

## I John 1

1. What can you learn about John's purpose in writing this letter?
2. To whom was it written?
3. During this period, many false teachers had emerged in the church. What were some of their teachings that opposed the Apostle John's message (the message of Christ)?

Do we still have a problem with false teachers? Have you ever encountered false teaching?

What are some of the false teachings in the church today?

How should we deal with false teachers and teachings?

4. Read I John 1:1-4. Keeping in mind that John was addressing false doctrine, why do you believe he began his letter this way?

What is John establishing?

5. According to these introductory verses, why should we believe John?
6. In verse 3 John mentions fellowship. What is your definition of fellowship?

What is your definition of Christian fellowship?

Why is Christian fellowship important? Or is it?

7. In verses 3 & 4, John gives two reasons for writing this letter. What are they? Do these reasons still apply to us? How?
8. Read vv 5-10. John addresses the issue of fellowship with God. John gives two tests to determine if we are truly in fellowship with Him. What are these two tests?

Vv 5-7.

Vv 8-10.

9. In verse 5, John addresses one of the problems in the church. How would you paraphrase verse 5?

What does it mean to you when John says, "God is light"?

What does it mean to walk in darkness?

10. According to verse 6 some were claiming to be in fellowship with God but also were walking in darkness. John calls them liars. Why?

Why is this claim impossible?

11. What are the "benefits" of walking in the light?

12. According to John, how important is our talk and how important is our walk?

13. To what truth is John referring in verse 8?

14. Verse 9 is one of the most often quoted scriptures. What does it mean to you that we are to confess our sins?

What are the promises for those who confess their sins?

How have you experienced this forgiveness and purification?

How often do you confess your sins?

According to John's letter, what does it mean if we do not confess our sins?

15. Suppose you had a drinking problem and felt led to confess this sin before the church. What benefits would you reap?

How comfortable would you be confessing your sins openly before the church? Why?

What can we do to restore confession to its proper place?

16. What are some of the ways we can claim to be without sin?

Why is this dangerous?

17. After reading I John 1, how would you describe fellowship with Jesus?

What steps can the church take to restore fellowship with God?

With one another?

## I John 2

1. In chapter 1 John stresses the importance of living what we profess. What makes the biggest impression on you: what someone says or what someone does? Why?

How important is it for us today to live according to Christ's words?

2. In chapter 1 John said if anyone professes to love Jesus but walks in the darkness or claims to be without sin, he or she is a liar. How does this claim strike you?

Does John's blunt language offend you?

Can you think of instances where we should be blunt and to the point concerning God's word and our actions?

3. Keeping in mind the above points, why do you think John addressed his readers as "My dear children"? What does this suggest about his relationship to them and with them?

How would you react if someone called you a child (in this context)?

4. John now addresses those who may be feeling guilty or condemned by what he wrote earlier. To John, this meant that their hearts were not hardened to the Lord. What hope does he give them in vv 1-2?

John states that Jesus speaks in our defense. Jesus is defending us from whom? How does He defend us? (See v. 2 and the question below.)

What does it mean that Jesus is the "atoning sacrifice" for all our sins?

5. According to vv 4-6, how can we tell if someone really knows Jesus or just claims to know Him?

How can we walk as Jesus did? Can you list some specific examples?

6. In vv 7-8 John talks about a command that is both old and new. What is this "old" command that we have had since the beginning?

In what way is it new in Jesus Christ?

7. Read carefully vv 9-11. What is the true measure of our relationship with God?

What does it mean to love your brother?

To hate your brother?

8. According to these verses, what does it mean to live in the light?

To live in darkness?

9. In verses 12-14, John addresses three groups: children, young men, and fathers. He also ascribes certain qualities to each. Whom do you think each group represents?

For what does John commend each group?

How do these verses apply to you?

From these verses, how can we overcome the evil one?

10. Once again, John is very blunt in verse 15. He makes it quite clear we cannot love the world (or anything in the world) and God. What is meant by the "world"?

What does it mean to love the world?

Why would believers choose to love the world instead of God?

11. In verse 16, John lists three areas where the love of the world can enter: the cravings of sinful man, the lust of the eyes, and boasting. How are these still operating today?

How can we resist them?

Read Matthew 4:1-10. Jesus is tempted three times by the devil. How do these three temptations line up with the three areas mentioned by John?

How did Jesus overcome these temptations?

What can we learn from these scriptures?

12. Read vv 18-27. John warns us about antichrists who will try to lead us astray. What are some of the false teachings about Jesus today?

How seriously should we take this warning (see the first part of v. 18)?

13. What are some of the characteristics of the antichrists?

Of their teachings?

