34**

Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

1. Verses 1-4 are the prologue to John’s letter. As one of Jesus’ closest friends and disciples, John spoke with authority about who Jesus was. How does he establish his authority and what are his “credentials” in these verses?

2. What does “eternal life” mean? How would you explain it to someone who isn’t a Christian yet, or who has just become a Christian?

**3**We 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.

**6**If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth.

**Acts 2:42-47**

**42**They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. **43**Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. **44**All the believers were together and had everything in common. **45**They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. **46**Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, **47**praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

3. In verses 3 and 6, what does John mean when he uses the word “fellowship”? (Read Acts 2:42-47 for a description of the fellowship the early church enjoyed.) Look up this word, think deeply and explain what this fellowship entails.

4. What does Jesus coming to earth as a man tell us about God’s desire to have fellowship with us? How does this make you feel? Does it motivate you in any way? Explain

5. What are some practical things you can do to strengthen your fellowship with God?

**5**This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. **6**If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. **7**But 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[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%201%3A1%20-%202%3A2&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30548b)] sin.

**8**If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. **9**If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. **10**If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

6. Read verses 5-10. Why does sin hinder our fellowship with God? Why does it hinder our fellowship with each other? Be specific. How can our fellowship with God be restored, and how can our fellowship with others be restored?

7. Think of a brother or sister in Christ with whom your fellowship has been broken or damaged. What are some practical things you can do to strengthen your fellowship with that person. Would you like prayer about this?

8. What does it mean to walk in the light? What does it mean to walk in the darkness?

**8**If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. **9**If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. **10**If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

**2**My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.**2**He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

**Romans 8:34**

Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

9. Read 1John 1:8 – 2:2 and Romans 8:34. What help and resources do we have when we sin? (Copy and memorize verse 9.)

**4**We write this to make our[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%201%3A1%20-%202%3A2&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30545a)] joy complete.

2My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.

10. Why did John say he wrote this letter? (see 1:4 and 2:1)

11. Journal this passage using the SOAP method.

**The Letters of John**

Lesson 2

  Warnings: The Test of Knowing Him

1 John 2:3-27

**3**We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. **4**Whoever says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. **5**But if anyone obeys his word, love for God  is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: **6**Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.

**7**Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard.**8**Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.

**9**Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness. **10**Anyone who loves their brother and sister[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%202%3A3-27&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30561c)] lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble. **11**But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them.

**12**I am writing to you, dear children,  
    because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.  
**13**I 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.

**14**I write to you, dear children,  
    because you know the Father.  
I 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 lives in you,  
    and you have overcome the evil one.

**15**Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. **16**For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. **17**The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

**18**Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. **19**They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

**20**But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%202%3A3-27&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30571e)]**21**I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. **22**Who is the liar? It is whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the antichrist—denying the Father and the Son. **23**No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

**24**As for you, see that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. **25**And this is what he promised us—eternal life.

**26**I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray.**27**As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him.

 1. According to verses 3-6, how can we tell if someone truly knows Christ, or just claims to know Him?

2. According to these verses, what is the first evidence of love for God?

3. Are these verses convicting you of any sin that you need to overcome, and any area(s) of your life you need to change? Describe, if you feel comfortable doing so. Would you like prayer about this? (Reminder: Anything of a personal nature that is shared in our small groups, in discussion or prayer requests, is confidential and should not be shared with anyone outside of the group without specific permission. No gossip please!)

**9**Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness. **10**Anyone who loves their brother and sister[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%202%3A3-27&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30561c)] lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble. **11**But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them.

4. What is another indication that someone is truly in fellowship with God, according to verses 9-11?

5. Write a paragraph based on verses 9-11, as if writing to a friend who just became a Christian, and who is having trouble processing deep feelings of hatred toward a parent/husband/other who was abusive toward her.  (If you hate someone, pretend you are John and write a paragraph from John to yourself.)

**12**I am writing to you, dear children,  
    because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.  
**13**I 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.

**14**I write to you, dear children,  
    because you know the Father.  
I 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 lives in you,  
    and you have overcome the evil one.

6. In verses 12-14 John addresses different groups in the church – not according to physical age, but according to their levels of spiritual growth. What are the various stages he mentions and what does he say to encourage and/or warn those in each stage of growth?

**15**Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%202%3A3-27&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30566d)] is not in them. **16**For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. **17**The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

7. What does John mean by “loving the world” in verses 15-17? How can a person tell if they are guilty of loving the world? Do these verses convict you in any way? Explain.

**18**Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. **19**They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

**20**But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%202%3A3-27&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30571e)]**21**I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. **22**Who is the liar? It is whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the antichrist—denying the Father and the Son. **23**No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

8. What are some characteristics of the antichrists John mentions in his warning in verses 18-23?

**20**But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%202%3A3-27&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30571e)]**21**I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth.

**27**As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him.

 9. What is meant by the anointing, in verses 20 and 27?

**23**No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

10. What are the two options mentioned in verse 23? How does this jive with current thought in our society about there being many roads to God? Explain

11. Journal this passage using the SOAP method.

**The Letters of John**

Lesson 3

Love One Another

1 John 2:28-3:24

**2 28**And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.

**29**If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

**3**See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.**2**Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%202%3A28-3%3A24&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30582a)] we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. **3**All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

**4**Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. **5**But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins.And in him is no sin. **6**No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

**7**Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. **8**The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work. **9**No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God. **10**This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God’s child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.

**11**For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. **12**Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother’s were righteous.**13**Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%202%3A28-3%3A24&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30593b)] if the world hates you. **14**We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death.**15**Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

**16**This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. **17**If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? **18**Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

**19**This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: **20**If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.**21**Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God **22**and receive from him anything we ask,because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. **23**And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. **24**The one who keeps God’s commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

**John 15:5-10**

**5**“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. **6**If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. **7**If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. **8**This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

**9**“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. **10**If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love.”

1. Read 1John 2:28 and John 15:5-10. What do you think John means when he writes “continue in Him” in verse 28? Some translations use the phrase “remain in Him” or “abide in Him”. What is involved in continuing or remaining in Him, and what is the result of continuing or remaining in Him”?

**3**See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

**John 15:9**

**9**“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.”

2. John is astonished by the love of God. Read what He said about God’s love in 1John 3:1, and read the words of Jesus in John 15:9. Write out what these verses tell you about God, and about you. Then describe how this makes you feel.

**2**Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%202%3A28-3%3A24&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30582a)] we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

3. In 3:2, John mentions Jesus Christ’s return. How would you feel if Christ returned right now? (Thrilled, embarrassed and ashamed, relieved etc.). Explain. Is there any aspect of your life that you want to change to be ready for His return? Explain.

**29**If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

**3** See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.**2**Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%202%3A28-3%3A24&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30582a)] we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. **3**All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

**4** Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. **5**But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins.And in him is no sin. **6**No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

**7**Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. **8**The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work. **9**No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God. **10**This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God’s child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.

4. According to 2:29 – 3:10, what actions and attitudes characterize a person who’s been born of God?

5. What actions will you take, so that with the Holy Spirit’s help, you can more closely resemble your Heavenly Father? Do you need prayer about this?

**11**For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. **12**Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother’s were righteous.**13**Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%202%3A28-3%3A24&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30593b)] if the world hates you. **14**We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death.**15**Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

**16**This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. **17**If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? **18**Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

**19**This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: **20**If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.**21**Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God **22**and receive from him anything we ask,because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. **23**And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ,and to love one another as he commanded us. **24**The one who keeps God’s commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

**Genesis 4:1-16**

**4**Adam[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%204%3A1-16&version=NIV#fen-NIV-81a)] made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%204%3A1-16&version=NIV#fen-NIV-81b)] She said, “With the help of the Lord I have brought forth[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%204%3A1-16&version=NIV#fen-NIV-81c)] a man.” **2**Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.

Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. **3**In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. **4**And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, **5**but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

**6**Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? **7**If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”

**8**Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.”[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%204%3A1-16&version=NIV#fen-NIV-88d)] While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

**9**Then the Lord said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”

“I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

**10**The Lord said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground. **11**Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. **12**When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.”

**13**Cain said to the Lord, “My punishment is more than I can bear. **14**Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”

**15**But the Lord said to him, “Not so[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%204%3A1-16&version=NIV#fen-NIV-95e)]; anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over.” Then the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. **16**So Cain went out from the Lord’s presence and lived in the land of Nod,[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%204%3A1-16&version=NIV#fen-NIV-96f)] east of Eden.

6. Spend some time reading and thinking about 1John 3:11-24. What is the heart of John’s message? (If you aren’t familiar with Cain and Able, please read their story in Genesis 4:1-16.)