What is the significance of John's statement in verse 19 that "they went out from us?"

What is the "definition" of an antichrist? (see verse 22)

14. What is our protection from these antichrists? (see verse 20)

What do you think is meant by "anointing"?

Do you have this anointing? How can we know?

15. If we have an anointing, why are we to study the Bible?

In light of these verses, how important is it for us to know God's word?

16. What should we do when we encounter someone whom we believe is leading us astray?

17. In verse 27 John urges us to remain in Christ. What does this mean to you?

18. How can we tell if someone is truly born again? (vv 28-29)

19. What touched you most from this chapter?

How would you summarize John's message?

## 1 John 3

1. John 1:12 states that God has given to everyone who believes the right to become the children of God. Once again, John touches on this theme. In chapter 2 he spoke of the need for confession and avoiding the darkness. Now he states that God's love is evident in our being called children of God. What does it mean to you to be called God's child?

How should His child behave?

What does the word "lavish" mean to you?

How does the realization that we are God's children and that God's love is lavishly poured out on us help us to walk in the light?

2. What does it mean to you that the world will not know us? How should we react?
3. According to v. 2, we are not what we will be. What does John mean?

What are we to look forward to becoming? How is this an encouragement now?

What does it mean to you that we are in a state of "becoming"?

What effect does John say this hope should have on us?

4. According to v. 4, how does John define sin?

How does this definition compare to the world's idea of sin?

How would you define sin?



5. What assurance does John give in v. 5?

What does it mean for Christ to "take away our sin"?

In v. 6, what does John mean by "keeps on sinning" and "continues to sin"?

How do vv 5-6 relate to 1 John 1:8-10?

6. In vv 5-6, John gives us another test to tell if someone really knows Jesus. What is it?

7. In v 7 John warns us not to be deceived or led astray. What specifically is the deception that can deceive us?

How real is this deception and how can we guard against it?

8. According to v. 8, why did Jesus appear?

9. Read vv 9-10. Why is it impossible for those born of God (His children) to continue to sin?

How can we tell God's children from the devil's children?

10. What has it meant to you to be born again? What changes have occurred in your life? What changes are still occurring?

11. What is the message we have heard since the beginning?

What does this message mean to you?

12. Read vv. 12-15. How is Cain an example of hate (devil's child)?

How is Able an example of love (God's child)?

Do you agree that these are the only two categories? How does the world react to this idea?

13. How can we pass from life to death?

What does this mean to you?

14. In v. 16, how does John define love?

What does it mean to lay down our lives for someone else (see v. 17)?

Have you, have we, has the church been loving others this way? What are some practical ways we can?

15. Based on these scriptures, how would you define hate?

What is the result of hate? (See v. 15).

John says "hate" is the same as what? How do you feel about this comparison?

16. What does v. 18 mean to you, especially in relation to John's statements about love?

What does it mean to love with words or with the tongue?

Why does John warn us against this?

17. Verses 18-20 are to be a comfort to us. What comfort do they hold?

What does it mean to you that *God is greater than our hearts*?

What assurance do you gain from knowing *God is greater than your heart and He knows all things*?

18. Read vv. 21-22. What is the relationship between obedience and prayer?

19. Jesus' command in v. 23 has two parts. What are they?

How are these two parts related?

Is it possible to obey one without obeying the other? Why?

20. How do we know we live in Jesus?

How do we know Jesus lives in us?

Why is it important to know both?

21. According to 1 John, how would you answer someone who was having doubts about his/her salvation?

What comfort did you find in this chapter?

## I John 4

John has been addressing the issue of antichrists. He then talks about loving one another with Christ's love. These two issues are related and John says we are to have a proper balance in our Christian lives.

1. What is the relationship between guarding against antichrists and loving one another?

Either idea, carried to an extreme, can harm the other. Explain.

2. In verse 1, John says we are not to believe every spirit. What does he mean by this?

What does it mean to you to "test the spirits?"

How often are we to "test the spirits" around us? How often do you?

What are some ways we can test the words of those around us?

3. According to vv. 2-3 how can we recognize the spirit of God?

How can we recognize the spirit of the antichrist?

What do you believe John means when he writes that the spirit of God "acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh?" How do we acknowledge this?

4. What does it mean to you to overcome someone or something?

According to verse 4, how can we overcome the false teaching of antichrists and the evil around us?

What does the promise in verse 4 mean to you? How have you experienced this truth in your life?

5. John gives us another test in vv. 5-6. What is this test?

What does it mean that some in the church speak from the viewpoint of the world?

How do these scriptures relate to I John 3:1?