7. Do you see any “Cain-like” attitudes in yourself? Explain. What can you do to get rid of those attitudes and let God’s love flow through you instead? (This is a personal question to help you grow. There is no pressure to share your answer, unless you feel comfortable doing so. Remember anything of a personal nature that is shared in your small group is strictly confidential.  No gossip please!)

**14**Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”

**15**But the Lord said to him, “Not so[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%204%3A1-16&version=NIV#fen-NIV-95e)]; anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over.” Then the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him.

8. Write out verses 14-15 in your own words. What do these verses mean to you?

**16**This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. **17**If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? **18**Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

9. How does John define love in verses 16-18? Write out 3 practical aspects of love that you find in these verses:

**19**This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: **20**If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.**21**Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God **22**and receive from him anything we ask,because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. **23**And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ,and to love one another as he commanded us. **24**The one who keeps God’s commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

10. Read 3:19-24. How do we know for sure that we are “in Christ”?

11. Journal this passage using the SOAP method.

**The Letters of John**

Lesson 4

Knowing God Through Love

1 John 4:1-21

**1**Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. **2**This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, **3**but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

**4**You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them,, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. **5**They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. **6**We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%204%3A1-21&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30610a)] of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

**7**Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.**8**Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.**9**This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. **10**This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. **11**Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. **12**No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

**13**This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. **14**And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. **15**If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. **16**And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.**17**This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus.**18**There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

**19**We love because he first loved us. **20**Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. **21**And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

**John 13:35**

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

**1**Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. **2**This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, **3**but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

1. Read verses 1-3. Have you ever fallen for spiritual deception?  If so, describe your experience and how you got out of it. If you are still confused about your relationship with Jesus, would you like special prayer about this?

2. How do you test the spirits?

**4**You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

3. According to verse 4, what power equips you to overcome deceiving spirits/false teachers?

**5**They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. **6**We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%204%3A1-21&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30610a)] of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

4. When you read verses 5-6, do they cause you to want to monitor what you listen to and what you allow to influence you? (TV, movies, music, internet, social media, friends, etc.) What helps you to recognize the spirit of falsehood, and keep you from being deceived? Explain.

**7**Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.**8**Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

5. Read verses 7-8. What is another test of whether or not we’re in God and He’s in us?

**7**Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.**8**Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.**9**This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. **10**This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. **11**Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. **12**No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

6. Explain the love described in verses 7-12. Is it a feeling, an action, or what? Give an example.

7. How can we make the invisible God visible in our midst? Can you relate a time when you either saw God in someone else, or others saw Him in you? Explain.

**13**This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. **14**And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. **15**If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. **16**And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.

**John 13:35**

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

8. Read verses 13-16, and John 13:35. Why must we be diligent in our devotion to each other?

**17**This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus.**18**There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

**19**We love because he first loved us.

9. According to verses 17-19, how can you have confidence in your relationship with God, with no dread of facing Him on Judgment Day?

10. Jot down the names of 5 people you interact with regularly, including difficult people in your life. Next to each of their names, write a specific way you can and will demonstrate God’s love to that person this week. (Please don’t share the names of people who are difficult to love; show your love for them by just sharing  how you will love them.)

11. Journal this passage using the SOAP method.

**The Letters of John**

Lesson 5

Faith in God’s Son, Jesus Christ

1 John 5:1-21

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. **2**This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. **3**In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, **4**for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. **5**Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

**6**This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. **7**For there are three that testify: **8**the[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%205%3A1-21&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30633a)] Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. **9**We accept human testimony, but God’s testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. **10**Whoever believes in the Son of God accepts this testimony. Whoever does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because they have not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. **11**And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. **12**Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

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

**16**If you see any brother or sister commit a sin that does not lead to death, you should pray and God will give them life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death.I am not saying that you should pray about that. **17**All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death.

**18**We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the One who was born of God keeps them safe, and the evil one cannot harm them. **19**We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. **20**We know also 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 by being in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

**21**Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.

1.What are some natural results of being born again, according to verses

1-2?

**3**In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, **4**for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

2. John says in verse 3 that God’s commands are not too hard for us. Do you agree with him? Why or why not? Explain.

**4**for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. **5**Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

3. What is our power source for overcoming the world, and who overcomes the world, according to verses 4-5?

4. Are you “overcoming the world” right now? Is there a special challenge or battle you’re facing for which you’d like prayer? What steps of faith is God calling you to take?

**6**This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. **7**For there are three that testify: **8**the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. **9**We accept human testimony, but God’s testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son.