Some can consider John's statement in v. 6 arrogant: we are from God and they are not. How does this statement affect you? How can John make this claim?

6. Read vv. 7-12. Why is it so important for us to love one another?

What does it mean if we do not?

What does it mean to you that "God is love?"

Is the statement that "love is God" equally true? Why or why not?

7. What proof do we have of God's love for us? When did you first become aware of this love? What affect did it have on you?

8. What definition of love does John give us in verse 10?

How does this differ from the world's definitions of love?

9. How does God's love for you urge you to love others?

What are some practical ways we can love others on a daily basis?

Who are included in the term "others"?

10. According to verse 12, how does our loving one another as Christ loves us help make the invisible God visible?

11. Read vv. 13-17. What are some of the ways that we can tell that we are living in God and He is living in us?

In verse 16 John says we are to live in love instead of just loving. What does this mean to you?

How does loving this way give us confidence on the day of judgment?

What are the greatest hindrances to living in love?

12. Verse 18 gives us some insight into fear. According to this verse, why do we sometimes fear?

How can we overcome our fears?

John says that fear has to do with punishment. What does this mean to you?

What does this have to do with perfect love?

13. Read vv. 19-21. Why we are able to love?

If we find it difficult to love others, what might be the cause?

Therefore, what is the first thing we must do in order to love others?

14. Why does John say that we cannot love God if we cannot love our brother?

Does this mean it is impossible to love God and hate our brother? Explain.

15. What commandment is given to us in verse 21?

How does this relate to I John 3:24?

16. As followers of Jesus, is there ever a situation where it is acceptable not to love our brother or sister?

How does this make you feel?

17. What challenges do you find in I John 4?

What comforts do you find?

## I John 5

1. In I John 4:21 we are told that we must love our brothers. Some might wonder who would be considered our brothers. How does I John 5:1 answer that question?
2. In v. 1 we find two results of the new birth. What are they?

How are they related?

3. According to v. 3, what is love for God?

Why do you believe John used this "definition" of love for God?

Do you agree with it? Why or why not?

4. What does the word "burdensome" mean to you?

Why is obeying God's commands not burdensome to believers?

Have you ever found obeying God burdensome?

Explain the relationship between love and obeying.

5. What does it mean to you to overcome the world?

What is the victory that allows us to overcome?

Who are the overcomers?

What evidence have you seen in your life of this victory?



6. During John's time there was a false teaching that stated Jesus was the Christ only between His baptism and crucifixion. It stated that He was only human until the "Christ" descended upon Him at His baptism. This is one of the false doctrines John warns us about. Why is this teaching so dangerous?

What do you think John meant in v.6 when he said Jesus came "by water and blood?"

7. John further states that there are three who testify that Jesus is the Son of God. Who are the three? How does each testify to this truth?

According to v. 9, why should we accept this testimony?

8. Some might ask how we know this testimony to be true. How does v. 10 answer that question?

In other words, how do you know this testimony is true?

9. What does v. 10 say about those who believe? What does it say about those who do not believe this testimony?

Do you agree that these are the only two options we have? Explain.

10. According to vv.11-12, what is this testimony?

How would describe the life one has through Jesus?

How does this life compare to the life a non-believer has?

11. So far John has talked about false teachings, being led astray, and antichrists. From these warnings it would be easy to begin to doubt one's salvation. Even John Wesley doubted he was a true Christian.

Have you ever faced these doubts?

To address this issue, what assurance does John give us in vv.13-15?

How do we know we have eternal life?

12. Prayer is powerful and effective. How do we know our prayers will be answered?

What does it mean to you that "we have what we asked" of Jesus?

How would explain "unanswered" prayers?

13. Verse 16 has generated much discussion. Apparently there is sin that leads to death and sin that does not lead to death. What can you learn about these two "categories" of sin?

Can you find examples of a sin that led to death? (Acts 5:1-11, for example)

14. However, John's focus was not on the difference between these sins. Instead, as people who are assured our prayers will be answered, what are we to do when we see a brother commit a sin that does not lead to death?

What do we often do?

Why does John encourage us to pray in these situations?

Why does John tell us not to pray when the situation involves sin that leads to death?

15. Once again, just in case we are wondering if we have committed a sin that leads to death, John gives us another assurance. What assurance do we have in v. 18?

Again, what does the phrase "continue to sin" mean to you?

Are you aware that you, being born of God, no longer "continue to sin?"

16. In verses 19-20, John lists several things we should know. What are they?

How does this knowledge keep us from perishing?

17. Verse 21 seems to be out of place. Is it?

Why do you think John ended this letter with this statement?

18. What has this study of I John taught you?

How has it encouraged you?

How has it strengthened you?