5. Read verses 6-9. The Old Testament required 2 or 3 witnesses to prove anything in court. What 3 witnesses does John cite, what do you think each means, and why should we accept their testimony?

6. What would you say to the person who argues that there are many ways to God?

**11**And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. **12**Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

7. Read verses 11-12. How can a person know that he/she has eternal life?

**14**This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. **15**And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

8. According to verses 14-15, what confidence do we have as believers? Explain.

**16**If you see any brother or sister commit a sin that does not lead to death, you should pray and God will give them life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death.I am not saying that you should pray about that.

9. If we see a sister or brother in Christ committing a sin, what should we do, according to verse 16? Do you do this, or are you tempted to ignore it, gossip about it, etc. Explain.

10. An idol is anything that takes the place of God in our lives.  Are there any people, things or activities that threaten to rival God in your life? Would you like prayer about this. (Please remember that anything of a personal nature that is shared in your small group, should not be shared outside of your group without specific permission. No gossip please!)

11. Journal this passage using the SOAP method.

**The Letters of John**

Lesson 6

Hospitality Guidelines

2 & 3 John

**2 John**

**1**The elder, To the lady chosen by God and to her children, whom I love in the truth—and not I only, but also all who know the truth— **2**because of the truth, which lives in us and will be with us forever:

**3**Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father’s Son, will be with us in truth and love.

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

**7**I say this because many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world.  Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. **8**Watch out that you do not lose what we[ have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. **9**Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. **10**If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take them into your house or welcome them. **11**Anyone who welcomes them shares in their wicked work.

**12**I have much to write to you, but I do not want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to visit you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

**13**The children of your sister, who is chosen by God, send their greetings.

**3 John**

**1**The elder, To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

**2**Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. **3**It gave me great joy when some believers came and testified about your faithfulness to the truth, telling how you continue to walk in it. **4**I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

**5**Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=3%20John%201&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30664a)] even though they are strangers to you. **6**They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their way in a manner that honors God. **7**It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. **8**We ought therefore to show hospitality to such people so that we may work together for the truth.

**9**I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will not welcome us. **10**So when I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, spreading malicious nonsense about us. Not satisfied with that, he even refuses to welcome other believers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.

**11**Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God. **12**Demetrius is well spoken of by everyone—and even by the truth itself. We also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true.

**13**I have much to write you, but I do not want to do so with pen and ink. **14**I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face.

**15**Peace to you. The friends here send their greetings. Greet the friends there by name.

1. Read 2 John. John uses the word “truth” five times in the first four verses. Did John believe in absolute truth or in relative truth? What is your answer to those who say “your truth is your truth and my truth is my truth.”?

**5**And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. **6**And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.

2. What is the command John gives in 2 John 5-6 and what do you think this means?

**7**I say this because many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world.  Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. **8**Watch out that you do not lose what we[ have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. **9**Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. **10**If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take them into your house or welcome them. **11**Anyone who welcomes them shares in their wicked work.

3. Read 2 John, verses 7-11. What was John warning this lady about? What did he tell her not to do, and why?

4. What practical applications do you take out of this short letter?

**3 John**

**1**The elder, To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

**2**Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. **3**It gave me great joy when some believers came and testified about your faithfulness to the truth, telling how you continue to walk in it. **4**I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

**5**Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=3%20John%201&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30664a)] even though they are strangers to you. **6**They have told the church about your love. Please send them on their way in a manner that honors God. **7**It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. **8**We ought therefore to show hospitality to such people so that we may work together for the truth.

**9**I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will not welcome us. **10**So when I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, spreading malicious nonsense about us. Not satisfied with that, he even refuses to welcome other believers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.

**11**Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God. **12**Demetrius is well spoken of by everyone—and even by the truth itself. We also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true.

**13**I have much to write you, but I do not want to do so with pen and ink. **14**I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face.

**15**Peace to you. The friends here send their greetings. Greet the friends there by name.

5. Read 3 John. What did John say was his greatest joy?

6. Jot down a phrase or two about each of these people, based on what John said in this letter:

Gaius:

Diotrephes:

Demetrius:

7. If a group of Christians reported on your life, as they apparently did on these men’s lives, what do you think they would say?

8. Why is hospitality such an important quality for Christians to possess?  Do you show hospitality?

9. Based on 2 and 3 John, do you think John would approve of the hospitality you show, and the people to whom you extend hospitality? Explain.

10. Journal one of these passages using the SOAP method.